



Sevenoaks Counselling

a professional service offered by Christians
to the whole community

NEWSLETTER Summer 2018

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RING THE CHANGES

The serenity prayer is well known and loved and rightly so - but it doesn't say it all.

'God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.' (Reinhold Niebuhr)

Serenity and courage are important but so are many other qualities and attitudes involved in HOW we change the things that we can and in HOW we respond in our attitudes and actions to unwanted and unchosen changes. If we choose to deny what is happening out of fear or indolence, the results will be tragic.

WH Auden writes chillingly of those who 'would rather be ruined than changed.'



Rejecting such negativity, we can choose rather to make changes leading to prevention and/or restoration.

Change is not an optional extra. It happens everywhere in and around us all the time. *'To live is to change, and to be perfect is to change often,'* wrote John Henry Newman. And again I love that quote but the HOW and indeed the WHY of any change determines whether it moves us towards perfection or in the opposite direction.

The phrase 'ring the changes' with which I deliberately headed this piece has a positive, celebratory nuance. And it made me think of change ringing which I was vague about so I looked it up on the internet and here's what I read:

'Change ringing is a team sport, a highly coordinated musical performance, an antique art, and a demanding exercise that involves a group of people ringing rhythmically a set of tuned bells through a series of changing sequences that are determined by mathematical principles and executed according to learned patterns.'

This tells me exactly what I believe to be true: that we need not deny or fear changes because they can prove to be beautiful, good, beneficial for all if they are effected, or 'rung' if you like, in the right way for the right reasons by people who know what they are doing and work together.

I hope and believe that the changes in SC over the past months have been like that. And I hope as you read what follows and continue to support us in the coming months and years you will agree with this optimism and positivity.

Jean Watson, Trustee

Continuing Professional Development for Counsellors

It is now 14 years since we started organising training days for counsellors. We now organise four courses a year, two in spring and two in autumn. We were pleased to welcome Caroline Hearst back for a second day on 'Autism'. As an art psychotherapist with a diagnosis of autism in adulthood she provide fascinating and informative insights into autism and how to work with this condition. The second day was run by two Sevenoaks Counselling counsellors and our Family Therapist and looked at creative ways of working with clients. This was a relaxed and at times lively day which was enjoyed by all who attended.

In the autumn we have a day planned on 'Endings' (an important part of the counselling process), with Lindsay Schofield, and finally a day with Pauline Andrew concerning 'Attachment and Shame'. If you would like more information about our courses please look at our website or contact Sevenoaks Counselling office.

Jean Day, Counsellor and Courses Administrator

TRANSITION: A TIME FOR REFLECTION AND GRATITUDE



Since our last newsletter the service has been through a period of considerable change with inevitable accompanying uncertainty for the team.

In mid-June we said farewell to Julie Smith who has served as Head of Counselling for the last two years. At her farewell event we were able to express appreciation for all she has brought to the role and to note how much had been accomplished during her period of tenure, with new services on offer and the service widely recognised for its professionalism. Janet McGrath, who has been our Service Administrator alongside Julie is also moving on, having completed her own training as a counsellor. At the joint farewell tea it was noted that alongside the many outstanding qualities Janet brought to the role was a strong commitment to praying for the service.

After a lengthy and very thorough recruitment process which took many hours of trustee and counsellor time - and for which especial thanks go to Mary Wright, who led the process and brought great insight and knowledge of the service, having herself been a counsellor with Sevenoaks Counselling for many years - we are delighted to have secured Sue Surgenor as our new Head of Counselling. Sue is an experienced counsellor and supervisor who has been deputy coordinator at Crosslines, a Christian counselling service supported by the churches in Maidstone. Sue will be joining us in September. In the interim period we are very grateful to Jennifer Adams, a long-standing counsellor for SC with extensive supervision experience, for standing in as acting Head of Counselling.

I am also new to the service, having joined as a trustee in January and then been asked to take on the role of Chair of Trustees. My husband Andrew and I moved to Sevenoaks 25 years ago, shortly after our marriage and joined the congregation of St Nicholas.

After nearly 30 years working as a lawyer, first in the City and then at the Competition Commission, I stepped back to some part-time roles: I am a judge in the Competition Appeal Tribunal and was Chair of Governors at Lady Boswell's school until 2016. We have two daughters, both now graduated; we are looking forward to having one living with us from the autumn. In all the aspects of my life - parent, church member, manager, school governor - I have been aware of the many challenges to mental well-being thrown up by our lives and our society and of the tremendous value of access to counselling, so I am very pleased to have the chance to be involved with SC.

Throughout this time of change we have been blessed by the faithful service of our counsellors, volunteers, my fellow trustees and you, our supporters who provide generous financial and prayer support. We want to express our gratitude to all those who have helped to keep the service running and thriving.

In February, with the sad death of Tony Groom who set up and ran the service from 1983 until 1999, there was an opportunity to reflect on the history of the service and to give thanks for Tony, for his vision and gifts and faithful service. It was an opportunity, too, to recognise God's faithful provision for the service over the years. Similarly we can now look back and acknowledge God's provision for the service through many people and by various means during what has at times been a difficult period and look forward with hope and expectation to what lies in store for us in the years ahead.

Clare Whittaker, Chair of Trustees

Please take action.

The General Data Protection Regulations have now come into force, so we need your consent to continue holding your details and sending you our Newsletter. There is a form included in this mailing. Please can you complete it and post it to Sevenoaks Counselling, The Bridge, Littlecourt Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 2JG. Alternatively you can contact us by email at **sevenoakscounselling@btconnect.com**, giving us your consent and contact details.

We hope you will stay in touch.

FAREWELL TO JULIE SMITH

I am sad to be stepping down from my role as Head of Counselling which I have held for the past two years. I am immensely proud of what we as a team have achieved during this transitional period and am confident that the service will continue to grow and develop in the years ahead.

I have valued all the experiences and challenges that have accompanied the role for they have added variety and richness to the work which I have so enjoyed.

It has been an enormous privilege to work with such a dedicated team of people, all of whom are united in faith and committed to helping others through the counselling process.

I will continue to pray for the service in the months and years ahead.

Julie Smith

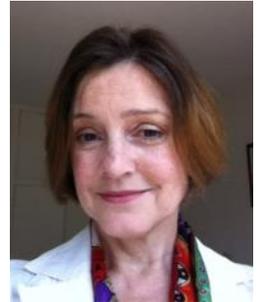


FAREWELL TO JANET McGRATH

It has been my pleasure and privilege to work as Administrator of Sevenoaks Counselling these past two years. Alongside the wise and trustworthy leadership of Julie Smith, we implemented a new computer system as well as a card payment system. We sadly said farewell to two volunteers and a counsellor who had worked with great dedication for many years. Yet with every farewell we gained the opportunity to welcome new counsellors and volunteers for whom we give great thanks.

Now having completed my Diploma of Higher Education in Counselling, I say farewell to Sevenoaks Counselling. I do so to take up my own fresh opportunity to practise as a counsellor with Heart and Mind London, where I have been a trainee counsellor over the past year. I will always be grateful for the opportunity to grow with Sevenoaks Counselling and will continue to pray for its growth and development in the coming years. God bless you all.

Janet McGrath



WARM WELCOME TO SUE SURGENOR

I am delighted to accept the Trustees offer of the Head of Counselling at Sevenoaks Counselling and am very much looking forward to working with the team of counsellors and therapists.

My counselling journey began whilst I was working as a physiotherapist at Seven Springs Cheshire Home in Tunbridge Wells.



Little did I know that following the introductory course at West Kent College, God would lead me on to studying for a Diploma in Christian Counselling at CWR (Waverley Abbey House) and then an MSc in Therapeutic Counselling at The University of Greenwich.

I have worked at Crossline Christian Counselling Service in Maidstone since 2005 and from January 2014 until March 2017 was the deputy coordinator there. My experience as a counsellor encompasses both Christian and secular settings including an IAPT (Adult Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) service; I currently counsel and supervise at Crossline whilst also supervising privately and at a service that runs out of a central London Church.

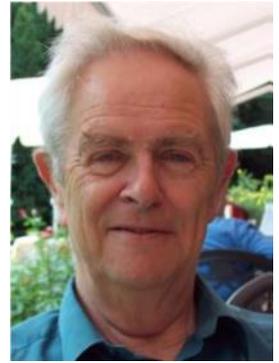
With my husband Andy, I have lived in Tonbridge for almost 30 years and we have a daughter and son in their mid 20s. In my spare time I enjoy gardening, dabbling with paints, visiting gardens and art galleries, together with listening to (preferably live) music.

I look forward to meeting you all in the near future and hopefully I will get to see some of you at the AGM in September. If you would like to meet with me and talk about what needs Sevenoaks Counselling could meet for any churches or organisations you are involved with, please feel free to contact me once when I take up the post in mid-September.

**Sue Surgenor, Head of Counselling
(from mid-September)**

THE REVD TONY GROOM 1933-2018

This tribute to Tony Groom, who died in January, is based on the longer tribute which Wendy Billington, one of our Trustees, gave at Tony's thanksgiving service at Tonbridge URC on 5 February 2018.



Tony Groom's ministry with Sevenoaks Christian Counselling Service lasted from its inception in 1983 until his retirement in 1999. SCCS started with a vision by a few members of St Nicholas' Church, who found they were out of their depth to meet the pastoral needs of some of their congregation. Led by Nigel Cooke with Kenneth Prior, then Rector of St Nicholas, other local clergy and lay people, and with charitable trust status, the SCCS was founded to serve the local churches and wider community. Nigel Cooke, together with the recently formed Board of Directors, invited Tony to become its first counsellor.

He was then a chaplain at a hospital in Dundee. So it was a big decision for Tony and his wife, Gill, bearing in mind that they had three children, but he saw it as a clear call from God for him to use his experience and gifts in this new field of ministry. So in May 1983 Tony came, to be joined by his family at the end of the school year. Tony started counselling sessions in a private house for a while until suitable premises for the Service became available. Tony Groom was the Service's ambassador and in a pro-active way he promoted our Service within churches and organisations locally and beyond. He was much loved and respected.

What gifts did God give him such that he was so special in his ministry?

- First and foremost he was a wonderful committed Christian – an example to us all.
- He cared enormously for the other person and their well-being was important to him. He made each person he met, whether for a casual chat or an in-depth conversation, feel valued and special. He was an amazing listener.

Wendy concluded her tribute, 'As we celebrate together today the life of Tony Groom, may we give thanks to our heavenly Father for his great life and faithful service with a legacy left in so many lives.'

ANNUAL OPEN MEETING

Wednesday 26th September 2018

7.30pm refreshments

8.00pm start

St Mary's Parish Centre,
Kippington Road, TN13 2LL

The main subject this year will be:

'Do I need counselling if I have faith?'

'If you're a Christian and you go and see a counsellor,
doesn't that mean you don't trust God and
the power of prayer?'

'Will a counsellor knock my faith?'

'What's the difference between seeing a counsellor
and seeing my minister or parish priest?'

Speaker : Revd Jane Edwards

Jane Edwards will tackle these and other questions about counselling, prayer ministry and spiritual direction/ accompaniment.

Jane is Vicar of All Saints Belvedere and was previously Curate of St Mary's Riverhead. Prior to training for ministry in the Anglican Church, she worked as a counsellor, supervisor and trainer and remains a BACP Accredited Practitioner. She has worshipped in Free Churches and been a member of a Prayer Ministry Team.