



In Touch

Midsummer 2016

calendar

COT Events Calendar

Keep this calendar handy to stay up to date with everthing that's going on at COT.

For up to the minute updates see our website calendar at www.c-o-t.org.uk/calendar. Or for more detailed info on RBC events go to www.rarebreeds.org.uk.

August

Summer adventures throughout the school holidays at the Rare Breeds Centre!

Why not book a bird of prey experience day with our falconer

Exotic home grown vegetables available from Plants and Produce

September

8th: Life Skills expo at Basepoint

11th: Volunteers' lunch

12th: Parent Focus Group Meeting, Aldington

16th: Spurling Cannon Golf Day, Broom Park GC

19th: Parent Focus Group Meeting, Chelsfield

24th: Concert, Snowdown Colliery

October

8th: COT AGM

22nd-30th: Rare Breeds Centre Halloween Spooktacular

November

20th & 21st: Art at the Farm Pop-up exhibition, Coterie Tea Room

25th: COT Board of Trustees meeting

December

3,4,10,11,17,18, 21-23

Rare Breeds Centre Truly Magical Christmas

January

Time to work off the Christmas dinner...

RUN - CYCLE - SWIM?

Why not get fit by taking on a challenge and raise funds for COT at the same time!



Canterbury Oast Trust & Rare Breeds Centre Highlands Farm, Warehorne Road, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent, TN26 3RJ

01233 861493
facebook.com/cotcharty
@COTCharity
c-o-t.org.uk and rarebreeds.org.uk

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Cover photo: Russell with Poplar Hawk Moth

Joanne Creighton, CEO

When the resignation of the Prime Minister is the THIRD item on the 10 O'clock News, you know you are living in strange times.

So much has happened since I wrote my last piece for In Touch and I now find myself eager to see what will actually change as a result.

Certainly, under the previous government's austerity measures, the Care sector faced some significant challenges. Provision for adult social care was reduced by an eye-watering £500m in 2015, with the Local Government Association estimating a funding gap of £4.3bn by the end of the decade.

The previous Chancellor's introduction of a compulsory [National Living Wage](#) is also beginning to have serious implications for care providers, many of whom have an average wage bill amounting to over 60% of their total costs. Whilst we all welcome the recognition of essential front-line staff, this is only feasible when we can recover the true cost of the services we provide. The squeeze on local authority funding means that - far from increasing in line with these costs - care fees are often staying the same (or barely increasing) year on year. As you would hope, COT is working hard to ensure our strategy keeps us ahead of these challenges, but for many in the sector, the waters are feeling very choppy. News of calmer times ahead would be most welcome for us all.

In a speech launching her national campaign to become Leader of the Conservative Party, our new Prime Minister set out her vision for a Britain, "that works for everyone – whoever you are and wherever you're from." It's good to hear, but we obviously need to know much more about the detail before we can take comfort from the sentiment.



Family and Supporters

Margot and Thomas Eastwell

We booked the group experience for a joint 80th birthday celebration. Finding something for all ages and abilities to do together as a family is not always easy. With an age range of 2 to 80 we were hoping this would suit all.

We were not disappointed! Colin is very knowledgeable and passionate about his birds.

They are beautiful specimens, and flying them was amazing, and we also learnt a lot about the history of falconry and birds of prey in general. Everyone had a great time including the octogenarians, which was as it was their special day after all.

We would thoroughly recommend "giving it a go".



Volunteering

You may have seen a lot of activity around Rosemary Cottage over the past month, specifically involving Amey Construction lorries! Rosemary Cottage parking bays were in desperate need of repair, to save the residents and staff constantly having wet and muddy feet each time they transferred from house to vehicle, not to mention the risk of someone slipping in the mud.

Amey Construction contacted us earlier in the year to ask whether they could offer some corporate volunteering days from their 170 staff team. When they visited C.O.T. to have a look around, they immediately said they wanted to resolve the parking bay problem; by the end of the following week the bays were levelled, tarmacked and white lined! But that wasn't the end of it!

Having mentioned the work that Rosemary Cottage are hoping to do on their sensory garden, Amey sprang in to action again, clearing out the existing garden and over the past 5 weeks, have been sending teams over to do work on the sensory garden. We can't thank them enough for all their hard work, generosity and support; the work they have done has made such a difference to the day to day lives of all residents and staff at Rosemary Cottage.

We also had 2 groups of volunteers from Trading Standards, with one group building a very luxurious bug hotel under Hayley's guidance. I haven't checked on occupancy rates yet but I am sure it will prove to be very popular with the local insect population. The second group helped the horticulture team and despite a rather grey start to the day evidently brought the better weather with them!

Thank you to everyone who was able to add their volunteering energy to the Poulton Wood Open Day. It was a really successful day and the addition of several willing volunteers made it a more relaxing time for everyone. Your contribution was greatly appreciated by Lynn and her team, thank you.

Have a lovely summer and I hope you all enjoy your holidays if you are going away.

Our very grateful thanks to all of you who tirelessly volunteer and I do hope to see you on September 11th for the Volunteers' Lunch.



Gill Marsden

There is hope, though. Although continued reductions in public spending are inevitable, there now seems to be an opportunity for the new Chancellor to reconsider how those cuts can be achieved. That, in turn, offers a window for Learning Disability providers to restate the case for appropriate levels of funding for our services. Through our sector links, COT is monitoring developments closely and contributing to that debate where we can. There is lots of good advocacy work going on but we will need to wait for the autumn budget statement before we can gauge how successful it has been.

In the meantime, I am looking forward to another wonderful summer at COT. We are just beginning to get feedback on all the exciting holidays and summer activities taking place for our service users and it sounds like everyone is making the most of the sunshine. Perhaps we should start broadcasting our own COT News at Ten. I am sure it would make more uplifting viewing than the BBC version..!

Life Skills

Poulton Wood

Hi All, forgive our absence from the last issue of In Touch, I think I went into a worm hole and disappeared for a while and when I returned the deadline had passed! Anyway, as a consequence of that – lots to say.

Our 2 events of the year went brilliantly. The bluebell tea was our busiest yet - we baked the scones on site but however wondrous the smell of fresh baked scones hot from the oven, we won't be doing it again! We just couldn't keep up with the demand!

At the end of the day we were all on our knees! However, our St George and the dragon sketch was hilarious and went down really well, except for the one woman who, on hearing loud cries of "Help me Help Me!" actually believed that someone was in real distress (this possibility never entered my head), and had to be reassured by Jo C, who thankfully was on the walk and knew what was happening. Thanks Jo, and thanks for all your help in the kitchen.

Financially the day was a great success but none of it could have happened without our fantastic volunteers. They baked, washed up, ran the café and the car park (winching several cars out of the mud) and without them we would not have been able to run the event.



Next up Open Day!

It was great, as ever. Everyone came, the sun shone down, lots to see and do and eat, and everyone had a good time, except Julian. He was running the archery and spent the day quaking in his boots awaiting the arrival of Rob, one of our insurers, who he knew in advance was coming.

As it turned out Rob was a great guy, was happy with all our health & safety control measures and had several turns on the archery to boot. However, he didn't win 'The Silver Arrow', which was won by Nick Sanderson's dad, Paul. So many people come along to demonstrate or set up stalls and add colour and interest to our day.

It really does have a lovely old fashioned rustic festival feel that everyone who comes, appreciates. It's quite magical.

We were sorry not to have Pete's plants this year but unfortunately he was ill (next year Pete), and the gallery who had other commitments, were missed (so put us in your diary for next year guys).

The Morris Men were fantastic as ever, though it took them a while to get from their cars to the yard to start dancing due to the fact that they had to pass the Biddenden cider van, which they did very slowly.

Again, we had fantastic volunteers, and again, thank you all.



The Kent Ambassadors chose to visit our charity again this year and as always they worked very hard! They completed a lovely rock garden and undertook lots of garden clearing works and re-turfing for our high needs home Rosemary Cottage. Residents Dan, Christopher, Molly, Karen and Lee now have a lovely garden to enjoy this summer!

Emily Rust

On Sunday 10th July Andrew Causer, Claire Samuel, Jax Tanner and myself all took part in the Vitality London 10k. The 11,257 runners taking part were split into two groups blue for the faster runners and red for everyone else. We had been given our allocated starting pens Andrew in blue, I was in red and Claire and Jax were in a separate red pen. As we waited music played and warm up routines with words of encouragement rang out from strategically placed speakers, ensuring everyone was kept motivated as the start time approached. Once the race started it took 35 minutes for my group to reach the start, just by the Ritz, and as I went over the start line at Piccadilly with Jump by the Pointer Sisters blaring out of the speakers the timing chips in my running number was activated.



The run, or walk in my case, was a real experience and it was lovely to see all the different charities people were running for and the messages on their vests. As I walked along Piccadilly, Claire and Jax cheered me on from the other side of the road as they waited to start. I was able to return the compliment as when our paths crossed a few other times during the race. Brass bands, singers, an orchestra, cheerleaders waving pom-poms, a steel band and noisy supporters lined the route encouraging us as we passed through the streets of London including Lower Regents Street, Strand and Victoria Embankment. As we passed many iconic London sights I was even asked to stop and take a photo by another runner from Australia who wanted to ensure the London Eye was in the background!!



Andrew completed his first 10K race in a fantastic 47 minutes and 6 seconds and came 875 out of 11257 runners, amazing and congratulations to Claire who ran a personal best with her and Jax crossing the line together in 1 hour 12 minutes and 20 seconds, and I walked it in 1 hour 36 minutes and 36 seconds.

To date we have raised £500 between us with more donations to follow and I am delighted to confirm that our wonderful supporters at Basepoint will match our final total! Thank you once again Basepoint and to everyone who has sponsored us.



Fundraising

I popped down to the Basepoint Centre in Folkestone where Lorraine May, Centre Manager, presented me with their first donation of £812 - matching the amount raised at our COT Quiz night. Having our fundraising matched by Basepoint is giving us a tremendous boost and really encouraging our fundraisers to raise as much as possible for COT. We are delighted to be working in partnership with Basepoint. We'll be showcasing our art works, plants and other produce at a special event at the centre on the 8th September.

Angela Phipps



By the time this edition goes to print our five riders, Kevin, Jay, Scott, Richard and David, will have completed the gruelling London to Surrey 100 mile cycle ride which includes two mountainous hills! As if this wasn't enough of a challenge, Richard and David are riding a tandem! Riders Kevin and Jay popped down to see us at the Rare Breeds Centre. They cycled from London to the farm, a round trip of over 100 miles, as part of their training for the big day.

We wish all our riders the very best of luck! You can support all of our wonderful fundraisers by visiting:

www.justgiving.com/cot or www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/chippstandemtvo



As I mentioned in the last edition of In Touch, we had a great day with our friends from the Rotary Club of Tenterden at our golf day in May. Mike Mulley, Rotary Club member and volunteer with Harrington College, presented us with the proceeds from the entries. The amount raised during the golf day will again be match funded by Basepoint meaning this fun event raised an amazing £3,000 for COT.



I also had the pleasure of receiving a wonderful donation of £1,000 raised by the Rotary Club of Sandwich at their golf day in May. Again this will swell to £2,000 when match funded by Basepoint! We are so fortunate to have the support of these wonderful clubs who work so very hard on our behalf.



Our new signs are all in place and look fantastic!

The new workshop is already being put to good use and everyone loves it. We've had lots of people compliment us on our new 'barn' so we've ended up calling it 'The Barn' and Ben H is currently working on a sign to put above the door.



Cllr Mike Angell who helped to fund the build through his Members' grant scheme came for a look and was delighted with it. Fortuitously on the day he arrived it was pouring down, and our need for a new mess hut roof was highlighted beautifully by rain dripping into his tea! So now we have the funding for that which is our next site development job. A tin roof this time that will last forever! That's the plan anyway.



For the moment everyone is enjoying the one time of the year when the pressure of our seasonal routines and events is at its least. It would be great if there was a summer to enjoy but someone needs to let the rain know to go to Spain – please.

In the woodland we have been creating areas of non-intervention where the public are not allowed to go. This gives those areas of the wood entirely back to the wildlife and enables it an opportunity to recover from the increased footfall we've been experiencing over the past couple of years.

Murray recently attended a brilliant course with Jo, run by Kent Wildlife Trust, on identifying bumblebees. Thankfully it was a lovely sunny day and the bumblebees were out in force and both Murray and Jo had an enjoyable and informative afternoon. It was held at Green Farm in Shadoxhurst with whom we already have a great relationship having carved about 20 signs for the spa resort that they run there.

Two more Kent Wildlife Trust courses were attended by staff who have returned enthused and full of ideas for the woodland and fields.

The Rangers have been doing plant surveys in the Xmas tree field and the meadow and the next thing on the agenda is a cull of the bracken in the woods.



The cubs and beavers were here last week enjoying a campfire and a sing song in the woodland and next week we have a whole bunch of pre-schoolers coming for a walk.

The poly tunnel is really beginning to take shape now in its new role as a sensory environment. Full of colour and creativity and plants (of course) but a new sandpit is just about to go in and a pond is being planned. We've had some brilliant charcoal burns, so please contact us for your BBQ supply. It really is the best in the world.

£4 for 2Kilos – bargain!

Well that's all from the woodfolk! Another heartfelt thank you to all our volunteers, who give up their time and enable us to do so much more than we could ever do without them.



Harrington College

Welcome to our group, Sam!

We are pleased to welcome Sam to the numeracy and literacy groups at the RBC on Wednesdays and would like to tell him about our favourite activities:



Laura says "I like numbers and time" and "I like measuring things as it helps me in the Granary Restaurant."

"Doing maths helps me with the quarters; 8 teams in the quarter finals, 4 in the semis and 2 in the final," says Thomas.

Kyle says he likes maths best because "I'm good at it" and "I like learning money".

"I enjoy Mike's presentations; my favourites are the Police, Robots and Sea Creatures. I enjoy coming to English because I am learning a lot of my Ds and Bs even though I am dyslexic. You are helping me a lot" says Amy.

"I like spelling and reading and it helps me with my sentences on the computer at home" says Symon.

Sarah says "I am good at my spellings" and Suzie says "I practice reading with my Dad". "I enjoy playing Hangman and Connect Four" says Adam.

It's Tiddley Snooker!

A fun game to develop numeracy skills based on the Game of Snooker. This game was developed at Harrington College by Tutor John Cunningham with the assistance of students Symon Young and Nick Sanderson who were both attending John's intermediate skills sessions at the time.

The aim of the game is to score with coloured counters in the same way that snooker is scored. For example red equals one point, black equals seven points. Two dice with coloured spots on them instead of numbers are thrown, one dice with equal red and white spots for a red 'pot' (white is a missed pot and the next player or team takes their turn) and the other dice covers the yellow, green, brown, blue, pink and black sequence. A Tiddley winks version of snooker can also be played. The name 'Tiddley Snooker' was christened when Charles Underhill visited the college one afternoon and saw us developing and playing the game with all the coloured counters and dice. The rules of play are developing nicely as the game is being played both by the Harrington College students and John's grandchildren.

