

Head Start

Spring 2021 issue

Crossways Community is a Christian charity based in Tunbridge Wells providing residential care and support for adults with acute mental health issues.

During this weird year here's what's been going on at Crossways

Holiday in Cornwall September 2020

A small window of opportunity in between lockdowns in the autumn meant that seven residents from Moxham House were able to have a holiday near the coastal fishing town of Port Isaac in Cornwall. A large holiday home was hired, which easily had room for us all as a bubble. It was located close to a working farm; we witnessed the farmer turning the mown hay, cut in a field

close to the house, and bailing it. Being mid-September, it was a reminder as to how delayed the hay making had been in 2020.

The house was designed for guests to self-cater. There was an outdoor heated swimming pool, a snooker table indoors, plus TV, DVD player and several board games provided. Although the small country roads and lanes were a little challenging at times for the seven-seater people carrier used by Crossways, the scenery was stunning.

With swimming pools having to be closed due to the pandemic, it was great to have the opportunity to enjoy using the pool with the accommodation. A couple of



On the beach at Polzeath

residents bravely swam in the sea on a visit to Polzeath beach. A lovely beach with hardly anyone there when we visited.

A really lovely gem in the midst of a difficult time.

Culverdale trip to the coast

Back in October some of the residents at Culverdale along with Ginny and Natalie had a very wet day down on the Kent/East Sussex coast. The original plan was to fly kites at Lydd (thanks to the expert kite flyer with us) followed by a time on Dungeness beach taking photographs and taking in the atmospheric light and surroundings that is unique to the area. Given that trips out during 2020 had been severely restricted, this eagerly awaited trip was going to go ahead whatever the weather. We hadn't quite anticipated the torrential and relentless



downpours and we had to abandon the kite flying but we took a detour via Camber beach and took in lung fulls of salty sea air, drove around Dungeness, taking in the lighthouses and Prospect Cottage and ended up at the Pilot Inn for a welcomed lunch and time to dry out. It was good to be together, to chat and laugh. It did nothing for our hairdos but everything for our morale!



To call these times extraordinary does not do justice to the word

It is a challenge to be in these extraordinary times, isn't it?

Joshua was one of the Israelite leaders in the Bible. He was an extraordinary man whose job was to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land. It was hard work. And God knew that, so He gave him one of the great promises of the Bible: ***'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.'*** Joshua carried out his job brilliantly. The power of God's presence and power turned this man from ordinary to extraordinary.

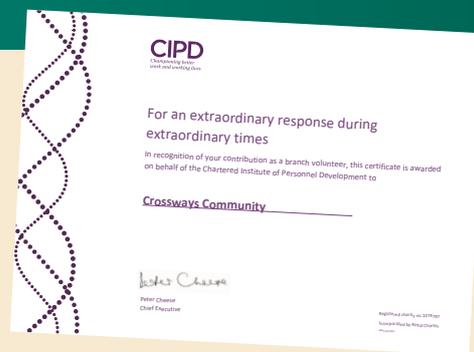
Last year we received the sad news that Lilla Moxham, one of the original founders of Crossways Community had died peacefully aged 94. Lilla and her husband Leslie were pioneering, resourceful and tenacious people with a huge heart for people with poor mental health. They were also people of great faith and all of us who live and work at Crossways owe Lilla a great

debt of gratitude. Lilla was a woman who knew and loved God and who was used by Him in extraordinary ways.

Like everyone else the past months have been tough at Crossways. The ways we support our residents and work together have changed as we cope with the heady cocktail of PPE, social distancing, Zoom meetings, Covid testing and working from home. There have been challenges and problems and the occasional dark day. But we give thanks for God's protection of all of us. You will see from the rest of Headstart that much good stuff has been happening and the Crossways sense of humour has not been dimmed.

I have been so impressed by the staff team here. People have worked extraordinarily hard to ensure our residents have been supported and cared for. But what has delighted me, even more, has been the other offshoots of this time: staff supporting one another through tricky times; teamwork, flexibility, ingenuity and kindness have all grown and grown. It has been a privilege to lead the team.

And so it was a great joy to receive an award in December from the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development for all the staff at Crossways. The award is for 'an extraordinary response during extraordinary times'. A fitting tribute to a group of extraordinary people.



The God who made those promises to Joshua is the same God who was with Lilla and Leslie and the other founders as they stepped out in faith and He is journeying with us through dark times today at Crossways.

Once these extraordinary times start to disappear I look forward to meeting many of you again.

Chris Munday, Chief Executive

Some of the residents at Culverdale have been making cards to go in the well-being boxes sent out by the local council, to be sent to vulnerable residents in Tunbridge Wells.

DOING THE BEST YOU CAN AT THIS MOMENT PUTS YOU IN THE BEST PLACE FOR THE NEXT MOMENT

JUST DRIPPING IN TO SAY HI HANG IN THERE AND BE GENTLE ON YOURSELF WE ARE THINKING OF YOU



Gardening at Moxham

Thankfully lockdown did not extend to the garden, and we are truly thankful to the residents and team who kept us fed with fresh vegetables throughout this winter. There was a bumper harvest of sprouts and amazingly large parsnips produced amongst an array of delicious and nutritious vegetables. We still have some sprouts in the freezer!

The provision of the poly tunnel has meant that we can still enjoy fresh, home grown lettuce even in the midst of winter.

At the moment the raised beds are being prepared for spring planting of vegetables.

Preparation is also going on for a display to be put up in the front garden. This year it will be on a theme of recycling.

One of our committed resident gardeners, Michael, writes ***"I love and enjoy the garden. It is therapeutic and calming watching and enjoying the finished product ripen and flourish"***.



New Trustees



Lesley Hickmott

What are your interests?

- Reflexology
- Painting (especially Water colours)
- Volunteering for Help the Aged/ Social Enterprise

How do you spend your spare time?

- Studying Reflexology (part-time at weekends)
- Art classes (now all held on Zoom)
- Walking in the woods around Ashdown Forest / The Ghyll in Crowborough
- Swimming (when allowed)
- Qi Gong – Chinese form of gentle exercise.

What do you wish you had more time to do?

- Work in an Elephant sanctuary – living with the herd

- Get more qualified in other Complimentary therapies, like Aromatherapy
- Paint more using more mediums / oils and pastels.

What would you change about yourself?

Learning how to cultivate a better sense of humour and practising how to really belly laugh more often – its good for the soul!

Last year I made a massive change away from full time pursuit of a London-based

career where often I was stressed and working long hours.

In 2020 Covid times gave me the excuse and opportunity to ‘escape’ the drudgery of too much to do in too little time. I am now working as a self-employed Marketing Effectiveness Consultant and making more time for myself and family.

What makes you happy?

I feel at my happiest when I am an active participant to the actions required to make a difference. Seeing God’s

work unfold... in human endeavours, blessed with His spirit I love the experience in how humans can triumph and find solutions to our everyday worldly challenges when we serve our Lord.

Being appointed to Crossways’ Board and given the opportunity to work with other Trustees and to serve has made me incredibly happy.

Aidan Lisser

Aidan Lisser has lived in Tunbridge Wells for the last 16 years, having moved here with his wife who grew up in the area. He has a 19 year old son at university and has recently retired from the City. Aidan’s commercial background is in strategy, marketing and brands and he has worked for a variety of different businesses, including in Asia for most of the 1990s. He is a non-executive director of two other companies, alongside joining Crossways as a trustee.

Aidan has long been interested in the work of Crossways, having discovered the organisation through being a member of the St John’s Church family, just up the road. He is keen to contribute to Crossways’ development and has direct experience of mental health challenges in his own family.

In his spare time, Aidan does some voluntary work for St John’s, enjoys exercise and is also an increasingly keen golfer. As a result of having a little more time available, he is hoping to have more time to read. He and his wife enjoy travelling, although the coronavirus has temporarily put a stop to that!

He is much looking forward to getting to know the various members of the Crossways Community.



Kathryn Lane

Hello! I am Kathryn Lane, and I am thrilled to have become a trustee for Crossways Community.

I’m really passionate about Crossways - I was a resident at Culverdale from 2015 until 2017, and my time living at Crossways was transformational. Since moving on, my mental health has continued to improve. I am very happy to say I have now found work in a school. I am passionate about helping others, I am very creative and enjoy arts and crafts. I spend my spare time with my little dog, Rupert - we go for lovely walks together. I am happiest when spending time with others, I still catch up with church and my friends via video calls, and am very grateful for the technology that makes it possible!

Most of all, I am so thankful to God for leading me to Crossways and beyond - and for leading me to the position I am in now, as a trustee. I hope and pray that I will help make a difference, through my support of Crossways, to the mental health of those in our community in Tunbridge Wells.



Culverdale residents visit Athena Herd

Some of the Culverdale residents enjoyed a sunny four-week course at Athena Herd, Paddock Wood in August and September which was made possible by part funding from the Gatwick Foundation. Here, residents learnt to develop skills such as self-awareness and self-confidence through Equine Facilitated Learning (experiential interaction with the horses) and explored ‘grounding’ techniques to promote calm and relaxation. Everyone made huge progress and the sessions culminated in each person leading a horse named Apple around obstacles in the sand school by themselves. This was beneficial and invaluable work and our thanks go to Jennifer and Graeme and their amazing team at Athena Herd for making us feel so welcome and sharing their knowledge and expertise with us.



New members of Staff

Vicky Daniell



Tell us a bit about your background?

My background is in HR and I have worked for various local charities, my last job was as a co-ordinator for TW Street Pastors.

What are your interests?

I love watching films, especially period dramas and I love to read, mainly biographies and crime

fiction. My husband and I have a collection of limited/signed first edition hardback books.

How do you spend your spare time?

I like researching my family tree, we have gone as far back as Elizabeth 1st and one of my ancestors was a smuggler on the Isle of Wight! Another invented the perforations between the stamps before they became stickers!

What do you wish you had more time to do?

Travel the world with my family! We would love to go to Costa Rica and Japan in particular.

What makes you happy?

My family and friends, they mean so much especially during these times of Covid. I can't wait to give them all a bear hug!



Helly Green

I started working as a support worker at Moxham House in August 2020, having previously worked there between March and September 2019.

I got the opportunity to study for a Master's degree in psychology at Edinburgh University, so I nipped up north for a few months!

The course is designed for those whose Bachelor's degree wasn't in psychology and successful completion confers graduate membership of the British Psychological Society. This means that I could go on to complete a doctorate in psychology. I'm not sure about that career path just yet but the master's course certainly gave me lots of really valuable knowledge and skills. We covered every core module of a psychology degree (including areas like developmental psychology and social psychology) and there was the added bonus of a module on psychological therapies. This was my favourite subject and I think it enhanced my ability to understand how people's thoughts, feelings and behaviours are understandable reactions to life events.

It hasn't been easy returning to Moxham during a pandemic, but I know it must be even harder for the residents. I've been so impressed by the residents' ability to adapt to such tough conditions, including spending Christmas at Moxham. I take my hat off to them. The good humour and resilience of the team have also made it easier to don the rather fetching PPE every day! Thanks to everyone at Crossways Community for giving me such a warm welcome back.

Amy Marsden



Tell us a bit about your background?

I was born in the UK, in Ealing to be exact, and moved to Sydney, Australia, when I was 23 and lived there for 7 years. Before working in mental health, I worked with young children in a pre-school setting.

What are your interests?

I am hugely interested in true crime, I find the human mind fascinating. I am currently reading a book called the 'Anatomy of Violence', which dives into the interaction of genetics and the social environment in which people are raised.

How do you spend your spare time?

In my spare time, you can find me binge watching a new series on Netflix, reading a crime thriller or listening to music.

What do you wish you had more time to do?

I wish I had more time to travel - I have been lucky enough to travel parts of Europe and Australia but I would love to see more of the world.

What would you change about yourself?

There are actually a few things I would like to change about myself, one being my lack of motivation to exercise!

What makes you happy?

Spending quality time with my friends and family, and cuddling dog.



Chris Hutchins

I grew up in Tunbridge Wells and have been a keen sporting enthusiast throughout my life with a particular preference towards football which I have played since I was 5 years old.

In my life before Crossways, I spent the last 4 years in education studying clinical psychology as I am fascinated by how the brain works and how simple changes to our daily behaviours and routines can cause massive changes to our thoughts, feelings, moods and behaviours.

I spend my spare time socialising with friends and going to the gym (pre COVID of course) whereas now I try to exercise but predominantly watch television.

If I had more spare time I would love to play more football and carry on expanding my knowledge and understanding of psychology as this brings me great joy and keeps me happy and relaxed.

Thanks and prayers for Bennett School

We are extremely grateful to the pupils of Bennett School who sent a box full of Christmas cards to all the staff and residents at Moxham House. A really lovely thought from them and much appreciated.

Here at Moxham, we all feel aware of the difficulties facing pupils, teachers, parents, teaching assistants, and everyone involved in education in any way. Resident Tim writes *"Children are our pride and joy. It's important that we pray for them. We especially remember students at this time"*.

As well as sending our thanks we would also like to send our love and this is a prayer that we have written as we were thinking of, and giving thanks for all involved with Bennett.

Dear Father,

We thank you for the gifts of life, learning and education. COVID has certainly taught us not to take these things for granted so easily. We ask in the precious name of Jesus, a wonderful teacher who communicated so perfectly and so uniquely with each person that he met, that the capacity to learn, understand, absorb and retain knowledge, will be deepened for each and every pupil at Bennett. We pray that they will be able to flourish.

We thank you for the gifts of enthusiasm, desire to learn, creativity and imagination, and we pray that these will not be dampened for any pupil, teacher or family member.

We ask that their teachers and headteachers might have wisdom and patience to adapt to the ever-changing situations.

We ask that families who have struggled and suffered during this very difficult time will have a year ahead with restored health and energy; and where there may have been friction, disharmony and frustration there will be an ability to reflect, respond in peace and effective resolution to difficulties be gained.

Amen.

In spite of all the tremendous difficulties that children, families, teachers and schools have needed to overcome, may the year ahead be full of hope, love, grace and new ways of learning. Thank you again, pupils at Bennett, for your cards and kind wishes.

Out and about safely in the lockdown

During this pandemic a lot of us have tried to make the most of the opportunity to still be able to go on walks and enjoy fresh air, exercise and good company. As the residents at Moxham are all in the same bubble, they were able to enjoy walking together, although going in smaller groups sometimes, to reduce any concerns passers-by might have, seeing a large group of people.

Ryan writes *"I've enjoyed walking with my friends, having some fresh air and space. I talk with team members about which places are nice and safe to walk"*.

Sponsored Silence

Rosie and Mo decided to raise money for Children in Need. Mo described how "We thought the most challenging thing for both of us to do was a sponsored silence. Surprisingly we did it for an hour with ease! We did not have phones. We were really chuffed to raise £125 from residents, staff and ex staff." Thank you so much for your generous donations.

Supporting the work of Crossways Community

Crossways Community is very dependent on the support of our friends. We greatly appreciate the help that many people give us in our work with people with mental health difficulties. If you feel you can help us or continue to help us in prayer, practically, financially or with your time, please indicate this below. All help, however large or small, is valued.

Title _____ Name _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

Email _____

- I would like to go on the Crossways Mailing List and receive the twice-yearly newsletter.
- I would like to receive periodic updates for prayer.
- I am interested in helping out by:

Yes, I will support Crossways Community & enclose my cheque for:

£ _____

Please indicate whether you wish your cheque to go towards the:

- General Fund
- Mental Health Awareness
- Crossways Enterprises
- The Kitchen Table

Please contact us on 01892 543290 if you would like to make a regular gift and receive a Standing Order form.

Gift Aid

If you are a UK taxpayer, you can make your donation even more generous by completing the Declaration below. You must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the Crossways Community reclaims on your donations in the appropriate tax year. (currently 25p for each £1 you give).

Signed _____ Date _____

Privacy: As a supporter of Crossways Community we hold your contact details. Any information you give us will be used for Crossways Community purposes only. We never pass on contact details to any other organisation. If you do not wish to receive further information or news from us please contact us julia.kirk@crosswayscommunity.org.uk or via the contact details on the front page.

Christmas bingo session

Throughout lockdown the Admin team have mostly been working remotely, with things like our regular times of chapel being held via Zoom. Obviously we couldn't hold any of our usual Christmas get togethers at Crossways, but there were various Christmas entertainments in the individual homes and the Admin team enjoyed a Christmas bingo session via Zoom.



Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Richard Croft**, a member of staff at 71 London Road, for achieving his level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health & Social Care.

Save the date!

We have set a date of **Friday 15th October 2021** for our **Thanksgiving Service** at 2.30pm at the United Reformed Church, Tunbridge Wells. We are so looking forward to seeing everyone again (restrictions permitting of course!).

Coping with Covid-19

Even though we had all heard the news over the months about the coming pandemic, it still seemed as if COVID arrived in a rush bringing about many changes to the way we work at Moxham.

Initially, we spent our efforts sanitising those parts of the house with high volumes of traffic, monitoring everyone's temperatures and adding the use of masks to our working routine. It took a while for both us and the residents to get used to the masks. Covering a large part of our faces covers most of our expressions too, so we had to think carefully how to adapt to communicate sensitively with those we support.

June saw the arrival of boxes full of neatly made scrubs. We are truly grateful to a wonderful group called "for the love of scrubs" who made them and donated them to us. Along with a mask, scrubs became our working uniform: with ample drawstring at the waist, they allowed for any changes due to lockdown baking! The Enterprise



Vittoria and Erin submitting tests

building has been repurposed and now includes staff changing rooms.

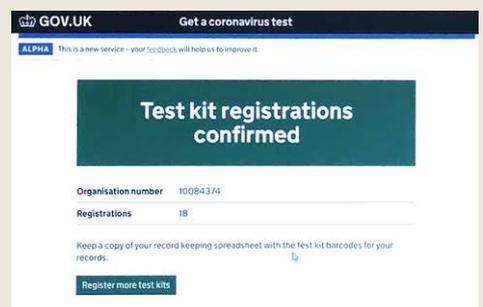
Soon after, we began the weekly COVID testing programme, which initially seemed complicated but after 6 months of testing on a weekly basis we have the system down pat. Each individual test is registered online, boxed up and collected and sent to the lab. When the results are back, these are then reported via a specific format and portal.

Other PPE that has been essential to us over this time are gloves, visors, aprons and hazmat suits and you can't move very far in Moxham without coming across some strategically placed alcohol gel. Basins with running water have been put

in place at both the front and back doors to encourage regular handwashing.

We have created an isolation room with its own outdoor space for new residents or those returning from a hospital setting, to isolate in comfort. A specific sanitized room is available for visits either inside during winter months or outside when the weather is more favourable. During lockdown, when visits can't take place, necessary meetings and clinical appointments take place online, mainly via Zoom and Lifesize.

As the vaccination programme rolls out, we continue to expect more change and remain hopeful that at some point, in the not too distant future, we will see an end to this pandemic.



CROSSWAYS ACCOMMODATION:

- **Moxham House:** a registered care home providing round-the-clock support for 17 residents.
 - **71 London Road:** a registered care home providing round-the-clock care for 7 residents, plus a further 2 in a self-contained annexe.
 - **62 London Road:** a supported unit for 3 people.
 - **Culverdale:** a supported unit for 22 people.
 - **Bethel Court:** 6 self-contained flats for more independent tenants.
 - **Camden Road:** 5 studio flats for more independent tenants.
- CROSSWAYS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS:** Running awareness programmes in schools, businesses, churches and community groups.
CROSSWAYS COMMUNITY ENTERPRISES: Practical work experience, helping combat the exclusion of people with mental health difficulties.
THE KITCHEN TABLE: Our community Café in Camden Road, open to all.