



The Reverend Pat Southgate with one of Routes to Roots homeless clients

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Poole Homeless Charity's New Outreach Building to Provide a Vital 'Place for Change'

Renovation begins at Routes to Roots' Hill Street hub to help Poole's homeless and vulnerably housed transition to more permanent accommodation within the community.

Following the acquisition of Poole's former Hill Street Baptist Church, thanks to the generous assistance of the Talbot Village Trust, local homeless charity Routes to Roots has embarked on an extensive refurbishment programme to

convert the historic building into a permanent base for the town's homeless and vulnerably housed. Hailed as 'A Place for Change', the Hill Street outreach facility is being fully renovated and will provide basic necessities to improve the well-being of those in need in the local community.

The aim of this important new outreach facility is to help people in Poole who are without permanent accommodation achieve lasting positive change in their lives. Facilities such as showers, toilets, laundry, hot food, clothing and sleeping bags will be provided in addition to crucial access to outreach workers for addiction and mental health support, nurses, chiropodists, housing and benefit advisors.

'A Place for Change' is the long-term vision of Routes to Roots' founder, the Reverend Pat Southgate, who has been supporting rough sleepers and vulnerably housed individuals in Poole for much of the last two decades through its drop-in sessions. It has been the charity's ambition to acquire a space of its own, from which to offer these services since the charity was first established in 2002.

"Thanks to some extremely generous grants and fundraising support from our volunteers, local schools, companies and churches, we have made a fantastic start towards reaching our target of £150,000, which means we are all set to start working on this exciting project," commented Reverend Southgate. "Our first task will be to remove and sell the beautiful antique pitch pine pews to make a central space where clients can relax, feel safe and talk in confidence to outreach teams. We are hoping to raise in the region of £3000 from the sale of the pews, which would help fund the cost of installing our all-important shower facilities."

Routes to Roots was recently awarded a grant of £5,000 from The Haddon Trust, a charity that specialises in providing relief for those in poverty and without permanent accommodation. The grant will help fund a new kitchen and the associated white goods and equipment needed to cater for up to 50 clients.

Local support from Poole's residents and business community has been very positive and the charity has received full backing for the project from Dorset's Police and Crime Commissioner, Martyn Underhill, who understands the positive impact that the hub will have both on the vulnerable people being helped and the local community. Under current plans, the Hill Street

renovations are due to be completed by late Autumn 2020, subject to the ongoing restrictions imposed due to the Coronavirus crisis.

For further information about Routes to Roots' 'A Place for Change' project and details of how to make a donation, visit www.routestoroots.org/charity/

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Media information & interview requests

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Background notes for editors

Routes to Roots

Poole-based charity Routes to Roots was founded in 2002 to support local rough sleepers and the vulnerably housed and is dedicated not just to providing day-to-day support but also outreach services to help those in need make long-term change. Through its Amos House facility, it provides three

short-term supported housing units, helping residents make the transition from life on the street to more permanent homes.

The Patron of Routes to Roots is The Right Reverend Karen Gorham, Bishop of Sherborne. The Trustees are the Reverend Pat Southgate, Chairman of Board of Trustees and Associate Priest at St Peter's, Parkstone, Founder Trustee of R2R and Chaplain to the Homeless in Poole, Kate Mellor, Martin Finch, Andrew Teale and the Reverend Lucy Holt.

Routes to Roots currently runs five drop-in sessions a week offering basic necessities such as showers, hot food, clothing and sleeping bags, as well as outreach access to mental health workers, the local addictions team and housing advisers. Once refurbished, Hill Street will become the charity's centre for all services to help homeless and vulnerably housed people in Poole. Founded on Christian principles, Routes to Roots supports all adults regardless of their faith.

Saltwater Stone is working for Routes to Roots on a pro-bono basis. PR, marketing services and advice are being offered to the charity without charge.

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