

Sevenoaks Counselling

a professional service offered by Christians
to the whole community



Newsletter Summer 2016

The Bridge, Littlecourt Road
Sevenoaks TN13 2JG

Telephone: 01732 450118
www.sevenoakscounselling.org.uk

ALL CHANGE !

Over the past few months we had a successful public meeting and been blessed by some additional financial support, but we also have faced the daunting task of the future without Maureen King at our helm. Maureen has been a wonderful Head of Counselling for many years. She quite rightly has the support and confidence of many and will be truly missed. We have worked to find people and a strategy that will best attempt to fill her shoes in a manner that will continue, and possibly even enhance, the exceptionally effective service we currently enjoy.

Our initial effort to fill the post of Head of Counselling included broad advertisement of our need and interviews with three very capable individuals, but

for a number of reasons, it was concluded that they were not suitable for our situation. After much deliberation, and thanks to the creative thoughts of Maureen, we decided to divide the position of Head of Counselling into two part-time posts, one related primarily to overseeing the delivery of counselling, and one focused on meeting our administrative needs.

We are delighted to be able to advise you that people from within the Sevenoaks Counselling team have come forward with enthusiasm to fill the newly developed posts. An interviewing board put the candidates through a rigorous interview process and unanimously approved the following appointments:

Julie Smith

Julie has been appointed Head of Counselling. Julie has been a counsellor with us since 2013,



primarily working with young people and couples. Whilst serving at Sevenoaks Counselling, she has co-managed and delivered a counselling service (one that she co-founded in 1999) within a large GP surgery. She is a qualified supervisor with advanced certification, and a versatile and experienced counsellor. She has a proven record in training and staff development. Julie has a confident, compassionate approach to people, with a gentle strength that will serve her and the service very well.

Janet McGrath



Concurrent with Julie's new appointment, **Janet** has accepted the post of Service Administrator. Janet has been serving in a Sevenoaks church for many years; in addition, most recently volunteering in an administrative role with us. She was the Administrative Director of a Pregnancy Resource Centre for a number of years, leading them through a time of growth. Janet is an outgoing, caring person who shows determination and dedication in all that she does.

As you can imagine, we as trustees are very grateful for God's direction and provision in this matter. There will be an opportunity to meet our new leadership team at a Commissioning Service on 2 November. Please see page 8 for details.

PEACEFUL PARENTING

A Non Violent Resistance course for parents

A course using ideas from Non Violent Resistance for parents running for 8 term time sessions on Friday mornings from 30 September 2016 to 20 January 2017.

This is for parents who have a child with anger issues or destructive behaviours and with a special needs diagnosis or struggling significantly with his/her social skills.



It will be run by **Esther Beugeling** (Special Needs teacher with a particular interest in social communication) and **Catherine Rodger** (Child and Family Therapist).

If you are interested please look on the Sevenoaks Counselling website: www.sevenoakscounselling.org.uk.

Last date for applications: 16th Sept 2016.

INTRODUCTIONS

From our new Head of Counselling

I am delighted to introduce myself as the new Head of Counselling at Sevenoaks Counselling taking over from Maureen King who retired in July.

I joined Sevenoaks Counselling in 2013 having gained significant experience in a number of different work roles as a counsellor, lecturer, trainer and supervisor.

My journey as a counsellor began in 1999 when I completed a BACP Accredited Course in Humanistic Counselling. Since then I have counselled individuals, couples and adolescents in a variety of settings including mainstream and special education, further education and primary care. In 2000 I co-founded and manage a counselling service in a large medical centre which has continued to expand over the years to meet the growing demand for counselling. I completed training in Couple's Dynamics in 2011 and qualified as a counselling supervisor in 2014.

For the past four years I have taught introductory and advanced level counselling courses whilst supervising diploma level students during the final stages of their training and beyond.

It is with great excitement that I begin my new role at Sevenoaks Counselling. I will be continuing the excellent work undertaken by Maureen King under whose leadership SC has flourished. I am looking forward to working with Janet McGrath, the new Service Administrator, along with the counsellors, trustees and volunteers.

With such an experienced and committed team of people, I am confident that we will continue to deliver professional counselling to those in need within our community.

Julie Smith

From our new Service Administrator

I am really pleased to be joining the team as Service Administrator at Sevenoaks Counselling. SC's ethos of real care for clients and its dedication to provide counselling whatever a client's ability to pay speaks to my heart. Over the past nine months I have been volunteering with the service and getting to know some of the team members as well as some of the systems in place for answering phone calls and emails and logging communications.

Little did I know how vital these things would be for the work I now take up. It has been a real joy to attend the monthly prayer breakfasts for the way it reminds me that all the work we undertake is under God's provision and guidance and therefore in need of his empowerment.

I look forward to getting to know each team member and seeing how I can facilitate their work. I also feel quite privileged to be on this team as I pursue my own qualification to counsel, having just completed the first year of a BA Counselling course through Waverley Abbey College. I have much to learn and I know I'm in a great place to do just that.

Janet McGrath

IN A GOOD PLACE

Heard and accepted, I admit to my fears;
nourished by empathy, I release pent-up tears;
astonished by beauty, I long to create;
strengthened by hope, I can actively wait;
enjoying shared laughter, I make space for play;
gifted by presence, I now truthfully pray;
valued as me, I grow vulnerably strong;
thriving through friendship, I expand, I belong!

ANNUAL OPEN MEETING

4 MAY 2016

A familiar venue (Kippington Parish Centre) but an unfamiliar person chairing the meeting; since last year the Revd Stan King has replaced Stephen Scott as Chair of Trustees and Stan steered us confidently through the proceedings this year.

Chris Stiven, our Treasurer, was first to take the floor; he reported a small shortfall at the end of the recent financial year and paid tribute to all SC donors. There was a continuing need, however, for new financial supporters, so that the Service could maintain its commitment to provide counselling for clients who could afford little or nothing.

Before introducing the next speaker, Stan commented that, having recently arrived in the UK from Canada, he was impressed by the generosity of those who supported SC. He then had to make the announcement that Maureen King, our Head of Counselling for many years, would be leaving at the end of July. Maureen gave her customary review of the previous year: there had been just under 3,000 sessions for clients presenting with a whole range of issues, including an increasing number of those affected by childhood trauma and abuse. As well as counselling, the Service was able to offer support for those needing reflective practice and pastoral/clinical supervision. SC continued its important training function and, as well as professional development courses, had provided a course on 'Peaceful Parenting'.

Maureen paid tribute to Nigel Law and Sandie Wade who had left during the year; also to Mary Wright who had resigned as a Clinical Psychologist but had re-appeared as a Trustee. Gillian Hancock had been welcomed as a new counsellor and Janet McGrath had joined the team of those providing voluntary admin support.

Referring to her own decision to step down, Maureen commented that she had worked for the Service for about 30 years, two thirds as Head of Counselling. Now, on the point of leaving, Maureen said she was confident Sevenoaks Counselling was in God's hands and would continue into the future as a Christian Counselling Service available to all.

It was then time for the main speaker of the evening, Dr Elizabeth Procter, to be introduced. Elizabeth's chosen topic was 'Working with Adolescents' and she identified the main tasks of adolescents as developing a personal identity and separation from parents/searching for autonomy. Dissatisfaction with the status quo often leads to conflict with parents. Teenagers are immature and seek thrills, confident that nothing can go wrong. They are hormonally driven and focused on their peers.



The 21st century had brought added pressures: mobile phones, social media and sexting in particular, combined with pressure from parents and schools to do well in examinations. Drug taking, particularly what used to be called 'legal highs', was also an issue.

The problem for parents and teachers was being able to differentiate between normal adolescent behaviour and risky behaviour. The latter would be characterised by evidence of bullying or physical/psychological illness. Typical warning signs would be weight change, self-harm including cutting, truancy, and persistent anxiety possibly leading to suicidal thoughts.

There were also, of course, problems arising from the home situation such as living with step parents, parents involved in splitting up and single parents. This was all combined with excessively long waits for professional help. Non-professional help could be in the form of listening, encouragement, prayer, non-judgemental advice and practical kindnesses.

Elizabeth then described the forms of professional help available locally, mainly through the Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Board and CAMHS (The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service). There were also resources, including websites such as mumsnet.com minded.org.uk and childdevelopmentinfo.com

A final piece of advice and encouraging comment from Elizabeth: ***"Decide which battles to fight; hang on in there; the majority of teenagers do fine!"***

Following the appointment of Julie Smith and Janet McGrath there will be a

Service of Commissioning

on Wednesday 2 November 2016

at 7.30pm

at Christ Church URC, Littlecourt Road, TN13 2JG

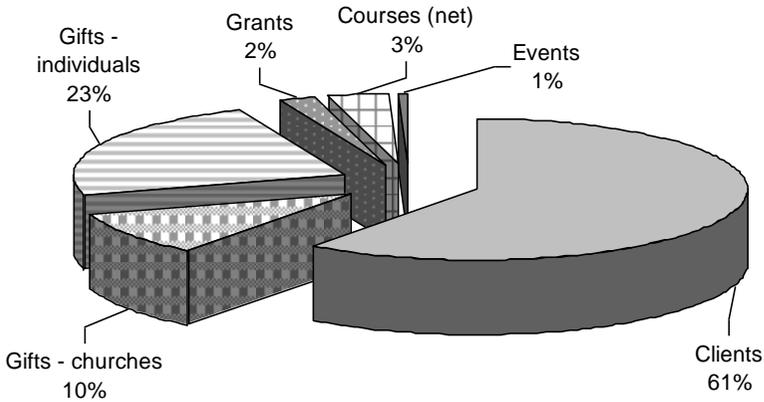
Bishop James, Bishop of Rochester, one of our Patrons, will preside at this service which will provide an opportunity for all of us who support Sevenoaks Counselling in a variety of ways to re-commission ourselves for the part we play.

You will all be welcome to join us for this prayerful act of worship.

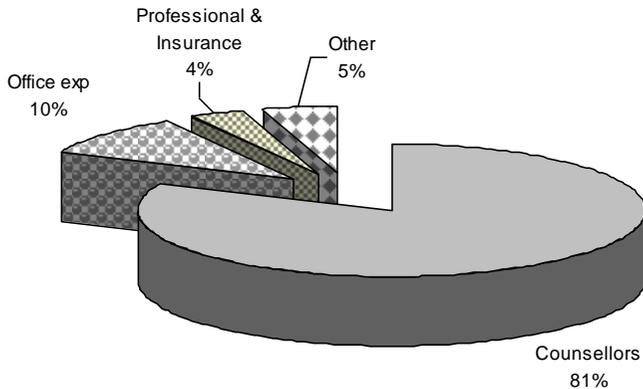
A Treasurer's Snapshots

The snapshots below show the (unaudited) picture of our income and expenditure for February-June, the first five months of our current financial year. We provided some 1,160 counselling sessions during this period, about 11% fewer than during the equivalent period in 2015. We don't turn any clients away for reasons of affordability and many continue to struggle financially. As a result, income from clients as a percentage of overall income has fallen from around 70% a couple of years ago to 61% so far this year, and expenditure exceeded client income by £18,163 over the five months. If this were to continue for the rest of the year we could be facing a shortfall of some £43,500.

Income 2016 (5 months) £41,367



Expenditure 2016 (5 months) £43,136



We are grateful to both individuals and churches who continue to cover the shortfall on a regular basis, and to Sevenoaks Town Council and Sevenoaks District Council for their annual grants.

The next two snapshots (over the page) show part of the reason for the larger-than-usual office expenditure during the period:

THE CHAIRS



By way of background, it is a matter of professional ethics that what is said by clients in a counselling session remains within those four walls. Walls may have ears, but they say nothing; they're made of sterner stuff. Chairs likewise say nothing, but they are softer and more sensitive than walls, and the emotional stress eventually takes its toll. As you can see from the picture on the left, after many years' service our chairs were beginning to grow tired and droop.

We now have eleven brand new chairs, upright, emotionally stable and ready to take the strain for many years to come. They cost £2,094 and we are very grateful to a number of individuals who have made specific donations covering, in total, more than half of the cost. This includes a special grant from Kent County Council funds kindly arranged by Councillor Margaret Crabtree. As for the old chairs, we have put them out to pasture.



Most of them have already found good homes, some in people's houses, some in youth group meeting rooms. There are still a few old chairs waiting for a new owner (free of charge) could that be you? If so, or if you would like to make a donation, please email: chris.stiven@talk21.com.

Listening Poem

You are not listening to me when...

You do not care about me

You say you understand before you know me well enough

You have an answer for my problem before I've finished telling you what my problem is

You cut me off before I've finished speaking

You find me boring and don't tell me

You feel critical of my grammar, vocabulary or accent

You are dying to tell me something

You tell me about your experience making mine seem unimportant

You are communicating with someone else in the room

You refuse my thanks by saying you haven't really done anything.

You ARE listening to me when...

You come quietly into my world and allow me to be me

You really try to understand me even when I am not making much sense

You grasp my point of view even when it goes against your own sincere convictions

You realise the time I have taken from you has left you a bit tired and a bit drained.

You allow me the dignity of making my own decisions, even though you think they may be wrong

You don't take my problem from me, but allow me to deal with it in my own way

You hold back your desire to give me good advice when you sense I am not ready for it

You give me enough room to discover for myself what is going on

You accept my gift of gratitude by saying how good it makes you feel to know that you've been helpful.

Anon

PRAYER

We would like to ask all our supporters to remember SC in their prayers. The following prayer is suggested:

Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
thank you for
Sevenoaks Counselling;

I pray for its clients that they will be helped
towards healing and wholeness
in their lives and relationships;

for its counsellors -
for their development as Christians
and in the practice of their profession.
May they grow in understanding,
insight, wisdom and any other
skills and qualities that they might need.

I pray for the admin team in their office work
and support of the counsellors;

for the trustees as they oversee the work of the service;

for Sevenoaks Counselling in all aspects of its work -
counselling, education and training,
being a support and resource
for those in pastoral care.

I offer these prayers in the name of Jesus,
the wonderful counsellor. Amen

Counselling Team:

Julie Smith
(Head of Counselling)

Jennifer Adams
Jeanette Archer
Laura Daniels
Jean Day
Rachel Ferguson-Gow
Alan Forman
Claudine Gavin
Gillian Hancock

Nicci Paramor
Andrew Procter
Catherine Rodger

Admin Team:

Janet McGrath
(Service Administrator)
Frank Amott
Rosie Dalton
Pamela McCurdy
Caireen Surgeoner

Trustees:

Stan King *(Chair)*
Wendy Billington
Gill Clayton
Stephen Day
Carol Kitchener
Chris Stiven
(Treasurer)
Jean Watson
Mary Wright