

40th Anniversary



The Cyrenians recently marked forty years of supporting local people affected by homelessness by holding an all staff event exactly forty years to the week when the first meeting of the organisation was held in 1968.

The event took place at The Albyn Bar in the city centre and colleagues from projects, head office, members of the Council of Management and some

volunteers came along and enjoyed the evening which included dancing, a buffet, birthday cake and a raffle.

These achievements of the organisation were acknowledged in speeches by Chairperson Jeremy Burchill, Chief Executive Paul Hannan and Director of Residential Services Susan Montgomerie. All of whom thanked staff for their hard work and constant dedication to the organisation.



The staff team enjoying the evening.

Project Focus: Wernham House



Wernham House provides long term residential care for up to eighteen men and women who have considerable alcohol dependency issues. The project has led the way in providing a tolerant 'wet' house approach to meeting the needs of this group of homeless men and women.

People who are referred to Wernham House usually have a

proven difficulty in maintaining any form of housing. This has traditionally been older people who receive excellent long term support and accommodation which is tailored to their individual needs.

However since the closure of Aberdeen City Council's Direct Access Hostel there has been a rise in referrals from a much younger age group. Therefore the support provided has developed to meet this change.

These residents do not stay at Wernham House long term, instead they are encouraged to adopt a more controlled attitude to alcohol dependency which

Iceberg Arts

The Cyrenians' first ever social enterprise is going from strength to strength in its first few months of operation.

Iceberg Arts was nominated for an award in this year's *Grampian Awards for Business Enterprise* and has been short listed under the *Alick Buchanan Smith Spirit of Enterprise Award*. This is an excellent achievement for the new social enterprise.

Iceberg Arts offers excellent service and produces high quality work within the print and design industry and is working with people affected by homelessness to improve their employability skills and to help them move on.

For more information or to discuss print and design work please contact 01224 622027 or info@iceberg-arts.co.uk.

eventually enables them to move on to an environment that provides minimal support and allows them to live as independently as possible.

Wernham House is staffed twenty-four hours a day. Three meals a day are provided by two job share cooks, however if a resident doesn't want to have the meal that is planned then the cook can offer an alternative if enough prior notice is given.

This last year has been particularly difficult for Wernham House as two long term residents, who were supported at the project, recently succumbed to terminal illnesses. Nonetheless the Wernham team continues to provide the same high quality of care and support for all residents, a detail highlighted by the Care Commission at the last inspection.

The Cyrenian

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Funding Crisis hits The Cyrenians

The Cyrenians funding is to be cut by around £900,000 as Aberdeen City Council tries to balance its books with cuts in services totalling £27m.

Such a cut, representing around 28% of the funding from the Council, will have a devastating effect on the range of services the Cyrenians will be able to provide in the coming year.

It is envisaged that 4 projects will have to close and three of these are likely to be residential accommodation projects. These closures will result in around 30 staff being made redundant.

Paul Hannan, Chief Executive said, "We appreciate that the Council has financial problems but surely the most vulnerable

people in our city are not the ones who should be paying the price. Such a move does not make sense at any time but less so when the situation for homeless people is getting worse. These services are an absolute lifeline for many vulnerable people, they will be left without a roof over their heads and no-one to care for them".

The Cyrenians has taken the view that we have a moral obligation to ensure that the needs of homeless people or those affected by homelessness are met and we will be robust with regard to that objective. We believe that the intention to withdraw vital services to vulnerable people is morally unjust.

We are trying to have further discussions with Aberdeen City Council to see if they are prepared to withdraw the intended cuts or to substantially reduce these cuts.

You can help by:

- Talking to, or writing to, your councillor
- Signing the e-petition
- Joining the "No cuts" march on 5th April
- Joining our city centre protest from 1st April

Details of each of these actions will follow on our website shortly.

www.aberdeen-cyrenians.org

Contact

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Coming Up

Sleepout Awards
19th March 2008

Business Dinner
3rd July 2008

Thomas Ball
4th Oct 2008

Text 2 Donate

Text HOME to 82540 to
make a £3 donation to

The Cyrenians

Sleepout 2008

A Great Success!

The annual Sleepout at the AECC was a great success. Our thanks go to the 700 people who took part (raising close to £30,000).

Participants came from all over the north east and included family groups, individuals, community groups and 12 North East schools.

Competitions, including the best dressed hot water bottle and the best sleeping area were contested with wonderful enthusiasm and a special mention has to go to the young people at Torry Academy who designed and built a boat – not a bad idea considering the rain that night!

Another special mention must go to the *Dirty Weekenders* at Aberdeen University who stayed outside all night, despite the heavy rain soaking their cardboard sleeping area and clothes.

As always the event raised awareness about homeless people. Even though there were games, dancing, food and hot drinks, everyone agreed that rough sleeping is no fun and everyone deserves the warmth and security of their own home.

Our thanks also go to the Cyrenians' clients and staff who also supported the event by giving up their free time to participate in and assist with

the running of it.

Fundraising & Communications Manager, Amy Grant said "*This year's Sleepout was another brilliant success. We were absolutely delighted at the volume of people who turned up on the night to support the Cyrenians*".



Briony Keith, Kathryn Lords & Karen McDonald enjoy Sleepout

New Cyrenians DVD



A new short-film about the Cyrenians has been created. The DVD shows a series of clients, former clients and staff being interviewed and discussing their experiences with the organisation.

Created specifically for the Cyrenians by 2 students from The Robert Gordon University the film sees interviews with clients from a wide age range who have been supported by the organisation in various ways.



RGU students Lindsay Stott & Steven Bedford who produced the DVD

Business Dinner



The First Minister, Alex Salmond, has shown more support for the Cyrenians by committing to attend and speak at the Cyrenians' 3rd annual Business Dinner.

The event takes place at the **Marcliffe Hotel & Spa** on **Thursday 3rd July 2008**. Tickets and more information are available from the fundraising department.

Interview: Scott Baxter



Scott Baxter, Director of Community Services, gave this interview about his interesting career.

What is your career background? My first job was as a nursing auxiliary carrying out general hospital duties and taking care of older people with mental health issues. In 1990 I gained my qualification in nursing and specialised in mental health working at The Royal Cornhill Hospital within the field of acute psychiatry. Mental health was an area that interested me after a school friend took his life because of mental health related issues.

I left the health service in 1994 to work for a voluntary organisation, managing projects that help people move out of hospital.

In 2000 I went to work for a private company, again setting up and developing services for people with profound physical and learning disabilities.

Why The Cyrenians? I had been a member of the Friends Committee when I first came to Aberdeen and I knew a lot of people who worked with the Cyrenians. I'm interested in working with people who have ended up in a situation where they need support. I am especially determined to work with people who have been 'written off' by other services or become socially excluded - we all deserve chances in life, at different times and in various measures.

What does your job entail? I'm responsible for all non-residential projects, ensuring that they run as smoothly as

possible and providing support to manager and staff.

I look at the provisions we offer and consider opportunities to improve our service. I have a lot of contact with other agencies and I believe that it is important that we develop and work together, that way we can ensure people are referred to the right service for their needs.

I'm involved with a range of activities representing the Cyrenians such as drug rehabilitation and other health related strategies. I try to influence attitudes and cultures in relation to working with us or our clients. I also advise on setting up social enterprises and facilitating flows of people through various employment opportunities and employability training.

What are the pros & cons? The pros are that I get to meet many amazing people and a great sense of achievement when people reach their goals. The biggest con is the paper work.

How would you like to see your role develop? I'd also like to see more agencies willing to work in partnership with us.

The Scottish Wild Cats



Jacqui Chree, Depute Manager at the Summer Street Project, took to the water for the first time to co-pilot a *Zapcat*, a Grand Prix power boat. JC went for a thrilling ride around Cruden Bay harbour whilst holding on tight as the 50 horse-powered engine reached speeds of up to 2 'G's! "*It was such a buzz*" she said. "*I've*

never done anything like this before."

The Scottish Wild Cats launched the *Zapcat* as a permanent extreme sports activity in Cruden Bay.

JC was invited to take part by the management team behind The Scottish Wild Cats who have pledged to support the Cyrenians by donating a whole weekend's worth of takings to the organisation. The Cyrenians are extremely grateful for this support.

Thomas Ball

The 8th annual Thomas Ball takes place at the **Ardoe House Hotel** on **Sat 4th October**.

Tickets and more information are available from the fundraising department.

The event consists of a ceilidh dance, a four course meal, charity auction and the traditional *Skite the pound*.

This is an important event in our fundraising calendar and we look forward to another successful year.