

December 2020

Community News



emmaus
Merseyside
working together to end homelessness

Bringing you up to date with recent activities and changes at our community, charity and social enterprise.

Thank you

It has been some time since we have been in touch with all of our friends and supporters. This has been a challenging year for everyone and we hope that you, your family and friends are keeping well throughout the ongoing pandemic. We really appreciate all the interest and support which we receive from so many different people and organisations across Sefton, the Liverpool City Region and beyond. Thank you for all your continued kind support and contributions.

Please do get in touch if you have any thoughts or ideas about anything you want to share with us. We are always happy to receive donations of good quality unwanted furniture or household goods and can be persuaded to accept financial gifts as well! Ideas for joint working or partnerships are always welcome too.

working together to end homelessness

Charity number 1110220 - Company number 5075117

emmaus.org.uk/merseyside



The impact of Covid-19

Along with everyone else, Emmaus Merseyside has had its share of challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. This has affected both our residential community and social enterprise activities.



Community life

So far as life in Seaforth Green House is concerned, we started the year with a renewed commitment to reaching full capacity as soon as possible. However, the onset of the pandemic soon reduced the number of companion applications. We were however pleased to be able to work with Sefton Council to accommodate a number of homeless people as part of the “Everyone in” initiative. Although not strictly Emmaus companions, this was a good example of partnership working involving the Bosco Society and our local authority.

Whilst the pandemic clearly involved significant changes to normal working practices and meant that some companions had to self-isolate for precautionary reasons, we have been fortunate that, to date, no one has tested positive. During the period when the shops were required to close, companions were able to catch up with many tasks that needed attention and keep busy at our community home and gardens.

Social enterprise

Our social enterprise activities have been severely affected this year. We had to close the Sandy Road Charity Superstore in March and the two Charity Re-Use Shops located on the Household Waste Recycling Centres at Irlam Road in Bootle and Cheadle Avenue in Old Swan Liverpool were also closed. After undertaking detailed risk assessments and putting in place the necessary protective measures, we were ready to re-open our Superstore when the first period of lock down was lifted on 15 June. It was encouraging to see so many regular customers and supporters returning to the store, as well as being able to welcome some new faces. Our Charity Superstore was doing well until the second lock down across the Liverpool City Region caused a further period of closure on 5 November. We're happy to have reopened at the start of December.

The Charity Re-Use Shops have not fared as well. Unfortunately the layout and site facilities at Irlam Road Household Waste Recycling Centre do not offer ready access to the Re-Use Shop. This, combined with the general restrictions placed on all customers wishing to visit the site, meant that footfall has been much lower than usual.

The Cheadle Avenue Recycling Centre has an excellent catchment area, and the Re-Use Shop has better accessibility. Trading activity there was picking up nicely after the first lock down, but a small fire broke out in the shop just prior to the the second lock down.

Investigations into the cause are continuing. We are hoping that when circumstances allow, we can have further discussions with Veolia to create more space at the Cheadle Avenue Re-Use Shop to enable us to take in larger items of furniture and other household goods. This would greatly improve the trading activity and reduce the amount of goods sent to landfill. A benefit for both Emmaus Merseyside and the environment.



Our next development opportunity

In order to utilise all the resources which are available to Emmaus Merseyside, we have been working to develop the external space around our residential accommodation in School Lane. To date we have eradicated the contamination of the whole site area (due to remains of war damage) and begun the erection of polytunnels and raised beds to propagate from seed and grow-on seedlings.

Further capital funds are required to complete the physical works to utilise the whole site. We are also looking for funding to employ a Horticulture Manager to oversee the development and management of the initiative together with some operating costs. The work which has been done on the project plan to date indicates that the site could produce fresh food to supplement the requirements of the kitchen at Seaforth Green House together with a weekly local fresh food stall. Planters, window boxes and hanging baskets could be made and sold locally and there is potential to supply other local markets with bedding plants. Honey and other niche products could also be produced. A training facility would be incorporated in the project to enable companions and other volunteers to acquire the skills and expertise necessary.

We are about to start on what we hope will be the final stage of our fundraising activity to enable us to implement the exciting plans for this project as soon as possible. If you would like to get involved or partner with us for this exciting development, please do get in touch.

Staff changes

We have experienced several staff changes over the recent period, so this is a good opportunity to bring everyone up to date with our current personnel. Honora Crisp who was our Business Manager left Emmaus Merseyside in October to take up a new post with Claire House Children's Charity.

The Board took some time to review the staffing arrangements and as a result decided to create the post of Chief Operating Officer. Following a successful recruitment process, we welcome Marc Bamber who joins us from Emmaus Preston and Burnley.

Ann-Marie Hughes (0151 928 4775) continues in her post as Residential Manager with Mark Callister as the Support Worker. We are presently reviewing the Finance and Administration post prior to beginning the recruitment process. On the retail side of our organisation, Margy Allen manages the Sandy Road Charity Superstore (0151 928 1588) and oversees the two Re-Use shops which are managed by Stacey Whitfield (Irlam Road 0151 705 0848) and Tony Parr (Cheadle Avenue 0151 705 0847).



Board changes

Nigel Mellor, current Chair of Emmaus Merseyside, is standing down at the next AGM in December. Nigel has been involved with Emmaus Merseyside for 13 years and has seen it develop from the initial concept to the successful operation it is now. We are fortunate that Jo Henney, Trustee, is able to take over as Chair with support from Neina Cave, Trustee, as Vice Chair. A full list of current Trustees is given below. The Board is conducting an audit to ensure that it has the skills and experience required to fulfill the duties and responsibilities involved.

Our current trustees are:

Jo Henney, Chair Elect
Neina Cave, Vice-Chair Elect
Phil Adams, Treasurer
Nick Thompson
Leon McGowan
Debbie King

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