

Hope Frome Report for FACT AGM 11/05/15

Hope Frome is still alive, but only just. The lack of response from the churches has led me to believe that Hope Frome, in its current form, is no longer relevant or required. It may be that a period of quiet is necessary in order for the gaps to appear and for these to then be assessed in order to determine future action. I have spoken to John Samways about this and said that although I am willing to still hold the portfolio, I am not prepared to flog the proverbial 'dead horse'.

What is still going on is the Hope Coffee Van; this continues to function, under Gary Lee's leadership, once a fortnight on a Friday evening. However, there is still a shortage of volunteers and some evening we are very thin on the ground indeed. Nevertheless, we carry on and try to serve the town in the normal way. Recent developments at the 'Wheatsheaves' have meant that the Van has to close for business at around 1.30am, which is considerably earlier than the considered norm of c 3.00am. The Wheatsheaves have decided to close at 2.00am, and we have to finish before that as we simply couldn't cope with the potential numbers that may turn up at that time. Furthermore, there are some 'noises' being made by the police, who feel that our very presence encourages pre-18ers to stay out late. This may or may not be true but clearly a discussion needs to be had with some of the principal stakeholders.

Other traditional aspects of what Hope Frome has done in the past will continue to function as and when required; litter picking and assisting at Frome events, such as the Frome Festival etc, will still happen, although I really don't see HF as a glorified extension to Somerset Waste Partnership! Ideally, we would love to attract more (and especially younger) people to demonstrate the love and will of Christ, which is the practical 'right arm' of FACT.

I trust that this doesn't read too negatively – that is not the intention at all. However, it is vital that the current position is clearly understood in order for the Phoenix to rise.....and with God's blessing, it will.

Chris & Jane Stafford