Double-decker bus for the homeless unveiled in Portsmouth ¹

Joanne Vines and Sammy Ellen at the wheel of the bus. Picture: Keith Woodland

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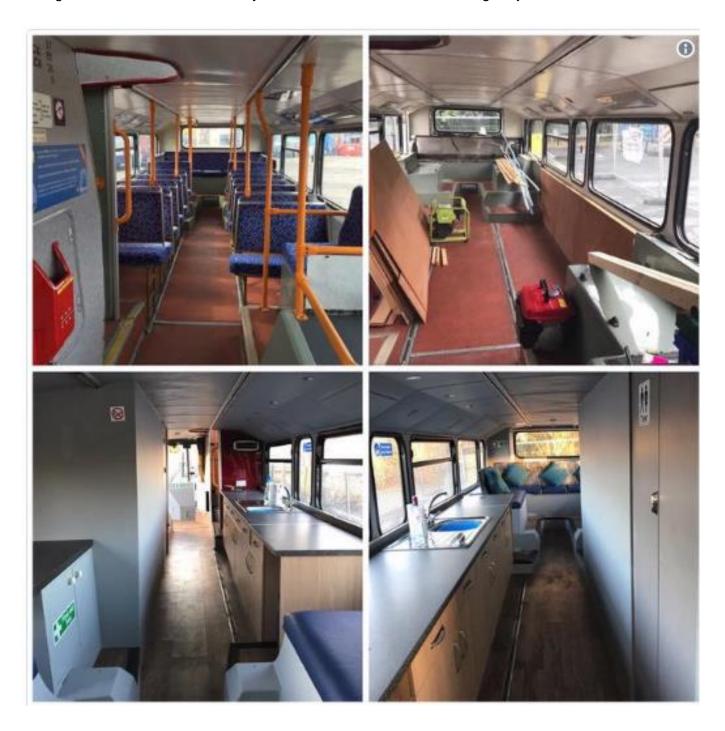
IT HAS been eight months of hard work, volunteering and community effort and yesterday, a double-decker bus was unveiled as a homeless shelter.





¹ Portsmouth News

The Bus Project, which saw the donated Stagecoach vehicle turned into a place for rough sleepers to stay overnight, is now finished and the keys handed over to the Robert Dolling Project.



At the launch held in Fratton Joanne Vines, founder of the project, said the finished product was exactly what she'd imagined.

Since March, she and Sammy Barcroft have been getting the bus ready with a kitchen, toilet and shower and 12 bunks.

Joanne said: 'I am totally elated. I gave myself 10 months to complete the bus and we have finished it in eight. 'Everyone has been amazing and I can't thank them all enough.

So many businesses, groups and individuals stepped forward to help deliver this.



Some of the many volunteers and sponsors alongside the bus. Picture: Keith Woodland

vision of what it would be like at the start and that vision has materialised into something real. This whole project shows how Portsmouth really comes together as a community.'

Groups like the Gosport Men's Shed helped fix the interior of the bus, fitting cupboards and doing general DIY jobs.

Highbury College students built and fitted the 12 bunk beds on the upper-deck while Vivid Housing donated and fitted the kitchen.

All organisations involved have their logo on the side of the bus as a thank you.

The News also backed the scheme, and held the Running for the Bus fundraiser in the spring.

I had a vision of what it would be like at the start and that vision has materialised into something real. Joanne Vines

ʻl had a Wilf Pickles, from Gosport Men's Shed, was at the launch. He said: 'It is great to see the final product ready to go.

'We just wanted to help where we could and do our bit.'

Gordon Frost, operations director for Stagecoach, was shocked at how different the bus looked.

He said: 'We made a very small gesture in donating the bus. It is amazing what Joanne and Sammy, along with everyone else, have been able to achieve.

'When they asked us for a bus, we had this one which otherwise would have been scrapped.

'Seeing it now and knowing what it's going to be used for makes me so happy that we donated it.'