



ALMA BEACON NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2026

2025/26 COLD WEATHER NIGHT SHELTER A HUGE SUCCESS

The 2025/26 Cold Weather Night Shelter was an OUTSTANDING SUCCESS, and we would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who helped make it possible

Over the 15 weeks that the shelter was open, we provided 1,445 overnight beds and served more than 1,500 hot meals, together with many thousands of cups of tea and coffee!! Most importantly, we were able to offer warmth, safety and companionship to some of the most vulnerable members of our community, during the coldest months of the year.

This achievement would not have been possible without the commitment and

collaboration of so many people. We are extremely grateful to our staff, volunteers, partner organisations and guests, all of whom played a vital role in creating a welcoming environment.

We would also like to thank our funding partners, including Ascot Racecourse and RBWM whose financial support helped make the shelter possible.



Above all, our sincere thanks go to our TRULY REMARKABLE team of staff and over 100 volunteers. Their dedication and willingness to give their time week after week were at the heart of the shelter's success. They demonstrated the very best of community spirit and made a genuine difference to the lives of our guests.

"Our grateful thanks go to our professional staff, our incredible volunteers, and our valued partners and supporters. Your generosity and commitment continue to change lives, strengthen our community, and bring hope to those who need it most. Thank you."

Jeremy Crame & Maria Hindmarsh – 2026 Joint Chairs.

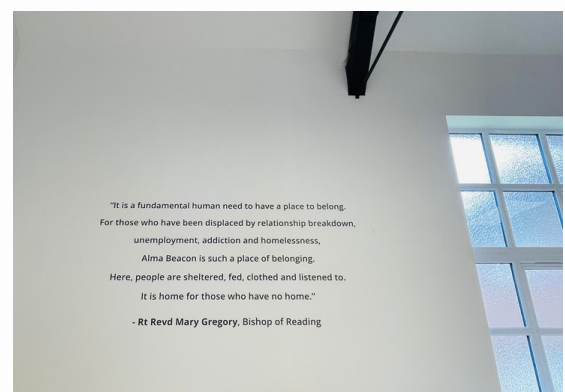
[A copy of the Cold Weather Night Shelter Impact Report can be downloaded here.](#)

BISHOP OF READING VISITS ALMA BEACON

In November last year, we welcomed the Bishop of Reading to Alma Beacon. During her visit, Bishop Mary spent time learning about our work, meeting members of the team, and hearing about the challenges faced by many of those we support. We asked whether she would be willing to provide a few words that might help us share the story of Alma Beacon with others.

The quotation she subsequently provided was deeply moving. As the message perfectly captures the spirit and purpose of our work, we decided to display it permanently on the wall of the Tom Hinds Room at Alma Beacon.

We hope you will take a moment to read Bishop Mary's words when you are next visit Alma Beacon.



NEWS FROM AROUND THE PROJECTS

Windsor Homeless Project – during the first few months of 2026, we welcomed 1,282 guests for hot nutritious lunches, showers and advice, all supported by our fantastic bank of volunteers. 18 new guests were registered during the period which sadly demonstrates the continuing need for the provision of support for the homeless and vulnerable in our community.

Thanks to the great team at WHP who have provided support and guidance around housing, benefits and employment, 7 guests have secured permanent accommodation so far this year.

Windsor FoodShare – another very busy period for WFS, providing sufficient food for over 3,000 clients in total, from Alma Beacon on a Tuesday and Dedworth Green Baptist Church on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Whilst FoodShare operates extremely efficiently with a loyal and committed team of volunteers, they are beginning to suffer from a lack of food donations, which in turn means we must raise more funds to satisfy the requirement for foodstuffs. If you are able (or any of your friends or colleagues), please visit the Food Donation Page at windsorfoodshare.org.uk or the Windsor FoodShare Amazon Wish List page.

Windsor Street Angels – continue to very successfully patrol the nighttime economy in Windsor at weekends (and during Royal Ascot) which becomes increasingly busy as the weather improves.

One of the biggest challenges faced by WSA is the shortage of new volunteers. If you would like information about volunteering (or know a friend or colleague who might like to volunteer) please let us know. Full training provided, and flexible rotas available. Volunteering at WSA is a very rewarding activity.

CORPORATE SUPPORT

The support we receive from local businesses continues to grow, and we are very grateful for their support. Through volunteering, financial support and donations of goods and services, they help us provide vital assistance to those who need it most.



Ascot Racecourse continues to be a fantastic supporter, contributing to the cost of the Night Shelter for a second consecutive year. We were also delighted to receive a donation through their popular Losing Bet initiative and were pleased that eight of our volunteers were invited to attend one of their Royal Ascot trial lunches.

IHG Hotels & Resorts (including InterContinental, Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn) remain longstanding supporters. Their teams regularly volunteer across Alma Beacon and Windsor FoodShare, while continuing to provide very generous financial support



We were delighted to welcome Aramark, caterers at Victoria and Combermere Barracks, whose chefs prepared a wonderful lunch for our guests. They have also donated surplus food following a recent State visit.

A warm welcome too to Windsor Racecourse, whose involvement began with two staff taking part in our Sleep Out. They have since volunteered with us and invited Alma Beacon to be one of their charity partners at a recent race evening, raising more than £500.



Our thanks also go to Princess Margaret Hospital, whose monthly collection drives provide much-needed items for Windsor Homeless Project, Windsor FoodShare and Street Angels.



During the past year, 31 employees from Centrica have volunteered across all our projects. supporting us with essential deep cleaning at the Alma Beacon to delivering our coffeee and lunch service.

De Vere Beaumont Estate has supported us through food collections, volunteering, cooked lunches and the donation of new quilts for Night Shelter guests.



The Crown Estates have continued their support by giving permission to use Home Park for the Sleep-Out, and for Loop the Lake at Virginia Water – and they have provided butchery items from the Farm Shop.

Regular donations from **Flowerland**, Bourne End, provide delicious cakes and pastries for our guests three times each week, while **Socktopus**, Windsor, has donated a large supply of thermal socks to help keep people warm.

We are also grateful to **RBWM Libraries** for donating new IT equipment, enabling guests to search for employment and prepare CVs independently, **Big Yellow Self Storage** for providing valuable storage space during the refurbishment of the Alma Beacon basement and teams from **Knight Frank** and **Morgan Lovell**, who volunteered their time preparing and serving lunches while spending time with our guests.

Every partnership demonstrates how businesses can work alongside Alma Beacon. Whether through funding, volunteering, food, equipment or practical support, their generosity enables us to continue making a positive difference across our community. We thank them all for standing with us

EVENTS ROUND UP

Events are a great way to not only raise funds, but also to meet fellow volunteers and other members of the wider Community.

It has been another busy period for fundraising across Alma Beacon, with supporters, volunteers and local organisations coming together to raise vital funds for our work.

In May, Windsor FoodShare organised the Loop the Lake event at Virginia Water. Participants completed a 7km walk around the lake, raising £1,700. Congratulations and thanks to everyone who took part.

Also in May, Windsor Homeless Project fielded several teams at a Quiz Night hosted by the York Club in Windsor Great Park. The event raised £400 for the project. The teams enjoyed a thoroughly entertaining evening in an outstanding location.

We are also grateful to Ascot Racecourse, which selected Alma Beacon as one of the beneficiaries of its "Bet with Ascot" initiative. The charity was delighted to receive a donation of £1,000. Our sincere thanks to Ascot Racecourse for its continued support.



Big Give Small Charity Week.

A huge thank you to all our loyal supporters who gave to the Big Give – with generous match funding from the People's Postcode Lottery, a total sum more than £13,500 was raised.

Long Walk Live

The new Alma Beacon gazebo will be staffed by familiar faces from across our projects. With live music, dancing, great food and refreshments, it was a great community event. We were delighted to meet Prince Edward who visited the team and congratulations to Windsor Festival and the Prince Philip Trust Fund, and many thanks for inviting us to be there.



And as we go to Press

27 September – Windsor Half Marathon
Whether you are an experienced runner or simply looking for a personal challenge (aka fun run)) this event offers something for everyone. Participants are encouraged to seek sponsorship in support of Alma Beacon.



If you would like to take part or have a fundraising idea you'd like to propose, please let us know!

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

After a 40-year career in Customer Services with British Airways, Pauline Hopkins found that retirement left a gap in her routine. Looking to add some structure to her days and give something back to the community, she discovered the rewarding world of volunteering.

Following a period of volunteering at Frimley Park Hospital during lockdown, Pauline joined Windsor FoodShare, where she quickly found a role she thoroughly enjoyed. Through Kevin Lyons, a former colleague from British Airways, she was then introduced to the Windsor Homeless Project.

Today, Pauline volunteers at the Windsor Homeless Project on Mondays and at Windsor FoodShare on Thursdays. She has also completed several shifts with Windsor Street Angels. Reflecting on her experiences, Pauline says, "Having volunteered across all three projects helps me to understand the bigger picture of Alma Beacon and how the different services work together to support vulnerable people in our community."



When she's not volunteering, Pauline loves to travel and seek out new adventures. Most recently, she enjoyed a camping trip in Botswana, and her next destination is to the ancient city of Petra in Jordan.

"Volunteering at Alma Beacon is a grounding experience," says Pauline. "It makes you appreciate what you have, while giving you the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of others."

REMEMBERING BOGDAN

In February, we said farewell to one of our best-known guests, Boguslaw Kepa, known fondly by us all as Bogdan.

During his time with the WHP, Bogdan was diagnosed with an aggressive form of neck cancer. With no income and no close family nearby, he faced significant challenges. Thanks to the generosity of a local family, funding was secured to provide comfortable accommodation while he underwent treatment.

Throughout his illness, Bogdan received extensive support from the WHP team, with Brenda transporting him to hospital appointments, helping with daily living, and coordination with healthcare professionals.



Sadly, in November, Bogdan was informed that further treatment was not possible. Working closely with healthcare providers and Thames Hospice, Brenda ensured he received the care, comfort and dignity he deserved during his final months. They were also able to help him reconnect with close family members after many years apart. Following his passing, a service was held at St Edward's Church, bringing together family, friends, volunteers, staff, professionals and fellow guests to celebrate his life.

Bogdan's story highlights the amazing impact that compassionate, person-centric support can have. Thank you to everyone who played a part in ensuring that his final months were marked with care and kindness.

COUNSELLING SUPPORT

Earlier this year, we were delighted to welcome Karen Harle to the Alma Beacon volunteer team. Karen is an experienced and accredited member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), with more than 15 years of clinical experience across a variety of settings. Most recently, she worked as a counsellor in secondary education. Her training and professional experience include supporting people affected by trauma, complex life decisions and significant personal challenges.

Recognising the increasing need for emotional and mental health support amongst our guests, Karen has established a counselling clinic at Alma Beacon every Monday. Guests who may benefit from this service are referred to Karen for confidential, professional support.

TRUSTEE UPDATE

At the AGM in November, we will be saying a fond farewell to Geoff Hudson as a Trustee, following nine years of dedicated service to Alma Beacon. Having completed three consecutive three-year terms, including a term as Chairman, Geoff has reached the maximum period of service permitted under our Constitution. Throughout his time with the charity, Geoff's calm, measured and insightful advice has been invaluable, helping to guide Alma Beacon through a period of significant growth and change. We are delighted, however, that Geoff has agreed to remain involved with the charity in an advisory capacity. On behalf of everyone at Alma Beacon, we extend our sincere thanks to Geoff for his outstanding contribution and commitment over the past nine years.

Following the retirement of Rev Kat Bracewell, Rev Richard Terrado-Reardon has kindly agreed to take on the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Alma Beacon. Richard will be supported in his role by Volunteer Catriona Eadie who has extensive hands-on experience of all aspects of Safeguarding. Kat and Richard have already undertaken a comprehensive handover, and we are grateful to Richard and Catriona for assuming this important responsibility. Should anyone have a safeguarding concern, Richard can be contacted directly on 07583 324630.



The Trustees have also met with a wide range of prospective Trustee candidates to fill both current and planned vacancies on the Board and we will look forward to introducing and welcoming Avril Appleyard, Alice Hunt and Angela Walsh to you as early as possible.



Avril Appleyard



Alice Hunt



Angela Walsh





CONTACT US

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almabeacon.org

Alma Beacon is the operating name of Windsor Christian Action
a registered charity in England No. 1154308