

An interview with Gavyn Emery, founder of Keep Bristol Warm

An interview with Gavyn Emery, founder of **Keep Bristol Warm**

This month our resident blogger Sophie Weaver got the chance to interview Gavyn Emery who is the founder of Bristol based event Keep Bristol Warm. Sophie wanted to gain an insight into how this fantastic event has united the Bristol community and how we need to tackle homelessness within our city.

S: Hi Gavyn, can you tell us what is Keep Bristol Warm for our readers that don't know?

G: *"Keep Bristol Warm (KBW) is an active movement to demonstrate solidarity and community spirit to the homeless and street sleepers of Bristol this winter. It's very basic, we ask for donations and time, never quantitative money donations from the public. All you have to do is donate a rucksack full of warm clothes and things to help them stay warm through winter."*

S: This all sounds amazing! How are businesses getting involved?

G: *"A few handful of local coffee shops have agreed to launch 'KBW pending coffee' across Bristol. This is a simple but effective way for a homeless or a street sleeper to receive a free hot drink to help stay warm."*

S: What spurred you to set up this event?

G: *"Last winter was extremely cold, most of us dread waiting on a bus stop for 10 minutes let alone a whole night exposed to the elements. The uniqueness of the event is that we're not a charity, instead Keep Bristol Warm is working to change the way we interact with the homeless, by engaging and supporting the most vulnerable in society (instead of just walking on by). The simplicity of it means it doesn't matter if you're a regular charitable contributor or a self-confessed person who walks by, anyone can attend the event and show some love."*

S: Is there anything else you want to do with Keep Bristol Warm?

G: *"We're actually also wanting to look after the street dogs, so we are also launching Street Paws to help keep the dogs on the street warm. Many people have been donating and we've been*

collecting dog coats in all sizes, as well as food that we will push out to this amazing city alongside other cities through winter."

S: Brilliant! What has the response from Bristol and the surrounding community been like?

G: *"The response from Bristol has been incredible.*

I have had some amazing shops donate soap and shampoo, clothes and rucksacks as well as dentist hospitals donate toothbrushes and toothpaste. The local community have been posting pictures on the event page, people knitting hats and gloves, sharing photos of their rucksacks, donations they have collected for the event and so much more. We have teamed up with Bristol Knitinitiative who are a local knitting community who are also making us scarfs and gloves as well as the amazing work they are doing. Bristol is amazing and I'm truly grateful."

S: What you're doing is certainly admirable. Finally, what are the details of the event and how can get involved?

G: *Anyone can get involved with this and show some love this winter by filling a rucksack with a jumper, coat, sleeping bag, gloves, hats, scarfs, a torch, ring pull soup, soap, shampoo and anything else you might think would be helpful. KBW then meet on December 6th at 3pm at the BearPit in Bristol, and donated the clothing and rucksacks to the homeless. Surplus donations then will be donated to the Julian Trust's night shelter and Crisis and Caring In Bristol for them to continue to keep this city warm.*

To find out more information regarding Keep Bristol Warm and their event, check out their Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/437520589752822/>