

# Sevenoaks Counselling

a professional service offered by Christians  
to the whole community



## *Newsletter* Winter/Spring 2017

The Bridge, Littlecourt Road  
Sevenoaks TN13 2JG

Telephone: 01732 450118  
[www.sevenoakscounselling.org.uk](http://www.sevenoakscounselling.org.uk)

### **'ONWARDS AND UPWARDS!'**



That encouraging cheer first appeared in the London Literary Gazette in 1829, although the origin of the phrase is disputed. It has been used for nearly 200 years to encourage military endeavours, ministry efforts and melancholic explorers – often with the intent of releasing the failures or successes of the past so that one might lay hold of the victories, blessings or wonders that lie ahead.

'Onwards and upwards' summarises the conclusion I drew from Bishop James' gracious commissioning of our new leadership on 2 November, 2016. Drawing insights from Psalm 145, Bishop James encouraged us, and most specifically our new Head of Counselling, Julie Smith, and

Office Administrator, Janet McGrath, with his thoughtful reminder of God's faithfulness in the past.

The Bishop did not leave us merely celebrating the past, but pressed us onwards and upwards to a new expectation of what our gracious, compassionate God might do in our lives, homes, our places of vocation and our community through the counselling service under the direction of Julie and Janet. As we reflect on this past year, the truth referenced by the Bishop from v 13 of Psalm 145 is affirmed: the reassuring truth that God is faithful to all his promises and loving towards all he has made.

Whatever our role, counsellors, volunteers, patrons, trustees or supporters, we move onwards and upwards into 2017. We all

rely on God's continuing faithfulness for the future of the counselling service.

**Stan King, Chair of trustees**

---

## FROM STUDENT COUNSELLOR TO TEAM MEMBER



I feel very blessed and excited to be joining the team at Sevenoaks Counselling in 2017. My time here as a student counsellor in the last twelve months or so has been very special to me: I have felt very supported, particularly when college work and the stress and chaos which accompanied that has reared its head from time to time. Sevenoaks Counselling has been my 'secure base'!

I have been in Kent in the last 12 years - initially working with young people in a church in Paddock Wood and then with adults struggling with substance misuse issues in Maidstone - work with which I am still involved. Being with this client group, which I have found to be both a challenge and a blessing, is something I have not lost my passion for. It has given me an interest, too, in supporting people struggling with relationship issues, such as assertiveness, anger management, self-esteem and anxiety.

I have also been involved in designing and delivering training sessions on drug and alcohol awareness for professionals in West Kent who may not feel confident about addressing and dealing with the sensitive issue of substance misuse with clients having problems in this area.

Outside of work, as I recover from being a student, I like to keep involved with my small church group, and nothing gives me more pleasure and relaxation than taking my chocolate labrador Dexter on long country walks along the Greensand Way - provided he doesn't eat too many apples!

**Steve Fearn**

# VOLUNTEERING AT SC



I started volunteering at Sevenoaks Counselling in September, at the start of the new school year. And there was lots to learn: getting to know the procedures as well as the counsellors and other volunteers. With over ten counsellors working over four days a week including evening appointments, the diary is a complicated business.

No two days are the same but I check phone messages and emails to ensure the diary is correct and up-to-date so that the counsellors can manage their time effectively. Sometimes potential clients call at the centre to enquire about counselling - speaking directly to someone often makes booking appointments easier as everybody has different availability. Communication in the message book ensures that there is a clear record of what's been happening from day to day.

Everyone has made me feel welcome, taking the time to show me the ropes - for which I'm grateful. It's an invaluable service and it's lovely to be part of such a great team.

**Cairen Surgeoner**

## **ANNUAL OPEN MEETING**

**Wednesday 7th June 2017**

**7.30pm refreshments, 8.00pm start**

**St Mary's Church Centre, Kippington Road, TN13 2LL**

**Allison Summers, from Kenward Trust,  
will speak about**

## **Addictions**

For more details please see our website  
[www.sevenoakscounselling.org.uk](http://www.sevenoakscounselling.org.uk) nearer the time

# From our treasurer- Chris Stiven

The graphs and figures that follow show the (unaudited) picture of our income and expenditure for the financial year ending 31 January 2017. We provided some 2,550 counselling sessions during this period, about 10% fewer than during the previous financial year.



Illustration by Chris Gash

This reduction was mainly due to two counsellors, including the previous Head of Counselling, leaving the service during the year. Demand remains high and we still have a waiting list

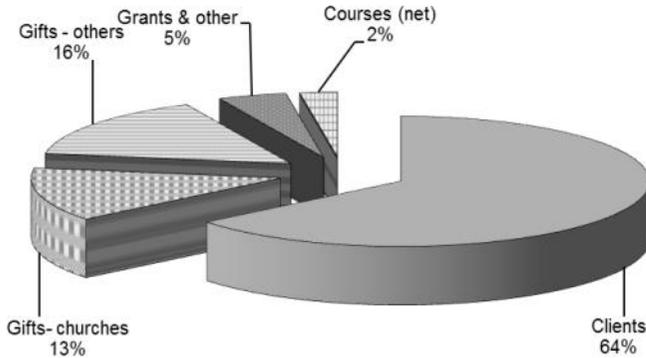
Despite the 10% reduction in the number of sessions, income from our clients was only about 2% lower, and was sufficient to cover about 63% of our overall costs (2015-16: 61%). The resulting operational shortfall was some £33,700 (2015-16: £38,600).

This shortfall was partly covered by gifts from individuals and churches (which declined by 12% and 18% respectively) and by increased grants from Kent County Council, Sevenoaks District

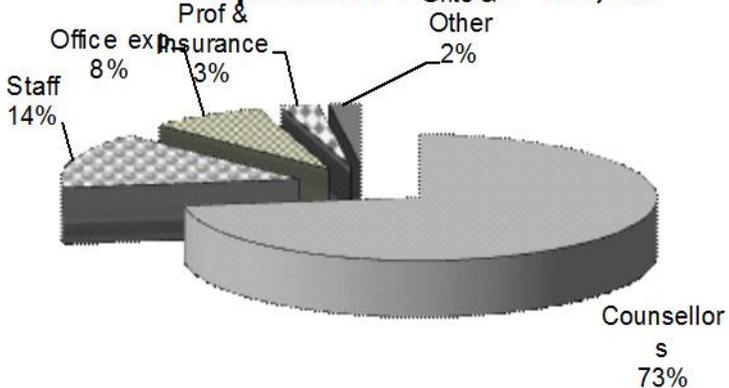
Council and Sevenoaks Town Council for which we are very grateful. We were able to maintain at some £2,000 the income received from courses that we run. As a result the service was able to end the year with a small overall surplus.

There has been a noticeable recent trend for clients to pay by bank transfer instead of cash or cheque. Although such payments still only covered some 2.5% of client income, they nearly tripled compared with the previous year. The average value of client bank transfers is significantly higher than average cash or cheque payments. We hope to introduce the facility to take credit and debit card payments

### Income 2016-17 £92,083



### Expenditure 2016-17 £91,299



---

## Would you like to help?

If you would like to send a single gift or sign a Standing Order for a regular contribution to Sevenoaks Counselling, Gift Aid forms, etc can be downloaded from our website:  
[www.sevenoakscounselling.org.uk](http://www.sevenoakscounselling.org.uk)

Donations should be sent to the address on the front of the Newsletter.

# SEED THOUGHTS

These reflections have been contributed by Jean Watson, one of our Trustees.



***A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver ( Proverbs 25:11 AV/KJV).***

I have been thinking about sowing seeds and what grows from them as a metaphor for the effect we can have on other people. My 'take' on the subject is a personal one, based on my reading, observation and experience. We can, it seems to me, help to sow bad or good seeds in other people's lives by what we say to them, but also by how and why we say those words, as well as by our actions and attitudes.

Bad seeds might include:

- ◆ Constant criticism and put downs - which tend to grow defiance and bad conduct or, alternatively and very differently, discouragement, a cowed attitude, apathy.
- ◆ Inappropriate expectations or over-pressure to achieve appropriate expectations - which tend to grow feelings of never being quite good enough and so to either giving up or workaholism and drivenness.

Good seeds might include:

- ◆ Positive, genuinely meant affirmation - which tends to grow confidence because of starting to feel known, valued, significant.
- ◆ Kindness and understanding - which tends to encourage honesty as people can feel safe enough to face and own up to their flaws and vulnerabilities and hence to the possibility of change, healing, growth.

Good seeds might also include truth – but truth is not always easy to know, let alone sow well. I believe it can only ever be sown as good seed producing good growth when it springs from genuine love offered with some compunction and without even a smidgeon of relish.

Speaking personally here, I shrink from telling someone ‘home’ truths or ‘hard’ truths. This may be cowardice on my part. Or it may be that such unwelcome truths are best arrived at and ‘named’ by the person concerned at the right time; and this is much more likely to happen, I believe, when that person has been sown the enabling seeds of gentleness and care.

In a beautiful blessing by Joyce Rupp these words occur:

***May you discover the kernels of wisdom,  
hidden in unwanted experiences.***

People helpers, sowing good seeds, may well be needed to help others ‘discover the kernels of wisdom in unwanted experiences’. And we can surely all be ‘people helpers’ – and, indeed, ‘people helped’ - through our family and friendship relationships, even though we can’t all be counsellors, therapists or spiritual directors.

In the most ‘unwanted experience’ of my life, I remember feeling, in amongst the grief, that I had somehow stumbled into the wrong story; and I think I could have got stuck there but for a lot of time and a lot of good seed-sowing coming my way. These helped me to see ‘the wrong story’ as ‘my story’ which I could then process and start to see as part of the ongoing continuum of my life.

A final thought: the quality of the seeds sown is inextricably linked with the qualities of soil in which they are sown – but there’s no space here for further thoughts and metaphors arising from that!

# Professional Training Days for Counsellors

Each year we plan and provide a number of Continuing Professional Development Training Days (CPD) for the counsellors at Sevenoaks Counselling and in the surrounding area. These are usually well supported, provide an opportunity for good quality training locally, and also enable counsellors to meet together on a regular basis. If you know any counsellors do please pass this information on to them. This is particularly important for counsellors who work privately and we receive good reports from them about how helpful these days are.

***'Autism and your Practice' with Caroline Hearst***  
***Saturday 11 March, 10.30-16.30, cost £60***

There are currently no places available, but if you email [sevenoakscounselling@btconnect.com](mailto:sevenoakscounselling@btconnect.com) you can go on a waiting list.

***'Age sixteen to early twenties: some of the issues and difficulties' with Sally Valentine***  
***Friday 21 April, 10.00-16.00, cost £60.***

***'Compassion Fatigue and how to avoid it!'***  
***with Lindsay Schofield***  
***Friday 29 September 9.30-17.30, cost £65.***

***'Adult Attachment Behaviour' with Pauline Andrew***  
***Wednesday 1 November 10.00-16.00, cost £60.00***

---

***Counselling Team:***

Julie Smith  
*(Head of Counselling)*

Jennifer Adams  
Jeanette Archer  
Laura Daniels  
Jean Day  
Steve Fearn  
Rachel Ferguson-Gow  
Alan Forman

Claudine Gavin  
Nicci Paramor  
Andrew Procter  
Catherine Rodger

***Admin Team:***

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

***Trustees:***

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







