

What is *The Guest House*?

Each night, dozens of people in Colchester are sleeping rough. They have no home to go to, no roof to sleep under, and very little to protect them from the cold and the wet of the winter.

This winter, St Peter's Church are making available their Church Hall. Ideally situated in the Town Centre, with space for up to a dozen rough-sleepers, the Hall will be the venue for this winter's *St Peter's Guest House Project*.

The idea is to welcome those in need, to serve them a hot meal, to spend time getting to know them, to seek to help them in ways appropriate to their needs, to offer them a comfortable and safe bed for the night, and then to offer them a warm breakfast in the morning.

In other words, the idea is to treat them like guests.

Beacon House are partnering with St Peter's to make this possible. Based on East Hill, Beacon House have years of experience in supporting and helping the homeless. Those seeking help must register for a bed at Beacon House. There is no direct access to the *Guest House*, and only those who have registered will be admitted.

The Guest House will open its doors again on Thursday 14th December, and remain open until the end of February 2018.



FAQs

What about the Night Shelter?

The Night Shelter in Alexandra Terrace can't provide shelter for everyone. *The Guest House* will supplement the Night Shelter provision through the worst of the winter.

Isn't this quite dangerous?

We don't take anything for granted, but there will be training from Beacon House and careful assessment of risk. To be on the safe side, volunteers have to be over-18.

How many volunteers do you need?

Hundreds, probably. But we already have a mailing list of about 90. It will all depend on how much help each volunteer can offer.

Can I just turn up and help out?

No. To ensure the safety of both our guests and our volunteers, it is important that everybody is trained and vetted before serving on the team. The doors will be locked each night for security.

Do you have to be a Christian to be involved?

No. Anyone is welcome to join with us. You don't need to be a professing Christian, although we would expect you to be sympathetic to our values and ethos.

Do I have to do the whole night?

No, although we're hoping some will! Any help on any shift will be highly valued.

How can I get involved?

Easily. Just ring or email to express your interest (see over for contact details).

Isn't this just a drop in the ocean?

Yes. But the ocean will be smaller because of that missing drop.

How could I be involved?

There are a number of opportunities to be involved.

VOLUNTEER AS A TEAM MEMBER

Each night, we are looking for a team of at least four adults to staff the *Guest House*. Perhaps you could volunteer as a team member (and maybe with friends!) for:

- 👤 for **the evening shift** (6:30-9:30pm)?
- 👤 or for **the night shift** (9:30pm-7am)?
- 👤 or for **the morning shift** (7-9am)?
- 👤 or even **a whole night**?

VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH CATERING

Each evening, we will serve a hot meal - and the volunteers and the guests eat together. We will need volunteers who can provide a hot meal for 12-16 people, to be delivered to the Church Hall soon after 6:15pm.

VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH ADMINISTRATION

If you could offer some time to help with the administration of the *Guest House Project*, we would love to hear from you.



How could I be a partner?

PARTNER WITH US IN PRAYER

All that we do will need to be supported in prayer, and perhaps you might commit to pray for us. Specific prayer needs will be circulated regularly; to be included in this list, please send your email address to thestpetersguesthouseproject@gmail.com

PARTNER WITH US FINANCIALLY

Although the majority of the costs are being met by St Peter's Church and by Beacon House, inevitably there are further costs. Perhaps you could give towards the *Guest House Project*.

📧 **online:** bank transfer to St Peter's PCC, Santander Bank, sort code 09-01-54, account 36051087; referenced *Guest House Project*.

📧 **cheque:** make payable to 'St Peters PCC should be marked *Guest House Project* and sent to the Vicarage, Balmerne Close, Colchester, CO1 1NZ.

PARTNER WITH US PROMOTIONALLY

We rely on volunteer support, so perhaps you could promote this Project. Perhaps you could let people at your church, in your workplace, at your local school, or in your local shops know what is going on...



VOLUNTEER TRAINING SESSIONS

We ask all volunteers to attend one of the Training Sessions in advance of helping out with the Project. As well as explaining how the *Guest House Project* works, these sessions are an ideal opportunity to deal with safeguarding issues, talk about best practice, and to share tips.

Please choose whichever date is most convenient:

Monday 27th November, at 7:30pm

Tuesday 5th December, at 7:30pm

Wednesday 13th December, at 7:30pm

Sunday 14th January, at 5:30pm

Each Volunteer Training Session will be in the Hall on North Hill where the *Guest House* takes place, and will last approximately one hour.

THANKSGIVING SERVICE & CELEBRATION LUNCH

We are hoping to hold a Thanksgiving Service and Celebration Lunch at the conclusion of the *Guest House Project*. This is being planned for Sunday 4th March, but further details will be made available to all volunteers and supporters nearer the time.

The *Guest House Project* is organised jointly by Beacon House and St Peter's Church. For further information about these organisations, contact:

Beacon House 01206 761960
@BeaconHouseUK
office@beaconhouseministries.org.uk

St Peter's Church 01206 572529
@StPeter's_CO11DZ
towncentreparrishoffice@gmail.com



The St Peter's Guest House Project

December 2017 to February 2018

St Peter's Church Hall
North Hill, Colchester, CO1 1DZ

starting Thursday 14th December

#GuestHouseProject
thestpetersguesthouseproject@gmail.com