

You & **emmaus**

working together to end homelessness

Pawel's story

Our new social enterprise

A special cup of coffee

Successful challenge

Meet team member, Taylor

... and more

News and updates from the Emmaus Bristol community

Spring 2022



Black Hair Code

We're excited to announce that Emmaus Bristol has adopted the Halo Code, the UK's first Black hair code. No Black employee, volunteer or Companion should have to change their natural or protective hairstyle to thrive at our charity.

We hope that the Halo Code will move us one step closer to a world free from discrimination, where all Black members of our community have their identities fully recognised and celebrated.

To find out more about The Halo Code or sign up your own workplace, school, or organisation, visit

halocollective.co.uk

A new way of giving to Emmaus Bristol!

We've signed up to a new fundraising initiative launched by Nectar and Crowdfunder **Nectar Donate**. You can now donate some or all your Nectar points to Emmaus Bristol.

All you need to do is create a Crowdfunder account and link that to your Nectar card. It's very easy to do through the Nectar app or on a computer.

By shopping at Sainsbury's, eBay, Esso, Argos, JustEat and many others, the donated points will soon add up – we'll use them in our work to support Companions to move on from homelessness.

To find out more go to www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/emmaus-bristol



www.emmaus.org.uk/ukraine

Emmaus Europe Appeal

Emmaus Europe has launched a fundraising appeal to support our two Emmaus communities in Ukraine, as well as groups on the Polish and Romanian borders helping Ukrainian refugees.

On Saturday 19 March, we held a one-day solidarity sale and donated all our shops' takings to the appeal, totalling £1,740.

If you missed the sale you can still donate to the appeal online.

Two eco holiday pods have landed right in the heart of Stokes Croft! Holiday accommodation – our new social enterprise – will be available to book soon!

In February, the pods arrived on site – work is ongoing on the plumbing, electrics, stairs, doors and windows.

We embarked on this project three years ago to generate additional income for our charity and provide new work opportunities for the people we support. Our Companions will co-ordinate, maintain and clean the pods, and provide guests with information when staying with us – great opportunities to gain experience in the hospitality and tourism sector, with a view to future paid employment.

The environmental credentials of the project was equally important to us. Agile Property & Homes has designed and managed the sustainable construction of the pods. Made from carbon-capturing materials, the holiday pods will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have low energy demand and associated running costs.

Visitors booking a stay in one of the pods can expect contact-free, studio-style accommodation, with an en-suite bathroom and small balcony. The pods will be fully furnished, including shelves made from reclaimed scaffolding boards and crockery sourced from our pre-loved stock.

We're excited to welcome our first guests!

If you're local to Bristol, why not pop by to take a look at our pods – you can find them from Backfields (off Upper York Street).

TWO NEW ECO PODS



www.emmausbristol.org.uk/book-us/eco-holiday-accommodation

In each issue of **You & Emmaus** we invite you to meet the staff, Companions and volunteers who make up our team.

This edition, we talk to our Premises and Vehicles Coordinator, Taylor.

Taylor joined us in 2019 and is responsible for our Health & Safety and maintenance, completing tasks himself or organising contractors to come in. This May, Taylor is off to represent Emmaus Bristol at the Emmaus World Assembly in Uruguay!

I'm from Portland, Oregon, where there's a huge homelessness problem so it's something I feel quite passionate about.

I look after all the Emmaus Bristol sites. There's always something that needs repairing and my job varies day-by-day.

A 'normal' day starts with a walk around our Stokes Croft site to do routine Health & Safety checks; then I go through my emails and the maintenance list before getting on with the jobs I've lined up – anything from fitting a light bulb, to getting quotes for work from contractors.

Some days things go badly – a burst pipe, a leak in someone's ceiling, or a property that's losing hot water – all things that need to be done straightaway! Often I need to get a contractor in the same day, which is a challenge.

A lot of my role is balancing emergencies with the jobs that are on my to-do list, such as replacing or repairing, or regular inspections of fire doors and extinguishers.

My biggest upcoming project is to install secure bike storage in our yard

Both the staff and Companions at Emmaus Bristol are absolutely great. I'm the only one doing my role but when there's a big project, like repainting a house, the Companions always step up and come to help. They're fantastic!

My favourite thing about working at Emmaus Bristol is being able to see where my work goes. In previous jobs, I worked and worked but never really saw the effects. One example was just after I started: a vacant room at our Shaftesbury House accommodation

had been left in a mess by the previous occupant.

I went in, deep-cleaned everything and repainted the room ready for someone to move in. Being able to see the new Companion, who had been living on the streets, move in to a warm, safe environment was really good. It's just little things like that; **I get to see that my work is going somewhere and is helping people.**

I can't think of many jobs that have given me the same feeling."



Our collaborative coffee

In March, we celebrated our collaboration with Blind Owl Coffee Co. by holding an official launch party at our Stokes Croft shop. Joined by Robyn and Jem from Blind Owl, we handed out free samples of our freshly hand-roasted Morning Motivation blend of high-quality Arabica beans from Brazil and Vietnam, and were delighted to see so many people stop by to talk and purchase a bag of coffee!

"We love what Emmaus Bristol does and how they do it. To us, the sustainability and long-term relationship-building Emmaus offers to those who were formerly homeless made it an easy decision to collaborate. We wanted to use our force for good – by making giving back as easy as popping on the kettle. With every sip you're putting a bit of good straight back into the local community."

We would like to thank Robyn and Jem for making this collaboration possible – another new fundraising venture to help people move on from homelessness.

Morning Motivation is a great coffee with the added kick of knowing that you are helping to reduce homelessness in Bristol. To find out more about the collaboration, our coffee, and to buy online visit www.emmausbristol.org.uk/shop-with-us/coffee. Bags of ground and bean coffee are also available in our shops and on eBay for £6.50.



WE'RE ON TIKTOK! Follow us for video updates about life at Emmaus Bristol: our community, Companions, team and latest news! www.tiktok.com/@emmausbristol

Best place to get back on track

“Emmaus Bristol has given me a door to my future and I’m really happy I moved here in July 2020. If I hadn’t made that decision, I don’t know what would have happened to me.”

I’m from Poland and came to the UK for a break when my 12-year marriage ended. I expected to stay for a month or two. After three months, I found a job to keep me going... that was eight years ago!

Becoming homeless

I’ve lived and worked in lots of place since – London, Birmingham, Doncaster, Scunthorpe, and now Bristol. Just over a year before the first lockdown, I was in Scunthorpe, and everything was alright. I had a place to live and work, but I was a party boy – drink and drugs. When lockdown and Brexit happened, I lost my job, lost my room and became homeless.

I stayed at a friend’s house a few times, but I mostly slept under a bridge in my tent. I started volunteering Monday to Friday in the kitchen of an organisation called The Forge Project,

For that part of the day, I was inside, but at night I was going back to my tent. Occasionally, I would get a bed in a night shelter, which allowed me to wash clothes, shower, and get breakfast.

I stopped using drugs when I was homeless. One day, I woke up in my tent and thought “what I am doing with my life?” I’ve been clean since. I felt really rough for the first few weeks. Drugs had been in my life for nearly 20 years since I started partying and DJing in school. Soon after I stopped, my energy started coming back and I realised that I didn’t need drugs anymore.

Finding Emmaus

I was homeless when the councils started helping people get off the streets in lockdown. I was sent to a beautiful lodge with a farm, not far from Scunthorpe. I stayed for nearly a year and the other people living there became like family.

My support worker told me all about the Emmaus working community. I was really scared to leave the lodge, but I didn’t have a future there – I thought maybe I could have one at Emmaus. When I got accepted, I was happy but scared. I’d never been to Bristol before and knew then that my life was about to change.

I arrived at Emmaus Bristol in a lockdown and spent my first ten days in isolation. It was a hard time – a new place, isolated, and knowing no-one, but I soon became part of the community. Some people





joining Emmaus keep to themselves at first, but I talk all the time! I'm not sure everyone liked me, but everyone accepted me.

Work, and support

The biggest help Emmaus Bristol has given me is getting my documents. My documents had been stolen before I became homeless, I was "Mr. Nobody". Ewa, Fran, and Nicola from the Support Team helped me get my passport, National Insurance number, and settled status. Believe me, it was a really hard fight, but it's now opened so many doors for me.

I've worked in all areas of Emmaus Bristol since joining. I was van crew for the first year, worked in the shops, and cooked a lot for the other companions – usually Polish dishes. I cooked nearly full-time until I became pescetarian

– another step I took to change my life.

A couple of months ago, I joined the Warehouse Team here – everything that happens in the warehouse is on my head! I had experience with warehousing in Poland, so I know what I'm doing. I look after deliveries, sort donations of items, ensure everyone's working together as a team and that we're following health and safety rules. It's a little hard for me to ask for help and I don't like delegating. I prefer to start doing something and then ask others to help me.

I've done lots of training courses: I've got my CSCS card and three Level 2 Catering, Food Hygiene, and Food Safety certificates. Next, I will be doing a Hospitality and Catering course.

I also got money for a new push bike through the Companion Training Fund. I feel much better if I'm riding on my bike. It's good exercise, and I have loads more energy by not sitting in my room watching TV and getting fat... although I'm already there with my belly!

Future plans

I've got lots of plans. I was thinking about doing 'proper life' this year – moving out, getting a job and my own place. That plan's on hold because I've hurt my shoulder and might need an operation, but it does mean that I can do more courses and get more work experience at Emmaus Bristol. I always say that every bad thing is doing something good for you. If something bad happens in my life, it can either give me the opportunity to do something else or it might give me a life lesson, that I can learn from.



Emmaus Bristol is the best place to come if you need help to get back on track. I'm a really good example of how it helps and I'm happy that I have a chance at life now.

UPDATE:

A boost for our Lifesaving Challenge smashes our target!

This winter, our team began a special Lifesaving Challenge to purchase a much-needed community defibrillator for the Stokes Croft area. We've now exceeded our target!

We've been fundraising for three months in a bid to meet the costs of installing a defibrillator and the associated training.

To raise the money, Emmaus Bristol Companions and staff have undertaken personal challenges throughout the winter. **A big thank you** to the Companions who walked miles for this challenge, and Support Team Manager, Fran who ran a daily half marathon from November to April. Fran said:

"It has been quite a challenge throughout the cold, dark months, but we've had great support from the local community. The fact that we can install lifesaving equipment for the Stokes Croft area is amazing."



Members of Bristol Junior Chamber at Stokes Croft with Emmaus team members

We were thrilled to learn about the generous donation of £1,466 from Bristol Junior Chamber – the proceeds of the raffle held at its annual black-tie dinner in March. The Bristol Junior Chamber is a networking organisation for young professionals in the city.

www.emmausbristol.org.uk

Stokes Croft shop/office: Backfields House, Upper York Street, BS2 8QU

Bedminster shop: 72 Bedminster Parade, BS3 4HL

Emmaus Vintage: 332 Gloucester Rd, BS7 8TJ

Online shop: www.ebay.co.uk/str/emmausbristol

eBay app: search 'seller: emmausbristol

Emmaus Bristol is a charity registered in England and Wales: 1071538 and a registered limited company: 03579001

working together to end homelessness

