



Breaking the cycle of homelessness for young people in Colchester

“Even though you knew my trauma you accepted me, you didn't turn me down. You didn't think that I'd be too difficult to deal with.”

*Jenny, 21**



Annual Report 2024 - 2025

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I'm sure I'm not alone when I say that I feel like the pace of change is accelerating in many aspects of my life, and being chair of Korban for the last year is no exception. We've seen a good deal of change over the last twelve months in our staff team, our residents and our strategic position. We've said farewell and thank you to some valued members of the team and had the good fortune to appoint some excellent new staff members over the last year. Residents have moved on well into independent living and new residents have taken their place, bringing their own character to the community that is Korban. As trustees we are embracing the opportunity that comes with the changing relationship with the Diocese of Chelmsford as we look ahead to our lease at Bethany Place ending in November 2027.



In all this change we can see God's providence. The new staff team is a true blessing to the whole Korban family. They bring gifts, insights and energy that ensure that we can offer flexible and tailored support to meet the changing needs of our residents. And as we begin to explore the strategic options for Korban's future, in this time of change, we are aware of the people and organisations that hold Korban in high regard and greatly value the provision for the young people of Colchester.

In Luke 15:8-9, Jesus tells the story of the woman who has ten silver coins but loses one; how she lights a lamp, sweeps the house to search for the coin and then celebrates with her neighbours when she finds it. Jesus' purpose is to teach his audience about how much God loves each one of us and that He never gives up on searching for us and calling us back. Young people at risk of homelessness have inevitably already experienced isolation from family and loss of security, making them vulnerable at such a key stage in their lives. Despite our changing world, Colchester Korban Project continues to passionately pursue excellence as a Christian supported housing provider. We demonstrate God's love for the least and the lost through community living and support that empowers our young people to break the cycle of homelessness and live the fulfilled and purposeful lives that God desires for them.

Nicky Sirett

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

An excellent year for impact... 86% of residents who moved on did so positively!

Sadly this success is against record youth homelessness in the UK. The latest report from Centrepont shows that in 2023-24, over **118,000 young people aged 16-24** approached their local authority for help due to homelessness — **a 10% increase** from the previous year. That's **one young person facing homelessness every four minutes**, a stark reminder of the scale and urgency of the issue. Even more troubling, **54% of all rough sleepers first experienced homelessness before the age of 25**, highlighting how early intervention is not just important, it's essential.



These numbers reflect a growing crisis driven by rising rents, family breakdowns, and gaps in mental health and social care support. **At Korban, we're working to change this trajectory.**

As in the health and education sectors, since Covid we've found that more support is needed to help our residents achieve the same outcomes. Being aware of this we planned to develop our service and increased our staffing significantly in May 2023 – with our 5 year National Lottery grant that started in August 2024 we've been able to sustain this level. As a result, in January we were able to introduce a daily support structure from 10am - 12noon on week days, designed to help our residents get in a good routine, build resilience and learn some new skills.

At the end of last year's report I wrote that we were looking forward to recruiting a new staff member and enjoying some stability as a team – I couldn't have anticipated the unprecedented changes to come as we now have a completely new team and have said goodbye to some established staff.

In spite of this we had a record 15 young people living at Korban this year and a record 7 who moved on. **We're proud to report that 6 of these move-ons (86%) were positive!** Showing that with the right support, young people can and do succeed.

We are really thankful to God as our firm foundation, in spite of the constantly changing staff situation this year, that we've been so blessed to see our residents achieving so much.

We are now due to enter the second year of a stepped 3 year rent increase to a more commercial level, after many years of generosity from our landlord, the Diocese of Chelmsford. While we are confident in God's faithfulness, we will be praying and working hard to ensure Korban can continue to serve young homeless people in Colchester as we take on the fundraising challenge to secure our future.

Mark Wood

LIFE AT KORBAN / SUPPORT STRUCTURE

Korban has always provided good holistic support with residents having weekly one-to-one support meetings, ad hoc and emergency support, creating and developing tailored opportunities, as well as advocacy and accompanying residents to appointments where necessary.

Communal meals have always been a central feature of life at Korban and this year we've enjoyed approximately **50 communal meals** with residents involved in planning and cooking most of them, although sometimes to varying degrees! We've done barbecues and homemade pizzas together, making the dough from scratch and using passata as a base for the sauce.

In the lead up to Christmas last year 3 of the residents made pencil pots with felt and coffee tins. They looked professional and were sold at our last AGM to **raise money for the Toilet Twinning initiative (Tearfund)**. The photo and certificate is proudly displayed in our hub house as a permanent reminder of the benefit to others.

Kicking off 2025 our new daily support structure incorporated more social interaction, lifeskills, fitness, creativity/craft, psychological and emotional development, and improving the environment.

- ♦ A community outreach advisor from the **Royal Horticultural Society** facilitated sessions with residents making macrame baskets for plants and pouches with dried flowers and herbs.
- ♦ 4 residents participated in a **national Emerging Leaders initiative, "Leadership for Life"** at Kingsland Church Community Centre.
- ♦ We've facilitated **personal development sessions** on Character strengths and virtues (positive psychology), Communication and Coping with change, as well as interview skills and preparation.
- ♦ For **"Fitness Friday"** we've done badminton sessions, walks, flown a kite and been to different places that residents have requested including the beach at Holland-on-Sea, Cudmore Grove Park (East Mersea), West Mersea beach, Dedham and Brightlingsea. We celebrated a resident's birthday with ice creams and had a poignant time marking a bereavement with one of the residents, at her request.
- ♦ Revd Sam Lees returned in the summer to continue working with our residents on the **Korban soapbox cart** for the upcoming Colchester competition.
- ♦ Becci Lees, a local artist and business owner, donated her time and materials leading most of the craft sessions. These included **designing T-Shirts, making slime, and transforming our lounge/dining room** which now has homemade resin art, canvases and other creative pieces by all of our residents, so Korban feels more and more like a home.
- ♦ We encouraged and supported residents to apply for paid and voluntary work. **3 started regular volunteering; 2 at a local café for rescued animals and 1 at a charity shop who got a paid job by the end of the year.**

KORBAN FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Over the year we said goodbye to some great people as they took up new opportunities elsewhere. This had a big impact on the team and especially on the residents as they've built trusting relationships – while we can't change this we take the time to do endings well, and model how to celebrate people's contribution and express our appreciation and sadness.

The following people go with our thanks and blessings for all they contributed to Korban:

Michelle who served for 4 years as our Office Manager (and latterly did some support work), Lizzie who did 2 years as Supported Housing Manager, and Egli our move-on project worker who was only with us 9 months. Former trustee Stella Lee has retired from providing supervision for our Chief Executive and we've also said goodbye to Sam and Becci Lees who've moved to pastures new.

This has given us the opportunity to bring some fresh blood into the Korban family. We've welcomed Rae Doney as a support worker, Jo Wright as our Administration Coordinator, Karen Loring to provide supervision, and Patsi Brown who took on the role of Supported Housing Manager in August as Tony Chasteauneuf (our interim Support Housing and development manager) prepared to handover. We also appointed Myla Carey as Support worker focused on move-on, who will start in the next Korban year!

Tony joined us in May, having previously worked at a much larger charity and prior to that in regional development for the Salvation Army. He commented that one of his highlights was working directly with residents and felt that the activities we ran which gave opportunity for relational connection were valuable and appreciated. He enjoyed the chance to be involved in creative discussions with the team and described Korban as “very much a learning environment” and appreciated “being able to tackle issues as a team. The absence of finger pointing makes it feel a safe place to share differing perspectives.” Tony has now gone on to be CEO at Emmaus Suffolk.

During the year we've continued to upskill the team taking advantage of different training available as well as our own bespoke programme developed in the previous year, and we continue to be blessed by our faithful volunteers: Andy Courtier our committed handyman, Blad Kamacho who does extra handyman duties, Helen Sims in the office, Mee-Foong who coordinates our prayer team and all those volunteers who do the Fareshare Go weekly food collection from Tesco.

We are especially grateful to longstanding friend of Korban, Ian Hurst, who abseiled off the Lloyds of London Insurance building with his daughter. He raised £1965 including a double match fund by his employer Ki insurance.

VICTORIES THIS YEAR

15 different young people have lived at Korban this year. 7 were new residents; 5 of whom started at Bethany Place and 2 went straight to Bethel House.

7 of our residents moved on, and 6 out of those (86%) were positive!

This includes:

- ♦ 2 residents who each moved into their own council flat
- ♦ 2 residents moved into one of their relatives' as a couple (after meeting at Korban) to save up to get somewhere together
- ♦ 1 resident moved to live on a boat which he was doing up – what he'd always wanted
- ♦ 1 resident moved in with her boyfriend
- ♦ 1 resident moved in with a relative to provide end of life care

The following measures are based on our monthly Assessment and Review format, where residents self-report scores for 11 areas:

- ♦ **67% of residents' mental health has improved and/or stabilised**
- ♦ **67% of residents' key relationships have improved and/or stabilised**
- ♦ **80% of residents money management improved and/or stabilised**
- ♦ **73% were in paid work, regular volunteering or full time education and nearly half of those started or increased this while at Korban**

"I was at 6th Form College when I came to Korban. I initially found it a challenge to live in the same house with other young people and also because I was in poor health. My tendency to be OCD about things like cleanliness didn't help either, but having a settled place to live and away from toxic family relationships helped me to focus on my studies.

I was pleased to get good A level results including 2 distinctions in my level 3 BTEC... I was planning to go to university but instead I got an opportunity to train for my dream job. I was so pleased to be accepted once I'd completed the 6 week training programme. Shortly afterwards I went to live at the 'move on' house and formed a good friendship with one of the other residents there, but after a few months with a lot of travelling I realised I wanted a job with a greater challenge and better pay. I started applying for loads of different jobs which led to me getting a local office-based job where I could build up experience in a new area.

Now I have a steady job and my personal life is more settled, I'm so looking forward to moving out of supported accommodation. I think I've matured as a person since I've been at Korban and I'm really grateful for the support I've received and that they believe in me and have encouraged me... I'm excited that I've managed to get a flat in the area I wanted and I will be commuting into London soon for a new job that I was offered last week!"

Resident testimonial: Claire, aged 20*

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Despite the ongoing cost of living crisis and uncertain economic climate, we have been blessed this year:

- ♦ The National Lottery Reaching Communities grant of £166,643, began in August 2024, pays towards 3 employees' salaries over the course of 5 years.
- ♦ Kingsland Church increased their regular financial support to £4800 per year.
- ♦ Equippers got involved again at Christmas, paying for gifts and vouchers for our residents.
- ♦ St Mary's Dedham, St Leonard's Lexden, All Saints' & St John's Great Horkesley and Greenstead Evangelical Free Church all continued supporting Korban's work, with Foulsham Baptist Church making a one-off donation.
- ♦ Root & Grooves gave £600 as the result of a fundraising event.
- ♦ Palmer & Partners 500 club chose Korban as one of the charities for their monthly donation and gave us £500, and another local business has continued giving to Korban. There has also been an increase in individuals giving regularly.
- ♦ We joined Colchester Round table to raise money through the Santa's sleigh scheme as usual, which resulted in a donation of £682.62.
- ♦ Colchester Centurion Rotary club gave £500.
- ♦ The Korban Ceilidh raised approximately £250.
- ♦ We received the first payment of £117 from paypal giving as a result of Ian's charity abseil, with the remaining £1848 to come next year.

We spent the last of the Colchester Catalyst grant on our training programme and we still have £390 from the restricted funding we received in 2019 from Colchester Borough Homes (voted on by CBH Tenants and Leaseholders) - this is to use towards residents moving into new accommodation for furniture and move-on support for those who need it.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Colchester Korban Project is a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee i.e. a company not having a share capital. Our memorandum and articles of association were incorporated on 25th June 2008 and amended at an EGM on 16th July 2020 to better reflect our ethos and update some articles regarding membership.

The charity was registered on 27th August 2008.

The trustees meet 5 times a year. Decisions are reached by a majority of votes, providing a quorum of 2 voting members is present (or a tenth of the total number of persons entitled to vote, whichever is the greater). We have a robust process for appointing new trustees including vetting and appropriate checks that they are eligible to serve in this way, which is available on request.

The trustees serving during this year were: **Nicky Sirett (Chair), Revd Anthony Bushell, Richard Spencer and Cllr Tim Young.**

The trustees and Chief Executive work collaboratively on strategic planning, and the Chief Executive is responsible for the operational side of the charity.

Colchester Korban Project is also known as Korban.

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

In exercising our powers and duties, the trustees of Colchester Korban Project have carried out our work with due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the charity commission.

This annual report was approved on 5th December 2025 and is signed on behalf of the trustees:

Nicky Sirett:.......... (Chair)

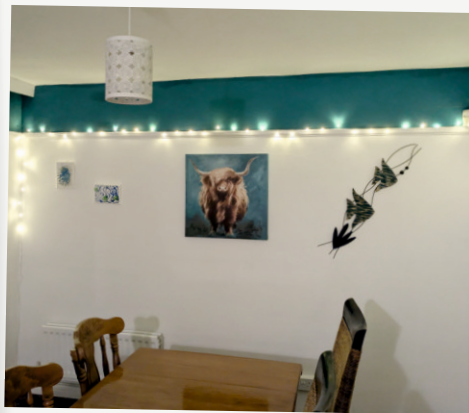
www.korban.org.uk

Colchester Korban Project is a Charitable Company. Charity no: 1125617 Company no: 06630415
Registered office: Bethany Place, St Anne's Vicarage, Compton Road, Colchester CO4 0BQ
Patrons: The Rt. Revd. Roger Morris, Bishop of Colchester and The Venerable Ruth Patten, Archdeacon of Colchester

* Names, ages and some personal details have been changed to protect residents' identities



*L to R: Rae, Jo, Mark,
Patsi and Myla*



*Newly decorated dining
room*



The finishing touches!



*"The best pizza I've
ever eaten!"*



Christmas Dinner



Cudmore Grove trip



Ian abseiling



Becci Lees' craft session