

# Sussex OAKLEAF

www.sussexoakleaf.org.uk



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**Disclaimer:** *Sussex Oakleaf would like to note that all views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are that of the contributor and not necessarily those of the organization as a whole.*

## CONGRATULATIONS MITCH!!!

Mitch wins a £20 gift voucher from the shop of his choice. Cameras are still available for all who want to enter. Contact Suki Westmore or Claire Knight at Norris House for a camera or ask a member of staff. This is a rolling competition so entries are always accepted.

**And the winner is...**

Mitch Hadley from  
Scaynes Hill with  
**‘Deck chairs in  
the Breeze’**

# 'What a picture!'



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## Your Newsletter needs you!

Do you...

- Want to have a voice
- Like to write
- want to expand your cv
- practise your computer skills
- learn how to use Microsoft publisher
- have any contributions for our next issue

Contact a member of staff or Suki Westmore (Service User Involvement Co-ordinator) on 01444 447376 at Norris House. Deadline for submission to Autumn edition: **12th August 2009**

## Inside this issue:

Sussex Oakleaf Week Attending a first Aid Course	2
Oakleaf Consumer Circle Update	3
The Roman Road in Burgess Hill	4
Behind The Scenes at Norris House	5
Introducing... Millhaven	6
Our Community Cafes	7
And the winner is...	8

# Sussex Oakleaf Newsletter

## Summer 2009

Volume 1 Issue 2

June 2009

## Sussex Oakleaf Conference

### Developing Personalised Services

On May 11th at the Hickstead Hotel we had a Sussex Oakleaf conference to explore the methods and merits of developing personalised services.

It was very well attended with a mix of professionals and service users. The morning looked at the new challenge of ensuring that in the future services should be developed with the client at the centre of the planning process.

The conference had some excellent speakers including a national perspective from Jamie Bartlett at Demos and Annie Whelan from the Mental Health Providers Forum, a local perspective from Commissioner Margaret Guest from West Sussex and a service user perspective from a client and her sister who had directly benefited from direct payments and now were receiving a service more tailored to her needs.

At the conference we launched our Community Recovery Team and our new service – Complex Care Packages - we had a moving presentation from a client of the new service as well as the Team Manager Lynne and Community Recovery Worker Nick explaining how the service works.

The Oakleaf Consumer Circle (OCC) did a fantastic presentation on why they were committed to Sussex Oakleaf and the opportunities they had available to them.



**Oakleaf Consumer Circle**

We also were lucky enough to be entertained during lunch by Ed who is a client of Sussex Oakleaf.

We received great feedback including how informative the day had been and how the quality of the speakers had been excellent. It is always good to improve and learning points included more time for questions directed at the speakers and more time for workshops to examine the topic in more detail.

Sussex Oakleaf really enjoyed sharing this day with clients and colleagues and look forward to the next time!



## Sussex Oakleaf Disco and Fun day

Sussex Oakleaf week kicked off with a resounding bang at a fun day held at Beechhurst Gardens in Haywards Heath on the 10th May.

Fun was had by service users, staff and their families. A treasure hunt was arranged by Sue Darnell which led many of us on a wild goose chase around the gardens. There were however a number of successful entries who not only managed to answer every question but even found an empty crisp packet and a shiny coin to boost their points.

Claire and Jan arranged a penalty shoot out which children from the age of 18 months upwards entered. All had great fun trying to beat the goalie, however the most fun was had by the baby who kept moving the portable goal posts! Tennis was played by children of all ages; there were winners declared in two categories.



Many thanks are due to the admin team who secured a whole hour for us all to ride the miniature railway free of charge.



Sue and Glyn riding the rails at Beechhurst Gardens

Adults and children alike went round and round the half mile long track choosing their favourite train to be pulled by. The record went to one young rider who managed to complete 8 circuits of the track before our time was up.

The afternoon was thoroughly enjoyed by all, once our picnic's were eaten and the children exhausted prizes were awarded to the winners of the treasure hunt, and penalty shoot out.

Goodie bags were given out to all the children and were an instant hit.

## Attending a First Aid Course

I attended a course at St Mary's Church in Southgate, Crawley on emergency life support for adults. I knew a little in advance. When we arrived there were 18 of us; I knew most of them which made me feel less nervous. The trainers were from the St John Ambulance, they made us feel welcome and got us all to introduce each other.

We started with an introduction to the course and what we would be doing, they asked what we thought the contents of a first aid kit would be - the answer surprised us all. Then volunteers helped demonstrate a realistic situation, I was put forward to do this and had to lie down as if I had collapsed. Marita had to check me over focusing on my breathing, at this point I thought I was going to get the kiss of life which made us all laugh.

Then we were split into groups to do resuscitation on a dummy. We practiced checking breathing, giving the kiss of life and giving heart compressions. We also learnt how to put a person in the recovery position. The course lasted 3 hours and was very intense but well worth it.

*"I feel a lot better knowing what to do in an emergency situation."*

John Ahearne

## Our Community Cafes

Mundy's Café - 01293 534782

Sunny Corner Café - 07917034520

### Mundy's Café

Mundy's Café is open every Monday from 10am till 4pm in St John's Hall, Crawley town centre.

Hot and cold food is served by well trained volunteers at a very reasonable cost. Popular foods are jacket potatoes, sandwiches and soup.

Mundy's café is run by Sussex Oakleaf service users as a social enterprise in conjunction with Crawley CMHT.

**Social enterprises are businesses set up to tackle a social and/or environmental need.**

Mundays and Sunny Corner are community café, staffed by volunteers who have all achieved certificates in food hygiene. The cafes are open to the general public and are proving to be very popular in both venues

**'Why not pop in for coffee and cake'**



Elaine, Tracey and Martin - three of the volunteers who run Mundy's café. Unfortunately Lyndy, the fourth volunteer is not in the photo. The team say;

**"We work well together, encouraging and supporting each other. We are losing one of our team and wish her well."**



### Sunny Corner Café

This photo was taken at the Sunny Corner Community Café in East Grinstead. On Red Nose Day all the staff and volunteers dressed up in red.

Money was raised by guessing the weight of the cake and naming the adorable Teddy Bear in the photo.

## Sussex Oakleaf Celebrations at Maunsell Court

As part of Sussex Oakleaf week tenants at Maunsell Court held a buffet and musical entertainment afternoon.

Lots of people came; tenants past and present, Laura - chair of the OCC, staff members and other Service Users. David Evans (support worker) set up an amazing buffet which was eaten whilst I entertained everyone on the guitar with a mixed bag of songs, some of which were composed with help from Robert West and Grant Curry.

A fabulous time was had by all, the entertainment was of a fine standard, the food delicious and the company most enjoyable.

Hopefully there will be another Sussex Oakleaf week next year so we can repeat the event?





## Introducing... Millhaven

By Barbara Beech

### A Brief History

Millhaven started in 1992 when Service Users and Carers approached councillor Sue Knight about activities for people with mental health issues.

Betty Hills served as co-ordinator with the support of the Welcome Trust. The Millhaven Trust was set up as a charity in 1994, their patron was local actress Thora Hird. The centre was originally based out of Cyprus Hall in the centre of Burgess Hill, it later moved to a large house in Mill Road.

Whist there we participated in a number of Burgess Hill's town processions. In our first year we dressed up as Queen's and won best walking group. The following year we chose the famous Willow Pattern as our subject and were awarded with a runner up prize. Members have also staged Cabaret nights in the past to raise money and awareness of the club.

In 2005, after many happy years in Mill Road, Millhaven had to move again. This time they moved into the same building as The Stead on the Victoria Industrial Estate.

### Times are a Changing

And now to the present day, I think Millhaven members and staff would say we have "gone through the mill" a bit over the past 18 months. Our manager for eight years retired and with new guidelines and directives from our commissioners the future looked daunting for The Millhaven Trust.

A loyal band of voluntary and member trustees fought passionately to secure our future. In July 2008 we became part of Sussex Oakleaf and whilst this was a difficult change for us we now have the support we need in order for us to head into the future with our heads held high.



**Millhaven  
Day Centre**  
01444 870915  
50 Victoria Road,  
Burgess Hill,  
West Sussex  
RH15 9LH

We have a new manager, Iain Cooper, who has grand plans for developing services and facilities at Millhaven Day Centre. A new timetable of structured activities to promote social inclusion and client involvement has been launched. Millhaven staff and members are currently looking for new premises in central Burgess Hill from which the centre could relocate to and provide a new range of specialist services in the future.



Purchased from of tedsonline.co.uk

## Oakleaf Consumer Circle Service User Sub-Committee to the Board

By Kay Phillpot OCC Member

As a follow-up to the launch of the Service User Sub Committee to the Board, the members have now met on a number of occasions.

The name of Oakleaf Consumer Circle has been unanimously approved. Laura Rigg has been voted Chair and Lynn Willis as Vice Chair. (Steve Potterton has for the moment stood down as the second Vice Chair due to him pursuing a vocational course for nine months. He has however asked to be kept informed of the circles progress and hopes to re-join the group once he has completed his course.)

Already Laura and Lynn have traveled to London to attend a course on Charing meetings and all Circle members have received committee skills training.

Laura has attended a Board meeting with Suki Westmore (Service User Involvement Co-Ordinator) and has reported all matters discussed by the Circle to them.



We have discussed topics for our work plan for the coming months these include:-

1. payment or rewards for OCC Members
2. Service User Survey

Our aims have been clearly defined as:

- To make a better future for Service Users
- Increased social inclusion for our Service Users
- To write a Service User survey and provide support filling it in
- To be recognisable and contactable by Service Users

There are a number of vacancies on the committee, if you would like more information or to join please contact Suki Westmore (Service User Co-ordinator) on 01444 447376

The Oakleaf Consumer Circle will be out and about over the next few months visiting all Sussex Oakleaf services, they want to get to know you, the services you use and any issues you may want taking to the Board.

**Look out for posters  
advertising their visits and come  
along to get your views and ideas  
heard!**



**'What's on TV Mum?'**

Runner Up Photo taken by Michelle Ireland





## The Roman Road in Burgess Hill

In 1779 Stephen Vine, a local teacher, was told about “an old straight paved road”, at St. John’s Common and that stones were being taken from it to build the turnpike road (now London Road).

When the Roman Road was discovered, by a group of local brick makers digging for clay, it was 5-6m wide with a top layer of flints 20cm thick. The line of the road was known as the agger and was raised above ground level. The roads were built with a curve, known as a camber to allow water to drain into ditches.

The road, built around 100A.D., was a direct link from the coast to London. People, soldiers and goods would have come from the coast. Another Roman Road crossed the Burgess Hill Road at Stonepound.

The Romans needed to transport food and goods as well as soldiers over long distances to cities that did not produce very much themselves. When Rome collapsed Britain returned to producing food locally and the Roman Roads were no longer required. Slowly vegetation grew over the road and it disappeared.

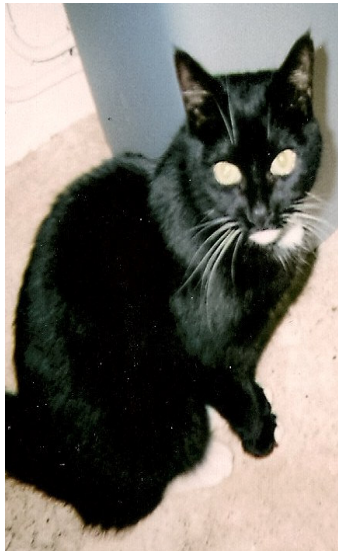
Plaques have been inserted at strategic points along the route, and two interpretive boards have been installed. One of these is at St. John’s Park where the line of the road clipped the corner of the Park. The other is in Queen Elizabeth Avenue, outside the offices of Sheering Health Care.

Leaflets about the road can be obtained from Burgess Hill library. Also at the library is a book by Alex Vincent called ‘Roman Roads of Sussex’.

Peter Scott - Sussex Oakleaf Tenant



## Animal Corner



My name is Laura, my mental health problems involve my emotions feeling much more intense than normal. It often feels like being on an emotional rollercoaster and to cope with this sometimes I feel the need to hurt myself.

In February I got a cat which I called Herbie,

she is very special to me. I think they can sense when we are down and upset, whenever I feel really low Herbie comes up to me and looks at me with her beautiful eyes. It feels like she’s saying please look after yourself, I love you and need feeding.

By Laura

## Cat Cuddling

Michelle Ireland and Fiona Lindfield

My friend and I have discovered cat cuddling which we found very relaxing and therapeutic. It was good to know that we are helping abandoned and traumatised cats, without people volunteering to do this the cats are often left on their own.

We travelled to Chelwood Gate by bus which only took half an hour. The centre is near the Ashdown Forest with a beautiful pub next door. We met the staff and completed a volunteer form, then we went to see where the cats live temporarily before they are re-housed. Depending on individual cats you can take them out of the individual pods and cuddle them. Some were very cuddly but there are a few cats that have been traumatised and need a bit more time to adapt to people again.

If you would like to volunteer to do this all you have to do is go to the Cats Protection and let them know you are willing to volunteer.

# Behind the Scenes... with the senior management team

**With Nahar Choudhury & Casper Murphy - Questions by Paul McNamee**

## How do you see the direction of Sussex Oakleaf in the future?

We are keen to consolidate our existing services by ensuring that we are delivering quality services that meet the needs of clients. We want to continue securing ongoing contracts and tenders, for example the Supporting People Tender that is likely to emerge in late 2010 and a new opportunity in East Sussex to modernise Residential care homes.

We want to expand the range of services we provide, and the geographical locations, to compliment our existing work in mental health as well as development opportunities in young peoples services and substance misuse. We want to reach greater numbers of people, particularly in those communities who have not traditionally accessed Sussex Oakleaf services, for example young people, elderly people, single parents, people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. We want to support the work of the Oakleaf Consumer Circle and ensure clients and service users are at the heart of the decision making process.

## What role do you think this might have for Service Users with ever evolving targets and changing guidelines?

We are anticipating an increasing role for service users in the development of Sussex Oakleaf services. A key goal for the organisation is to have at least one service that is solely service user run, as a social enterprise. Also, our expansion into East Sussex means that we are recruiting for a Service User Involvement Coordinator to ensure that service users are consulted, involved, and actively participating in shaping services in East Sussex, as well as being involved in shaping the direction of the organisation. An additional goal will be the increase in paid employment opportunities for service users, either as Peer Supporters, Recovery Workers, Café Workers, Cleaners, Advocates, or indeed any role in the organization where someone’s skills and abilities best match the role.



## East Sussex Day Services



On 1st of July Sussex Oakleaf will begin managing a number of day services in the East Sussex area. Caspar Murphy (Director of Operations) has been heavily involved in the whole change over process he says:

*“ With the July 1<sup>st</sup> start date looming, nearly all of the 17 new staff are in place, plus most of the four new buildings agreed upon. There are ongoing meetings between myself and service users in Crowborough, Hailsham and Eastbourne, as well as with the East Sussex Commissioners. There was a well received East Sussex service user get-together in Uckfield during Sussex Oakleaf week. We were entertained by 1 in 4 , the Sussex Oakleaf band, and informed about life in Sussex Oakleaf by OCC members. Once the services have officially transferred over in July there will be many more get togethers planned so that staff and service users in East and West Sussex can socialise and share ideas”.*