



THE BESOM IN DORKING - SEPTEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

Dear friends and supporters,

Another year has gone since I last reported on Besom activities.

2021 was a record year in terms of the number of recipients helped. We thought you might be interested to know the areas we covered and how many recipients we helped in each area. We were able to help thirteen households out of our area, but only because we had volunteers with available extra time and the required items. We would love to see a new Besom in the Crawley / Horley area where there is a great deal of need, for sure.

Deliveries to Recipients 2021 by area:

Dorking, Goodwyns, Chart Downs and North Holmwood	68
South Holmwood, Beare Green, Newdigate, Ockley, Capel	16
Brockham and Betchworth	5
Westcott	9
Bookham, Fetcham and Effingham	26
Reigate, Redhill and Crawley	13
Total deliveries	137

Sometimes a delivery is one or two items - a washing machine and a chest of drawers for instance; sometimes it's a full van load and a car load to a flat or house with nothing but bare walls and bare floors. The latter presents a major issue for our recipients and is not something we are able to solve apart from providing rugs for some comfort.

The vast majority of recipients come from two demographics: single men living alone and single women living with their children. A small number of families are helped as well as a few single women and occasionally a single dad. Some are elderly and we made 14 deliveries to sheltered housing at Turner House, Lyons Court, Chapel Court, Norfolk Court and Hanover Court.

We collect from donors across all the areas but, as you can imagine, most of the homes we collect from look quite different from the ones we deliver to.

We are extremely grateful to all our donors. Besom, when it is functioning effectively is a blessing to the givers, the recipients and the volunteers, who make it all happen.

There were 13 volunteers in 2021 from seven churches. Five make up the Core Team who meet weekly to pray for the work and specifically the needs. God is good and we have seen many miracles of provision. There have been a few applications to join the Besom Team as a volunteer, one of which is actively being processed as I write. Thursday is the collecting and delivering day and up to eleven volunteers turn up for duty (including 3 who are also trustees.) There are no rotas; all volunteers turn up every week unless they are on holiday or ill. Most are retired from paid work but those still working keep Thursdays free when they can. There are rarely too few volunteers and never too many. There is always something to do.

Before a delivery can happen, recipients are visited and their needs assessed. (They have already been "referred" by Social Services, a housing association, Home/School Link Worker or similar, so we don't have to look at their financial situation or background, thankfully!) These assessments take place on Mondays to Wednesdays. During this visit, there is always an offer of a short prayer. It is never refused, mostly very much appreciated. We have seen people moved by God as His Spirit begins to work in them. This is a privilege and a joy.

2022 update and looking forward

That was last year. So far this year we have already helped 84 households. We have gained one new volunteer (so far) but lost one - of working age - to a new job. Due to the ongoing level of activity, storage is an issue (currently using 3 garages and our home) and the volunteers have had some long days so more volunteers would be gratefully received. We may need to start curtailing the level of activity if efficient storage facilities cannot be found.

Finances are stable and we are very grateful for the pandemic grant money offered to us through MVDC from SCC, which has been used to fund items needed for recipients. We have good working relationships with Dorking Area Foodbank who provide bags of food and toiletries for all our recipients and Furnistore in Redhill who have donated items we did not have (specifically bunk beds.) We maintain excellent relationships with referral agencies, who are unbelievably grateful for the work of Besom.

If you would like to find out more, would like to visit us on a Thursday or if you would like a small team to come and speak at your church or small group, please get in touch.

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