

In Touch

Spring 2018



In this issue...

Living & Skills

Joanne's update

Care Services

Staff Updates

Living & Skills

Lifeskills

2

3

4

5-7

8-11



Rare Breeds Centre

On the farm

Marketing & Events

12

13



Our Supporters

Fundraising

Friends of COT

Back page: Calendar

14-17

18-19



Joanne Creighton CEO

Charities have been through a rough time of late. You can hardly pick up a newspaper or turn on the news without hearing of yet another organisation in hot water, either because they are pestering people for donations, being careless with personal data or – in the latest spate of incidents – falling below the expected standards for staff behaviour. In every case, these reports have damaged trust among the charities’ supporters; trust which – once withdrawn - is not easily regained.

These troubling stories have made me reflect on the trust that we enjoy here at COT from our service users, their families, our staff and the wonderful people who support us in a myriad of different ways. Indeed, you will see numerous accounts in this edition of generous donations from schools, community groups, the Friends of COT, local pubs, commercial businesses, grant making trusts and individuals – all of whom have shown faith in the people we care for and the work we do.

I was lucky enough to be invited by some very loyal supporters of COT to be a special guest at the Military Jubilee Masonic Lodge Ladies’ Festival event in January. In addition to the many hundreds of pounds that were raised on the evening and throughout the year, I was also grateful for the opportunity to say a few words about our charity. I was keen to emphasise how much we value the Lodge’s belief and trust - especially when there are so many other hugely worthy causes competing for support. I wanted them to know – as I want all our funders to know – that we never take their kindness for granted.

Although we don’t always get everything right (I am yet to find an organisation that does...), we hope that our service users and their families trust us to put things right swiftly and have faith in us to approach our care with compassion and commitment. In this regard, I was especially proud of the ‘Dunkirk Spirit’ that existed during the recent spell of snowy weather. The determination of our teams to make it in to houses and offices - no matter what - was really impressive. Indeed, I heard many stories of emergency underwear supplies being offered around in case folks were snowed in! The Rare Breeds Centre also managed to be one of the few attractions in Kent that stayed open all week. Again, the team could be trusted just to ‘get on with it’, whatever Siberia happened to throw at them.

So, to anyone feeling understandably cynical about charities at the moment, I would urge them to take a flick through this edition of InTouch – it proves there are many wonderful folks out there who - thankfully - don’t feel the same.



Finally, although there are many stories to lift the spirits this time around, the recent loss of some well-loved members of our COT family rather hangs over us all at present. You will hear more in the pages that follow about how much long-term resident Barbara Williamson and minibus driver Malcolm Revill are missed. One a highly knowledgeable nature-lover and the other once a swimmer in the Special Olympics, both Malcolm and Barbara have left an indelible print on the history of COT. We also lost our resident shire horse, Toby, at the end of last year. The incredible response to the news on social media showed the key role played by Toby in attracting visitors to the farm. Although we can never truly replace him, Davy is working hard to find a new occupant for the stable – watch this space...

Carol Senior—From the office

The new year in the care office unfortunately started on a somewhat sombre note as Barbara Williamson, one of our Ivy Cottage residents, sadly passed away after a lengthy stay at William Harvey hospital. Barbara had been living within the Trust since 1991 and was fondly remembered by various members of the care team as a “lovely lady” with a passion for Elvis Presley music and a partiality for bright colours. She will certainly be sadly missed by all her pals within the Trust.

On a more positive track, we have recently welcomed new resident Grace Croft, who filled the vacancy at Old School House, and who is settling in really well. In fact it is a bit like revolving doors down in New Romney, as Grace’s arrival was swiftly followed by resident Stuart Cross moving to take up his new supported living placement at Warren Mews; so we once again have a vacancy created at Old School House. Not to worry though, the care team are on it, and are already deep in negotiations with the Local Authority in respect of another external service user, keen to join other residents at the house. Another recent move involved Zoe Swann, who relocated from Watchbell House to the Mariners in mid-December. We wish them all good luck in their new homes.

Clearly one of the most exciting prospects on the horizon for the coming year is that of the new college building coming on line. After what feels like decades of discussions and planning, we have builders actually on site and can see and hear all the activity involved with pile driving and setting out foundations. We can hardly wait to see the beautiful new building spring up out of the ground. Alan Davies and June Crisp are already hard at work putting their heads together in preparation for the changes these smart new facilities will bring.

Although it is still early days, 2018 is already proving to be a busy year for building work, with extensions also in progress at both 1 Warren Mews in New Romney and Beaver Lodge in Ashford, both of which will result in extra supported living places becoming available in due course. Our grateful thanks must go to all the Beaver Lodge tenants who very kindly agreed to temporarily relocate to the old Harrington Cottage while the messiest and noisiest parts of the extension works were effected. I am sure, though, that they are more than pleased to be back home again now.

Work is also under way planning for our Care Open day in June. This year we are collaborating with students from the Norton Knatchbull school who, as part of their work experience programme, are lending a hand with making arrangements for both the day itself and setting out ideas for design of marketing materials to be used on the day and beyond. The students are immersed in every stage of design, negotiation with printers, and ultimate production of an updated display board and information packs that will be used regularly by the care team. Initial work has proved to be rather promising, so we are looking forward to it all contributing to what we hope will be another successful event in the Summer.



Danielle Boakes— Learning & Development

I would like to Congratulate the following staff who have recently successfully completed their Apprenticeship Diploma level 2 in Health and Social Care;

Amie Tobbit – Holly Cottage

Kelly Alford – Rare Breeds Farm

Michelle McDonald – Art at the Farm

Nikki Hughes – Granary Restaurant

Bethany Hole – Old School House

Lynn Cooke – Poulton Woods

As some of you are aware, the Life skill retender has meant that some additional training and qualifications are required to be undertaken by our already hard working and dedicated life skills staff.

One of those requirements is that life skills staff undertake the Diploma level 2 in Health and Social Care. As this has been a new expectation, it was an apprehensive time for the first small group of staff members that put themselves forward to register on to the course.

They all put in an exceptional amount of effort into completing the course and have all achieved the qualification in the required timescale. We now have our second group of life skills staff undertaking the qualification and I hope they have an equally positive experience.

A very big well done to all Life Skills AND Care staff who continue to embrace our training!!!

Juliet Perschky—Work & Employment

It's been really great getting to know students who are interested in their own self- development and keen to explore opportunities for enriching volunteering and work opportunities.

Our developing Life Skill Programme has been named! This was after a successful naming competition which resulted in 65 suggestions. After some further voting rounds the name was chosen as **COT Pathfinders**. Below is Thomas Lovegrove presenting the "Sweets & Treats" hamper to the competition winner Carol Senior shortly before Christmas.....Well done Carol and many thanks to Waitrose in Hythe and Wyevale Garden Centre in Hamstreet for their generously donated prizes.

Since then we have helped support Faye Price to successfully gain her first job at the Granary Restaurant. Well done Faye and good luck for your new job!

We are putting together our "COT Pathfinders" programme which offers support for 4 students at a time who wish to prepare for and look for work. We are keen to involve "Volunteer Buddies" who play a vital role in helping facilitate the student's transition into the workplace. Please get "in-touch" (*excuse the pun!*) if you would like to know more about this role.



Nine students recently got involved in a one day workshop run by Lee Robinson from The Ashford Volunteer Centre. The course helped students identify their unique personal skills and explore different types of volunteering. Our thanks go out to Lee and everyone at the Coterie Tea Rooms, who provided a superb lunch on the day!



Farmhouse

Farmhouse has two new members of staff. We welcomed Tish Wallis as our new Assistant Manager in October and Ashley Welsh, our new Support Worker, in November.

We had our Christmas lunch at the Conningbrook Hotel followed by a trip to see "Daddy's Home 2" at the cinema. Farmhouse residents all went home to their families for Christmas and had a wonderful time.

Ricky enjoyed having his parents over from Spain for Christmas and New Year.

At the beginning of January we all went to see Peter Pan at the Marlowe Theatre. It was an excellent show.

The building site for the new college is right next to Farmhouse and Thomas is particularly enjoying watching the work from his window!

Milly is looking forward to meeting her cousin's baby, due to be born in February. She is also excited about a falconry day here on the farm with her friend in March.

Soon we will be planning our holidays and days out for the year.

Ricky

Eating healthy and exercise is so important for all of us, yet for some of us it seems like a constant battle. But for Ricky has persevered with exercise and eating healthily and has lost almost 2 stone in a year.

Ricky goes to Body combat, Zumba, football and swimming every week.

We are all so proud of Ricky for his great achievement.

Ricky has been determined to lose weight and achieve his goal. It has been remarkable to see the transformation not only in Ricky's weight but his attitude to choosing healthy options.

He is a true inspiration.

We all just wanted to say Well Done, Ricky!

You look amazing!



Ricky receiving his Slimming World Award for reaching his target weight

The Mariners

We have had a busy few months at The Mariners. Zoe Swann came to stay for one night in December from Watchbell and didn't go back! Zoe seems extremely happy and has settled in very well. We had Watchbell down for a takeaway to celebrate her moving in.



For our Christmas meal the Residents decided that they would like to go to the dogs. So off we went to Brighton for the day, where we had a lovely three course meal and a few bets. A good time was had by all and some of us even won.



On January 4th we celebrated Louise Godden's big 50th Birthday with a party at The Mariners. Tony acted as DJ for the night and we danced the night away. Our next outing will be Drusillas, which we are all looking forward to.

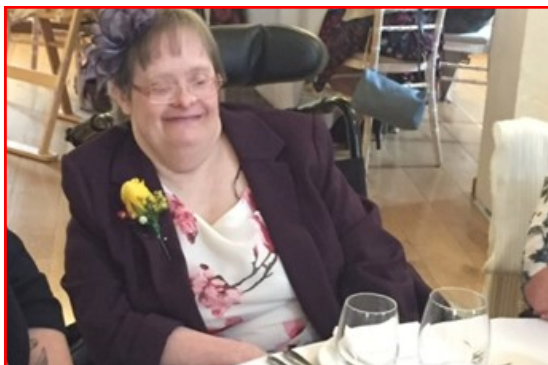
The New Bungalow

As always, people living at the Bungalow have had a busy Autumn and Christmas period with many individual and group activities attended.

Jane Poores' family very kindly purchased a new Puma electric wheelchair and have specifically requested that it is used for the benefit of any one of the people living here, so a huge **Thank you** for that to Jane's family. This has enabled everyone to have more access to the woodlands and easier walks into the village.

Karen was invited to a family wedding in Bath in October and after lots of planning and arranging with the help of her Sister and Brother in Law plans were finalised and Karen was escorted to and from her destination by her keyworker Susan – travelling by rail.

Prior to the date there was much excitement for Karen in purchasing a lovely outfit for the wedding – she chose a beautiful trouser suit, new shoes and a fascinator to wear on her head. Karen enjoyed her holiday at a respite centre, where she made new acquaintances, and I think (in the nicest possible way) enjoyed the complete break from her home surroundings and the people she sees every day.



People living at the Bungalow all enjoyed many Christmas celebrations including shopping trips, the Christmas Dinner Party at the Farm, visits from families, shopping trips out and some individual meals out with keyworkers.

Nigel's family travelled a long way to enjoy Christmas dinner with Nigel in a hotel. Karen's family travelled to meet up with Karen on Boxing Day for dinner in a local pub and Kerry was very happy to spend time at home with her Dad and other family members over Christmas.

Other members of the house had family visits and enjoyed all the in-house celebrations and fun with the dedicated staff team (many of whom had volunteered to work over Christmas), so a really big **Thank you** to them all.

Now, as this late entry is being written we are looking out at thick snow but all looking forward to the spring and the opportunity to plan and enjoy more outside activities – we have already booked the Kingfisher Trip again.



From Murray Shears—Farm View

One of my many hobbies is collecting bird feathers. I have several different kinds from all over the world. I have friends in other countries who send them to me.

My friend in Australia just sent me feathers from a Boobook owl and a Sulphur Crested Cockatoo. I also find them on walks I do and when I am bird watching, also in Poulton Wood where I work on Wednesdays.

Lots of friends save them for me. I arrange them in display boxes and label them.

Jill—Granary Restaurant

We have been busy over our Christmas period and would like to thank Michelle and 'Art on the Farm' for helping with the decorations again. The 'Ski theme' on our Mother Christmas hut was great. Our thanks also to Damian for building this for us and to Jon Booth and Estates for dismantling it all and storing it for us, and to Davy and Hayley for organising materials etc. My thanks to Nikki and Dan for helping me untangle the seemingly endless length of lights, too.

The Residents' Christmas party went off well again and my thanks to Janet, Martin, Sandra and David for helping with the set up and help to make the evening its normal success. My thanks to Lucie and Nikki for their help in running the bar and looking so Angelic!!!

Thanks to Sarah for organising a great Christmas night out at The Kennington Carvery, it was good to see so many there.



The Granary Lifeskills

Our students helped us manage through a busy Christmas period with one of our students dressing as an Elf and running our 'Mother Christmas' offer. Our

thanks to the Volunteers that helped run this on a couple of days, too.

Lifeskills made delicious Christmas cakes, Yule logs, Mince Pies (which were mouth-watering with Lucie's pastry recipe) and boxes of Christmas decorated muffins. Orders were non-stop from staff and we would like to thank them for their support.

They also put together a lovely hamper to raise money for Lifeskills, which raised £55. Joanne Creighton very kindly drew out the winner for us, which was a Lady who had visited at the weekend.

I purchased a couple of new cabinets to showcase the delicious cakes our students make. We probably sold double the amount of cakes in the first few days with the new displays and have had such a lot of positive feedback.



Michelle—Art at the Farm

Here at Art at the Farm we are currently working hard on two projects:

We are working on our Weather exhibition, which will be exhibited at the Beaney in Canterbury 19th May – 15th July and we will be holding an opening event on 19th May 11 – 3pm. We look forward to seeing you all there for a first look at this wonderful project!

We went to the Beaney on 7th February to have a good look around and construct a 'weather trail' in collaboration with the Beaney. We looked at all of the current exhibitions and found all of the weather related artwork and artefacts. Elspeth Brown and Darren Ergis joined Alan Davies and Michelle McDonald on the day and we are looking forward to sharing this with you at our exhibition, so you can all have a look around and see if you can find what we have found.

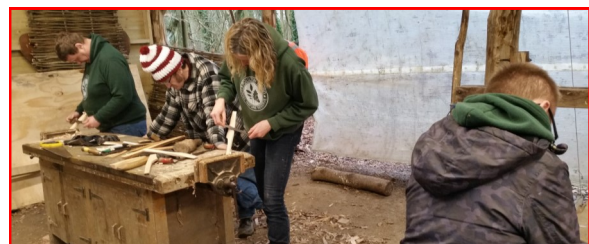
We are also attending the Wealden Midsummer Fair 7th – 9th June and will be selling beautiful ceramics, felted cushions, lampshades and stunning framed artwork. We are looking forward to chatting to our neighbours and showing what our artists are achieving up at Art at the Farm.

We would also like to say another big **thank you** to HITRADE for our wonderful heating, we are toasty warm in this bleak weather and are eternally grateful!



Lynn —Poulton Wood

Hi All, from the Woodfolk, sitting on the periphery of spring but with a Russian weather front to get through first which is apparently going to plummet us down to minus however much for the whole of next week. Noo! The bulbs are pushing through, the buds are swelling, the birds are flirting – we want spring! Now! Ah well, soon enough I suppose, for the moment it's nice at least to have the days stretch into lighter evenings, all of which is taking us in the right direction.



Anyway, news – Christmas Karaoke at the Village Hall! That was a first. For several years it has been evident that we've outgrown the Walnut Tree but it's been such a tradition that we (I) have struggled with having it anywhere else. Anyway, we bit the bullet, went across the road to the village hall, had the pub come and run the bar and provide us with a buffet and I have to say it was fantastic! So much better. More room for everyone to strut their stuff and put down some moves with the wheelchairs positively zooming about. Thank you to everyone who came and made it such a great night and for Friends of COT for footing the bill. Big thanks.

Our saddest news of course is that Malcolm Revill died just before Christmas. Most people from within the Trust knew him from working on the bus but Malcolm had worked at Poulton Wood for many years and was very much one of the Woodfolk. We miss him and it'll be a while before we get used to him not being around. We're hoping to have a little memorial party for him up at the wood in the springtime when the bluebells and wood anemones are at their best, and we're making a bench to site in the woodland in his memory.



We recently had a trip out to Canterbury to see an exhibition based on a project we have been following, called the 'Ash Project'. This is a wide ranging project, celebrating the ash tree, in response to the potentially devastating impact of ash dieback and involving people and communities at all levels in arts, crafts, poetry, literature and the practical conservation of ash in our landscape.

The exhibition we went to was partly based on one man's aim to see how many products he could make from a single ash tree, showcasing the beauty and versatility of the wood.

Poulton Wood contributed a spatula, a dibber and a spirtle which are now part of the exhibition which is actually really cool. All credit to Jax for this, as she came across this project and with her usual gusto decided to pursue our involvement.

Another trip out was to the Bronze Age museum in Dover. The aim was to check out the remains of a Bronze Age boat and everyone who went found it absolutely fascinating.

We've just hosted a willow weaving afternoon for Woodchurch WI which went down a storm. They were such a fun bunch and thoroughly enjoyed learning how to make willow stars and butterflies and eating cake in the sunshine.



Over this winter we have created a really lovely product range which includes a whole wealth of different bird boxes covering multiple species from swift to sparrow to tree creeper and some beautiful 'orange box' style crates with Poulton Wood stencilled on the sides.

Once we've finished the memorial benches we have to make we'll be able to make a couple of benches for sale.

Hilary has just completed a beautiful table and 2 benches as a commission and the carved signs, as ever, keep on coming in.



We now have electrics in our barn which makes a phenomenal difference so big thanks to our funders and to Glen & co, and Steve E who worked hard to get all that done and light up our winter months.

Our Bluebell Cream Tea has been set for Saturday 21 April and our annual Woodland Open Day Saturday 2 June. Two dates not to be missed!

That's all from the Woodfolk!

Hayley—On the Farm

Though it seems a long time ago already, our Christmas event was a huge success and we were fully booked for visits to Santa! Despite the odd snow flurries, it will soon be time to say goodbye to our Mr Snowman (much to Graeme Jackson's delight) as we seem to be hurtling towards spring!

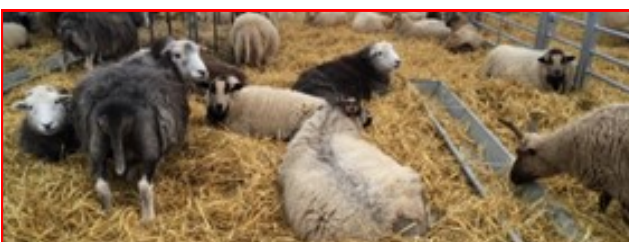
The spring flowers are beginning to show themselves in our woodland, keep a keen eye out for the rosettes of the Early Purple Orchids, Primroses and of course the Bluebell shoots. Please do stay on the paths to avoid trampling, so that next year's display is just as beautiful.



With spring, comes the time for spring cleaning with plenty of refurbishment on the farm... our field carparks are being laid with rubber matting to help with visitor parking during our peak times; the main hand wash station is under much needed refurbishment, and the top toilets have undergone a dramatic transformation, we are awaiting the grand opening. We've planted and begun mulching more hedges around the farm (to act as screens and wildlife corridors) and have pruned our existing hedges.



Half term was nicely busy with great weather and lots visitors despite the muddy conditions under foot. We are now preparing for the Easter holidays, lambing season and our peak school season – never a dull moment on the farm :)



Nikki—Events & Marketing

It seems a little bit late to talk about Christmas but I have to mention that we had an extremely successful event, as all Santa tickets were sold out long before the man himself was due to arrive.

Davy, Hayley and the farm team produced the most wonderful, sparkling grotto for yet another year and gasps of wonder were heard from the both the grown-ups and their children as they walked in.

Thanks to everyone who took part, including Matty and Coralie, who performed another well received pantomime, the shop and catering and Julie and Erica; they all helped to make another successful event.

Santa, the Naughty Snowman and the Elves are all booked in for this year, so for those of you with little ones, tickets will be on sale in September.

Easter may have been and gone by the time you read this but there will be lots to do around the farm, including the Easter Bunny choccy hunt, pig washing, face painting, more activities with the Easter Bunny and of course it's the start of Pig Racing season.....all very exciting.



It's our 24th Classic Car Show this year; where have all the years gone since Margaret Hanlon started this increasingly popular event? Last year we had just short of 200 exhibitors and stalls and bookings are coming in thick and fast for this year.

If you have a family member or friend who has a prized vintage vehicle hidden away, please encourage them to come and take part in the show. There's lots going on for all the family, a selection of stalls and autojumble, a parade for those who wish to 'show off' their highly polished car, bike or van and all the usual farm fun.

If you would like more information or a booking form please come and see me in reception or you can download one from the website <https://www.rarebreeds.org.uk/events/detail/24th-classic-car-rally> .



Lucy & Emily—Fundraising

Our fantastic supporters and volunteers continue to amaze us by raising vital funds and awareness for our work. We would like to thank each and every person who kindly donated their time to help further and strengthen our message as we begin a new and exciting year.

Relax and enjoy just a handful of inspirational stories from the last few months...

Christmas Raffle proves fruitful

Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets for the Kent Charities Group Christmas Raffle in December 2017. Canterbury Oast Trust are proud to be a part of the Kent Charities Group (KCG), a local initiative which exists to improve the quality of life for people throughout the county. The group epitomises the true ethos of partnership working, providing assistance to thousands of vulnerable children and adults.

The Christmas draw was made on Monday 11th December 2017 with two lucky winners receiving a falconry experience day at the Rare Breeds Centre and a case of wine! Through our events and projects with the KCG, we receive **all the funds** from the tickets we sell, which is proving to be a fantastic partnership for every charity involved.

If you would like to support COT this year whilst also enjoying a delicious, 3-course vegetarian dinner, please consider buying a ticket to the Blackthorn Trust Annual Dinner on Friday 18th May 2018. Tickets are £20 and tables range from 4-8 people. Please call Fundraising Manager, Lucy Read, on 01233 861493 (ext. 241) or email lr@c-o-t.org.uk for more information.



Students shine bright at Furley Park Primary Academy

We were delighted to receive an email from the Vice Principal at Furley Park Primary Academy late last year informing us that students had held a sponsored Fun Run to raise money for charity. Of the four houses in the school, students had to nominate which local charity they would like to support and we were thrilled when COT was chosen by Redgrave House!

Based in Ashford, the school invited us along to the cheque presentation as part of their morning assembly. We felt so honoured to attend and accept the cheque which totalled £292.92! It was a wonderful experience to be a part of the day and we are very grateful to everyone at Furley Park Primary Academy for their hard work and continued support.

Huge thanks to Royal Blackheath Golf Club

We would like to say a BIG thank you to Siobhan Smyth, the Ladies Captain at Royal Blackheath Golf Club who kicked off a fantastic year-long fundraiser for COT in 2016 by selecting us as their chosen Charity of the Year.

Following their Christmas Bazaar Fundraiser, which we attended laden with muffins, cakes and mince pies, the club went on to raise a phenomenal £3,634.80! We will be welcoming Siobhan and the club members to COT in springtime to express our thanks and gratitude for their incredible support.



Charity of the Year partnerships are a fantastic way to unite staff with a worthwhile cause. If you or anyone you know who may like to learn more about partnering with COT this year, please get in touch with Lucy on: lr@c-o-t.org.uk

Running for the COT in Manchester

On Sunday 3 December last year Joanna Sanderson (sister of Nick Sanderson, Warren Mews) and Nathalie Janvier ran the Stockport 10, a ten-miles run that began and ended at the athletics stadium in Woodbank Park, Stockport, situated south east of Manchester. Their chosen charity was the Canterbury Oast Trust.

The course was described by the organisers as 'quite undulating', but the conditions were good for running, in that there was no wind or rain and the air wasn't particularly cold. Both our COT runners surprised

themselves by completing the run in less than two hours, raising £460 for the COT in the process.



Joanna Sanderson (left) and Nathalie Janvier with their event medals after the Stockport 10 run.



Lucy & Emily—Fundraising

Quizzes, raffles and tea – all in a day's work for local WI!

The wonderful ladies of the South Willesborough and Newton (SWAN) WI kindly selected COT as their Charity of The Year in 2017 and invited us to accept the incredible cheque donation of £257.00 at the start of 2018. Arriving with a delicious homemade carrot cake by The Granary Life Skills students, we were welcomed with open arms and pots of tea before delivering a short speech to express our sincere thanks. Throughout the year, the ladies hosted quiz nights and raffles, all in aid of our work in providing independence, confidence and support to our service users.

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone involved at SWAN WI for donating their valuable time and effort to help raise vital funds and awareness for COT.

Special thanks is extended to 2017 President Sheila Eastlake (pictured with Fundraising Officer, Emily Rust) and the best of luck to 2018 President Maureen Drury.

Thank you for your kindness and continued support.



Final cheque from Basepoint totals £20,000

Our friends at Basepoint Folkestone selected COT as their Charity of the Year for 2 years in a row and within that time have donated an incredibly generous £20,000 through their partnership with The ACT Foundation! Their kind donation was dedicated to be 'matched funded', meaning for every £1 fundraised from one of our fantastic supporters, Basepoint would donate £1, up to a grand total of £20,000.

Emily Rust, Lucy Read and Rob Foley travelled down to the Basepoint offices to collect the cheque and also had the opportunity to meet with local businesses – a fantastic chance to spotlight the incredible work of COT.

Special thanks to Lorraine May of Basepoint who has been instrumental in forging this wonderful relationship and for her commitment in supporting COT into the future.

Local pub raises funds for 'Plants and Produce'

Our friends at the Lord Raglan Pub have amazed us once again by deciding to fundraise for our Plants and Produce Life Skills project through their own plant sales and garden parties. Since they began supporting us in 2015, we have received over £3,000, which has helped towards our growing tunnels and planting benches – both of which were in desperate need of repair.

School fashion show raises funds for COT

Haig House from Gad's Hill School in Higham decided to raise funds for us by hosting a fashion show at their school, with teachers, students and staff involved.

We were delighted to hear they selected COT as their chosen charity to support throughout 2017 and even more thrilled to learn they will support us throughout 2018 too! As a thank you, we welcomed a number of students from Haig House to the Rare Breeds Centre to showcase the impact of their fantastic fundraising efforts.



Students learned all about herbs and spices at Plants and Produce and heard from our service users at the Rare Breeds Centre. We received some wonderful feedback from the students following their trip:

"We would like to thank the staff for their hard work throughout the day to ensure that we had a good time. We loved their positivity, spirit and friendly nature and attitude; this was inspiring to us as we are more determined now than ever to raise money as we know it is going to such a fantastic charity run by incredible people. Thank you again for such a great day!"



To date, Gad's Hill School has raised a fantastic £693.88 for us and we are delighted to know we have their ongoing support.

Paul Harris—Volunteer Coordinator

Tesco Bags of help programme Sat 3rd February 2018 award ceremony.

The Canterbury Oast Trusts' volunteer gardening club was put forward by Gill Marsden, former Volunteer Coordinator, for Tesco's 'bags of help' scheme. This is a grant programme funded through monies raised from the 5p carrier bag charge and voted for by shoppers depositing the blue disks for the charity of their choice.

Tesco felt the COT application met all the requirements for their programme and the voting box with our name on it appeared in the Park Farm branch of Tesco throughout November and December 2017.

We were notified early in December 2017 that we had received enough votes to receive a donation from the programme.

I had the pleasure of attending the award ceremony on Saturday 3rd February 2018. The event was well attended with the mayor of Ashford handing over the cheques to the winners. I was thrilled to have received, on behalf of the COT, the highest cheque awarded in the sum of £4000, which will be used to assist the volunteer garden club with new and better equipment and waterproofs to help them keep the gardens at the homes looked after.

CSIS CHARITY FUND's £20k GRANT FOR COT's LIFE SKILLS ACADEMY

A £20,000 grant will soon be on its way to the Canterbury Oast Trust thanks to the CSIS Charity Fund. The donation will go towards the build cost of our new Life Skills Academy at its Rare Breeds Farm site; almost tripling the size of the current Harrington College facilities, which aims to support people with a learning disability.

The funding follows a similar size grant from the Charity Fund last year and continues the very generous support provided in recent years. Gill Noble, who chairs the Charity Fund said how pleased she was that the grant had been agreed and looked forward to seeing completion of the project. "It will be so valuable in supporting COT's work and will be a major improvement for the future", she said.

The CSIS Charity Fund is an independent charity linked to the Maidstone-based Civil Service Insurance Society, a not for profit insurance intermediary which markets products exclusively to current and former civil and public servants. Virtually all CSIS's annual trading surplus is transferred to the Charity Fund, allowing grants to be made to dependants of policy holders and, via charitable organisations, to those from the public services who face hardship.

We are enormously grateful to the CSIS for their continued support and the faith they have shown in the Life Skills Academy project.

Margaret Hanlon and Janet Shears - Friends of COT

We told you last year of our massive fundraising programme undertaken in 2017 – whew, glad that's over – maybe we can put on our slippers for 2018? I'm glad to say that the last two events of the year both were very successful. The November Gift Market saw a steady stream of visitors across the weekend, despite cold and wet weather, and achieved a profit of £1,400 and the Christmas Concert in Tenterden was also great fun with a packed church.



The Musical Director of

the Kent Police Male Voice Choir is quite a showman and made the evening go with a swing; I can't wait to sing again 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' whilst leaping off my chair and waving my hands ! We were joined by the Queens Regimental Association Corps of Drums who gave a lively display – they were involved in the Twelve Days as well, of course. This event is profit-shared between ourselves and the choir and we each took home just over £746. The Choir would like to repeat the concert in December so watch this space.

Fundraising activities are fun but exhausting so please consider regular giving, contact Martin Bieri 01233 730935. They would be less exhausting if our band of helpers was to increase. Many of you already volunteer for COT, would you consider adding Friends to your portfolio? We have a lot of fun and the tasks are varied, from engaging with the farm visitors at a Tombola, pouring wine at a concert and acting as a model for a Fashion Show. Something for everyone!

Friends were delighted to be able to support many activities arranged by the houses and Life Skills departments as well as helping to fund Banger Racing and Hollies Concerts. If it brings benefit to the residents and tenants, then we're keen to help. Weekly **Zumba** sessions continue to be very popular. We now have 31 movers and shakers on the register and average 25 at each meeting. We added 2 new members this term, one of whom is an external service user. We



welcome external users to our events and hope to meet more of them in the future. Our most recent **Disco**, held on Feb 9th, was a great success with a good attendance from both residents and tenants; more Discos to come. Our long-standing relationship with **SG Productions** continues and there were 2 entertainment evenings in 2017 – lots of singing and jokes – with more booked. We plan another **Sports Day** in the summer, the first was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who came along. *If your son or daughter or the house in which they live has an idea for a social, leisure or sporting activity that needs funding, then*

please encourage them to apply to us.

Still to come – forget the slippers – **Tombola** at Easter, the June Car Rally and August Bank Holiday. These will only happen if we have **enough prizes PLEASE**. We're running a **Travelling Trends Fashion Show on May 11th** in Hamstreet, where you can buy brand new High Street names at rock bottom prices: £5 tickets on the door. We've booked another **Charity Lunch** (see the insert) on Sunday 1st July. We've chosen a Sunday Carvery this time and need 60 diners as a minimum but it's such good value, just £16.95 for a 3 course meal with coffee. Please read all about it and **BOOK** your meal with us.



Probably another **Christmas Concert** with the Kent Police Male Voice Choir, 8th December, venue to be arranged. Plus some irons in the fire for the wonderful **Primavera Chamber Ensemble** to give another concert, they last performed for COT in 2014. No firm details yet but they're offering an excellent not-to-be-missed programme.

Many, many thanks to all who support the work of Friends, whether by donating tombola prizes, eating lunch, attending concerts, selling and buying raffle tickets or joining the band of regular givers. **Thank you all very much.**

COT Events Calendar



Keep this calendar handy to stay up-to-date with everything that's going on at COT!

For up-to-the-minute updates see our website calendar at www.c-o-t.org.uk/calendar

For more detailed info on Rare Breeds Centre events go to www.rarebreeds.org.uk

Spring 2018

MARCH

30-31 March; Easter at the Rare Breeds Centre, including the Easter Panto and Meet the Easter Bunny.

APRIL

1-2 April; Easter at the Rare Breeds Centre, including the Easter Panto and Meet the Easter Bunny.

21 April; Bluebell Cream Tea at Poulton Woods.

MAY

17 May; Problematic Pop Quiz, Falcon Centre, Rare Breeds Centre.

JUNE

2 June; Woodland Open Day at Poulton Woods.

17 June; Classic Car Rally, Rare Breeds Centre.

JULY

29 July; Ride London.



Supporting adults with learning disability

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