

## Plymouth Soup Run Report for September 2022

In September 2022:

- Plymouth Soup Run served 2,526 meals (an average of 84 meals per night, equivalent to 17 meals or 26% more per night than September 2021, and 9 meals or 10% less per night than August 2022, an all-time high). The year-to-date figure of 21,920 meals served represents a significant increase of 20% over 2021. The August 2022 figures include meals served on Saturday mornings at Shekinah. Even factoring those out, there was an increase of 15% over September 2021.
- The changing season is being felt with lower temperatures and some very wet nights: *“So many wet, cold shivering and so hungry. We did our best to help but felt very inadequate. A lot waited so patiently for me to open up and were so grateful.”* Warm and waterproof clothing and shoes are in increasing demand, along with the usual need for underwear and toiletries.
- Good information sharing helped teams prepare enough food for the level of demand we are experiencing. Nevertheless, a supermarket visit was necessary one night to be able to feed everyone. Individual needs are taken into account whenever we can, with requests for vegetarian food, and efforts to ensure that anyone too anxious or physically unable to come out can be taken food by friends. And, of course, we had a significant number of requests for dog food.
- A total of 12 referrals were made to the Path Rough Sleeper Team, and 62 sleeping bags or blankets, two roll mats and a tent were given out to rough sleepers.
- We were pleased to be joined by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Sue Dann and her consort Alderman Chris Mavin on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September. They helped serve food and drinks throughout the run, and observed the help that teams provide to clients including referrals to support services and a sympathetic listening ear.
- The Saturday morning sessions for rough sleepers and those in emergency accommodation are continuing with funding from Soup Run resources, support from volunteers and Path staff, and hosting by Shekinah. An average of 30 clients were supported each week in September, most having a cooked breakfast and take-away lunch. Many took a shower and were provided with clean clothing or laundry vouchers. A number of vulnerable clients were supported to access emergency accommodation. Others with mobility difficulties and/or pressing medical issues were given bus tickets to enable them to access treatment. Clients were provided with smoking cessation advice by PCC/Public Health and Livewell staff, and with footcare by Forgotten Feet volunteer podiatrists. A peer mentor from Heads Count, an artist and volunteers from Path and PCC also attended. A report on the University-funded phase has been circulated to stakeholders.
- September was a relatively peaceful month generally, but teams had to call on support from emergency services on three occasions to deal with client ill health and aggression.
- The New Beginnings Fund jointly administered by Path and the Soup Run helped a client with bus fare to reach his workplace, provided two clients with a reconditioned TV for their new home, and provided a further two with fridges to hold their food in a multi-occupancy house.
- During September, teams came together for the first time in over two years for an in-person meeting of the Soup Run Development Group. We met with the Plymouth PIE Club to discuss common interests in community support, and a Club representative joined the Sunday Soup Kitchen. Several new volunteers and a Path staff member joined weekday teams and a Shekinah Navigator, a medical student and a Duke of Edinburgh Award student helped the Sunday team.
- Soup Run representatives participated in meetings of the Plymouth Food Aid Network, Plymouth Homelessness Prevention Partnership, and the Creative Solutions Forum, and attended a Service organized by Harbour at St Andrew’s Minster to remember those whose lives had been impacted by drugs and alcohol, and who had died during 2022.
- Congratulations to the four Soup Run volunteers who climbed Mount Snowdon on 29<sup>th</sup> September and raised an amazing £1,284 in sponsorship to support the Soup Run’s activities.
- On Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September, clients and volunteers at the Sunday Soup Kitchen observed a one-minute silence at 8pm to mark the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth.