

OCTOBER MEETING

“Ending Homelessness” Dover Outreach Centre’s Approach

A talk by Noel Beamish

Reported by Terry Sutton

Our society held its first face-to-face public meeting, after months of only Zoom get-togethers, in October 2021, when Noel Beamish was our guest speaker. The meeting, unexpectedly well-attended, was held as usual at St Mary’s parish centre. We went home with the realisation that Dovorian Noel Beamish is a really remarkable organiser and leader.

Noel, a former chairman of Christians Together in Dover, makes no bones of the fact that he believes God told him to give up a well-paid career in order to serve the poor, the homeless and those in need. “The Bible calls us to do so,” explains Noel.

In his mission to help the needy he played the major role in opening, at St Paul’s RC church, a daily drop in centre where rough sleepers were offered facilities such as showers, free phones, a postal address, and navigation to other social agencies.

From this enterprise sprang up Outreach Enterprises, offering painting and decorating services locally. Since this enterprise began, about £250,000 of work on forty properties has been completed.

From this social work, Noel and his team, with the co-operation of Dover churches, provided night shelters for three to four winter months. This took rough sleepers off the cold, winter night-time streets, with up to fifteen receiving hot meals and a warm place to sleep.

Still expanding this outreach work, Noel and a team of volunteers opened the Sunrise (community) Cafe in Snargate Street which is open to all with the slogan that you pay what you can afford for your meals and beverages. If you generously offer a little extra payment, the excess helps those who are unable to afford the publicised very reasonable prices.

Physically linked with Sunrise Cafe, in a former Snargate Street shipwrecked mariners’ hostel, Noel and his team have taken a lease on the complete property which provides seventeen single-occupational flats, with those living there on a two-year licence to remain.

Still expanding, Noel and the charity is now looking to obtain access to a property, possibly a new build, to provide a home with around twenty spaces for those previously homeless. Noel revealed his team is engaged in talks with St Paul’s RC Church - for use of land they own - and with a local developer to further this next stage in his work to serve the poor and needy.



Sunrise Cafe and Outreach Centre, Snargate Street