



## News from Faith in Action Merton Homelessness Project

**It's been a busy year for the charity, with the number of homeless and vulnerable-housed people needing our support and services steadily increasing. We're now welcoming between 50-60 people to the Drop-in each Wednesday and Friday, reflecting higher levels of homelessness being seen in London and across the UK.**

Thank you so much for your generous support for the work of the Drop-in and Winter Night Shelter. FiA's Trustees, staff and volunteers all wish you a merry Christmas and a very happy 2024.

### **FiA Annual General Meeting**

**Our AGM will be held online via Zoom on 18 January 2024 at 7pm**, at which we welcome questions and your reflections on the work of the charity.

To attend the AGM by Zoom, please email us at [mertondropin@gmail.com](mailto:mertondropin@gmail.com). We will send the Zoom log-in details a few days before 18 January.

- To submit a question in advance, please email us at [mertondropin@gmail.com](mailto:mertondropin@gmail.com).
- Copies of AGM documents can be obtained before the meeting from [mertondropin@gmail.com](mailto:mertondropin@gmail.com).

### **New Manager for the Drop-in**

**We're delighted to welcome Grace O'Neill as Manager Merton Homelessness Project, who joined Faith in Action on 11 December.**



Grace's responsibilities include day-to-day operation of our Wimbledon Homeless Drop-in and the services we offer to homeless and vulnerably-housed local people; leading our small team of professional staff; and working with FiA's Management Committee, staff, and volunteers to develop new methods of working so we can manage increasing demands on our services and offer more effective, trauma-informed support.

Grace joins FiA with a wealth of experience as a social worker, undertaking risk and need assessments and managing care packages for adult clients.

Most recently, Grace worked at Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness (KCAH) running their homeless drop-in, and previously worked at Kingston Wellbeing Service and the Kingston Adult Safeguarding Team. Grace has a Social Work degree from Kingston University.

### **Merton Winter Night Shelter now operational**

**This winter's Night Shelter opened on 4 December and is planned to operate until mid-March.** 14 local faith groups are providing both the venues and volunteers to ensure that 12 local homeless people have a warm place to sleep each night through the winter months, as well as breakfast and a hot two-course evening meal. Every guest also receives support from our staff team to help them move into more secure, long-term accommodation, alongside other advice and, where needed, referral to third party agencies.

### **A date for your Diary**

**Our 2024 Open Evening will be held on Monday 18 March.** More details will follow in the new year, but please make a note of the date.