

## Our History

### **The History**

Sandra Allen started the group in 1991 with a soup run touring the centre of Fareham late at night. This transferred to the old United Reformed Church in 1995, where it became a focal point for the homeless in the area and enabled us to be more effective in the help that we could provide. We moved to the Kings Road Assembly Hall in 1998, which was used for a number of temporary night shelters over the Christmas and New Year period supported by funding from Crisis, another Charity supporting homeless people.

This provided a temporary respite for people sleeping rough where they could have a “virtual” family Christmas with some of the people they had come to know from the drop-in.

Another Charity at that time working with the homeless was St Petroc. They operated a centre called Mill House in Portsmouth near St Mary’s Hospital and had a lot of experience of operating a direct access hostel with full time staff. They saw and heard about what we were doing and became very interested to see whether they could work alongside us. This developed into a permanent night shelter being opened at Kings Road, Fareham.

St Petroc provided the full time staff and funding to run the night shelter whilst we continued to provide two meals a day. This proved to be a successful recipe and with funding from a housing association developed into the new 24 hour hostel on the corner of Mill Road and Gosport Road by Fareham Creek. This is a purpose built centre with sixteen beds in individual rooms and staffed full time by Two Saints. Sandra Allen’s original vision for a hostel in this area became a reality after just 14 years. With Two Saints now running the hostel on their own, FROTH needed a new focus.

One of the volunteers suggested a visit to a Charity called SCRATCH in Southampton. They operate from a number of buildings across the city, providing much needed help to people in crisis. Very quickly it was decided to see if there was a need for a similar service in this area and The Fareham and Gosport Basics Bank was born as a project operated by FROTH. Using food and toiletries donated by the local churches, schools and individuals in the area, FROTH adopted the same process used by SCRATCH. Vouchers are now available from some eighty organisations which come into contact with people in need. The organisation passes on the voucher, which is then exchanged by the Basics Bank for food and other items.

We started by working out of people’s homes. However, this quickly proved to be very impractical and a search was made for a place to operate from. The Basics Bank moved into Aspect House in the centre of Fareham in January 2004 and opened a similar facility in Gosport. Since then we have provided food, toiletries, clothing and nappies to over 25,000 people with a significant and regrettable upturn since 2010.

The Charity aims to provide practical help in a welcoming, caring environment where each person is valued and respected as an individual, to encourage and assist homeless people in their search for accommodation and work in this area, to work in partnership with other organisations, both statutory and voluntary, to improve facilities of the homeless and other people in need in this area and to raise awareness of the problems many have to face, in order to effect positive change.