



# MCSC News

## The Home of Community Work

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### DATES FOR THE DIARY

#### NOVEMBER

- 18th Voluntary and Community Sector Breakfast - at College Road.

#### DECEMBER

- 2nd: MCSC Manager's Lunch—here
- 8th: VAM AGM—here



It's taken us a while to get there but we are delighted to announce the arrival of our new-look website. Integrated within the site is our new bookings system. Not only should our 185 regular bookings users notice the shiny, new, user-friendly interface but a quick look-up facility on our home page should encourage casual users to go ahead and book with us.

Much of the time involved in working up the new site was spent on building the new bookings system. We had to move well over 2,000 future bookings in a short space of time! We'd like to think that the system is much improved on the old version and, judging by the smooth transition, those of you who make their own bookings seem to have found the new system intuitive as we have had few calls for help so far.

The website ([www.mcsc.org.uk](http://www.mcsc.org.uk)) is disability compliant with optional text sizing. New features include FaceBook and Twitter feeds as well as a SagePay facility which will allow you to settle your invoices through our website. For those of you with SmartPhones, a new App will follow which will allow you to book a room at the Centre whilst you are out and about.



A regularly updated 'Newsroom' on the home page will run the latest stories from the centre and is your chance to get your message over to our site visitors. Furthermore, In these difficult times of rising unemployment, we would like to promote the 'Vacancies' page of the website as a means of recruiting people. Submissions for the Newsroom or Vacancies page can be sent to us by email and will then be published on the site the same day, free of charge.

### OH DEAR - CHRISTMAS IS COMING! CENTRE OPENING HOURS DURING THE FESTIVE PERIOD

With Christmas not far off I thought now would be a good time to let you know the Christmas arrangements here at the Centre so that you can make your plans as necessary. The Centre will be fully staffed until close of play on Friday 23 December but will then NOT have a reception or caretaking presence until the morning of Tuesday 3 January.

This doesn't mean that the Centre will be closed. Access can be made as usual via fobs, offices will be accessible and meeting rooms booked as needed. The heating will be kept on and cleaners will be in regularly. Either Richard, Mike or Jax will be on-call to assist throughout the Christmas period. It will, unfortunately, mean that users will need to set up meetings for themselves. We would just ask that all rubbish is cleared (and put in the wheelie bin that will be left in the upper car park) and rooms left tidy after use. Please do let the Reception team know if you want any clarification or have any special requirements over that period.

## WELCOME TO ACTION FOR CHILDREN



*as long as it takes*

Action For Children IRC have been long time members of the Centre. They have now been joined by another department, Fundraising, who moved into Room 210 in October. Here's a brief introduction:

"Hello, my name is Selena and I have recently taken up residence on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in the Community Centre along the corridor from my colleagues in IRC. I'm the fundraiser for Action for Children covering Kent and East Sussex. My role is not only to encourage people to raise money for our charity but also to let people know about the fantastic work Action for Children does in Kent and East Sussex through our 10 local projects.

We support the most vulnerable and neglected children in the UK - we tailor our work to local circumstances, in partnership with children and young people, families, communities and local organisations. We work with children and young people whose families need support, who cannot live with their birth families, who are disabled or who are experiencing severe difficulties in their lives. Christmas is a very busy time of year for Action for Children with lots of carol singing events and Christmas fairs.

This month I am involved in an abseil in Canterbury down Fischer Tower where I will be cheering my participants as they abseil down the 100ft building for us. I am also involved in a Christmas auction with the radio station KMFM. On Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> December we will be auctioning items live on the radio that we have been collecting all year. All proceeds from this auction are going to Action to Children. Please tune in all day as there are some AMAZING items. Other events include the Brighton marathon and the Bewl Water Dragon Boat race next year. If anyone would like to know more about the work we do, some of the exciting events we have coming up next year or just a general chat please feel free to knock on my door or email me: [selena.goldsmith@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:selena.goldsmith@actionforchildren.org.uk)



**S**SSSHHHHHH.....  
We have had a few complaints about noise in the corridors outside counselling rooms. Please be mindful of what may be going on behind closed doors when you are having a catch up with a colleague. Thank you.



The Kent eVent Team is a partnership between Kent County Council and the voluntary sector in Kent. The project's core function is recruiting volunteers for events and one-off sport, leisure and cultural activities across the county, including the build-up to the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in London.

Managed and run by Voluntary Action Maidstone and funded by Kent Sport, Leisure and Olympics, the project team are based in MCSC. The project started in May 2008 and has grown today to now include just fewer than 1800 volunteers, working with 106 organisations and having registered and promoted some 140 events. Since January 2011, our volunteers have given over 1000hrs of time and skills in support of events in Kent.

KET have also worked to promote the 'once in a lifetime' games maker opportunities for London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and increase awareness of how Kent residents can get involved in the games, in London and at home here in Kent. A real 'once in a lifetime' opportunity. More news on how you can get involved in a Kent Greeters programme for 2012 will be released soon. So watch this space...

The Kent eVent team project has been awarded a London 2012 Inspire Mark, and we are working hard to make sure the Kent eVent team stands high as part of the legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games.

For more information - call 01622 674252 or email [kenteventteam@live.com](mailto:kenteventteam@live.com) You can also visit our website [www.kenteventteam.org.uk](http://www.kenteventteam.org.uk), find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

## MCSC FILMCLUB UPDATE



Our Filmclub for disadvantaged children has now been running for 2 months and we are slowly but surely gaining attendees under the guidance of Colin and Carol, our Organisers and their ever growing team of

volunteers.

The Club is FREE to children under the age of 11. Filmshows take place every other Saturday from 10.00am and popcorn and refreshments are available. Please do bear the club in mind if you know of any family that may benefit from attending. You can contact Carol at [filmclub@mcsc.org.uk](mailto:filmclub@mcsc.org.uk) or on Ext 111.

## 3rd ANNUAL VAM CONFERENCE: 21st CENTURY VOLUNTEERING



This year's conference was another great blend of thought provoking speeches and debate, exciting new initiatives, learning opportunities and fun!

The Leader of Maidstone Borough Council Cllr Chris Garland gave an opening address about the value of the voluntary and community sector in Maidstone and how vital it is for us to work together in the borough. Then we heard about the exciting plans for the Olympic and Paralympic Games from Hugh Robertson MP, Minister for Sport and Olympics. The Games are right on our doorstep and Hugh amazed delegates with information about the huge scale of the event and how it is transforming London, as well as the vital importance of the 70,000 volunteers.

Rob Jackson, an international speaker and writer on volunteering then gave the key note speech on the future of volunteering, how volunteers are changing and the sector must adapt to maximise the great potential volunteers can bring. Teresa Coe, of the Kent eVent Team, shared her experience of using new media and social networking to promote volunteering and communicate with new audiences.



Cllr Chris Garland



Hugh Robertson MP



Rachel Smith



Bob Jackson

Before lunch delegates enjoyed 15 minutes of laughter Yoga with practitioner Rachel Smith; relaxing and exhilarating at the same time! Following the buffet lunch, an ideal time to network with the 70 or so delegates from the public and voluntary sector, there was a choice of structured workshops each with a volunteering theme. Fundraising with volunteers, recruiting trustees or the philosophy of volunteering; all were enlightening and engaging.

**If you would like any issue or theme covered in next year's conference, please get in touch with VAM!**

### POSTAL COLLECTION PRICE INCREASE

The Royal Mail saga rumbles on with yet another price increase announced for the collection of our post from the Centre. The charge has jumped from £500 per annum to £780, an increase of over 50%.

### MIND YOUR VALUABLES

We would urge all Members to be vigilant with valuables after a report of £300 being stolen from one group's petty cash tin. In this instance the key to the tin was accessible to all by being openly kept on top of a filing cabinet. Doh! I'm afraid it's easily done.

### HAPPY RETIREMENT TO PETER WAY

Peter was the Manager of Brighter Futures Group which, under his successful reign, was presented with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service last month.

Due to poor health, Peter has not had the send off he so fully deserves. We wish him a speedy recovery so that he may enjoy a well earned retirement. Meanwhile, we also wish his replacement, Danny Hewis a "bright future" here. Welcome!

### OBITUARIES

We are sad to have lost three people with ties to the Centre in a short space of time and felt we ought to mark their passing.



*Heather Curtin* who worked with Women's Support Services passed away after a long illness at the end of September. WSS will miss her caring nature and sense of humour.

*Stephen Tate* was a DPG service user and Jenny Meehan's brother. Jenny devoted herself to his care and well being. Our thoughts are with her and everyone at Topaz & DPG who will miss him. A Celebration of Steven's Life was held at the Centre on Friday 4th November with many of Steven's family and friends attending. Large quantities of cake were consumed—Stephen would have loved it!

*Dean Oliver* was a volunteer with the VTeam. He had a warm and friendly nature and was a big supporter of the other volunteers he worked with.

## Manager's Report



I'm delighted that we are finally able to announce the launch of our new website and even more pleased to see that the new bookings system seems to be working so well for all our many users, both internal and external. It was an enormous piece of work for the whole staff team and I sincerely hope that a) you like it and b) that it will develop over the coming month's to become a useful tool to let the outside world know what goes on in this building.

As with this Newsletter, we really do want to encourage you to think of the website as another means of getting your message across to others. With that in mind we have a readily updateable News feed with which you can promote current projects or any other news you wish to share. Please do use it.

We've given a small mention to our Filmclub within these pages but I want to appeal to you all to help support this wonderful project. Please do let anybody you may know who has a child under 11 who might benefit from attending, about the Club's existence. The chance for respite for a harassed carer and the obvious enjoyment that the children get from the club go without saying. And it's all FREE!

Many of you can't have failed to notice that we had a major problem with the phone system in mid October. I want to apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused but it was beyond our control as a cable had been severed at the local BT exchange. However, the good news is that we have just signed a new 3 year deal with a new supplier, the benefits of which are costs being held down, calls to mobiles reduced significantly and importantly, given the above problems, a much enhanced support package. As ever, if you need any help with programming your phone please don't hesitate to let me know.

Finally, and by way of a plea to the many group managers who haven't yet replied, it is time for our 6 monthly Managers' lunch on 2 December. This is an excellent time to discuss issues and worries as well as a chance to share good news, something we could all do with in these difficult times. We certainly have some important and good news to share with you!! If you haven't done so already, please do respond to my recent invite. If nothing else, it's a chance for a free lunch!

P.S. Please note the item about Christmas hours. For the workaholics amongst you, the building is open right through the Christmas season. Enjoy.

## 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.
- All items can be requested when making a booking by pressing CTRL and clicking on the items you want.
- Hearing Loop

*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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