

On 18 January, Caritas Plymouth hosted an online event to raise awareness of those who are homeless or living in temporary or vulnerable accommodation and to explore how we can all reach out and take action. The event was led by Canon John Deeny VG, with presentations from Lois Wild from [St. Petrocs](https://www.stpetrocs.org.uk/), Cornwall and Jacob Quagliozzi from [Housing Justice](https://housingjustice.org.uk/).

Canon John Deeny opened the gathering with an invitation: “*Loving God, may we share God’s welcome with all, and have a special care for those who are hungry, thirsty or without a home”.*

Housing Justice reflected on the changing context of homelessness. The “Everybody In” government initiative had brought many rough sleepers off the streets, causing a rethink in how night shelters, the traditional “safety net”, and emergency accommodation operate throughout the country. However, as rough sleeping has declined other kinds of homelessness have increased with many people in temporary or insecure accommodation.

St Petrocs offered a local perspective, highlighting their outreach in Cornwall through the provision of accommodation, and “[Fresh Field](https://www.stpetrocs.org.uk/news/freshfield)” drug and alcohol rehabilitation programmes.

We heard moving testimony from two people who have used their services which can be found here [Amy’s story](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnYqA6ZQxRo) / [Austin’s story](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwgSOkkKT10)

The event also looked at how we can reach out to those who are on the streets or struggling with housing issues and you can find more details in our Caritas [resource guide.](https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Homeless-Charity-Resource-List-Dec21.pdf) We were reminded, that if you are in fear for the safety of someone you should always call 999. Otherwise if you see someone rough sleeping. email or call [Streetlink](http://www.streetlink.org.uk/) on 0300 500 0914. The details you provide are sent to the local authority or outreach service for the area. (If you think the person you are concerned about is under 18 please call the police).

Not everyone can take direct action. We were reminded by Lois that “Prayer is so powerful and it’s something anyone can do”.

Father of Compassion, we ask that you pour out your spirit of comfort on all our brothers and sisters in Christ who are living with no security, no shelter, and no safety from the outside world. Give them extra warmth, peace, guidance, and provide wisdom as they work through their trials. Nourish their bodies with warm meals, clean water, shelter, and clothing. Bring them hope, strength and encouragement to face each day. Put an end to their loneliness and sorrow.
We ask that you inspire our actions so that as the body of Christ we can help those in our area who are less fortunate.

Show us how to be a part of their lives by generously sharing our prayers, time, and resources. Show us unending opportunities to help so that we may bring joy and peace of mind. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen