

## **CANONSGROVE NEWSLETTER**

Following our commitment to improve engagement with Trull residents and give a greater understanding of our work we are pleased to bring you the latest news and information from the accommodation project for rough sleepers at Canonsgrove.

The accommodation was set up following a Government requirement to take rough sleepers off the streets recognising this group as particularly vulnerable to Covid-19.

Our approach, bringing in other professional services such as health, social care, mental health and addiction services, means the rough sleepers are receiving extra support in their new environment, preparing them to move to more independent accommodation.

The difference this has made is already clear with many finding renewed hope for the future, and some moving on to longer term accommodation already. (Please note that names have been changed to protect identity.)

### **Greg's Story:**

Greg moved to Canonsgrove in April where he was given a safe and secure place to isolate throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Greg was initially worried about moving to Canonsgrove, fearing it was too far from Taunton town centre and he would have nothing to do. However, after settling into his own room, Greg soon felt happier and has since thrived at Canonsgrove.

Whilst living at Canonsgrove, Greg has joined a local sports team to keep himself busy, recently travelling with them to play a national sports tournament where the team won silver! Greg joined the team to avoid becoming bored and has been passionate about playing ever since, even signing up to play next season!

When talking about living at Canonsgrove, Greg said: "I have freedom here and space to be alone. The team at Canonsgrove do everything they can to help us, they are just terrific and there should be more places like Canonsgrove around to help others."

Greg is now planning for a future, accessing work support to find a job and bidding on houses to hopefully move out and begin living independently again.

He is working with the Canonsgrove team to take steps forward and has even volunteered to cook for everyone!

Greg is thankful to everyone who has helped him along the way and believes that moving to Canonsgrove was the best decision he could have made.

## **Resident Q&A**

Before arriving at Canonsgrove, Jess was identified as homeless and described her previous life as "rough and dangerous".

We had a quick catch up with Jess to talk about her experience at the site in Trull.

### **What do you enjoy about Canonsgrove?**

I enjoy my freedom but also appreciate the help and support provided by staff. I also tend to be pretty forgetful, so it's good to have staff around.

### **What challenges have you faced?**

Before I came to Canonsgrove I felt trapped. I was running in circles, with nothing happening. Since I arrived at Canonsgrove, I have achieved so much more in the last few weeks than I have in the last 15 years.

### **How has your experience at Canonsgrove been?**

I can describe Canonsgrove in one short sentence, simply excellent. Canonsgrove feels safe and secure. The support provided by the staff is invaluable and they are always willing to help. For example, they are happy to monitor and remind me with simple things such as laundry. I don't think there is anything that can be improved at Canonsgrove. It is excellent.

### **What do you want for your future?**

I would like to have a job and my very own safe place to live. My stay at Canonsgrove has allowed me to reflect and realise what my needs and goals really are. I will be forever grateful for Canonsgrove and the team, they have changed my life for the better.

## **Community patrols**

We are working closely with the Avon and Somerset Police who have increased their presence in the Trull area and have been undertaking regular patrols. Canonsgrove staff have also started evening patrols with the police on an ad-hoc basis. These have not raised any issues and we are pleased that the number of concerns reported by residents has been low over the past two weeks.

## This week at Canonsgrove

Residents have

- Cooked Lasagne
- Made their own bread
- Cooked a full English breakfast
- Listened to one very talented resident play the organ
- Weeded along the main road pavement and swept up



## Next week at Canonsgrove:

- One of our residents will be cooking a Caribbean inspired meal for everyone
- We will be setting up a library using book donations we have received
- We will be opening up the activity room with some arts and crafts

## And finally:

Canonsgrove resident Edd found an injured dove in Trull and took care of it until the RSPCA could come and collect it for treatment. Here's Edd with a member of the RSPCA local team.



Further information on the Canonsgrove accommodation project can be found on our websites at

[www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-information/](http://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-information/)

<https://www.ymca-dg.org/>

We welcome any feedback or further questions on [Canonsgrove@ymca-dg.org](mailto:Canonsgrove@ymca-dg.org)

Yours

*S.G. Lewis.*

Simon Lewis, Assistant Director,  
Somerset West and Taunton Council

Jonica Walkinshaw, Director  
YMCA Dulverton Group