

AUTUMN 2019
NEWSLETTER
Issue 5



emmaus

Colchester



From the Emmaus workshop to our High Street shop windows – we give pre-loved furniture a new lease of life

Working together to end homelessness

Emmaus Colchester is home to 33 companions – previously homeless people who are members of our community and work in our social enterprise.

We collect and sell donated goods, using the money generated to sustain our community. We repair, refurbish and upcycle items in our workshop and run delivery, collections and house clearance services.

Our community house is in Magdalen Street. This is where our companions live – and the community staff team are also based here. Our New Life Shop and Café, located on Crouch Street, has just celebrated its first birthday. We have two more shops on the High Street, The Emporium and the Home Shop, and Emmaus Works is along Osborne Street.

There are many ways that you can help your local Emmaus. Please see back cover for details.

**Phone
01206
768887
for collections
and house
clearances**

Home Shop refurbished



Emmaus volunteer Gladys Morgan opened the refurbished Home Shop

Emmaus Colchester Home Shop reopened by volunteer

Dedicated Emmaus charity volunteer, Gladys Morgan, opened the refurbished Emmaus Home Shop earlier this year and got a few extra surprises in the bargain.

After 10 years of service, delighted Gladys was presented with a bespoke bench, made by the companions at Emmaus Colchester. Ellie Vlavianou, from not-for-profit social housing organisation, L&Q, then stunned Gladys further with a beautiful bouquet and a donation to Emmaus Colchester of £4,000.

Gladys is the charity's longest serving volunteer and works two days a week sorting out donated clothing. She said: "I've never done anything like opening a shop before and my grandchildren are over the moon! My own son had a drink problem when he was a teenager, so from personal experience I'm glad that there is an

organisation like Emmaus that can help our community.

'It's been a wonderful honour today and I feel very emotional, much of the time I am sorting clothing and am out of sight, so it's been wonderful to have this surprise and receive the generous donation too.'

The £4,000 donation from L&Q will be used to fund the companions' uniform, which is the full amount that it costs per year. Regarding the donation, Ed Tibbetts, Head of Design and Planning at L&Q said: 'We're delighted to be supporting Emmaus in their work in Colchester. As a not-for-profit housing association, we understand the importance of providing safe and comfortable homes for everyone. We're looking forward to seeing the refurbished shop thrive over the coming months, and will carry on supporting Emmaus as we continue our work in Colchester and North Essex.'

The opening event was celebrated with staff, companions, trustees and volunteers from Emmaus Colchester, along with pupils from Lexden Springs School, with which Emmaus has an ongoing partnership.



The new frontage design of the Home Shop in Colchester High Street

Changing rooms

The shop's transformation began when Emmaus Colchester gained planning permission to convert the space above the shop into six bedrooms for companions. With adjustments needed to the shop frontage to accommodate a new entrance to the bedrooms, it gave the charity a chance to refurbish the shop. Construction work to the first floor is scheduled to begin in the new year.

Denise King, chief executive officer at Emmaus Colchester, said: 'All our companions, trustees and volunteers have been involved in the process and our companions have completed the work. It's helped improve their skills and given them confidence to

A wide range of vintage clothing is on sale



move on, which is what we do at Emmaus.

'After the success of our New Life Shop and Café on Crouch Street, we've taken the opportunity to create a stronger identity for our Home Shop.'

The new look shop takes on an industrial theme, with painted grey floors, scaffold-board shelving units and Crittall-style steel windows. It will also be based on a pop-up concept with four areas that will change over time.

Denise explains: 'We're starting with a clothing area with changing rooms, a vinyl area with space to play records, and two further sections selling electrical items and small furniture.

Retail Manager, Gemma Aylesbury, was responsible for the merchandising of the Home Shop and managed the overall design scheme, calling in local celebrity artist, Lucy Tiffney, who added her signature funky style with some painted wall murals.

Darren Scott, business manager, has overseen the project: 'To keep the costs down, and in keeping with the Emmaus ethos, all materials where possible have been reused. We've also used the skills of our companions to help us complete the refurbishment, improving their confidence and giving them a strong sense of achievement.'

New Life Café used as a community hub for local groups

In May, we welcomed the FANS network to the café for its very first met up. The charity was set up in Colchester six years ago and aims to reduce social isolation of those people living in care – helping them to reconnect with their local community. The first group included residents from nearby Crouched Friars Residential Home who were able to enjoy a natter with our companions and staff from the FANS Network over coffee and cake.



FANS network meet in New Life Café

St John Ambulance held a First Aid Community Advocate workshop in the cafe in August. The taster session was aimed at encouraging members of the community to gain life savings skills. The workshop was led by Claire Maynard who covered cardiac arrests and heart attacks, CPR and defibrillator training. The event was also attended by Essex County Council who were keen to learn more about the First Aid Community Advocate scheme.

Do you have a community group that is looking for a space to meet up? We'd be delighted to welcome you to our café that is staffed by our friendly companions. We serve a range of hot and cold drinks and a selection of cakes, sandwiches and paninis, all available at reasonable prices.

Away day at Emmaus Colchester

Emmaus Colchester held its first ever away day for staff, companions and trustees on Monday 19 August. The programme of events included a guest speaker, team building training and a discussion on solidarity.



Guest speaker, Josh Connolly

Leading life and performance coach, Josh Connolly, started the day with his own challenging story. As a young child he suffered the impacts of living with an alcohol dependent father, who subsequently died when Josh was 9 years old. The trauma was to have a huge influence on how he saw the world and had a detrimental effect on his own mental health.

Inspirational Life Coach at Emmaus Colchester Away Day

His talk focused on how his recovery was based on resilience and how he was able to work through his problems, rather than just getting over them. An important part of his message was to be truthful about your feelings and not be afraid to talk, 'It's not pretending that everything is OK, it's looking at making changes, and dealing with the situation to make you stronger,' said Josh.

Part of developing resilience is being able to understand your own internal

balance, something Josh refers to as your 'barometer'. Understanding how you feel inside, what impact your triggers have on you and acknowledging your physical and emotional symptoms.

Event organiser, and Progression and Development Manager, Gintare Petrauskatie, said, 'The work Josh is doing goes hand in hand with what we are trying to achieve at Emmaus Colchester. His focus on positivity, resilience and mental health is something that we work on every day. We felt that the companions would be able to relate to Josh's personal story and gain valuable tools to use later on in their own lives.'

Despite this connection with the companions, it was the first time that Josh had visited an Emmaus community. Josh said, "Having had the opportunity to see the work that you are doing and the impact you are having, I will be shouting about Emmaus from the rooftops. It was a real privilege to spend time in the company of everyone at Emmaus Colchester.

'Resilience is not the absence of struggle. In fact, when used and worked with in the right way, struggle can become our greatest asset. Emmaus are a beacon for helping people turn their struggles into resilience,' he added.

After a thought-provoking morning, the afternoon session was filled with

Emmaus UK's Development Officer, Tori Ryan



an interactive team building and communication workshop, led by Tori Ryan, Development Officer at Emmaus UK.

Building on team spirit and solidarity

'Teamwork is definitely one of those things that makes Emmaus so successful,' explains Gintare, 'Tori's training allowed us to discuss what works well and explore how to improve problem areas, while working on ways to build and foster professional relationships with each other.'

The day was concluded with a discussion on how Emmaus Colchester can help others in the local community with acts of solidarity – one of the most important parts of the Emmaus ethos. It was a worthwhile communication exercise in itself, where companions, staff and trustees were able to explore, share and value each other's ideas and opinions, gaining a greater understanding of one another.

'The aim of the day was to achieve a more coherent community and to equip our companions with the tools they need to build resilience and their ability to cope with challenges – all things, that we, as human beings, face daily. We hope to re-focus the way we see our community and each other and in return create an environment which is supportive and empowering,' concludes Gia.

Local barber keeps the companions looking trim

Paula Querino is one local barber that certainly won't get the chop. Apart from working full-time at Wivenhoe barbers, The Village Squire, she volunteers at Emmaus Colchester on her day off. She is among 22 volunteers who give up their time for the charity that support those who have formerly experienced homelessness.

Paula has been cutting the companions hair since December 2018 when she spotted an advert on Facebook. It was an apt time to start as she was able to get the companions in ship-shape before Christmas.



Wivenhoe based barber, Paula Querino at our Community House

Paula says: "It could be any one of us that's affected by homelessness. When I first came to Emmaus I was overwhelmed by the response and thoroughly enjoyed it, and that's why I've continued.

'Although I cut people's hair all day, I get particular pleasure out of cutting the companions' hair, because I'm giving something back to the community, and making them look handsome!'

One companion adds: 'When you've had your hair done you feel 100% better about yourself and it cheers you up. Volunteers don't have to come in and use their time, it saves us a lot of money and its appreciated by everyone.'

Before Paula joined Emmaus Colchester as a volunteer, she had limited knowledge about the charity's work: 'I'd seen all the charity shops, and my other half regularly shops in them, but until I started volunteering I wasn't aware of the full extent of how they help the companions.'

Paula's commitment to Emmaus Colchester isn't just through volunteering, she took part in the Colchester Half Marathon in March, where, with the support of her customers at her Wivenhoe barbers, she raised £250 for the charity.

WE RELY ON THE SALE OF GOOD QUALITY DONATIONS TO FUND OUR COMMUNITY

How to donate items

**PHONE FOR COLLECTION
01206 768887**

We can make good use of everything from furniture and electrical goods to vintage clothing and bric-a-brac.

E MAIL: transport@emmauscol.org

Please provide details of the items to be collected and we will get in contact with you to make suitable arrangements.

DROP OFF

Drop items off at our Arthur Street warehouse (off Osborne Street, opposite Gala Bingo). Parking available 9am-5pm Monday-Saturday. Small items can also be donated at the High Street shops. If you are coming by car please stop outside to unload. See map on back cover for locations.

Unfortunately there are some items – such as upholstered furniture without a fire label – that we are unable to accept.



House clearance service

We don't want to see unwanted items go to landfill. We can clear spaces such as homes and garages of all unwanted items but charge for the those we cannot sell in our shops as they need to be disposed of.

Please phone us on **01206 768887** or e-mail **transport@emmauscol.org** for a quote and to make arrangements.

IN BRIEF

Say no to plastic bags

It's been a while now since we stopped using plastic bags in our shops. We are encouraging our customers to use their own bags, or to purchase one of our own hand-printed paper bags at a cost of 15p.



Helping young girls out of period poverty

Emmaus Colchester continues to support The Red Box Project, which provides donated period products to young people through local schools, ensuring that no young girl misses school because of her period.

We continue to support the not-for-profit initiative by having a Red Box donation box within The Emporium on Colchester High Street.



Solidarity



Local teenagers raising funds for Emmaus in Culver Square, Colchester

Young fundraisers support Emmaus

An inspirational group of local teenagers taking part in the National Citizen Service, has raised £130 for Emmaus Colchester.

The group, known as Catch 22, held a stall in Culver Street, Colchester, selling cakes, homemade lemonade, while also running a tombola.

The teenagers were taking part in a NCS 4-week course aimed at young adults aged between 15-18, which takes place across the country, following GCSEs.

Course attendee, Claire Holt, was one of 15 teenagers taking part in her local group, who explained that the

final two weeks are spent planning and carrying out a social action project to benefit the community.

It's up to the group to decide what this project is and who it supports. Claire explains, 'We decided that homelessness was a big issue in society and not enough is done to support it. So, we looked at all the local charities to find one to fundraise for. We decided that Emmaus did the best for the homeless in helping them find work and homes.'

Everyone took an equal part in organising the fundraising event, with Claire taking responsibility for the tombola. Although, arranging the event didn't go without a few challenges. 'We found it hard at first to organise what we wanted to do and find roles for each member of the group. It was hard to include everyone as some people were less confident, however by the end everyone was eager to help out.'

University of Essex Podcast

A companion and trustee at Emmaus Colchester have taken part in a podcast with Gazette editor Dom Bowers and Essex University student HK Norman. During the latest Colchester Chat podcast they discussed how the charity transforms the lives of those formerly homeless in Colchester.

Companion, John, spoke candidly about his experience of trying to take his own life and how the support of Emmaus Colchester has helped him to turn his life around. Trustee, Peter Silk, explained the work of the charity.

OUR WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

Emmaus works for the whole community

Emmaus reaches out to the whole community – it not only helps those who have been formerly homeless, but enables others to create homes with affordable pre-loved items. Here, one customer, who prefers to remain anonymous, explains why he chose to shop at Emmaus.

'I already knew about Emmaus and didn't hesitate to head straight to Emmaus Works on Osborne Street, when I was looking for items to furnish the flat that I'd just moved into. I was looking for household items, mainly furniture and white goods.

'In the end I purchased a fridge, leather sofa, large display cabinet, and a few CD racks, which all came to £200. My best buy was definitely the fridge.

'I found the store was pleasant to browse around and the companions were on hand to help if I had any questions. I was also able to take advantage of the delivery service, which was great! It went much more smoothly than any deliveries I've had since, and the delivery team was friendly, efficient, and considerate.

'I've recommended Emmaus many times in the past and I definitely would again. Even when my own



Emmaus Works has a huge range of affordable furniture

financial position has been brighter, it's never stopped me supporting Emmaus and the work it does in the local community.'

Denise King, CEO at Emmaus Colchester, welcomes these comments, 'It's always good to hear how we are able to help the whole community by providing high quality pre-loved furniture that's suitable for any home. We are about solidarity and helping others, and value how our donated items don't just help support our companions, but help members of the wider community create their own homes.'

Emmaus Colchester generates revenue to support its companions through its four shops and café in the town centre. Each shop provides a slightly different offer, but all sell quality items.'

Emmaus Colchester takes part in Paris Salon

Colchester was one of six Emmaus communities in the UK that travelled to France, to take part in the Salon Emmaus 2019.

Denise King, CEO, travelled with former companion, and now driver, Simon, and companion, Andrew, to the venue at Paris Expo during the weekend of 22-23 June.

Emmaus Colchester shared its stand with Emmaus Gloucester, who helped

during the very busy weekend of sales.

'It was an extremely hectic couple of days, and we sold everything that we took, including bric-a-brac, clothes, textiles and small furniture items,' says Denise.

More than 120 Emmaus groups took part in the event from across Europe, with the UK being represented by Emmaus Colchester, Emmaus Dover, Emmaus Gloucestershire, Emmaus Leeds, Emmaus Mossley and Emmaus Oxford.

The money raised from sales will be used to support worldwide Emmaus International projects tackling poverty and social exclusion.



THE ESSEX LOTTERY

Support us through the Essex Lottery and give yourself the chance to win prizes of up to £25,000!

We now have a page on The Essex Lottery. When you buy tickets from our page 50% of the proceeds goes to us – plus 10% to other good causes in Essex.

And each weekly ticket only costs £1!

Visit: www.essexlottery.co.uk and search for: Emmaus

Support Emmaus Colchester

Donate to us

We give people a home, meaningful work in our social enterprises and an opportunity to get themselves back on their feet. We rely on the sale of good quality donations to fund our community.

PHONE FOR COLLECTION 01206 768887

We can make good use of everything from furniture and electrical goods to vintage clothing and bric-a-brac.

E MAIL transport@emmauscol.org

Please provide details of the items to be collected and we will get in contact with you to make suitable arrangements.

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Shop with us...

...at our new shop & café in Crouch Street, one of our two High Street shops or our warehouses in Osborne Street. You're sure to find a bargain!

Use our house clearance service

We don't want to see unwanted items go to landfill. We can clear spaces such as homes and garages of all unwanted sound quality items. Please phone 01206 768887 or e-mail transport@emmauscol.org for a quote and to make arrangements.

Volunteer with us

Volunteering is a great way to learn new skills and meet new people at the same time as helping your local community and supporting the Emmaus ethos. Our volunteers work alongside our companions and staff, helping to build our social enterprise together. To find out more please contact Darren on 01206 768887 or email volunteer@emmauscol.org

Follow us

www.emmaus.org.uk/colchester



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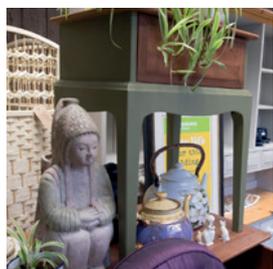


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Find us



EMMAUS NEW LIFE

Furniture, clothes, Bric-a-brac, vintage, upcycled items from our workshop and much, much more. Plus – our café.



EMMAUS EMPORIUM & EMMAUS HOME

Furniture of all styles, shapes and sizes, bric-a-brac, vintage, books, CDs and more.



EMMAUS WAREHOUSE & WORKS

Our operational hub – housing sorting, storage and workshop facilities. Shop selling a wide range of larger items of furniture, including beds, tables and chairs.

EMMAUS COMMUNITY HOUSE

Home for the majority of our companions and also the location of our main office.

