

BRIDGES

News Extra



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A Look Both Ways - Past and Future

This year's Annual Review meeting was special. After the formal part, there was an Open Forum to take stock of BRIDGES' achievements and identify possible new initiatives for the future.

Some 50+ people were able to join in the meeting and put forward new ideas to be considered and developed. The meeting was a great success.

We are very keen to follow up the ideas that emerged, and are looking for help from anyone who is interested in assisting us. This special edition of our Newsletter sets out where we are and how you might help.

Where is BRIDGES today?

The initial vision for BRIDGES was developed nearly twenty years ago when the listed building (formerly a Strict Baptist chapel) was first bought.

With steadily increasing numbers of volunteers BRIDGES has become a great meeting place in the town, serving light refreshments and always offering a listening ear for anyone in need of a chat.

But BRIDGES is so much more, offering numerous other services to the local community. The box opposite lists services that BRIDGES is offering now or has offered in the past. Wow! We didn't realise BRIDGES had covered so much ground over the years.

What BRIDGES is offering

Morris's Friends folk Music
Tea and Chat group, Carers First
Creative Art exhibitions
Traidcraft stall, Craft Circle
Prayer Supporters Group
Self Unlimited Cake stall
Hi-Kent Hearing aid help
Voluntary Action Within Kent clinic
Musical singalong group for young children
Summer Youth Rock Cafe sessions
Christmas Bauble appeal

BRIDGES achievements from the past

Training courses for BRIDGES volunteers and others on:

Food Hygiene, First Aid
Listening skills, Anger Management skills
HIV Aids awareness

Special interest projects:

Creative writing group, Board games club
Sally Anne Club, Homework club
Supper club and Family Cooks club
Assistance with reading skills, Deep Blue Café, Local Exchange Trading System

Clinics:

Health Visitors, Midwives
Job Centre/Employment advice
ETC chairman's surgery
Edenbridge Volunteer Bureau
Porchlight advice/support for the homeless
NHS support to elderly mentally infirm

Facilities used by other organisations:

Kenward Trust - drug and alcohol treatment
Allsorts Children's After School & Holiday Club
Alcoholics Anonymous, Weight Watchers

Other:

Dabblers
Story-time for U5s

How do we follow that?

Discussions at the Open Forum came up with many new exciting ideas. Four particular subjects were chosen by popular vote for review in small groups:

- The use of IT at BRIDGES and for use in marketing in general
- A Holiday at Home scheme providing days out
- Help for the elderly through shopping expeditions or during severe weather
- Support for single Dads.

All the ideas are shown in the box below.

Ideas from the Open Forum

TV display in the Centre
Holiday at Home scheme
Shopping expeditions for the elderly
A Website
Regular marketing of BRIDGES
Adult Literacy
Help for the elderly in severe weather
E-mails for alerts to particular needs
Leaflet drop in new areas of the town
Lip-reading instruction
Saturday pm opening
Group for visually impaired
Craft workshops
Implications of new Community Centre
Support for single Dads
Sing and Sign group
Links with other groups (e.g. knitting)
Evening coffee drop-in for young people
Help for recently released prisoners
Education on caring for the environment
God's hands project
Help for the underprivileged



What can YOU do next?

Are you interested in helping us take any of these ideas forward? If so we would love to hear from you.

We have already formed a small group to look at how we could use IT more widely. But the Trustees and the Management Committee need further support if BRIDGES is to realise its full potential in meeting the current needs of our local community.

If you are interested in assisting in developing any of the ideas above, please contact Mary Perrett at the Centre or telephone her on 01732 868186. In addition, please share our vision with friends and invite them to participate in creating the next chapter in BRIDGES' history.