



Canterbury Community Shelter

Report 2016-2017

Compiled by Jon Limebury

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1. Introduction.

Canterbury Community Shelter (CCS) has returned for the seventh time. It uses the "Rolling Shelter" method which was first used in London in 2000.

Our model uses 7 venues, one for each day of the week, with each venue having a set day of the week on which to be the shelter.

Coordination of the shelter is managed by CatchingLives based at the Canterbury Open Centre. Along with the provision of food, personal storage, showers, toilets and a project working team who assess and assist our guests to move on into better situations.

The winter of 2016 reached several landmarks with regards to homelessness in the Canterbury District, across Kent and most of the United Kingdom.

- **Rough Sleeping in the Canterbury District** - The official number of people sleeping rough in Canterbury reached 50 in 2016.
- **The growth of Winter Night Shelters** - With the addition of 2 winter night shelters in Kent the total (**number**) in operation (**across Kent**) for the winter 2016/17 was 10.
- **National Homelessness Figure Reaches over ¼ Million People** - Shelters 'Green Book' Report estimates there are over ¼ of a million homeless people in England, with at least 3500 sleeping rough on any given night.

In the Canterbury District, in 2011, Canterbury City Council changed the way it collects the data with which it formulates the estimated rough sleeping figures.

It works with local agencies, including CatchingLives, to identify the individual people sleeping rough as well as snapshot street counts. We believe this creates a much better picture of the reality of rough sleeping on our streets.

With this in mind and to avoid overly distorting the rough sleeping figures in our analysis, we will look at the official rough sleeping figures from 2011 to 2016 to give the statistics context with this years' shelter.

Rough Sleeping in the Canterbury District

From 2011 to 2016, estimated rough sleeping in the district has increased by 150%. The most marked increase in this period was between 2013-2014 when the figure rose from 22 in 2013 to 38 in 2014 – a rise of 58% in one year.

The most established forms of year round help for those sleeping rough are; Canterbury City Council Housing Options Team, Porchlight's Outreach Service/helpline, The Salvation Army and Canterbury Open Day Centre, operated by CatchingLives. Further to this, Canterbury City Council has recently commissioned an Outreach Service, operated by CatchingLives. There are also other various small scale community outreach projects run by students and church groups amongst others.

These services all work in order to tackle rough sleeping or alleviate hardship but are restricted by a huge overall reduction in funding for homelessness services across the county. Homeless Link (2016) report that nationally 47% of homeless accommodation services are facing reductions in their funding and access to affordable housing is blocking the ability of people to move on.

We can see the impact of this locally with the closure of Guildford Lodge, a supported accommodation project run by Porchlight. The closure of this project reduces the supported accommodation available in the Canterbury District by 21 bed spaces.

Further to this, Canterbury has very high rental prices compared to other parts of East Kent. A market search of www.home.co.uk shows the average 1 bed property price as £640 per calendar month whilst the Housing Benefit Local Housing Allowance for a 1 bedroom property is only £536.73.

34% of homeless accommodation projects surveyed by Homeless Link (2016) reported the main barrier to be a lack of affordable housing.

This expensive and stagnating rental market is blocking beds in supported accommodation for the many people with complex needs who become homeless. A reduction in supported accommodation as seen in the recent closure of Guildford Lodge noted above does well to explain the rise in rough sleeping in the Canterbury Area before we take into account the national factors which will be highlighted later.

The Growth of Winter Night Shelters:

The first rolling winter shelter opened in Folkestone in the winter of 2009 and was operated by the Salvation Army. This project was well received by its guests, the churches, communities, existing homelessness charities and local authorities. In subsequent years the model was adopted in other areas by church groups. There is now a network of 10 winter shelters across Kent, spanning Gravesend to Thanet. They are all linked under the umbrella of the Kent Winter Shelter Network which meets regularly to share ideas, knowledge and statistics.

It is not just due to the successes of the first shelters to be established that subsequent ones have been created. It is mainly due to the significant increase in rough sleeping across the county.

A Shelter Report (1st December 2016) was quoted in the media as having given conservative figures of over 3000 people being homeless in Kent, with a minimum of 150 people sleeping rough on any one night. Its' thought that there could in reality be as many as 250 people sleeping rough in the Medway area alone. The 10 winter shelters have a maximum capacity of 137 beds on any given night. 7 shelters operate every night per week, one for 6 nights per week and one for 3 nights per week. This significant voluntary effort goes a long way to offering shelter to many homeless people but still falls short. Some shelters also often run with void bed spaces, as will be discussed later with specific regard to CCS, which leaves more people outside. Conversations with homeless people and professionals working within the sector suggest, anecdotally, that there are two significant factors which contribute to this:

1. The prospect of sleeping in the same room, in a church, with 11 to 19 other people and never staying in one venue for more than one night is too stressful for some to manage.
2. The chaotic lives of those with unmanaged mental health or substance misuse issues prevents them from being able to conform to the boundaries of the shelters – some people may not even have the capacity to register interest with a shelter, let alone complete a registration process.

This is important to consider – rolling winter shelters are very effective at minimising the impact on each of the venues, the communities within which they operate and housing legislation by their temporary nature. They pull in volunteers and funding from a wide range of sources and mobilise faith groups into action. Unfortunately, the transience of the way they work may not help to stabilise the lives of some of their guests enough to provide them with the resources they need in order to move on into accommodation. Guests report “the walls closing in” after a fortnight of staying in the shelters. We often see guests relapsing after the stress of moving from venue to venue and existing in a large group becomes overwhelming.

There is no doubt that the majority of those who stay in the winter shelters are very grateful for the service and it is far better for them than sleeping rough but we must, for their sakes, consider improvements to make the winter shelters less stressful and/or creating other potential projects to work alongside the winter shelters. This will be discussed in the recommendations later in this report.

National Homelessness Figure Approaches ¼ Million Individuals

Shelter’s Green Book Report was published in December 2016 to celebrate its 50th anniversary. It notes that ‘progress in reducing homelessness throughout the noughties has now been firmly reversed’. The report further argues that we are in a new housing crisis with homelessness set to increase as the effects of cuts, lack of affordable housing and high rents continue.

Further to this, rather than previous statistics showing “relationship breakdowns” as a prevalent cause of homelessness, the end of tenancies is and has been for some time the greatest cause of homelessness. The most recent statistics released by the Department of Communities and Local Government (2016) show the end of Assured Shorthold Tenancies’ (AST) causing homelessness is a growing trend due to the lack of affordable accommodation:

“The end of an AST has been an increasingly common cause of loss of last home over the last six years, rising from a low of 1,060 households in Q4 2009 (11% of all cases) to 4,790 in Q3 2016 (32% of cases) – a rise of 3,730. By comparison, the rise in acceptances for all other reasons between Q4 2009 and Q3 2016 was 1,770. This indicates that affordability is an increasingly significant issue, as more households facing the end of a private tenancy are unable to find an alternative without assistance.”

With the continued increase in the cost of rented accommodation, the shrinking of the welfare system, the NHS, and the reductions in supported accommodation funding it does not take much to understand the rise in rough sleeping. Against this backdrop, the rolling winter shelter began its 7th iteration. Here’s how:

2. Our Rolling Winter Shelters

- Mondays - St. Mary Bredin Church
- Tuesdays - St Martin & St Paul Parish Centre
- Wednesdays - St. Peters Methodist Church
- Thursdays - Canterbury Baptist Church
- Fridays - St Thomas' Catholic Church
- Saturdays - All Saints Church
- Sundays - St Stephen's Parish Church

3. What's New?

- **Increased capacity.** After revisiting all our venues and assessing the the buildings and our staff team, we increased the nightly bed spaces from 15 to 20. This gave us a huge capacity increase.
- **Canterbury City Council, working with CatchingLives have identified a number of entrenched rough sleepers with whom intensive work is to be done.** CatchingLives have been funded by Canterbury City Council to provide extra outreach work done by Emma McCrudden.
- **SWEP Provision.** This year, Canterbury City Council requested that CatchingLives both administer and provide shelter during any periods where "Severe Weather Emergency Protocol" occurred (0 degrees Celsius for 3 consecutive nights forecast).

4. Other Services:

- **Porchlight Rough Sleeper Service** works across Kent with dedicated Outreach Workers to find, signpost and refer homeless people into services and accommodation.
- **CatchingLives Mental Health Outreach Team** – this unique service assesses, signposts and refers CCS guests and many other people in homeless or vulnerably housed situations in the Canterbury District.
- **Canterbury Housing Advice Centre** – Canterbury's independent housing advice centre has provided advice, partnership working and access to deposit bonds for those moving on and in current difficulty.
- **Turning Point.** Providing substance misuse services in Canterbury and across East Kent.
- **Other Winter Shelters** – we have "exchanged" guests between our partner shelters to alleviate those which were full.
- **Canterbury Local Link** - an organisation working in partnership with Canterbury City Council to provide shared accommodation in the local area for those that are vulnerably housed or homeless and have a proven local connection.

5. The Staff and Volunteers

Terry Gore -	CatchingLives' General Manager
Jon Limebury -	CCS Co-ordinator
Charlie Oakes -	Deputy CCS Co-ordinator
Graeme Solly -	Project Leader at Canterbury Open Centre
Penny Wilson-	Project Worker at Canterbury Open Centre
Dorota Witczak -	Project Worker at Canterbury Open Centre
Emma McCrudden -	Project Leader at Canterbury Open Centre
James Duff -	Trustee & Volunteer On-Call
Chris Holland -	CCS Project Worker
Pippa Grunsell -	CCS Project Worker
Danni Thompson -	CCS Project Worker
Sally Caless -	CCS Project Worker
Julia Elliott -	CCS Project Worker
Paul Todd -	On-Call Management Locum
Kelly Napier -	Trustee and Campaign Manager
Karen Baxter -	Mental Health Outreach Specialist at Canterbury Open Centre
Denis Tweedie -	Mental Health Outreach Specialist at Canterbury Open Centre
Paul Willoughby -	CatchingLives' Administrator
Luana Ali -	Client Data Coordinator

Venue co-ordinators:

Rev. Phil Greig -	All Saint's Church
Anna Thompson -	Saint Thomas' Catholic Parish Church
Rachel Bobb -	St Mary Bredin Church
Jackie Curd-	St Martin's and Paul's Parish Church
Richard Cockell-	St Peter's Methodist Church
Robert Mathews -	St. Stephen's Church

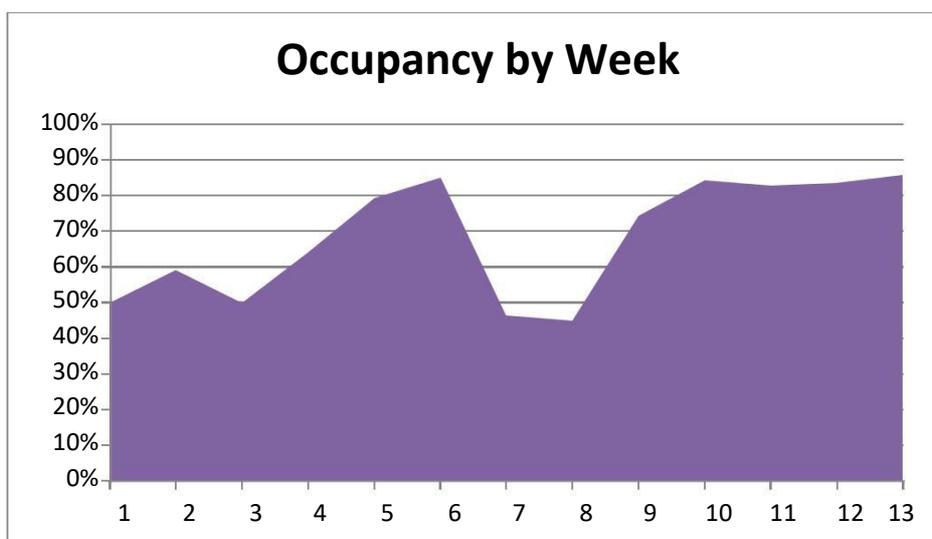
6. How Did We Do?

Firstly and foremost, over 130 of CCS's volunteers carried out more than 850 individual volunteering sessions and spent a total of just over 2600 hours working for the shelter.

CCS's Project Worker Team covered 180 evening and overnight shifts and 1485 hours, not including the SWEP provision.

a. Shelter Occupancy

- Each night, CCS had **20** bed spaces available in total.
- 109** people were referred to CCS or expressed an interest in accessing.
- 67** people stayed.
- Over the **13** weeks of the shelter, **1189** beds were taken up out of a possible **1800**.
- This represents an overall occupancy rate of **66%**.
- An average of **13** bed spaces were used per night.



b. Housing Outcomes

37 people were able to move into accommodation during, or in the 3 weeks after CCS finished and before the data for this report was compiled. This means **56%** of the people who stayed in CCS were accommodated.

c. Finance

Thanks to the ongoing funding and generous donations, CCS was able to keep **£653.32** within its total budget of **£48,010.00**. This paid for 3 months operation, the overheads associated with the

extra use of Canterbury Open Centre and its staff, along with the employment of the CCS Coordinator for 5 months.

d. **SWEP**

During a cold period lasting 15 nights, the whole staff team at Catchinglives pulled together and ran an additional Severe Weather Emergency Protocol shelter at Canterbury Open Centre, providing overnight shelter for **41** individuals, who took up a total of **254** bed spaces.

e. **Social Policy**

As part of CatchingLives Campaign Work, we undertook to identify and report on as many cases of Social Policy as possible. These range from instances where people are released from prison or hospital to street homelessness, are illegally evicted, excluded from benefits and much more. The level of Social Policy problems identified requires separate reporting and as such a CCS Campaign Report, compiled by Kelly Napier, is attached to this report.

7. Analysis

Increasing the bed spaces in order to accommodate the larger numbers of people recorded rough sleeping kept the pressure off the shelter to a large degree, as well as preventing us from having to reject potential guests of the shelter purely on a capacity basis. Had the bed spaces remained at 15 per night, the shelter would have been running at 87%, meaning a much increased risk of going over capacity.

We were very surprised at the level of outcomes this year, considering the level of homelessness and the difficulty in sourcing affordable accommodation. We believe that this, apart from the staggering motivation created by having such an energetic and dedicated team of volunteers, is largely due to the level of Project Working Staff at CatchingLives. The last time the author of this report coordinated CCS in 2013-14, we achieved a similar number of outcomes, but the majority of these came from referral into a "HostelPlus" scheme, which was similarly a short term project. At that time, the paid Project Worker Team at CatchingLives numbered just one. CatchingLives now has 2 full time project workers, one of whom is a specialist Outreach Worker and a further 2 part time project workers, one of whom is a Polish Speaking Specialist. Canterbury Open Centre is now open 7 days a week as a result of this increased staffing. This has resulted in more people being able to share a larger case load of people, identify and refer to more accommodation options and spend more time with each individual who needs help.

This increased vanguard of professionals does not, however, deal with the lack of affordable housing, the lack of supported housing, nor the reduction in welfare payments and lack of healthcare provision for our client group.

With this in mind, we are aware of at least one person who's already homeless again since they moved on from the shelter and one man sadly died after having spent several nights respite in the SWEP shelter. The significant vulnerability of homeless people encompasses what we refer to as "Severe Multiple Disadvantage" – where they have mental health, substance misuse, offending and physical health issues all at once. CCS has taken in and managed to find accommodation for several of the people who fall into this category, but as the Social Policy Report will highlight, much more needs to be made available and a logical, meaningful and holistic approach needs to be made by many organisations working together to help them.

The vulnerability of the people accessing CCS is very clear from the monitoring information gathered. Over 20% of them had been in care. The lack of access to benefits is diabolical:

34% No Benefits
3% on Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
30% on Employment & Support Allowance (ESA)
16% on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
1% on Widows Pension

With 30% of those who accessed on ESA which, according to www.gov.uk is a benefit for:

"If you're ill or disabled, [ESA] offers you:

- financial support if you're unable to work*
- personalised help so that you can work if you're able to"*

If we add the claimants of DLA to the 30% on ESA, we see that 1/3 of those in the shelter were vulnerable enough to receive these sickness benefits but not sick enough to be housed immediately to relieve their illnesses. It is a very simple observation to note that these people are very much more likely than the rest of the population to need medical care and yet they are less able to access it because they are homeless.

Worse than this is the fact that more than 1/3 of people had no benefit claim in place. Most of these are foreign nationals, many of whom have spent much time in this country, often doing hard labour on farms at minimum wage. But because their work is on zero hours contracts and doesn't last long enough to meet the criteria for benefits, they pay taxes for several months of the year and are then left destitute and homeless because the work has tied accommodation.

Overall, this year, CCS has been very successful. We try to aim for at least 1/3 of those who stay in the shelter to be resettled and we have nearly doubled that. Our focus now, in the following recommendations will be about how we can improve on that within a rolling winter shelter and what other options could be explored.

8. Recommendations

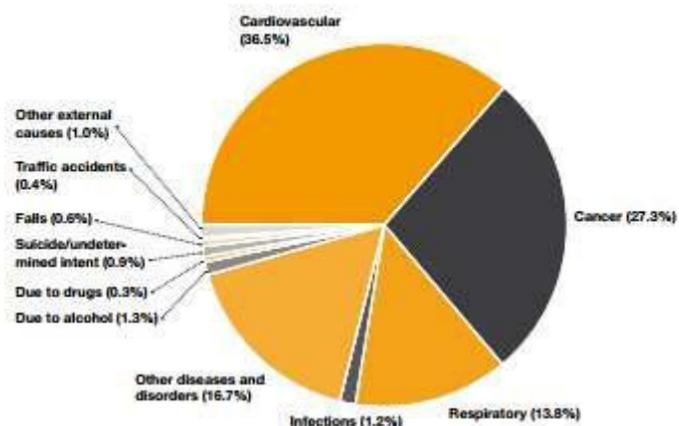
The first winter shelter in Folkestone was set up in response to the death of a local homeless man, Jeffery Billington. It is widely agreed that the best time of year to provide a temporary night shelter is during winter to prevent people "freezing to death" and to alleviate suffering during the coldest

months of the year. However, there are relatively few recorded deaths from hypothermia of homeless people in the UK compared to deaths from other causes.

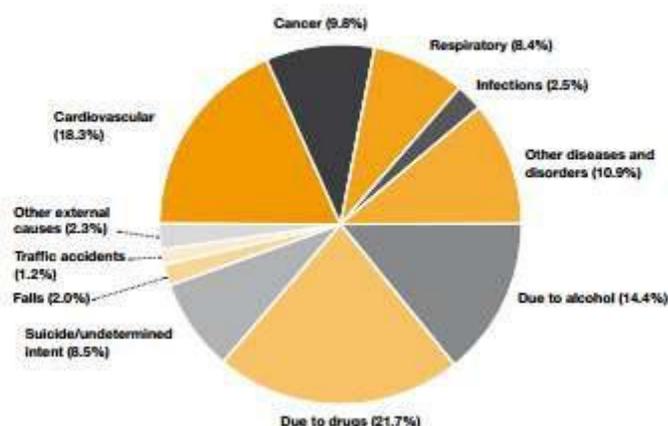
'Homelessness Kills' (Thomas, 2012) provides an analysis of the mortality of homeless people we can see the following:

We can see from this that disease and infection account for around 50% of deaths amongst the homeless population, whilst substance misuse (drugs and alcohol) account for another 36% of deaths. When compared in the same study alongside the general population:

Distribution of causes of death for the general population



Distribution of causes of death for homeless people (scenario HP)



Over 95% of deaths in the general population are from disease and infection – most of the deaths are in the 85+ age group. Bearing in mind that the average life expectancy of a homeless woman is 43 and 47 for a man (Thomas, 2012), this points towards a huge gap in access to life saving healthcare amongst the homeless and a colossal substance misuse problem.

It is very important to recognise these problems and barriers to homeless people when considering the effectiveness of rolling winter shelters – how far do they go towards alleviating the immediate problem of rough sleeping and how well do they help to stop it in its tracks at an individual level?

As it stands, rolling winter shelters do not contain a framework which can have a direct impact on the policies which govern access to healthcare nor the causes of substance misuse or the funding which pays for treatment. Nor are they increasing the amount of affordable housing available to those homeless people who are trying to access it.

My recommendations:

1. The creation of a county wide and networked winter shelter database which collects all of the information we collect at CCS, including the Social Policy Reporting section, in order to build a much more comprehensive data set with which trends are identified and campaigns can be run from. If there is a county wide collection of data, this creates a much more forceful argument when trying to tackle issues such as release from prison to street

homelessness and other barriers to having a home which homeless people endure. It will create the opportunity for the various shelters and their umbrella organisations to source funding and work on projects together in a homogenous way.

2. The use of a "Housing First" approach to providing shelter. It is now widely agreed and proven that the first step towards helping an individual break the cycle of homelessness and the associated ills of substance misuse, mental health issues, offending and more is to provide a home. Further to this, the use of houses with 3-4 rooms with appropriate support services attached to them are the best possible option as they do not place vulnerable people into crowded and stressful accommodation. Organisations such as Hope Into Action help church groups buy houses and run them as accommodation projects for homeless people with great success. They currently have 60 previously homeless tenants living in 38 houses in 12 cities and have significant success with outcomes.
3. The sourcing of a single venue to provide the overnight beds for CCS. Guests, volunteers and staff of CCS have separately expressed concern over the effort, complication and stress caused by having to move from venue to venue. As a well established project of over 7 years, it may well be within reach for CatchingLives and the various church and faith groups to identify, fundraise for and organise the provision of a single venue, possibly with individual rooms. We have discovered there are several empty former care homes within the district which could be repurposed whilst they are empty during the operation of the shelter.

9. Thanks

As with CatchingLives itself, CCS could not exist without the army of volunteers who donate give their time, money, vehicles, cooking skills and create the belief for our guests that people do care about them. It is this environment of hope which people who are homeless thrive in and contributes incredibly to the success of the project. Thank you very much.

In addition to this, we could not provide this project without the generous donations we receive. Thank you to all and in particular:

The John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust
Pack Family Endowment Fund (via Kent Community Foundation)
Canterbury City Council
Canterbury Christian Council
Canterbury Lions Club
Community of the Presentation Trust
Peter Callaghan
Reach Out Gospel Choir
Deal Apostolic Church

At this point, we all wish to mention the sad passing of John Swire, through who's Charitable Trust CCS may never have existed in the first place. The financial support of this trust has and continues to form the foundation of our project and we offer our thanks and condolences to his family.

10. Financial Statement

Donations

	Debit	Credit	Balance
Peter Callaghan (via Stewardship)		£360.00	
The John Swire 1989 Charitable		£35,000.00	
Trust Kent Community Foundation		£5,000.00	
Community of the Presentation Trust		£200.00	
Canterbury Christian Council		£750.00	
Deal Apostolic Church		£1,200.00	
CCC contribution to CCS 2016-17 running costs		£5,000.00	
Canterbury Lions Club		£500.00	
			£48,010.00

Stationery

14/11/2016 expanding file	£14.99		
08/12/2016 3-tier letter tray	£11.99		
12/12/2016 50 x asst filing indexes	£79.80		£47,903.22
	<u>£106.78</u>		

Canterbury Community Shelter - expenses

Date Details

22/11/2016 10 x laundry bags	£79.80		
22/11/2016 7 x sleeping bags	£60.13		
29/11/2016 Nokia mobile phone	£19.99		
25/11/2016 20 x camp beds	£400.00		
05/12/2016 key cutting	£12.40		
02/01/2017 earplugs x 2	£8.36		
18/01/2017 15 x sleeping mats	£112.50		
18/01/2017 25 x North Gear sleeping bags	£255.74		
	<u>£948.92</u>		£46,954.30

Client Expenses

03/01/2017 rail fare - Client	<u>£11.50</u>	£11.50	£46,942.80
Account Totals			

Salaries - Canterbury Community Shelter

28/10/2016 CCS salaries - October 2016	£981.56		
25/11/2016 CCS salaries - November 2016	£3,907.18		
30/12/2016 CCS salaries - December 2016	£9,834.74		
27/01/2017 CCS salaries - January 2017	£12,314.26		
24/02/2017 CCS salaries - February 2017	£12,409.18		
31/03/2017 CCS salaries - March 2017	<u>£6,394.80</u>		
Account Totals	£45,841.72		£1,101.08

Recruitment Expenses

26/09/2016 winter shelter recruitment advert	<u>£108.00</u>		£993.08
	£108.00		

DBS Checks - Staff

Date Details

30/11/2016 DBS checks	£168.00		
31/12/2016 Enhanced DBS check	£56.00		
31/01/2017 Enhanced DBS check	<u>£56.00</u>		
Account Totals	£280.00		£713.08

Mileage Claims

16/03/2017 mileage - staff	<u>£59.76</u>		
Account Totals	£59.76		

Totals	£47,356.68	£48,010.00	£653.32
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12. References

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