

Can You Help Renewed Hope Trust's East Surrey Winter Night Shelter?

Charity Renewed Hope Trust (RHT) is getting ready for the annual East Surrey Winter Night Shelter. The shelter, now in its ninth year caters for the homeless of Reigate, Banstead, and Tandridge, and it is only possible thanks to the time and skills of volunteers, this year, can you be one of those who help some of the most vulnerable?

By Jacob White

Based on last year's figures, RHT expects another busy winter, in 2018 – 19 the charity had 25 guests stay at least one night in the 15-week duration, the shelter has 10 beds each night and for several weeks all 10 were booked. This follows a brisk summer with numbers at the daytime drop-in centre holding up where in the past attendance fell when the night shelter closed in March.

RHT provides support to the homeless and disadvantaged of East Surrey regardless of how complex the needs of the individual are. Support includes serving meals, offering shelter, clothing and assistance in finding employment as well as encouraging them to build relationships through a winter night shelter, drop-in service and a Sunday lunch.

RHT has annual costs of between £60,000 to £70,000, is reliant on donations for meeting the majority of that, was founded as a Christian group, and faith underpins all that it does. However, RHT supports all who come to it, giving them hope, and the opportunity to build a new life regardless of culture or faith.



OFFERING A HELPING HAND

Services offered by RHT include:

Drop-In
Monday to Friday
11.00am and 3.00pm

East Surrey Winter Night Shelter
15 weeks from Wednesday, December 11 2019 to Tuesday, March 24 2020

Real Meal
Sundays 12.30pm

For more information about RHT, visit: www.rhtes.org

Volunteer and fundraising co-ordinator Mary-Anne Parsons said: "We are always looking for new volunteers and will shortly be scheduling training sessions for anyone wanting to get involved for the first time or have been volunteering there for a few years and would like a refresher."

"People find it a very rewarding and humbling experience helping people

who have fallen on hard times. Everyone's story is different the more homeless people you meet, the more you come to realise any one of us could be in that situation" Mary-Anne added about training.

Ahead of winter, there are volunteer opportunities open, each night split into three shifts – evening, night and morning shifts. The evening shift of six to eight people runs from about 6.45pm and roles include welcoming, cooking and assisting in the kitchen. The night shift of three to four helpers come on at 10.00pm handing over the reins to the four-strong morning shift at 6.30am.

The drop-in, which runs all year round has had more than 300 visitors in the past year who come for a range of reasons. Volunteers are always needed for roles such as cooking and supporting people filling in forms. Some visitors are homeless, but many come as they can be themselves as they struggle with the consequences of mental illness and isolation.

If you think you can help RHT this wintertime, visit the charity's website to register as a volunteer.