

History of GEAR

GEAR was formed as a company and charity in June 1995 with its own mission statement. It was a church led initiative, stemming from a conference chaired by the Bishop of Tewkesbury in the early part of the last decade. The conference led to the appointment of a Church Army Officer who was tasked with researching the need for a Night Shelter in Gloucester. This led to a steering group, which became the first management committee of the Gloucestershire Emergency Accommodation resource. This management committee exists under authority given to the trustees by the Memorandum and Articles of Association, dated June 1995.

It also ensures that the organisation acts within its charitable objectives in ensuring that the mission statement, which is 'to relieve sickness, poverty and distress amongst the street homeless population of Gloucestershire', is adhered to. Its function is carried out by the provision of a night shelter and day centre facilities.

At the same time as GEAR was being formed the national charity CRISIS were setting up a network of Night Shelters around the country and they offered to fund GEAR for five years on a reducing basis. This funding had come from the National Lottery. Part of their funding agreement was that they would appoint and pay for a night shelter coordinator for twelve months.

An appointment was made and Brian Jones commenced work in February 1996 and immediately came under pressure from CRISIS to open in April to coincide with the opening of other projects up and down the country.

Towards the end of 1995 the management committee had become aware that the Stonham project at the Mariners Hall was closing down and moving to the old Glydhurst Probation Hostel in Weston Road. This project was closing down as it was no longer suitable as a probation hostel.

The Stonham Housing Association leased the building in the early part of the 1980's for use as a night shelter. It was leased from the Church Society Trust, the owners of the building. I believed however that the Mariners Hall was a perfect site for a Night Shelter. It was known in the community as a hostel for homeless people and we reasoned that as such there could be few objections to its use as a Night Shelter.

The Bishop of Gloucester officially opened the project on May 22nd 1996, our patron. The title of the project is the Gloucester Open House and this and the fact that we were part of the CRISIS Open House Network formed the bases of the sign that still hangs above the door.

And from that we are what we are today...The Vaughan Centre, Day Centre, Night Shelter, Health Clinic.

The Health Clinic – Inadequate healthcare provision for homeless people is now a thing of the past due to our Health Clinic.

A Doctors surgery 4 times a week, Nursing support 5 days a week, Medical Advice and support, Health Visitor support, Health Promotion, Women's / Men's Health

<http://www.calameo.com/read/0000771987a1ec97f9954>

The Day Centre. The Vaughan Centre, 159 Southgate Street, is a one stop shop for the homeless & vulnerably housed people and was officially opened by Joanna Trollop in January 2003.

GEAR – Helping the Homeless.

<http://www.calameo.com/read/0000771987f3ad1ae0d3f>

The Garden Project was dedicated as a memorial garden by the Bishop of Gloucester