

Newsletter  
June 2021

NewHope

PREVENTING  
HOMELESSNESS.  
TRANSFORMING  
LIVES.

# EVERY STEP OF THE WAY



**INSIDE** → DISCOVER HOW YOU CAN HELP PEOPLE  
WALK AWAY FROM HOMELESSNESS – FOR GOOD

# Home, Health and Hope

**“ When you’ve had a lifetime of traumatic events the pandemic just becomes the latest tough thing to deal with. ”**

**So said a former rough sleeper to me, now permanently housed, healthy and full of hope (he’s employed full-time). What Gary (not his real name) said is true of course. People experiencing homelessness generally – but not always – have had more difficulties thrown at them than most of us could comprehend.**

But people like Gary, typically become impressively resilient at dealing with life’s challenges. It has been said that ‘when life gives you lemons, make lemonade’. This is what Gary has done. And this is what New Hope strives to do every day of the year with people like Gary.

On Friday 15th January this year something remarkable happened. After being battered by COVID-19 for nearly a year we were able to officially report there was not one person known to be sleeping rough on the streets of



Watford that night, and since then numbers have been zero or very low. When one considers that there were around 80 people sleeping rough in Watford last March the transformation has been quite remarkable. It was humbling to hear Dean Russell MP commending in the House of Commons the work of New Hope, One YMCA and Watford Borough Council in this regard. Truly, lemonade has been made out of the lemons.

We know it's going to be very challenging going forwards which is why we need your ongoing support. Ironically, as restrictions ease we fear that homelessness will increase. Perhaps steeply. So, we're pleased to be delivering a new service – Outreach Plus – to be based at The Sanctuary which will lead on work with people facing street homelessness over the coming year. Please do pray for this new service and every aspect of New Hope's work but, most of all, please pray for the men and women we are here to serve that like Gary, they would have a home, health and hope.

Matthew

Matthew Heasman  
CEO



# EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

**Recovery from homelessness is possible but it usually isn't easy.** This is why New Hope is there every step of the way, walking alongside people – from street outreach to our own accommodation services to independent living – offering bespoke care with patience, compassion and kindness.

Please, if you can,  
give today and help people  
walk away from homelessness.

**[newhope.org.uk/  
every-step](http://newhope.org.uk/every-step)**

## Step 1 Providing the Essentials

£4.98 can provide a person who is facing street homelessness with the essentials: hot and healthy food, clean clothing, laundry facilities, a shower and toiletries.



“ I was an alcoholic, took drugs, was homeless. The Haven was good for food and support and got me into accommodation. New Hope has been a massive turning point for me. ”

New Hope resident

## Step 2 Key to Recovery

£17 can provide a person living in New Hope accommodation with a key working session. Trained in coaching skills, mental health first aid, listening skills and motivational interviewing techniques our key workers are pivotal in helping people recover from homelessness.

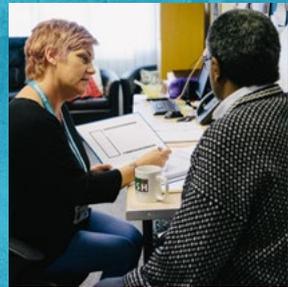


“ Staff are great. I feel supported. I feel safe. I’m learning life skills. I feel hopeful for the future. ”

New Hope resident

## Step 3 Moving to Independence

£35 can provide someone with support setting up a new home following a period of homelessness. Our Tenancy Sustainment Team helps people transition to independent living. Support workers walk alongside people to help set up benefits, find essential household goods and manage bills.



“ I am working step by step with someone who had spent many years street homeless. He was very proud to be able to tell us that he sorted out a new contract for his electricity on his own. He is slowly making his way to total independence. ”

TST Support Worker

# EVERYONE IN

**On 23 March 2020 Prime Minister Boris Johnson said 'we MUST stay at home'. But how do you 'stay home' when you have no home?**

Quickly, a solution emerged and the staff at New Hope worked tirelessly with Watford Borough Council, One YMCA and Dean Russell MP to ensure that over 80 people who were rough sleeping were housed in temporary accommodation in the town. We then began distributing three meals a day (seven days a week) to all those in temporary accommodation as well as supporting the few individuals who chose to remain sleeping rough. Alongside the meals, our staff and volunteers provided crucial support with mental health and substance misuse.



Our work then focused on ensuring that people did not return to rough sleeping when lockdown ended. Thankfully, the majority of people were able to remain in the temporary accommodation or move to alternative accommodation. We continued working with people who remained sleeping on the streets and in January 2021, we were pleased to report that the number of Verified Rough Sleepers in Watford was zero!

**March 2020**

**80** verified rough sleepers in Watford

Plus an additional 25 self-defined (this means we weren't able to verify that they were sleeping rough).

**March 2021**

**0** verified rough sleepers in Watford

\*Figure correct March 2021



## > From 23 March 2020 to 22 March 2021:



550

550 people in total received help from New Hope



18,632

18,632 nights of accommodation were provided



199

199 people came to the Haven Support Centre with a **new case** of homelessness and received advice and support, including finding accommodation, providing travel expenses to re-connect with family in another part of the country, and helping with benefits.

## Reasons people were facing homelessness



5,397

The Haven Support Centre provided 5,397 instances of humanitarian support (food, clothing, toiletries etc)



34

34 individuals moved on from New Hope accommodation into longer-term accommodation,

such as renting their own home or social housing



“I would only be too happy to praise the local organisations in [Dean Russell’s] constituency [Watford] such as New Hope and One YMCA. As I said earlier in my remarks, I think those people who are working on the front line of tackling rough sleeping whether that’s support workers, volunteers, in soup kitchens, people in local councils and many other spheres are incredibly brave, courageous people who are doing great work, noble work which often goes unnoticed and deserve our respect and recognition today as we see the fruits of the hard work with the statistics that have been published. His constituency is one of a number that has recently reported zero rough sleepers.”



**Robert Jenrick**

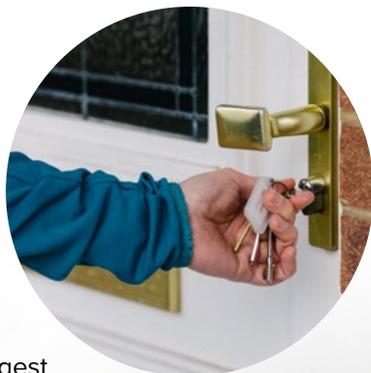
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government



# New Hope for new HOMES

**We are delighted to announce New Hope is one of a small number of charities benefitting from a Nationwide Building Society Community Grant. New Hope has been awarded £41,430 to fund our intensive housing support for people setting up their own home, possibly for the very first time.**

We're incredibly grateful to Nationwide for awarding us this funding which will allow us to address the biggest hurdles; it provides financial support towards both deposits and essential items we all need in our homes, and it also provides a member of staff who can work intensively with people during those first few weeks of their new tenancy.



The team at Nationwide's Watford branch are keen to support the work of New Hope too and said "Nationwide Building Society is thrilled to

donate a cheque for £41,430 from our Community Grant Programme to New Hope towards their Project Home initiative. We're passionate in our efforts to help local charities tackle the housing crisis and support society's most vulnerable people in our local communities. At the Watford Branch of Nationwide we are hoping to build a long-lasting relationship with New Hope which will be in place beyond the grant."

**“ We have been working with a service user who has complex needs and needs a lot of support with letters and phone calls, but did not trust people. So we persevered with him with weekly meetings, then he started to trust us a lot more and started phoning me when he had a problem or just needed to have a chat about things that were going on. He trusts us and he knows we are here for him. We never give up on anyone we work with. ”**

Stuart, support worker at New Hope's Tenancy Sustainment Team



**“ Our dream of having our personal flat has been accomplished and we feel very happy living our lives the way we always wanted. Our appreciation and gratitude to all staff and management of New Hope. You all deserve 5 stars. ”**

A grateful couple



# Introducing

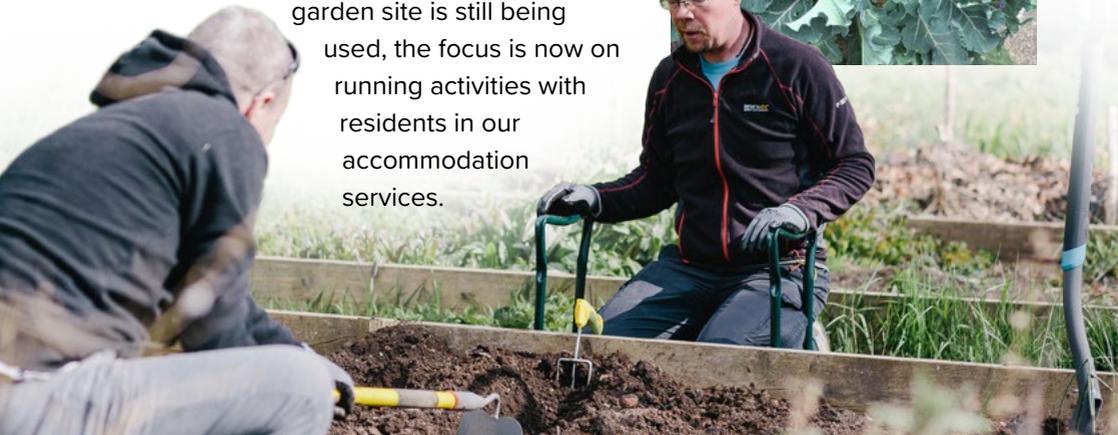
# CULTIVATE



**Spring is a time of new life and, appropriately, this April saw the start of a new service, Cultivate.**

Cultivate offers a new flexible approach, focusing on therapeutic activities, specifically horticultural therapy, but also including art, writing, music, life skills and practical activities.

As Cultivate begins, the Community Market Garden service ends. The garden team have become the Cultivate team and, while the garden site is still being used, the focus is now on running activities with residents in our accommodation services.



A resident at the Sanctuary decided to come down to the garden a few weeks ago instead of going drinking and took a particular interest in some blackcurrant cuttings that were struggling amongst a mass of weeds. The resident asked for a trowel and carefully weeded the patch saying “they’ve got no chance with all those weeds.” I asked whether he would consider digging one up, putting it in a pot and looking after it in his bedroom. He said he would like that and gently potted it up with fresh compost and a little bit of plant food.

Four weeks later it had transformed from a twig into a well-loved plant! The resident said that he turns it round every day so that all parts of it

**We tripled the ingredients and made 12 pizzas for a Sanctuary pizza night. One of the residents, having just finished it, said “That’s the nicest pizza I’ve ever had!”**



Enable someone to attend a Cultivate session by donating today.  
[newhope.org.uk/cultivate-give](http://newhope.org.uk/cultivate-give)

get the light and carried it proudly round the Sanctuary showing everyone, saying ‘It was just a stick and now look at it!’. We spoke together about caring for this plant and how that relates to caring for himself and how he is so much more precious than this wonderful plant.

**Ian Bond**  
Horticultural therapist/  
Cultivate Manager



**A participant planted lettuce and tomato seeds in his mini propagator and called it his “BLT planting!” (Bacon, lettuce and tomato). He’ll be keeping a close watch on the seeds making sure they don’t go dry!**





**Did  
you know  
a legacy  
enabled New Hope  
to buy a house? Did you  
know that every gift,  
large or small, makes  
a big difference?**

# You only live once

the chance to make  
a difference

**Being alive is an extraordinary privilege – when we see a new-born baby we feel afresh just how miraculous life is, and feel the urge to nurture and support the new person no one yet knows.**



**by Tim Robson**  
New Hope Co-Founder

We all receive this gift just once – one chance to become who we were made to be – to grow and flourish, to develop our gifts in the society we live in, to love and serve those around us.

Birthdays appear to come around remarkably regularly, when we celebrate another year achieved and send best wishes for ‘many happy returns’ – hopefully for many years to come. One of my homeless patients once passed on to me the book he was reading – an essay by Seneca ‘On the shortness of life’ written around A.D. 49, apparently to his father-in-law. It’s a blunt title but it does remind us that birthdays are also the countdown to the day when we will no longer be here to bless and serve those around us.

Many of us will leave things to family, and will have been encouraged to consider ‘inheritance planning’. Time waits for no man but it is worth making time to make a will – and plan to release assets to give what we could perhaps never have given during our lives – enough to support staff coming alongside homeless people and supporting them to rebuild their lives, maybe enough to buy a HopeHome for a homeless person to finally feel at home in. The difference you can make can be enormous – restoring New Hope to broken lives.

Don’t miss an exciting chance to make your life count that bit more, living on after you have gone.

► [newhope.org.uk/legacies](https://newhope.org.uk/legacies)

# A Reflection on Lockdown

When we come to the end of a year, we often reflect on what has happened in the world, in our country, in our family and in our own life. However, we have all experienced one same situation this last year, the word 'lockdown'.

We have coped in the Watford charity shop with three such lockdowns/ closures of the shop. The first was relatively easy as some of us had gardens to tend to and the weather was gorgeous. The second one, although only lasting a few weeks, was manageable! However, this last one was extremely difficult, no Christmas to share with family, no Easter to gather with people.

As manager of the shop it was great to keep in touch with the team but best of all was more time to really be still with God; to get to know our neighbours, to bake cakes and share with others too; to share our love of the Lord with others; to remember our customers, particularly those we knew would be struggling at this time; more time to pray and to read God's Word (the Bible).

The charity shop wasn't standing still during lockdown, things have been going on behind closed doors. Some amazing donations had been piling up in people's spare rooms, garages etc.

ready for collection and sorting. The amazing thing was I had £2,000 ready to put into the till when we opened on 12th April.

God is good all the time.

**by Polly Odbert,**  
Volunteer Shop Manager

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY POLLY

**Polly has been shop manager since 2006 but a volunteer since 1992. She celebrated a special birthday in April – and we celebrated too! Thank you for all you do Polly!**



# MIHAI'S STORY

A victim of people-trafficking, Mihai\*, slept rough for seven years.

**“ Life was very hard. There was no help available. I was very stressed, lonely, angry. I slept in garages, outside. I was very scared of dying. Being on the street is like being in prison. ”**

Referred to New Hope by the police, Mihai was able to move into the Sanctuary, where he lived for nine months, until moving into his own place at the end of last year. He is now being supported by our Tenancy Sustainment Team.

Our person-centred approach helped Mihai to trust us. We were able to help Mihai with his ID documents and immigration status; his key worker acted as an advocate with the Job Centre and the Home Office.

**“ Every member of staff helped me. The Sanctuary changed my life. I feel respected. They helped me get Universal Credit and Housing Benefit. I'm grateful to be alive. ”**

\*Not his real name

# Goodbye, Keith

**Sadly, Keith Glenister passed away at the end of February. He died peacefully in hospital at the age of 78. Keith was known to many supporters of New Hope through his work at the furniture project and garden and was a much-loved member of North Bushey Baptist Church. One of his friends there told us: “He’d found his place at the New Hope garden and was so proud to show me his work.”**





**Rob Edmonds, who is now New Hope's Head of Services, first met Keith over 20 years ago when Keith was sleeping rough.**

“ Our first meeting was at Watford Junction, he said that he had been sleeping rough for several years since losing both of his parents. He was like a little boy in a man's clothes who had given up on life and had no hope. We encouraged him to come to the Haven for food and support and then he moved into the Sanctuary and then to New Hope House. On his 60th birthday, he moved into his flat where he lived for the rest of his life. Keith continued to be a part of New Hope through the furniture project where he developed wood carving skills.

My mum still has the sign that he made for her house! ”



**Keith's story was featured in Entertaining Angels:**

“ I was given a place at New Hope House, where I lived for six months and got

back to civilisation. Then they helped me get a bedsit of my own in a nearby village. While living at New Hope House I got interested in the furniture recycling scheme and began working in the woodwork shop. I now have a City and Guilds certificate which qualifies me as a carver, and I'm so proud to be able to say that. I work in the shop four days a week and find it very relaxing. It gives me something to do and I can go away at the end of the day satisfied, knowing I've achieved something. ”





# To all the wonderful volunteers

Join our new **CULTIVATE** team!  
[newhope.org.uk/volunteer](http://newhope.org.uk/volunteer)

“Over this last year I have recruited amazing volunteers, especially over the first lockdown, when things were unsure.

We needed volunteers quickly and I had a great response from new and current volunteers. Without you we would have found things even more challenging. I have had so many phone calls from services thanking you for all the support, great talks, laughter and enjoyment you all bring. This was a very proud moment for a volunteer officer to see in such a difficult and vulnerable time; we all came together as a community.

I am grateful that I have so many wonderful volunteers that have stayed on and are enjoying their time with New Hope. I also want to thank those who have been unable to volunteer due to shops having to close, shielding, or not required. I know you have been thinking of us and it has been great seeing so many lovely faces coming back now things are easing! Again, thank you to all the volunteers for everything you do, one of the reasons I love my job is because of you all!”

**Ekta Gurney**  
HR and Volunteer Officer

“During the first lockdown my children became concerned about how the homeless would be protected from COVID, so we looked at how we could help in the community. We started with weekly food collections from Lidl. This meant my teenage son could come along with me to help out with the food collection and I also started helping out at the Haven on weekends. Volunteering at the Haven

works around my job and family commitments. I enjoy the team atmosphere and meeting new people. New Hope is a wonderful charity and it's great to feel a small part of it, enabling people get the support and intervention they need to move on from homelessness.”

**Rebecca**



“ I started volunteering with New Hope a couple of years ago and I enjoy my time here. I am impressed how the charity has adapted in the last year and how they are still able to deliver their services. I have volunteered for the winter shelter and am now cooking for the service users. On a personal level during my volunteering I have gained confidence with my communication and team skills in which I have been able to transfer to my work. I enjoy my time volunteering and will continue with New Hope as long as I can. ”

**Nik**



“ Helping the local homeless community by supporting New Hope’s cause has given me a fresh approach and an appreciation for what’s important in life.

New Hope is a valuable pillar in Watford. New Hope’s staff and volunteers work incredibly hard and do a fantastic job. The highlight for me as a volunteer was seeing a service user that I first met at the Watford Winter Shelter, move into housing and continue his journey supported by New Hope. ”

**Paul**



“ The scary thing about homelessness is that it can happen to anyone and can happen in the blink of an eye. New Hope acts as a safety net for the people who are blind-sided by it, offering hot food and drink and a chat to anyone experiencing homelessness. God forbid, but if it were to happen to me or anyone I know, New Hope would be there to help me out. ”

**Nadir**

“ I have volunteered for 11 years at the garden and it has been great to help those that have no homes and show people how to plant. I have also found it rewarding and love the garden as it’s peaceful and God is very present here. ”

**Cathy**

“ I have been volunteering for just over a year now and have found it very rewarding. The staff and volunteers are very welcoming and it is good to be able to support other people in less fortunate circumstances than myself. ”

**Tony**



# FUNDRAISING



## Move-in packs from local transport firm



Lucketts, the coach and taxi firm, has generously purchased several move-in packs, which include kitchenware and bedding, for people leaving New Hope accommodation and moving into independent accommodation. They have also provided vouchers for new clothing for people accessing the Haven Support Centre.

## Practical winter gifts

Thanks to the Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (UK) who donated 60 bags containing blankets, hats, gloves, scarfs, jogging bottoms, socks, toiletries and fleeces in January.

## Well done, Jack!

Jack, who is in year 6 at school, contacted us to ask how he could help raise money to help people affected by homelessness. Inspired by Loans Warehouse's fundraising endeavour, Jack too ran a marathon over a month and raised over £500 smashing his target of £150!



## Pot Noodle appeal

When the third lockdown began, we once again needed a large supply of pot noodles for people accommodated temporarily in hotels. We put an appeal on social media and you responded quickly and generously! Thank you!



# HEROES

## A marathon fundraising effort!

Watford-based firm, Loans Warehouse, raised over £15,000 through their January challenge. Over 100 people throughout the country ran 26.2 miles (a marathon) over the course of January. Matt Tristram, Loans Warehouse Co-Founder, said:

“ Small, unsung charities like New Hope are doing fantastic work all over the country and while this 2021 Challenge aims to raise money for the here and now, if it acts as a catalyst to encourage more of us to look beyond ourselves and donate on a regular basis or volunteer to help others, our country and our own lives will be infinitely richer. ”

## Pizza dough-nations!

The Moor Park and Eastbury Neighbours Together group kindly arranged for Social Dough Pizza Company to provide pizzas on several occasions (60 each time!) for people in temporary accommodation and in New Hope accommodation.



# MORE FUNDRAISING

## Christmas treats from WWGS

Thank you to the fabulous West Watford Golfing Society who, once again, donated funds for Christmas meals in our



accommodation services. A real treat at a particularly difficult time of year.



## One for the books

Thank you to St Helen's School, Northwood who raised over £3,000 for the work of New Hope with a sponsored Read-a-thon. Students, parents, families, staff, alumnae, governors and friends of the school were sponsored to read as many books as possible.



## Christmas thanks

Thank you to everyone who donated to our Christmas appeal, Not Alone at Christmas. Over £25,000 was raised to help people facing Christmas alone with no home to go to. We'd like to say thank you to everyone who purchased items (often anonymously) from our wishlists.



**Josi Zane** is our Fundraising and Communications Officer.

Please get in touch with Josi on **[jjane@newhope.org.uk](mailto:jjane@newhope.org.uk)** or **01923 227 132** if you would like to find out more about fundraising for New Hope.

# HEROES



## Roundups – a new way to give

We are excited to be involved with a new way of donating to charities. Roundups is a brand-new company, co-founded by a Watford resident and a previous New Hope volunteer, enabling people to give small amounts of money to charity each time they shop. We're pleased to be one of the first charities using Roundups and received £57 last month!

Roundups rounds up all of your card payments to a whole number and donates the pennies to your chosen charity. You can choose to round up your card payments to the nearest 10p, 50p or £1.00. You can also set a weekly cap.

Search on your phone for the Roundup app today and start giving next time you shop.



## Ultra grateful!

Mario De Crescenzo and Stephen O'Grady braved the heat and ran 50km (just over 31 miles) over the South Downs in aid of New Hope on 5 June. Mario is a transformation coach and a New Hope volunteer and Stephen is a former New Hope service user.

Mario said:

**“For the last two years or so I’ve volunteered at New Hope. I have to say, my journey with New Hope has been a truly valuable and nourishing experience and I’ve witnessed some amazing life transformations thanks to the great work that New Hope does.”**

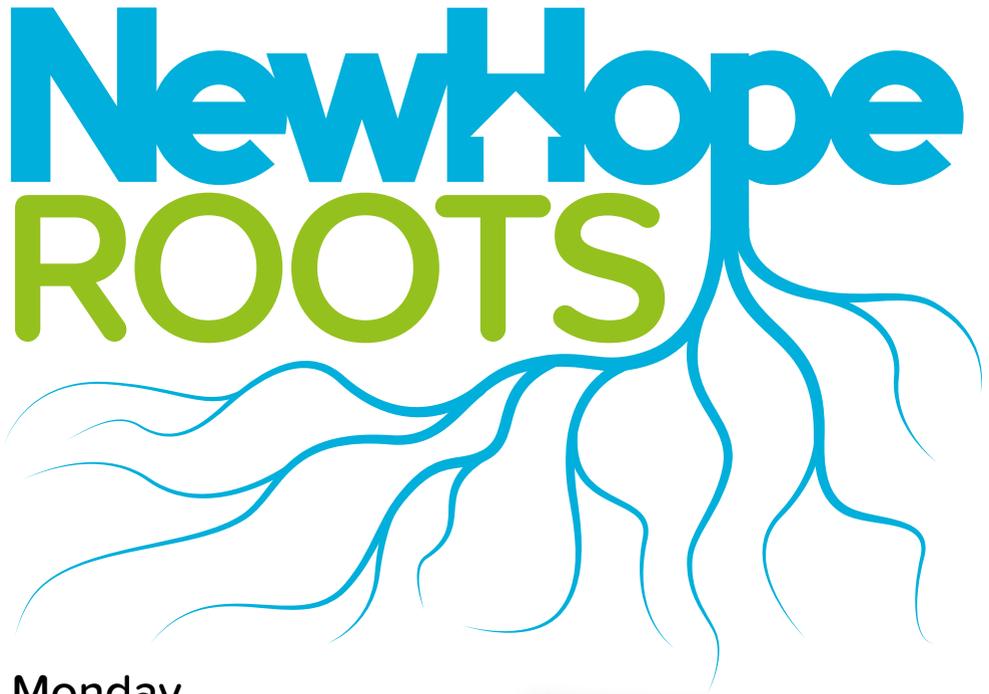
Stephen, who is now a successful artist, explained why he wanted to raise money for New Hope.

**“I’m running this Ultra Marathon to raise as much awareness and money for New Hope as possible as they literally saved my life.”**

The friends have already raised over £2,900!

# CELEBRATION EVENT

# New Hope ROOTS

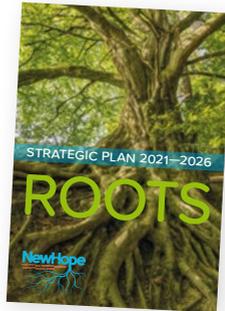
A large graphic of stylized tree roots in blue and green, extending from the bottom of the 'New Hope ROOTS' text down towards the bottom of the page.

Monday  
27 September  
2021

7:30pm–9:00 pm

Wellspring Church  
Wellspring Way, Watford, WD17 2AH

Also to be live streamed  
- details available nearer the time



Find out more  
about **ROOTS**

New Hope's  
strategic plan  
for the next  
five years

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