



King's Lynn Night Shelter Impact Report 2024-25

The Rt Rev'd Jane Steen, Bishop of Lynn, our Patron, writes:

Welcome to the 2024-25 Night Shelter Impact Report, and thank you for your support and for the interest you take in the Night Shelter's work. It is a truism to say that this has been another year of opportunity and challenge – but none the less true for that. The opportunity to serve those whose lives are not as they would hope, has continued, and we do not see the need for Night Shelter ebbing away. The opportunity too to see the fantastic team of staff and volunteers working so hard and well together has been very good, and it is a source of great encouragement to see staff continuing with us year on year. The principal challenge to the Night Shelter undoubtedly remains financial so please let me encourage you to support fundraising and donate in any way that you can.

Above all, though, the Night Shelter remains an expression of the witness and care of people of goodwill and people of faith in King's Lynn and beyond. Do, therefore, continue to pray for the Night Shelter, and to wish Lucy and her team well as I am sure they will do for you.

Nick Coleman, Chair of Trustees, writes:

We look back with immense pride and pleasure on our first year of being open and available to offer our resources to the homeless of West Norfolk, 24/7, 12 months of the year, carrying forward our charitable objectives. I am very grateful to all those who have made our work possible: the volunteers, the staff, led by the Director, Lucy, all of whom have worked tirelessly with, it seems, the most dedication and the minimum of fuss to help the homeless.

I believe we have laid a very strong foundation which will assist our drive to raise the necessary funds to achieve our next target which is to extend the accommodation at the Night Shelter. Homelessness does not seem to abate and it lurks - sometimes unseen. We must do all we can to help those who need our help, whether it be a bed or simply advice and sustenance.

I want to express my grateful thanks to all those who have given to our Charity. Your generosity has been outstanding. We express our fervent hope that you will continue to believe, as we do, that the King's Lynn Night Shelter is a force for good.

A guest writes:

Lovely staff, always clean, always food available. This place is heaven sent!

The images in this year's report are scenes taken from the Night Shelter's immediate local area. St John's House is in a beautiful part of King's Lynn, next to the Walks and with its own large garden. The park benches in the images however serve as a reminder that without the Night Shelter, our guests might be sleeping there instead.

From the Director

On 30th September 2025 the Night Shelter had been open year-round for the first time, welcoming a total of 69 guests to stay. This figure is more than twice the number we welcomed in eight months the previous year, and demonstrates the continuing need for emergency accommodation in West Norfolk where adults experiencing homelessness can come, by self-referral or referral from other professionals, and find safety, welcome, a room of their own 24/7, and support to find a home of their own.

The cover image of this year's Report is taken from the Night Shelter's new logo, introduced to celebrate this milestone in our work, with an image of the green front door at St John' House: now "green" and open for our guests year-round. It's a reflection also of our continued support "at the door" to people homeless or vulnerably housed who are waiting for a room, or coming in need of other help: in the last year we've supported nearly 300 people in this way, with hot drinks and food, sleeping bags, phone charging or landline to use, referrals to help elsewhere, and a listening ear. We're the only facility in West Norfolk providing this service, and our green front door keeps us busy!

The Night Shelter takes seriously the need to listen to our guests, to others who have been homeless among our staff and volunteers, and to voices from similar projects elsewhere in the country as well as from national organisations such as Housing Justice and Homeless Link, and to use their insights to inform our work. The one change which our guests have consistently asked for has been year-round opening, and their lived experience has taught us that homelessness is traumatic and hugely risky at any time of year. It is good to have been able to respond.

The Night Shelter receives no local or national Government funding. We are able to support our guests to claim Housing Benefit to cover around a third of our costs, but the remainder we must source each year from grant funding, from local fundraising, and from individual donations. We are the only Charity providing emergency accommodation in West Norfolk, and the simple fact is that we depend on our community to recognise the need and to help us do this.

In the coming year we will be starting work on the second phase of the St John's House Project to extend our building and increase the capacity of St John's House by a third. In 2024-25 we accommodated 69 out of a total of 160 people who asked to come and stay: with your help, our green front door will be open for more of them, and will continue to stay open.

Focus on ... partnership working

The Night Shelter works throughout the year with other local organisations in the area to support our guests, to find help for their needs, and to support safety and best practice in every aspect of our work. We particularly value our work with local police and probation services, with the safeguarding team at the Diocese of Norwich, and with staff involved in harm reduction in substance misuse at Change Grow Live.

Our guests continue to come to us with a variety of complex needs: mental and physical health difficulties, alcohol or drug addiction, debt, involvement with the criminal justice system, experiences of financial or sexual exploitation, violence or abuse. Many are grieving the loss of family or a relationship; others are unable to spend time with or take care of their children. All will have experienced trauma including the trauma of finding themselves homeless with nowhere safe to stay.

The Night Shelter seeks to provide a safe, welcoming “home” environment which values our guests for who they are. Being “trauma-informed” involves both a recognition both of the need to provide a service which avoids compounding past trauma, and of how their past may affect our guests’ response to the present day.

What do our colleagues say?

The Operational Partnership Team values its strong working relationship with King's Lynn Night Shelter. Our weekly meetings ensure that those accessing the service receive coordinated and effective support.

Amy Attlesey, West Norfolk Operational Partnership Team (OPT), Norfolk Police

This year, the Night Shelter has accommodated three individuals currently under my direct supervision. Without this provision, each of them would have faced street homelessness, which would have significantly increased their risk of harm and disengagement. The shelter staff have consistently demonstrated a proactive, solution-focused approach. They work with a clear 'can-do' attitude, actively supporting individuals to assist them meeting the objectives of their sentence. This includes placing appointments in their diaries, reminding them of statutory responsibilities and encouraging engagement with services. Staff are also quick to identify and report any emerging risk factors, helping to ensure that concerns are addressed early. They play a key role in coordinating with partner agencies, promoting attendance, and supporting individuals to adhere to agreed plans. Their collaborative and positive approach has been instrumental in stabilising these cases and reducing risk.

Richard Johnson, King's Lynn Probation Service

A year-round opportunity

This year's change to year-round opening has also brought an opportunity for the Night Shelter to be more involved in multi-agency conversations around homelessness in the area, including participation in the working groups set up by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk as part of the new Homelessness Strategy. The groups have focussed on homelessness prevention, accommodation provision and ongoing support, as well as the involvement of lived experience in strategic planning and service delivery, and the “By Name” focus group which looks at the needs of individuals identified by the organisations involved as being furthest from having their housing needs sustainably met. We are grateful to be able to contribute year-round to these discussions and to look together for ways to support some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

At the same time, year-round contracts have proved valuable for retention and development of our staff team, and it's been good to see two of our staff achieve the new NVQ in Providing Homelessness Services through the Chartered Institute for Housing: the first professional qualification aimed at night shelter workers, covering aspects of homelessness legislation as well as an in-depth look at best practice in the work we do. A further two colleagues are studying for the qualification in the coming year and we are grateful to the St Martin in the Fields Charity for their contribution to the course fees. Full team training days with Homeless Link on trauma informed working, and on managing conflict and aggression, have provided valuable opportunities to spend time together learning as a team.

What do our guests say?

Was the Night Shelter what you were expecting? *No, I'd live here if I could.*

What helped you feel welcome, safe and valued here? *People saying “You're safe here mate we'll look after you,” repeatedly.*

What help or support did the staff give you? *They helped me get into a Purfleet house within a week and were fun and chilled to chat with too.*

...a guest, aged 20. The Night Shelter has successfully referred 12 of our guests to move-on supported accommodation with Sanctuary Housing and the Purfleet Trust (8 and 4 guests respectively) this year. Referrals are coordinated through an accommodation partnership set up by the Borough Council, which meets weekly to discuss individuals in emergency accommodation and their ongoing support needs.

Focus on ... intensive support

The Night Shelter's two intensive support staff work across a seven-day week to offer one-to-one support to our guests. They help with tasks such as registering with a GP, making and attending appointments, and obtaining mental health support; with benefits, ID and debt; with accessing help recovering from substance misuse; with referrals to supported housing, joining the local housing register, and looking for privately rented accommodation. We asked them to share with us their thoughts about their work.

What do you think is the most valuable support we give to our guests as a whole staff team?

Working as a team helps us see the whole person. Each team member has different gifts, and we all come together to support the needs of our guests.

It takes all of us working together to help our guests find their own home, with their own front door key.

What do you think one-to-one intensive support gives to our guests?

It gives our guests time with the focus on them, to foster a relationship, build trust, and help us move forward together. We give our guests the opportunity to be as independent as possible but they need a lot of encouragement sometimes to focus. We may open up opportunities they hadn't thought of for themselves. Guests can come to us with questions, and we help them find the answers.

We can be an emotional support too when paperwork and form-filling becomes overwhelming; we've learned how traumatic it can be to keep providing the same information, or to have to give a 6-year address history for the local housing register when you've experienced domestic violence in your last home, or you've spent the last 6 years with no home and trying to keep going, staying with friends.

We help our guests feel they have a say in their future. Very often they know what they need or what they want but they don't know how to express it, or feel they deserve it.

We engage with our guests at whatever place they're at, working alongside them, not telling them what to do. We will be serious if we need to be. We can also make it fun!

How do our shift staff and intensive support staff work together to help our guests?

The Night Shelter staff team shares information collectively as a team. This is very helpful because for example staff on the early shift can remind guests about the day's appointments and help them feel ready, and night staff may have more time to be a "listening ear" for a guest who is needing to talk.

What does effective partnership working with other local agencies look like?

Meeting together and discussing our guests with transparency and openness to help move their situation forward. The opportunity to refer guests into next stage accommodation, after we've helped bring them to a point when they're ready to move on.

We see a different side to our guests sometimes, especially if they're already well known to other services or have a complicated past. Being able to offer a "home" environment at the Night Shelter where guests feel safe is a big part of this, and helps us to advocate for them when needed, and tell the other side of the story. Everyone's story deserves to be heard.

What would you want to tell our friends and supporters about your work?

That's an easy one. Our work just wouldn't exist if everyone didn't come together to make the Night Shelter possible.

And from one of our guests: *They gave me support with everything from looking for work to housing. They gave good advice, or sometimes just listened. They even searched for activities for things for me to do with my children. It made me feel happier in myself as I realised I wasn't at the end of the road. which gave me hope for my future.*





Do you have a room for me? ... our response

In November 2021 the Night Shelter heard the devastating news that the body of an RAF veteran who had asked us for a room on Remembrance Sunday two days before, had been found in the neighbouring garden at St John's Church. His death aged 43 from hypothermia reached the national newspapers with striking photographs from his military career including carrying the coffin of Diana Princess of Wales from the flight which brought her body home from Paris in 1997. Very sadly his death as a rough sleeper however was not unusual; in 2024, 1611 people died while homeless in the UK (Museum of Homelessness figures, released October 2025).

Preventing deaths among rough sleepers needs all agencies involved in their support to work together, including local authorities, health services, and others they may approach for support. At the same time, the Night Shelter asked ourselves what else we could do as a Charity: and we determined that if at all possible we would increase the number of rooms at the Night Shelter so that we can say "Yes" more often to people who come to our door.

The first phase of the **"St John's House Project"** took place in the summer of 2024, adding a further toilet and shower within the existing building, preparing electrical wiring and the CCTV to cover a larger space, and making another room available for a guest. The second phase, an extension to the house which will increase capacity at St John's House by a third, begins in November 2025.

The Night Shelter needs to raise around £130,000 to complete this work. This fundraising is in addition to our running costs of around £350,000 per year, and as always we will be dependent on the generosity of our supporters and friends, alongside potential grant funding, both to finish construction and to support our running costs. Once completed, the additional rooms will pay for the extension in two or three years, as our income from Housing Benefit will increase by up to a third alongside the increase in the number of guests.

We warmly welcome support. Every individual who comes to our green front door is a person of value, in need of safety and help: a mother, a father, a son or daughter, a friend. Most of our guests are unable to access emergency accommodation anywhere else. The Night Shelter's green front door may be the difference for them between survival, or not.

Did the Night Shelter make a difference to how you felt about yourself, or your future?

Without the Night Shelter, without exaggerating, I probably would not be here now.

A guest



From our volunteers

The Night Shelter has around 60 volunteers, who between them provide invaluable support to the staff team in welcoming and caring for our guests. Our volunteers are aged 18-80+ and come to us with all kinds of backgrounds and skills: the only qualification needed is an interest in homelessness and some time to give to discovering more! All volunteers complete a simple application form, with details of two referees, and attend an initial information evening (held on advertised dates throughout the year) which includes basic safeguarding training.

Over the last year our volunteers have given their time day by day and week by week: in the morning on the breakfast shift, in the evenings preparing a hot meal for our guests, and (crucially for a Night Shelter!) offering occasional support overnight. It's up to our volunteers which shifts they work (and how often) and we encourage them to chat with guests and to be a "listening ear" – they make St John's House a home.

We asked our volunteers about their experiences:

What have you most enjoyed about volunteering at the Night Shelter? Volunteering gives me so much. Meeting new people, a sense of belonging, self-respect and (probably most rewarding) the feeling that you are helping others • I've loved working there. I've not yet met a volunteer I haven't really liked and have particularly enjoyed getting to know the Thursday evening team • I enjoy being part of a team making something useful happen. I enjoy the achievement of turning out a meal even when it's a challenge. I like it when there's the sound of conversation in the next room and guests appreciating each other's company.

Have you felt welcomed and supported in your role? I've always felt very welcome, appreciated and part of the 'team' • I do feel welcomed and supported, all the staff are friendly and helpful. If there's any turbulence the staff always handle it with confidence.

What do you feel you have contributed to our work together? I feel that every volunteer brings different skills and we all contribute in many ways. I'll help in any way that I can.

What do you think is the most valuable help we give to our guests? Accepting people as they are at the point in their lives they're at • I think the most valuable thing we do aside from cook when I've been on duty is to spend time listening, which I hope is humanising for the guests, as I know quite often homeless people are passed by without any notice in the streets.

Could this be you? see our website www.knightshelter.org.uk/volunteer or contact us for dates of our next planned information evenings.

A voice in the community

Since its beginning in 2017 the Night Shelter has been keen to engage with opportunities to share news of our work in the local community, to promote understanding of homelessness and what it involves, and to encourage support for our work. In the last year we are grateful to have participated in the following events:

In **October**, a fundraising Harvest Supper at All Saints South Lynn, and a fundraising and awareness day at Sainsbury's Hardwick Road • in **December**, a day of carol singing in King's Lynn High Street with Churches Together, and in December and June, visits to the Rosebery School for young people excluded from mainstream education • in **January**, an "Evening with Call the Midwife" at King's Lynn Guildhall with stars from the BBC show and sponsored by King's Lynn Priory Rotary, participation in the annual Peace and Justice Forum organised by King's Lynn Churches Together, and Caritas East Anglia regional festival • in **February**, a talk with the Women's Institute in Southery • in **March**, participation in a careers event at the College of West Anglia, and a talk at a film night in Great Massingham • in **April**, a talk with local Guide leaders • in **May**, a visit to spend time with their students with the Developing Learners class • in **June**, a talk with King's Lynn Probus Club • in **July**, talks at Swaffham Baptist Church and Cornerstone Barroway Drove, a day of fundraising and engagement at Sandringham Flower Show sponsored by two local businesses, and an engagement day at the Poco Lounge in King's Lynn • in **August**, two engagement days at the Yard in Ely • in **September**, an engagement day at Thaxters Garden Centre in Dersingham, and visits to Year 10 and Year 11 classes of Health and Social Care students at the CWA ...

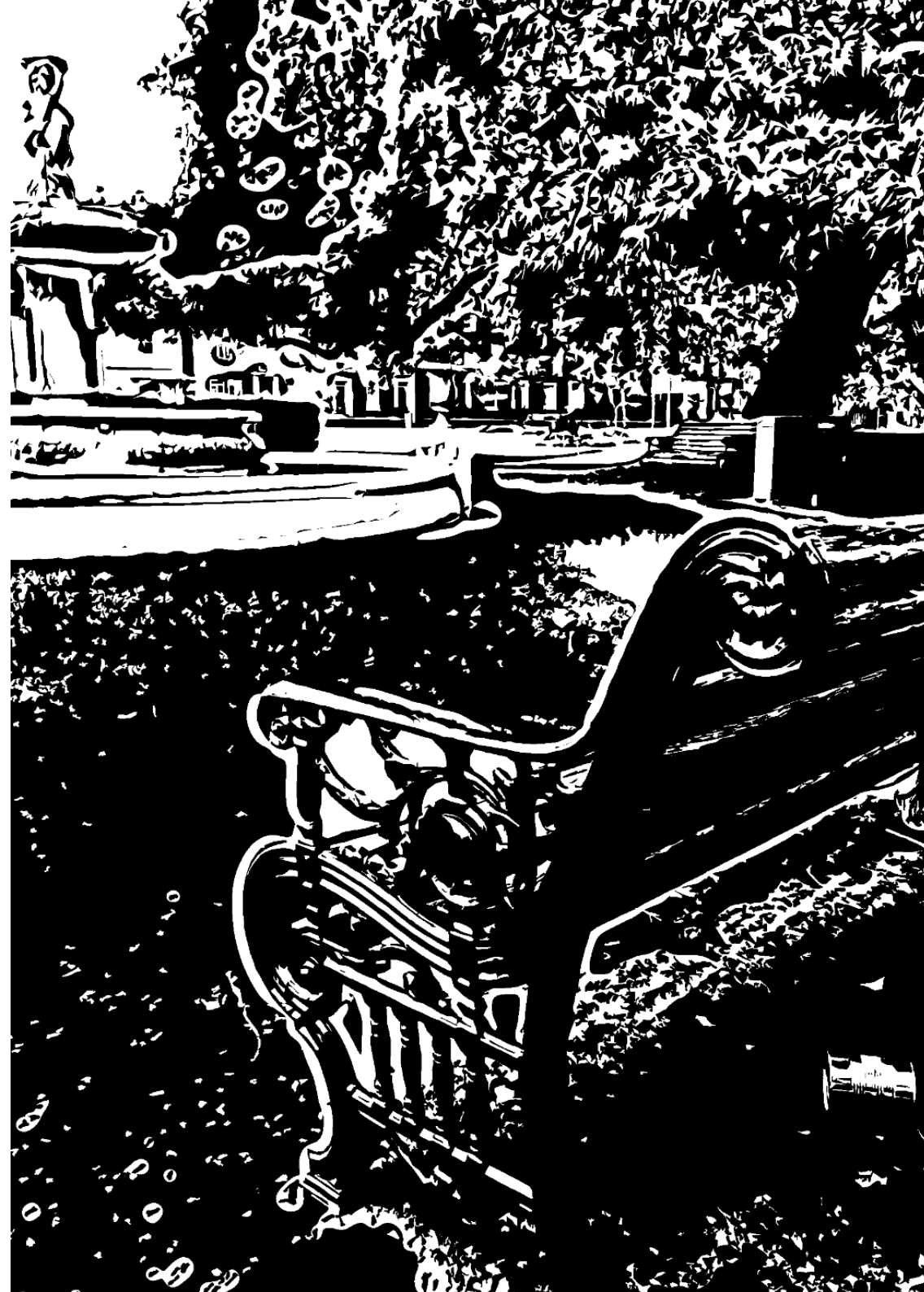
Why does being homeless make people vulnerable? ... is the question we often ask on our school visits, with community groups, and talking with new volunteers. The answers we receive are a huge encouragement to us, and demonstrate that compassion and understanding can be found in every part of our community and especially among our young people. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to share our guests' stories with them.

What do our teachers say?

Thank you so much for coming and doing a talk today. The children found it very informative.

I just wanted to drop you a message to thank you again for taking the time to talk to the students. I think it is really important to make them think about people less fortunate, especially at this time of year. If even one young person has become more aware, we have been successful.

The Rosebery School



Becoming part of our work

The Night Shelter currently receives **no national or local Government funding**.

Around a third of our budgeted income for 2025-26 is Housing Benefit. The rest of our funding has to be sourced from grants, fundraising and donations ... West Norfolk has a Night Shelter only because a great many people make it all possible!

Could you be a Friend? The **Friends of the Night Shelter** give a regular amount (any amount!) each month. You'll receive two newsletters a year, and an invitation to our annual "Thank You Party" as a mark of our appreciation and a chance to meet with staff, volunteers and guests. Follow the link on this page to sign up, or contact us for a standing order form: www.klnightshelter.org.uk/donate

Are you part of **a community group, a church, a school**? We can come to you ... let us know if you'd like us to come and talk about homelessness and what we do, maybe as part of a fundraiser or special collection. We like questions!

Could your workplace be a **Community Partner**? You might like to help by donating services or products to help with the running or maintenance of the Night Shelter, or by organising a fundraiser or event ... we're always happy to chat about ideas!



With warmest thanks to ...

Access Migrant Support * All Saints Briston * All Saints High Kelling * All Saints Narborough * All Saints South Lynn * Baltica * Brewers Decorator Centres * Chelsea Square 1994 Trust * College of West Anglia * The Community of All Hallows * The Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield * Computers 4 Charity * Contours Beauty * 9th Cubs King's Lynn * Dersingham Methodist Church * Domino's * Downham Foodbank * Downham Market Methodist Church * East Coast Storage * Fakenham Ukes * The Farthing Trust * Forever Green Flower Company * Foresters Friendly Society * The Francis Friends * Fruit and Veg 4U * Fulmodeston Methodist Chapel * The Geoffrey Watling Charity * The Griffin Federation * 1st Gayton Guides * Guy Raymond Engineering * Hughes Electrical * Hunstanton Bridge Club * Ian Collison Cut Flowers * The King's Arms, Shouldham * King's Lynn Catholic Parish * King's Lynn Church of the Nazarene * King's Lynn Evangelical Church * King's Lynn Methodist Church * King's Lynn Rotary * King's Lynn Priory Rotary * King's Lynn Seventh Day Adventist Church * King's Lynn Trinity Rotary * Knights of St Columba * Krusty Loaf * Lynnsport * M&S King's Lynn * Massingham Film Night * The Mercers Company * Morrisons King's Lynn * Norfolk Community Foundation Love Norfolk Fund * Philanthropic Art Lodges * Pilgrims * Poco Lounge * Pott Row Methodist Church * Priory of Our Lady of Walsingham * Radio West Norfolk * The Rosebery School * Sainsbury's Community Fund * St Andrew Congham * St Andrew Holt * St Anthony's Catholic Church Fakenham * St Dominic Catholic Church, Downham Market * St Faith Gaywood * St James the Great Castle Acre * St John Terrington * St John's Church in the Walks * St Lawrence Castle Rising * St Mary Anmer * St Mary Burnham Deepdale * St Mary Heacham * St Mary the Virgin Sedgeford * St Mary Snettisham * St Mary South Wootton * St Mary Walsingham * St Mary West Winch * St Maurice Briningham * St Nicholas Ashill * St Nicholas Dersingham * St Nicholas Friendship Group Dersingham * Ss Peter and Paul Swaffham * St Peter West Lynn * Sedgeford Village Hall * Shouldham Ladybirds * Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham staff team * The Social Change * Southery Women's Institute * Southgates Medical Centre * Sprigs and Blooms * Springwood High School * Swaffham Baptist Church * Thaxters Dersingham * Trundley Design * West Norfolk Catenian Association * XR West Norfolk * The Yard, Ely * Your Local Paper

... and to the nine local families who have supported us at the funerals of loved ones this year; to our volunteers, trustees, staff team, and to our many individual supporters and friends.

They cheered me up and made me feel happy.

A guest, who very sadly died in hospital a month after moving from the Night Shelter to a home of his own.



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