

STORIES

“Thank you for caring about me when I was feeling desperate.”



A guest recently came to our Essentials Hub and shared that he was experiencing homelessness. As temperatures drop, staying warm becomes one of the biggest challenges for people without a safe place to sleep, and he asked if we could help him to stay warm. Because of your generosity, we were able to provide him with a foil shelter, hand warmers, winter clothing, dry socks, food, and a waterproof sack to keep everything safe and dry. He left not only with practical support, but with the reassurance that people genuinely care. Thank you to our supporters and partners for making moments like this possible — and to Taylor Wimpey, who generously donated many of these items ahead of Christmas.

HELLO!

Welcome from our Charity Manager Beth

You may notice our newsletter looking a little different going forward. I'll be taking over this section, sharing more about the life of Open Hands, our services, and the people we support. You'll also see a little more about prayer and the motivation behind why we do what we do as a charity. I'm looking forward to sharing this journey with you.

For those of you who don't know me, my connection with Open Hands began when I was a university student, volunteering at what is now our Pie Night. From there, I volunteered as an intern at One Church (then Trinity Life Church) – the founder of Open Hands – supporting morning sessions and the furniture project. After a period as an apprentice, I joined the team in a part-time admin role.

I've now worked at Open Hands for 12 years, including two years supporting our preschool with administration. It's been a privilege to grow in different roles across the charity. During that time, Open Hands has grown from handing out food hampers from a church reception desk, to expanding its services into an old car garage in Highfields and then moving into our current Compassion Centre in St Matthew's. What hasn't changed is our heart to care for people well.

For the past seven years, I've had the privilege of leading Open Hands alongside a dedicated team of staff and volunteers who inspire me daily. Working in the voluntary sector can be challenging, but I value the freedom it gives to be creative in finding solutions, and to put my faith into action by showing God's love in practical ways. I'm also grateful for the opportunity to study and recently graduated with a Masters in Voluntary Sector Management.

Now, enough about me – this newsletter is for you – thank you to all our volunteers, supporters, and Open Hands champions. Together, we are making a difference.

Beth



APPEALS 2026



Our Essentials Hub is open twice a week, welcoming guests with a hot drink, practical items, and a warm sense of community. The Hub supports people facing urgent need, with guests referred to us by partner organisations. Here, they can access food, essential clothing, bedding, household items and furniture. Each morning, local organisations join us to provide advice and help with budgeting, form filling and access to education opportunities. Our teams are also available to offer prayer and a listening ear.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN

At Open Hands we recognise that many of our guests face significant challenges, and that having someone to listen and give a bit more time can make a real difference. The Chaplaincy team - made up of Christian volunteers - was set up to meet this need. We listen to guests on a one-to-one basis in a compassionate and non-judgmental way and offer and share prayer when guests choose. People see God's love and compassion in action when their practical needs are met and when their mental, emotional, and spiritual concerns are validated and prayed for. Please keep our guests in your prayers, and pray over the chaplaincy team.

Chaplain Mary

We need essential items all year round, but by planning specific focuses at different times, we can stay stocked up and offer special acts of kindness to our guests. We hope that our calendar helps you plan ahead and join in.

January	Men's Clothing
February	Toiletries
March	Easter Eggs
April	Bedding
May	Food
June	Fundraising
July	Socks and Pants
August	Bags for Life
September	Winter Warmers
October	Food
November	Christmas Treats
December	Give Today

More information on our appeals can be found at www.openhandsleicester.org.uk/donate/appeal/

VOLUNTEERING

Can you spare 1 or 2 hours a week to help?

We are currently looking for volunteers who can help us to collect food from local supermarkets and Pukka Pies! Visit our Linktree to find out more: <https://linktr.ee/OpenHandsLeicester>

