

3rd October

“The work of Launchpad in helping homeless people in Reading”

This was an inspiring and encouraging introduction to the work of the local charity Launchpad.

Sophie Stokes opened our eyes to the plight of homeless people by first defining different types of homelessness and how people become homeless, often through no fault of their own making. We were told that Reading has one of the highest rates of homeless people in the country: 407, or 1 in 162 households. There are also 30,000 people in social housing.

Launchpad began in 1979 when some students from Reading University decided to do something about the homeless. By 2011 it became an independent charity which is now providing housing support; floating support, helping people with benefit applications, budgeting, healthcare and developing life skills; and drop-in housing advice. It works with other local organisations such as Readifood, the Salvation Army and Faith. Launchpad seeks to help its clients regain their independence, find employment and a proper home.