

CGSC Executive Committee:

Chairman Tony Cornfield
 Secretary Miranda Cormack
 Treasurer Rosemary Wakefield
 Executive Elaine Coupe
 Executive Rita Bennett
 Executive Simon Dawes
 Executive Penny Walsh

Contact:
The Chairman on 01732 452062
 Or email
 Tony@7oaksvineyard.freeseve.co.uk
The Secretary on 01732 457230
 Or write to 17 Pontoise Close,
 Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3ES

Churches Group for Social Concern - Aims:

To encourage the people of the churches in the application of their faith to everyday life in the community.
 To draw the attention of member churches to current local needs and work in partnership with other agencies in an attempt to meet them.
 To assist in thinking about ethical and moral issues, by initiating appropriate study projects and conferences.
 When necessary it will arrange fundraising events.

Future plans and events

Spring Open Meeting
Monday 27th April 2009
7.45 for 8.00pm at Kippington Church Centre.
 Looking forward—looking back:
 A review of existing and new initiatives, with feedback from the Co-ordinators:
 • Befrienders
 • Sevenoaks Debt Advice Centre
 • Sevenoaks Child Contact Centre

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.
 Colossians 3 v 12 & 14

Gifts and Donations
 Gifts from churches or individuals to support Befrienders, the Child Contact Centre, or resource the magazine costs should be made payable to:
 Sevenoaks Churches Group for Social Concern, and sent to the Treasurer:
 81a Bradbourne Park Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3LQ
 Please indicate the intended purpose of the gift, so that it can be appropriately applied.



The Sevenoaks Churches Group for Social Concern Newsletter

Issue 14, Jan 2009

Contact opens in February

As I look at the coming year I do so with excitement and anticipation of the Sevenoaks Child Contact Centre starting up. It is great to see volunteers from different churches coming together to make a difference in the community by giving their time to enable families to be together.

We have been told that a Child Contact Centre is something that is needed in the community and are anxious to meet that need.

We have been preparing for this Centre for quite a few months now and we look forward to receiving our first client . . . waiting is the hard part.

Please pray that the volunteers will have patience, that they will remain enthusiastic about this venture and that we will provide a centre that enables God's love to be real.

On the one hand it's tragic to hear stories of family breakdown and children losing access to one of their parents . . . a too common occurrence these days . . . but a real opportunity and privilege for the church to be one of the things we are called to be - bridge builders.

In conversation with statutory service providers in our community, who continually emphasise the need for such a service, it is heartening to show the church in a different light. Not just a building that people disappear into on Sunday mornings, but an organisation at the heart of our community, providing hope, answering prayers and stepping in where others would be looking for funding or making grant applications.



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"He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour"
 Luke 4 v 18b-19

Community Interaction

by Tony Cornfield

At a recent conference hosted by Sevenoaks District Council, with about 45 health and social care professionals in attendance, Tony Cornfield represented Churches Together in

Sevenoaks as a speaker, answering the question, "How can the local church help?"

The question related to issues of Domestic Abuse, but it was a great platform to be able to show something of the breadth of services that Christians through their churches can offer to people in need.

After briefly explaining the church's mandate to love neighbours, be good news and do what Jesus would do, I opened by saying that the church can do very little without their help. In most cases we are completely unaware of specific instances of need that these professionals deal with on a daily basis. But where appropriate, if they were to ask, there were all manner of ways in which the church was uniquely placed to help.

Befrienders, now over three years old, exists to walk alongside people through difficult life circumstances . . . post natal depression, bereavement, loss of self confidence and the like. Once the professional has responded to an individual's acute need and needs to move on to the next, a



call to Befrienders could see that person supported over the ensuing months.

Simple "Help" is probably the most obvious but rarely considered reason for asking the church.

In the last week, we have received the following requests from service providers in Sevenoaks:

- Two women from Eastern Europe brought here to work, have no money at all . . . can you help?
- A parent without a car needs help to visit their child in hospital
- A victim of domestic abuse has to move house on Saturday and needs help.
- Another victim of domestic abuse has moved here with three small children . . .
- A client needs a washing machine but doesn't have the necessary finances . . .

As a local pastor, my answer to all these calls has been, "Yes we can help". Sometimes it's just a trip to the supermarket, but for two of the above, calls to another church leader and/or other Christians has resulted in a "churches together" response to meeting some of the everyday needs in our community.



Sevenoaks Debt Advice Centre

by Cathy Walker

In the September edition of Compassion there was an account of the hope of setting up a free debt advice service in Sevenoaks. We are pleased to report that significant progress has been made towards realising this at a time when it would seem that there is going to be a very real need for such advice.

Sevenoaks Debt Advice Centre will be situated at Vine Evangelical Church and will be a division of Tonbridge Debt Advice Centre. TDAC is a well established service set up by the



churches in Tonbridge and working closely with Tonbridge and Malling Council and with the local housing association. Through TDAC our Sevenoaks service will be licensed with the Financial Services Authority and affiliated to AdviceUK and also to Community Money Advice, a national debt advice charity.

Graham Garner our co-ordinator has effectively led our volunteers through a busy autumn term of preparation. There has been training in the over-all process of disciplined money advice and in the use of relevant computer packages needed to prepare budget and financial statements to assist in selecting

realistic options in dealing with debt. Recently there was a day considering the interviewing process and volunteers have had opportunities to observe live interviews at Tonbridge.

We are grateful for those who have already given towards the start up costs but there will be ongoing funding needed for the skilled

employee who will back up the advice given by our volunteers. We feel it is an important part of our witness to the community to show that we can meet the costs of this service

from the resources of our local churches.

If any individuals or churches are interested in supporting the work, please send a donation to Graham Garner, Co-ordinator of SDAC, at Vine Evangelical Church, Hitchen Hatch Lane, Sevenoaks, TN13 3AT. Cheques should be made payable to **SDAC** and gift aid forms are available. The SDAC phone number is **01732 459599** and voicemail messages can be left at any time.

Our service will be available on Thursday evenings from 29th January 2009.

We look forward to receiving your referrals.

Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit"

John 15 v 5