



# MCSCC News

## The Home of Community Work

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### OFFICE RENTS TO BE FROZEN!

The recent Managers' Lunch in the Centre was an occasion for some good news. Mike Evans, the MCSCC Board Chairman was pleased to announce that the Board had decided that now was an appropriate time to show support for our member groups by holding rents at their current level for the next twelve months.

To add to this welcome news it was further agreed that there would be no increase in charges for car parking, storage or, indeed, hourly sessional meeting room hire. All this comes against the backdrop of 5% inflation figures and squeezes on many groups' funding so it was felt that this one year freeze on increases would be one less thing for groups to be burdened with.

The rest of the lunch was taken up with a lively exchange of news and views. Whilst Mike Evans and Richard Swainston, the Centre Manager, updated members on their plans for the coming year, members shared their thoughts on their current and future prospects with most seeming to take a philosophical approach to the current financial uncertainties. There was a fair bit of discussion about out of hours caretaking and café cover and this, along with other suggestions, would be fed back to the MCSCC Board.

Full notes from the meeting are available from Reception or on our website.



### CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

The Centre will be unstaffed from the close of play on Friday 23 December until Tuesday 3 January 2012. However, there will be a number of events and meetings throughout the Christmas period and the building remains open to those who have fobs. Centre staff will be on-call throughout.

The heating will be on throughout, making this building a tempting haven from visiting in laws and bad Christmas telly...

### IT'S PARTY TIME AT THE CENTRE



There are a number of events planned over the Christmas period in the Centre. The Carers Project got the season off to a flying start with a wonderful party last Friday (see pic on left). Other groups like U3A and Butterflies are having events over the next few days.

VAM's Brighter Futures Group will be holding their wonderful annual Boxing Day lunch for older people. These lunches regularly attract around 100 guests who are waited on by up to 30 volunteers. I know that project Manager Danny Hewis is still looking for volunteers so please do get in touch with him.

Three of our regular church groups, including our own Grove Green Christian Fellowship, will be holding vigils on New Years Eve so there really is something for everyone!



# BLUE DOT

PROMOTE, DONATE OR VOLUNTEER FOR YOUR FAVOURITE CAUSES AND GET DOTS  
www.bluedotworld.com

A "social currency" website has been launched to motivate consumers to actively support charity organisations in return for rewards, a move it is claimed is the third sector equivalent of the retail reward scheme such as loyalty cards. Blue Dot aims to be a reward scheme for people "who do good things" for charity organisations.

Users can sign in via Facebook and receive benefits such as access to exclusive products and downloads from celebrities and career experiences from major brands in return for activities such as volunteering work, donating and becoming advocates via social networks.

Users accumulate "dots" for good deeds, which then go on to form a personalised "Active CV" that the scheme claims can help them get promoted or reach new job opportunities.

## NEW FACES AT MCSC FILMCLUB

We are delighted to announce that we have a new team in charge of our Saturday Children's Filmclub. As of January, the club will be run by Laura Andrews with Lydia Jordan as her deputy. Both Laura and Lydia are qualified teachers and are looking forward to re-launching the club.

There are still places available for this FREE club so please do get in touch with them at [filmclub@mcsc.org.uk](mailto:filmclub@mcsc.org.uk) or on 01622 230711 if you know of children and/or carers who may like to join the club.

## RETHINKING DIFFERENCE TRAINING



Rethink Mental Illness delivered Rethinking Difference training On Thurs 17 November to a number of delegates from different organisations that are situated in the Maidstone Community Support Centre. The Centre graciously offered the venue for free. The training was attended

by 13 individuals and the comments made were very positive.

The training Rethink Mental Illness offer is a different approach to cultural training. It is not about the superficial differences between cultures, but it is finding ways to work with people in order to help them engage with services.

The training is about understanding inequality between individuals and within services, including disability, age, sex, race, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, sexual orientation and pregnancy and maternity.

Understanding and accepting differences can help towards empowering people and help them on the way to recovery.

We reflect upon and define our own culture, beliefs and assumptions individually and within our practice, and learn to appreciate how complex culture can be.

We also discuss the importance of good communication, especially in view of cultural diversity and establishing ways to work with the whole person and not just the issues.

The training aims to offer an encounter with individuals who represent the different characteristics and we encourage discussion and interaction.

If anyone is interested in attending another session of the training, please feel free to contact Johan Smit at the following address: [johan.smit@rethink.org](mailto:johan.smit@rethink.org)

## HOMES UNDER THE HAMMER



The not so des res across the road from the Centre is the focus of popular daytime programme 'Homes Under the Hammer'. We've been watching with interest as the long derelict property undergoes a complete overhaul. Since a dentist surgery vacated the premises about six years ago, the house has been left to fall into a state of disrepair.

Camera crews have already filmed the house inside and out for the 'before' shots and are due to come back in the New Year to record the 'after' footage. The programme is due to air in February 2012 on BBC 1.

As this goes to press, the old Cornerstone site neighbouring the Centre is being gutted and returned to housing and a planning application has been lodged to convert the old Rising Sun pub across the road into two houses with a further two properties in its car park.



**SHHH...  
A SECRET  
SURPRISE  
FOR  
SOMEONE  
SPECIAL**



**Do you know someone selfless who thinks more about others than they do themselves?**

Perhaps they are a foster parent, carer, volunteer, charity worker, or even a local hero.

Would you like to say a massive THANK YOU?

A BIG name at Channel 4 wants to help you give them a fabulous surprise.

So get in touch and keep it secret:  
[info@crackitproductions.co.uk](mailto:info@crackitproductions.co.uk)  
0207 292 3581 / 07531 834 187

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

Aileen Davis, Advocate for Rethink Mental Health is celebrating after gaining her Doctorate in Psychology. Sadly, we have to take our leave of this lovely lady as she takes up a new position with Age Concern. Also leaving Rethink is Sara Hutchinson who will be working as Centre Coordinator at the Parkwood Project. Good luck to them both!

### CHRISTMAS TREE



The beautiful Christmas tree in the Foyer was decorated by Tomorrow's People clients for which many thanks. We missed out on a donated tree this year but thought the money spent on buying one ourselves would be well spent if it gave people a warm seasonal feeling on entering the Centre. Santa

shinning down the rope was our Mike's personal touch!



Increasing the safety of women and children

## One Stop Shop for Victims of Domestic Abuse

One Stop Shops will start every Tuesday from 17<sup>th</sup> January at MCSC. It will run between 9:30-11:30. Agencies such as Maidstone Borough Council, Kent Police, CASA refuge as well as specialist domestic abuse advocates from Women's Support Service will be in attendance.

The service will offer Confidential Information/Advice, including advice on benefits and legal issues, to victims of Domestic Abuse, their families and friends. This shows a client centred approach by partner agencies with access to multiple services under one roof. Our aim is to improve life chances for victims and their families.

For further information drop in on Tuesdays 9:30-11:30 or phone WSS helpline 01622 761146 Mon-Fri 9-5

## Christmas Services - Victims of Domestic Abuse

Please be aware of the service that WSS will run over the Christmas period. The helpline number 01622 761146 and mobile phone number 07961 021929 can be given to any clients or professionals that require WSS assistance during the below hours.

Our services cover the Maidstone, Medway and Tonbridge and Malling areas.

Dec 24 <sup>th</sup>	10-2pm	Out of Hours phone service 07961 021929
Dec 25 <sup>th</sup>	CLOSED	
Dec 26 <sup>th</sup>	10-2pm	Out of Hours phone service 07961 021929
Dec 27 <sup>th</sup>	10-2pm	Out of Hours phone service 07961 021929
Dec 28 <sup>th</sup> , 29 <sup>th</sup> , 30 <sup>th</sup>		Open as usual on 01622 761146
Dec 31 <sup>st</sup>	10-2pm	Out of Hours phone service 07961 021929
Jan 1 <sup>st</sup>	10-2pm	Out of Hours phone service 07961 021929
Jan 2 <sup>nd</sup>	10-2pm	Out of Hours phone service 07961 021929



Increasing the safety of women and children





## Manager's Report



The year is rapidly drawing to a close and I'm delighted to see that, bar a few exceptions, we have survived a very difficult time.

For much of the year many of our member groups have been worrying and fretting about potential funding cuts. In many cases that threat has not materialised, in others the threat has been postponed and there have even been one or two funding successes. However, we mourn the loss of those groups that have succumbed.

Set against this backdrop of uncertainty, the decision of the MCSC Board not to increase rental charges for the next twelve months is tangible evidence not only of the strength that our all working together under one roof can muster but also a clear commitment to provide as much support to our members as possible.

In the meantime the programme of refurbishment and modernisation works continues apace. This year saw the completion of our aim to have the ground floor completely turned over to "communal" use. The two new meeting rooms at the rear of the building have given us much needed additional hiring space and the media cum cinema set-up in our new Meeting Room provides a state of the art multi-media tool. The Saturday Children's Filmclub is just one example of the use it can be put to.

The new website with its integrated bookings system has, figuratively, hit the ground running and seems to be well liked by all who use it. This too will become a useful marketing tool for us as growing our hourly meeting room hire will become a key part of our strategy for future security. A continued programme of redecorating and fitting of secondary glazing also help to create a welcoming environment, I hope.

2012 may well prove to be another difficult year filled with uncertainty, both for our member groups and in the wider world. We at MCSC will continue to play our part by striving to provide a secure, well-run base from which our member groups, and the many external community user groups that call the Centre home, can continue to carry out their good work.

On behalf of all of us at MCSC, both staff and Board members, may I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

## MCSC IN-HOUSE

### SERVICES

These are some of the services offered by MCSC:

#### Photocopying:

- A4 black & white —4p per copy (A3 8p)
- A4 colour—10p ( A3 20p) per side
- Brochure collation, stapling and delivery to your office—FREE

#### Fax service

- 5p per sheet

#### Laminating

- A4 30p / A3 60p

#### Reception Service

- Phone answering and message taking service—FREE \* only available to members of MCSC Telephony service who can choose to divert calls.

#### Meeting room equipment:

- OHPs, Flip charts, white boards, P/A system, TV, video, CD/DVD player.
- laptop and multi media projector.
- Portable Hearing Loop
- All items can be requested when making a booking by ticking the relevant box on the bookings form.

*For more information about these and other services our reception team can offer please contact Jackie Avery on extension 103 or Reception on 101.*

# MAIDSTONE COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE

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