

Kingst Night- Shelter!

at least 700 people involved with the Homeless Night-shelter!

In the meantime, there's good news to report from the Kingston Methodist Circuit. We celebrated both "Homelessness Sunday" on 1 Feb and "Poverty Action Sunday" on 8 Feb – which coincided quite blessedly with the onset (Feb 1) of a Homeless Night-shelter arrangement at our local churches! This was an ecumenical effort headed up by Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness, but the Methodist churches (Surbiton Hill and then Kingston) were the first to say "We're in" (providing one night a week food and sleeping accommodation at each church over the initial period of one month). Five more local churches then came on board – some 150 volunteers showed up for the training day (coincidentally held during the Week of Christian Unity!). Since then, I'd estimate that AT LEAST 700 people from the local churches are involved with this project.

You might recall that 1 Feb was also the day of the heavy snowfall, which hit our area particularly hard! Three weeks down the road with this project, it has worked extremely well, both for our homeless "guests" and for giving our middle-class congregations a very real way to work out their Christian discipleship – making good use of their properties, forming new ecumenical links, and enjoying new friendships with the homeless!

by Bonni-belle Pickard (Superintendent minister at Kingston Upon Thames Circuit)