



IN TOUCH

Spring 2021

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From our
Chief Executive,
Joanne

On 23rd March, we reached an extraordinary milestone:

the first anniversary of the first Covid-19 national lockdown. I remember well the feelings of enormous apprehension and uncertainty about what the coming year would bring as we closed the gate on the RBC, suspended our face-to-face Life Skills programmes and gave the reluctant instruction for our residents and tenants to stay at home.

As it turns out, there were many things I underestimated about those ensuing 12 months. Like many people across the country, I underestimated how long the crisis would last and the sheer scale of commitment and sacrifice that would be required by staff across all areas to keep COT Covid-secure. I underestimated the patience that would be required by our service users in putting up with all the restrictions on their freedoms and also the pain our families would have to endure in not seeing their loved-ones for so long. I underestimated – by miles – the volume of emails, notifications, instructions, updates and directives we would receive from all the various statutory bodies. I certainly underestimated the amount of notice we would be given to put all the new rules into effect!

However, I also underestimated some positive things, too. Who could have anticipated the extent to which our care staff would rise to the Herculean challenge of keeping the virus out of our homes and supported living services? Who could have foreseen all the excellent customer feedback we would receive...

...continued on next page.

From our
Chair of Trustees,
Russell



It is with the greatest of pleasure that we welcomed

Sophy Hazevoet to the Board of Trustees at the AGM. As many of you know, Sophy is the daughter of Elizabeth Emson, a previous trustee and Chair of the Board, and sister to Tim in Rock Cottage. We particularly look forward to her help and experience on the tourist attraction side and in relation to our wider communications strategy as well as the input of another relative to the discussions at the board.

We said goodbye last year to Martin Lovegrove who is continuing to work with us on the business and financial side and Robert Perkins, both of whom gave considerable energy and wisdom to our discussions. We are always looking for possible future trustees, with a particular emphasis on care commissioning or management and finance at the moment, although other experience is welcome. If you might be interested, or know someone who is, do get in touch via the Chief Executive's office. In the meantime, strangely, no one wished to take over as Chair in the middle of a pandemic, so you remain with me for the time being.

The focus of the board for the moment is on the next five-year plan. Kent and other local authorities are making it very clear that they will look to reduce hours or move people from residential care to independent living, or back to the family home, at the first opportunity. We of course are here for our service users for the long term and therefore have to adapt and change to reflect what our local authorities will tolerate. As we all know, these things tend to go in cycles, however, we must work...

...continued on next page.

...about our infection control measures when the RBC was allowed to open for a brief time last summer? Who could have predicted the enormous success of the virtual Life Skills programme, with 1500 brilliant sessions for students to join from the safety of their homes? And, most pleasingly of all, who could have known how incredibly well our service users would cope with the disruption to their daily lives and routines? Their fortitude in the face of adversity has been little short of heroic.

So I take some comfort from the fact we are not letting the horrors of Covid defeat us, but instead are generating our own reasons to be upbeat, no matter what.

That's the 'COT way' after all.

Joanne

...with the cycle rather than against it. With the wider financial environment, sadly we can expect some rough times ahead although I am pleased to say we are in much better financial health than we dared hope at this time last year. This is in no small way due to the continued generosity of our families, Hitrade and supporters. We have received some extraordinary donations recently and we are considering carefully how we will make best use of these gifts.

As I have said regularly throughout the last year, we continue to thank our staff for their considerable and selfless work over the last year. Let us hope we can get back to some semblance of normality reasonably soon and I look forward to seeing many of you again sometime in the relatively near future.

Russell

The spirit and culture which makes COT special has been nurtured over many years by many dedicated individuals and we have been saddened to lose a number of them this past year. Margaret Hanlon's tribute to Martin Bieri, in the Friends of COT contribution, is a lovely read and we echo her sentiments here. Martin was a Trustee for 24 years, as well as a hardworking Chairman of the Friends of COT and an ever-present volunteer at all Trust events. His passion and commitment were always evident in his determination to hold the Trust's management to account and in the avid interest he took in all aspects of the charity's work. His sudden loss came as a great shock to us all. The passing of Barbara Cordell also leaves a huge hole at the heart of COT – having been a stalwart fundraiser since COT's very beginnings 36 years ago. The contribution she made – with the help of her tireless Hitrade colleagues – goes far beyond the £1m+ in cash that she helped to raise. Her efforts have brightened many, many lives - a wonderful legacy indeed - and you will read more about Barbara later in this edition.

In a cruel few months, we have also witnessed the sad passing of Juliet Dorrington, David Osenton, Derek Jeffery and Nan Waldron. All parents of our service users, each one of these individuals has been a much-loved member of the COT family over many years, having given a great deal in the way of support, time and money to help us in our work. On behalf of all who live and work with Canterbury Oast Trust, we send our deepest condolences to the families of the dear friends we have lost.

All that remains, then, is to look forward to the next 12 months with the benefit of a good deal of hindsight and with a lighter heart. We can't drop our guard yet, though, and we remain concerned about the arrival of a new strain from overseas that might prove resistant to our vaccines. But we very much hope that the combination of staff commitment, good luck and prayer (which has served us so well until now) carries us forward into a happier and safer summertime.

Living and lockdown

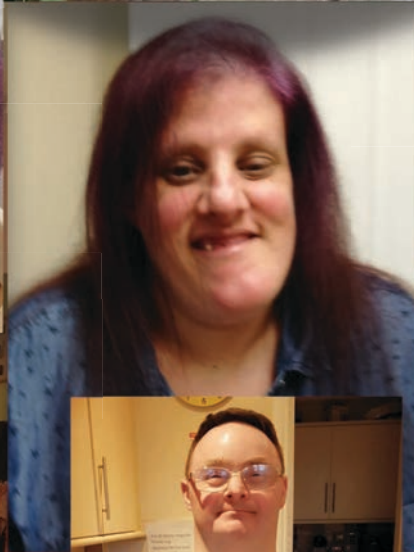
As we entered the first lockdown who would have imagined that a year on there would still be restrictions in place? Although we've been cooking, crafting, walking, gardening, laughing, playing games, trying new things (and lots of Zooming!) we're all looking forward to being able to do more soon - especially with family and friends (Lynn can't wait to go to the rescheduled Pet Shop Boys concert next year too!).



Birds of Prey and Pantos!

"Oh! no we didn't!" - let lockdown to spoil our traditional panto trip as we watched it at home!

Congratulations to Millie who worked hard to pass her modules for the Keeping and Handling of Birds of Prey.



Carry on crafting

Getting creative with craft projects has been a great way to keep busy.



The great outdoors

We've made good use of our time outdoors and explored new places.



Lockdown Birthdays!

We've had lots of Birthday celebrations - and now even some second "lockdown Birthdays".



High days and holidays!

A lockdown Halloween and Christmas - but we made sure we celebrated in style.

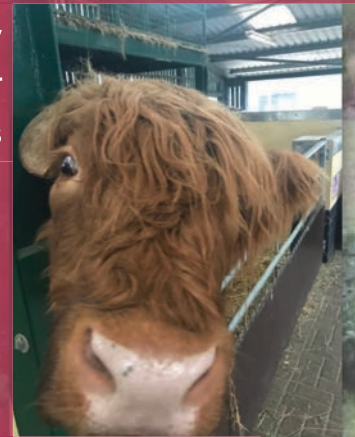


Living and skills

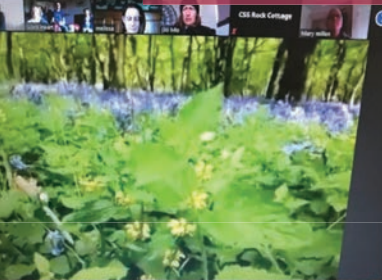
A to Z of Life Skills in lockdown - apples to dendrochronology...

As we pass a year of life skills being in lockdown we look back on the good times we've had and how we've kept in touch with our friends, learning lots along the way! We had our very first life skills zoom on the 1st of April 2020 and since then our amazing life skills tutors have hosted well over 1500 sessions - WOW! Although we simply can't wait to welcome all of our students back we will look back on the last year with fond memories. Here is a small selection of the fun we've had within our land based projects – Poulton Wood, the farm and Plants and Produce. Look out for the A-Z of our other projects next time!

A is for Animals - over the last year we have had so many animals join our zoom sessions. It's been a great way for everyone at home to keep in touch with their favourite animals at the farm.



B for Bluebells - we had a virtual Bluebell Cream Tea last year which was great! We made and ate our own scones while chatting on Zoom - and no washing up!



C is for Cooking – we cooked lemons, oranges and peppers on a camp fire and made beetroot brownies, grape jelly, leek and potato soup, marmalade, pancakes, Welsh cakes, Bara Brith and Irish cupcakes. We made conker wreaths and garlands and even conker laundry detergent!!



D for Dog Fish - we tried to hatch one from an egg but we were not successful. We studied dendrochronology after a big oak blew down in the wind and looked at the history of the tree and how old it was.



E is for Elderflowers – we made elderflower and elderberry cordial. We did lots of fun science experiments with Skittles, crystals, cola, Mentos and salt.



...from fireworks to ice!

F is for Fireworks and Foraging - we painted fireworks using cut toilet rolls and learnt to make delicious things from the plants of the woodland and beach. We made sloe gin, damson vodka, bladder wrack (seaweed) carbonara, pickled ash keys, ramson pesto, nettle soup, fried Chicken of the Woods, Parasol mushrooms, Linden blossom syrup, medlar tarts, crystallized spring flowers and nettle crisps.



G is for Gardening - we have done all sorts of virtual gardening, from seed sowing, to harvesting and even lawn mowing. We had more time to get into our own gardens too.



H is for Harvest and Herbs - we learned all about herbs and spices and the delicious things we could make with them.



I for Ice – we looked at patterns in frozen puddles and ponds and made an ice bowl and sculptures from icicles. We learnt to love the cold this year!



Living and skills

A to Z of Life Skills in lockdown - jelly to quizzing...



J for Jelly - made from the grapes in our polytunnel.

K for Kubb - we made sets to play in the back garden.



M for the Mud - faces we made in trees!

L for Lockdown - it was strange but we got used to staying indoors and getting creative.

N for Newsletter – our Life Skills newsletter, with activities, information and photos every month.

O for Outfits – we had fun with dressing up in different outfits to celebrate special days.



P for Pumpkins – we grew them, we carved them and we made them into soup and pies. We roasted the seeds with brown sugar and Marmite.

Q is for Quizzes – we held lots on all sorts of things including trees, butterflies, birds, tools, music, animals, noses and cakes.



...from Robins to Zooming!

R for Robin, Recipes and Rainbows - we made friends with robins! We hand feed them meal worms and they've become quite demanding, trilling loudly for their food!



S for Salt dough – we all went super silly with salt dough! Harvest wreaths, Halloween skulls, Aztec calendars, Christmas decorations, you name it, we recreated it in salt dough. Then we learned to make salt from seawater – for more salt dough!

U for upcycling - we learnt to make things from discarded items, like this BBQ from an old tool kit.



T is Tadpoles - we watched tadpoles develop into frogs.

V for Virtual excursions – we visited The Women's Land Army Museum, The Battle of Britain Museum, The Royal Military Canal, Park Gate Nature Reserve, saw a sheep rescued from quicksand in Cumbria! We saw bees being relocated, visited snowdrops at Brockhill Country Park, made Christmas puddings at The Ark Bakery, hunted for water voles and adders in Elham Valley, watched a lock being operated on the Kennet & Avon Canal and oysters shucked on Hythe beach.



W for work – we did woodwork and made a spoon, several bird boxes and bird feeders, wind chimes, hedgehog boxes and a bench.

X for Xmas - we made lots of decorations from natural materials.

Y for Yacht – we made this from petrified oak and chipboard.

Z for Zoom – we were nervous about using this technology but now experts and love to catch up with friends and family, have fun and learn new things!

Our supporters - crafters, riders and firefighters

In these difficult times we've had so much to be thankful for. Lots of lovely people and organisations have supported us.



THANK YOU!

A thousand thank yous to the lovely people at Sovereign (Financial Services) Limited in Tunbridge Wells who sent us a wonderful donation of £1,000. Some of their staff enjoy visits to our farm and were inspired by our work with people with a learning disability.

www.sovfs.co.uk

The hardworking volunteers at Crafting for Carers made and donated wonderful scrub sets for our care staff. The scrubs not only help to keep us safe but the lovely mix of patterns and colours really help to brighten our day! The Volunteer Riders UK made sure much needed PPE got to where it needed to be all over the UK - volunteers Glenn and Janice and Michael arrived with kind donations for us from the Crafting for Carers team.

And yet another heartfelt one thousand thank yous to Strategic Dimensions in London who also sent a donation of £1,000. Again, their staff are regular visitors to our farm and put us forward for this lovely gift.

www.strategic-dimensions.co.uk

The staff at SAGA plc chose us for their Charity of the Year fundraising and raised £800 through their in-house lottery.

www.saga.co.uk/



The Firefighters at Ashford Kent Fire and Rescue Service donated £1,329.48 to us. The whole team raised this tremendous amount with the help of the good people of Ashford during the Station's Christmas collection in 2019 - and through the generosity of their ex station commander Mr Russell. Unfortunately the restrictions halted last year's Christmas fundraiser - but let's hope they will be out this year!

Quizzers, shoppers and tipsy gardeners



Huge thanks to Julie Cook, Christopher Chappell's sister, who hosted a virtual quiz evening and raised £700 for us! A fantastic evening was had by 25 families – all friends, family and neighbours of Julie's - for 3 hours of music fun! Technical Support was provided by Jamie and Adam and Julie's Mum and Dad ran the quiz. Julie's Mum and Dad are Ken and Debbie Chappell who, with their friend Jim Graham, have been hosting music quizzes for COT for nearly 30 years – that's nearly 700 quizzes and over £250,000 raised for COT to date!



The Rotary Club of Ashford made a very generous donation to our charity of £150 in May and then again in August!

We are so very grateful to the members of the Club for keeping us in their thoughts.

A donation of £340 from the folks at The Tippy Gardener arrived for our garden on the farm.

This has been such an incredibly difficult year for everyone, so it was very heartening to have such support from Carl, Michele and Sam Edwards and their customers.

www.theoast.co.uk/the-tippy-gardener



Geoff Ditton sent us a wonderful donation of £1,920.50 for Plants and Produce. He raised this tremendous sum by selling plants from home.

Geoff is one of our long-time supporters at the Lord Raglan Inn who have supported our charity for many years through their tremendous fundraising activities.

Thanks to our special Christmas wish list on Amazon, and the generous people who bought a gift from it, we were able to deliver a stocking to all of our homes - packed full with surprises!

Thank you to every lovely person who helped to make this possible. Our special thanks, to Christina Martin for creating the list for us.

Our list can be found at:
<https://amzn.to/33fabG1>



THANK YOU

Our supporters - some kind folks doing great stuff for us



Ed Debrett, completed the virtual Marathon 2020 on behalf of the Friends of COT. Despite the wind and rain Ed ran from Hamstreet across Romney Marsh to Dymchurch and back. He's continuing his fundraising for Friends by taking part in this year's event - so far he's raised £1,335.

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/edward-debrett



Our very own wood elf, Jax Tanner Assistant Manager at Poulton Wood, is running for us. Jax took up running a few years ago and has dreamed of taking part in the marathon. We're so pleased she's achieving a long held ambition and helping us too!

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/jaxtanner2



We are delighted to have Jenny Hunter on board too as one of our runners!

Jenny said: "My cousin Tim lives at Canterbury Oast Trust and I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to support the farm where Tim lives and the charity his family have been so involved with for many years. I love running and the opportunity to run in the London Marathon, which has such a wonderful route and a great atmosphere, is very special, so I will train hard and hopefully get to run it around the streets of London or if not virtually round the road where I live."

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/jenny-hunter8



Nicola Croft lost her lockdown locks and raised £375 for us!

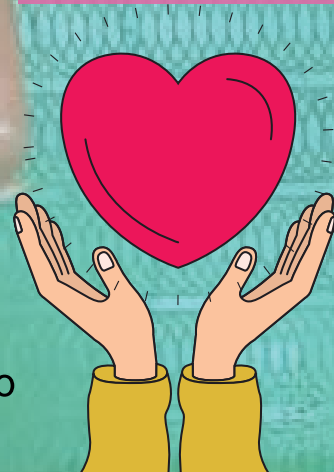
Rob Cumming's Birthday fundraiser got our year off to a great start and raised £162.

Jo Ludlam has raised £300 in memory of her Nanny Alice.



JustGiving™

If you'd like to hold your own online fundraiser for COT please go to: www.facebook.com/fund/cotcharity/ or www.justgiving.com/cot



From the Friends of COT

The most important but very sad news is that Martin Bieri has passed. Martin was a tireless worker for COT. I first knew him in 1991, he was working hard then and carried on doing just that until 2 weeks before he died. It's hard to write about the loss we all feel, it goes very deep. His funeral was small, of necessity in these times, but a group of Friends together with staff members, the CEO and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees all stood at the crematorium to pay our respects as the family arrived. Sandra is absolutely determined to hold a celebration of Martin's life as soon as that becomes possible. Martin deserves no less.



The restrictions have limited our usual activities and plans (although I have ideas for a big boot fair and sewing room sale!) but I can report that Friends haven't stood still. We've taken great pleasure in spending some funds – and there's even been some fundraising too.

We've bought lots from the Amazon Wish List totalling £1,700. At Christmas we gifted a personalised box of presents including a £10 Amazon voucher to everyone and made a donation to each house to be spent at the Manager's discretion to help 'make Christmas special'. There's no doubt the staff already do that in spades but we hope our gift increased opportunities for fun. We've had some lovely photos and thank you cards - which we really appreciate.



At the point that we all went into lockdown we were about to hold a Race Night in Hamstreet, specifically to support Ed Debrett, who was going to run the London Marathon for us. That event was cancelled, of course. Ed ran the virtual Marathon, running all by himself around Romney Marsh on what turned out to be a nasty wet day. He's taking part in London in October 2021 – fingers crossed! Ed had only just started his fundraising effort when everything ground to a halt but had already reached £1,148. Please will you donate on Justgiving towards Ed and Friends of COT.

An important source of donations is the wonderful Silcocks Farm Shop at St Michael's, not far from Woodchurch, where Hannah and her team keep the charity bookshelf filled and all the donations come to COT. They've done this for several years now and even raised an amazing £443 during lockdown, April – October 2020. They've sold some of my little owl doorstops as well, refusing to take any commission.
www.silcocksfarm-organics.co.uk

Margaret Hanlon

The Friends are dedicated to raising funds to support social and leisure activities for residents and tenants of COT. Everyone is welcome.

For information on joining or for help in fundraising for the Friends contact Margaret on email: hanlon1@btinternet.com or the Fundraising Office at COT.

News from the charity shop

I have to start by saying, on behalf of all of the volunteers with Hitrade, what a terrible shock it was for us all to hear that Barbara Cordell passed away. The tribute to her on the following page reminds us all about her tremendous commitment to the shop and its volunteers and to COT for so many incredible years. We will all miss her very much.

Although the shop had to close during the first lockdown a lot of work went on thanks to Lianne, Jeanette and Jeanette's brother, Christopher. The shop had new carpet in the main area along with some decorating and a lot of sorting out of stock; we must say that it all looked great when we returned! We managed to open in June last year. It was a huge effort to make sure all the rules surrounding COVID-safe restrictions were in place to help keep our volunteers and our customers safe. Some of our volunteers were unable to return though, so our hours were a little shorter and we've been unable to take in some donations due to storage and lack of staff to sort them – but we hope as time goes on this will ease. We had such a tremendous welcome from our regular customers who have supported us for many years and who really missed us! Although we had to close the shop again when the country went back into lockdown we hope to be able to open in April.

We would like to say a big thank you to Christine, one of our volunteers, who from day one of the lockdown has been making masks which we have been selling in the shop with proceeds going to the NHS - she has raised well over £1,000!

We are very pleased to say we have still been able to support COT even in these difficult times. We made a donation of £27,000 to support the feeding of the animals for the coming year. We also donated £4,062 to build a wash station within the top nursery to support the horticultural students and £5,500 towards the building of a new toilet block at Poulton Wood! We also made our traditional Christmas gift to the residents and tenants of COT of an £20 Amazon voucher.

We would like to say a very big thank you to all the staff at COT for keeping everyone safe and the farm running in these difficult times.

Phyllis Gallagher



Our friends at Hitrade

It was with great sadness that we heard about the loss of a dear member of the COT family, Barbara Cordell.

Barbara has been part of the Canterbury Oast Trust family since its inception. Barbara and her husband Don joined forces with our charity's founders to help raise the funds needed to get our charity started - and she shared many lovely memories with us about those early days.



Barbara celebrating Hitrade's £1M raised for COT

Barbara along with other committed volunteers would raise funds through activities such as manning stands at fairs, arranging sponsorship events, holding bake sales as well as making huge trays of homemade dishes to sell in the Coterie Tearoom.

Barbara was a founding member of the Charity Shop in Sidcup, Hitrade, which opened its doors in June 1991. She worked tirelessly as a member of the Hitrade Committee to ensure the smooth running of the busy shop and to care for its volunteers who, through their incredible efforts, raise thousands of pounds every year for COT. In 2017 we celebrated with Barbara, and all of the Hitrade volunteers, when they reached the astounding total of over £1million raised for COT. We have many fond memories of Barbara. The annual Hitrade Christmas disco with its fish and chip supper, dancing and of course the huge raffle was always a firm favourite with everyone. It was always an honour to welcome Barbara and all of the Hitrade volunteers to the annual COT Volunteers' lunch at the farm.

Barbara helped to brighten the lives of so many people. All of us at Canterbury Oast Trust are fortunate to have had Barbara in our lives. We will always hold her in our hearts and be eternally grateful for the dedication, hard work and compassion she showed to improve the lives of every person in the care of Canterbury Oast Trust.

The past year has been one of the most challenging in our charity's history – as ever though Hitrade has been there to help shore up our charity in the face of a crisis. The enforced closure of the Rare Breeds Centre due to COVID restrictions was a huge blow. Hitrade's tremendous donation of £27,000 to buy our animal feed was a lifeline. The farm is treasured by the people in our care and is essential to the sustainability of our charity. We have been able to reopen the farm for our students and for our visitors and we are indebted to Hitrade for helping to keep the farm going throughout the lockdown.

Just as Barbara, and the other founders of the shop planned, through the tireless efforts of the shop volunteers, Canterbury Oast Trust is stronger for the people with a learning disability who rely on our charity.

Angela Phipps



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www.c-o-t.org.uk and www.rarebreeds.org.uk

Registered Charity number: 291662

