

BRIDGES NEWS



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Members have a special hiring rate of £10 per hour (includes the use of servery), do consider Bridges when planning a function. The centre can take a maximum of 50 guests, so is perfect for parties, Christenings, family get togethers and much more. Contact Dot on 01732 862408 for more info (or Mary in office hours).

Diary Dates

Annual Review
 Saturday 19th March
 10am at BRIDGES

March Exhibition
 provided by Nina

Fairtrade Fortnight
 28 Feb to 13 Mar

April Exhibition
 provided by Fiona
 Watkins

EASTER
 Good Friday 22nd Apr
 Centre closed
 Easter Monday 25th Apr
 Centre Closed

Royal Wedding
 29th April
 centre Closed

Spring Bank Holiday
 2nd May
 Centre Closed

Edenbridge Summer
 Festival
 28th May-12th June

Spring Bank Holiday
 30th May
 Centre Closed

NEW IDEAS FOR BRIDGES??

At the Annual Review this year (March 19th 10.00) the business will be shortened to about 30 mins, to give time to hear your suggestions as to how BRIDGES can develop its services to the community in the years ahead. Since 1995 we've been working on ideas that provided solutions to issues that were relevant to how Edenbridge was in 1991. **Where do you see the gaps now? What is missing in terms of help that people would find useful today?**

BRIDGES is a charitable Trust, based on providing a service to the community that reflects Christian values of inclusion, and helping people to develop their individual skills and creativity to fulfil their potential. The core project has been the Pop-In Centre, but if enough energy, funding, and volunteers can be found we could look at the feasibility of running other projects that deal with specific needs in the hours that the Pop-In is not open.

Are there other issues or problems that you hear about, or services that you wish were available locally? If so please tell Mary about them, and come to the Annual Review to share these ideas with others. What is your vision for how to make Edenbridge a more supportive community? How will the redevelopment of the Edenbridge Centre at Spitals Cross affect you, and the town? How can BRIDGES remain relevant to people who use the High Street? Sue Oldfield

BRIDGES' Moneywise project For some time the Trustees have been working with CAB and West Kent Housing Association, on an idea to enable anyone to find good ways of managing household finances, especially when income drops or when there are unforeseen expenses to meet. The original idea of Moneywise was to focus on learning how to draw up a budget to keep spending in line with income, and to revise it regularly as different priorities crop up. This scheme involved recruiting a team of new volunteers who would train as budget 'coaches' to help people learn how to draw up their own budgets. However, only about 6 people have offered to do this training, which really isn't enough to run this project, as first intended.

In the meanwhile we've been offered the chance to book a *Better Money Management* 2 hr. workshop, run by a trained adviser from **Credit Action** - a national charity with huge experience in this field. They give the following description:-

'The workshop is very interactive and topic areas are Budgeting, Prioritising, Using Credit Wisely and Getting Help with Debt Problems. We have delivered this for many groups where financial exclusion is an issue and there is a need for basic money education – feedback has been very positive.'

It will be of most use to people who know they would like help with these issues, so please pass the word round if you know of anyone. It will be on 21st May, (time and place to be confirmed.) There will be no charge for attending, but places are limited to only 20 people. Invitation leaflets will be appearing soon, so please look out for them; they can be returned to a confidential address. Sue Oldfield

The Bridges Volunteers Tea Party - Sept 2010



Did you know we have a prayer Group on the first Thursday of each month from 3 - 4pm, to pray for all aspects of BRIDGES? We would be delighted to have more people in the group, if you feel this is for you, don't wait to be asked, just join us. Ring Dorothy on 862121 to check the venue as this may change.

DID YOU KNOW...???

As part of our TRUST DEED we have a mandate for Ethical Issues (local, national, global and developmental). We rigorously monitor our procedures covering a wide range of matters - food supplies (e.g. organic locally-produced eggs and bacon), use of energy resources, equality issues and we use FairTrade goods whenever possible. We raise awareness of these issues on our display boards which are changed each month. Please do READ it! It's so frustrating when the person responsible for the month has spent a long time preparing a display and nobody reads it. And our 'Food for Thought' evenings - where an ethical topic is presented and discussed over a two-course meal.

If you have any suggestions to widen our coverage of this theme please don't hesitate to let us know. And if you'd like to join our Ethical Committee, we would be delighted to have you. Please let Mary know.

Our BRIDGES Quiz Night seems to have established itself as an annual event, greatly looked forward to by its many participants. This year lived up to our reputation as an excellent evening with splendid catering - an extensive Ploughmans followed by apple crumble and custard. There were 108 players in nineteen teams. As ever, there was fierce but fun competition and the coveted shield was won by one of the Parish Church Choir teams who, in fact, won the very first quiz and received only a sticker badge - we've become more upmarket since then!

The response to the raffle appeal delighted us, we had a splendid selection of prizes which raised 264. Our thanks, too to the local traders who donated prizes, The Quality Tandoori, John's market vegetable stall and Options Beauty Salon. Our catering team did sterling work as did the setting-up crew, the raffle sellers and our sound technician Andrew Davis and our scorer Ron, but the biggest thanks of all go to Pam and Jeff for the excellent questions (which must have needed hours of preparation) and presentation skills. The overall profit was £1178.67 - a splendid result worth all the effort.

Job vacancies

Newsletter Editor. Someone interested in people, able to sniff-out what's going on, can inspire and persuade people to jot down their thoughts, stories and ideas and collect them together to make our newsletter both regular, interesting and a valuable publicity resource for BRIDGES. Help can probably be found for typing, layout and printing, the real need is a good newshound and organiser.

Maintenance supervisor. We have two or three volunteers who are willing to do handyman jobs, but we need someone who is capable of regularly checking what needs doing working out what it will cost and organising the handymen (or women) to do them. Larger jobs will need to be passed on to professionals after checking with Management Committee or Trustees. Would suit a retired tradesperson, engineer or similar.

Fairtrade in Edenbridge

Fairtrade Fortnight - February 28th to March 13th.

Edenbridge will be marking Fairtrade Fortnight with several events. Look out for:

- Fairtrade Specials: delicious dishes available at Bridges & other venues.
- A 'Big Brew' 7am -1.30pm, 10th March, Edenbridge Town Rail Station.
- Eden Valley Museum, a display about history of Fairtrade in Edenbridge.
- Fairtrade Fashion Show: March 11th at Edenbridge Primary School.
- Co-op 'Ice cream' van with Fairtrade 'freebies' 10th March.

WiFi for all! - Well, everyone who has a laptop! Our wireless network is already available to anyone we know and trust - and the password can be issued on application to Mary. But it is not good security to make it publicly available.

So we are talking to BT about joining BTOpenzone. That means anyone who has a laptop and is already an Openzone subscriber will be able to use our WiFi hotspot we set up and non-subscribers will be able to be issued with a coupon. At present I'm trying to find out if these cost us (we'd then have to charge). There will be a cost (approx £100) for setting up, but our broadband charges will fall slightly. It is hoped that, like the new coffee machine, this facility will attract more users within the membership of 'The BRIDGES Community', and help us to balance the books. Ron Sutton

Traidcraft @ Bridges

Fairtrade Food and paper goods can be bought all the year round - visit the stall in Bridges on the last Thursday morning of every month (except December) and buy your Traidcraft tea, coffee, honey, chocolate and much more.

You can also make a monthly order through the home delivery box scheme - information and orders to Val Pughe 862389 by the last day of each month.



Visitors' survey.

BRIDGES have been carrying out another survey of its visitors in February to give us a snapshot of the number of people, where they come from, and their age range. The last survey was from 24-29th Sept 2007, it will be interesting to see whether winter figures are significantly different. We had two weeks of surveying, one of them during half-term, to give a comparison for a holiday period. The main purpose of gathering statistics is to prove the effectiveness of our service to funding bodies. All grants have to be accounted for in terms of performance targets, and we are including some more specific questions this year to break down the age-groups of our visitors more clearly. As grants become harder to get, we have to make sure that the money is spent on meeting priorities that the Councils consider are of greatest importance to the community. The other reason is to see how our visitors feel about BRIDGES' performance, so we are also offering visitors the opportunity to rate the service they receive here, and to make suggestions as to other activities that BRIDGES might be able to provide apart from the Pop-In, that would address needs that are not provided for by any other organisation.

All the questionnaires are anonymous, and we hope that they will produce some helpful information. If you notice anyone who is finding difficulty in completing the questionnaire, please direct them to some of the extra volunteers whom Mary will be arranging to be on duty to help. Please carry on with your normal routines of visiting BRIDGES, so that we get an accurate snapshot of its usefulness to local people.

Thank you. Sue Oldfield.