

Priest dies on Christmas Eve after 80th birthday

by CAITLIN MASKELL

A PRIEST who dedicated his life to his community has passed away a day after his 80th birthday.

Father David Barnes died in the early hours of Christmas Eve after celebrating his birthday on December 23 in St John's Hospice in St Johns Wood where he had been in palliative care.

Father David knew he had a terminal illness when he spoke to the *New Journal* in November and reflected warmly on spending nearly 20 years at St Anselm and St Cecilia,

I feel at peace, says priest, this church is where I have had my happiest years



Father David reflected on his life in the *New Journal* in November

the Roman Catholic church in Lincoln's Inn Fields, Holborn.

He thanked "people of the area and the local councillors" and added of his diagnosis: "I think it's been quite a thing getting used to but

I'm very fortunate, I do feel at peace. I'm very lucky in that way because not everybody does."

Father David had worked on the project to restore the church's interior and remodel-



Father David Barnes died on Christmas Eve in St John's Hospice, St John's Wood

ling the sanctuary, while he will be remembered by residents for officiating countless weddings, funerals and baptisms.

"What I would say is that the 20 years I've been here have been amongst the happiest in my life," he said in

November. "I've found the people of the parish quite wonderful and just in terms of the experience of being a

priest here you could say it's a very interesting place to be because we have a lot of visitors from all over the world who come to Mass; and we have lots of students because the LSE is on the doorstep.

"So I would say you could never be bored." Friend and ward councillor Julian Fulbrook had described Father David as an "absolute institution" and a "very genial, supportive and utterly devoted person".

He added: "Everyone speaks very highly of him and, of course, of his dogs who he was always seen walking in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

"I could tell you dozens of times Father David has intervened and helped people in the area with issues such as housing."

Brewery cancels homeless fundraiser

A BREWERY in Camden Town has pulled out of hosting a fundraising event for an organisation supporting people experiencing homelessness because the cause "may be linked to alcohol abuse".

"I think it's just really

by FRANKIE LISTER-FELL

short-sighted ignorance," Caroline Allouf, outreach manager at Street Storage, said.

"They're perpetuating untruths about the homelessness community which we've

spent decades trying to get people to recognise.

"A massive part of the battle is that people still think 'but at the end of the day most of them drink and take drugs' which isn't the case.

"And that's not about vilifying people who

might drink on the streets.

"But equally there are plenty of people who don't."

Last month Hampstead Community Choir organised a fundraising evening at the Camden Town Brewery beer hall in Kentish Town to raise much-needed donations for Street Storage, which is the only organisation in the UK to offer free storage of belongings to people experiencing homelessness.

But the choir later had to inform Street Storage that the famous brewery had withdrawn its offer to host the evening because it has a policy of not supporting a cause with a connection to alcohol abuse.

After asking for clarity, Camden Town Brewery told Street Storage over email that it "doesn't have any prejudice towards" the charity and offered them a £200 donation.

It said: "As a responsible alcohol company, we operate under and adhere to strict policies and legal requirements. Specifically, we are not able to work with charities that may be linked to alcohol abuse which, sadly, homelessness, in some respects, could be."

Ms Allouf said: "It's like, are we going out on the streets and handing out pints?"

"All the homelessness charities are trying to support people



The brewery's bar in Kentish Town

irrespective of whether they drink or not.

"We're trying to help people to integrate into everyday life and the community.

"When there are still these attitudes it's hard for people to genuinely feel accepted and not judged.

"We're not going to

say the night would have made us a ton of money but every donation helps. The numbers of people needing to store with us have gone through the roof. We're having to pull back on the quantity that people store with us.

"So however many quid that we're not getting in, that's another person who we're either having to say, 'you can't store all of your precious things', or 'you're going to have to wait longer'. With the community it's about the money, but it's also about changing attitudes."

Camden Town Brewery were approached for comment.



Rachel Woolf, Caroline Allouf, Geordie and Lilian Longhurst of Street Storage

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