



Community Newsletter Christmas 2012

Hastings & Rother

New Van on Loan!

We now have a second van for collections and deliveries, thanks to the generosity of the Emmaus Communities in Gloucester and Coventry.

The Gloucester Community originally lent the van to Coventry, on the understanding that they would pass it on when they could. Earlier this year Coventry offered the van to other Communities, and as a new and growing Community we were lucky enough to be chosen as its next

help someone. In June, Companions Jason and Pat took part in the Paris Salon, a giant annual sale bringing together Communities in France and overseas to raise money for Emmaus projects in developing countries. This year's sale raised over 564,000 euros for Emmaus groups in Africa, with British goods particularly sought after. One customer bought 400 teapots!

One of our Companions, Mikee, went to Coventry to help pack a container



recipient, with the proviso that we pass it on again in about a year. The second van means that if one vehicle is tied up for several hours at a house clearance, another can still be out collecting donations and delivering purchases.

Solidarity, as it's known, is a key principle of Emmaus – the idea that however needy you are, you can always

.....
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Closer to home, anyone coming to us with a furniture grant from Magdalen & Lasher, Home-works, or the Lions Club gets it topped up with a donation of extra goods. We sent a van load of surplus stock to the new Emmaus Community at Medway in September, helping them achieve one of their best ever trading days. ■

with goods to be sent to help an Emmaus project in Madagascar.

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Welcome

Around the time of our last newsletter we opened six more rooms taking us up to a capacity of 15. We're now seeking the funding to add the last eight rooms and take us to our design capacity of 23.

Elsewhere, the 23rd and 24th UK Communities have opened in Medway and Leicestershire. A number of established Communities are also looking to expand, helping Emmaus in the UK reach its target of having rooms for at least 750 Companions by 2017.

Terry Waite's Radio 4 Appeal on behalf of Emmaus, first broadcast on 4th November, raised £10,000 and is still available to listen to on iPlayer.

Solidarity – helping others in greater need – is a cornerstone of what Emmaus does. We already give approaching £10,000 worth of furniture and basic household goods annually to local people in need. However, over the winter the Community will also be looking to support three other local and related charities: Seaview, the day centre for homeless and vulnerable adults in Hatherley Road; Surviving Christmas, which provides a three day 'open Christmas' at the YMCA in St Paul's Road, and Snowflake, which is looking to establish a local night shelter through the coldest months of the year. All three warrant both our - and your - support.

David Cooper
Chair of Trustees



Comings & Goings

With some comings and goings, we presently have 13 Companions on site. We were particularly sorry to say goodbye to Andy Bryant, who came down from South Lambeth to help us establish the Community when we first opened, and has now moved back to London with our thanks.

Recent visitors to the Community have included Chris Dowling, chairman of East Sussex County Council, and Bill Bentley, lead cabinet member for adult social care.

We have also had visits from trustees of a number of Emmaus Communities and Groups, including Medway, Gateshead, St Martins Dover, Liverpool, Cornwall and South Norfolk. The Groups are particularly interested in our low-cost modular housing and our experiences as a recently opened Community.

We have also welcomed a new trustee, Richard Cunningham, who is Business Development Manager for CareUK Mental Health Partnerships and has previously worked as Places of Change Programme Manager and as Rough Sleeping Specialist Advisor for the Department for Communities and Local Government. He brings valuable skills to the Board as we move from developing the project to managing an established Community.

Richard says "while working for Communities and Local Government and then the Homes and Communities Agency, I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to observe the work of Emmaus from a national perspective. As such I'm very pleased to be given the opportunity to contribute to the continuing development of a thriving community and local asset in my home town."

New Faces

Lorraine, who's from Hastings, joined us in May this year after losing her flat in Bexhill. Her advisor at the Home Works housing support service knew about Emmaus and helped her secure a place. She plays a vital role in sorting donated items when they first arrive and deciding what is shop quality and what should be recycled elsewhere. Keeping order in the space where donations are delivered is not always easy, but Lorraine says she has worked out systems to keep it all under control. "Sometimes the clothes aren't in very good condition, but sometimes they're ok. I sort out what's good and what's not good," she says. "I'm quite happy sorting out donations; I usually know what's good and what isn't." All the clothes, shoes, handbags and books are sorted through, and clothing that is not good enough to resell is sold for industrial recycling, while books that might not sell in the shop can be sold on to other organisations, or if they are really battered, for paper pulp.

Lorraine says she likes to spend her free time 'pottering about' in the Community, though she sometimes gets the bus into Hastings with Mary, one of our other Companions.



Ronnie has just joined us from Emmaus Medway, giving us a valuable extra driver now that we have two vans. He's an experienced Companion who enjoys supporting and mentoring new arrivals, so he will be a useful presence in the Community now that some of our original Core Companions have moved on. "I took Emmaus to my heart, I'm that impressed with the organisation. There are quite a few homeless charities in the country, but none of them do what Emmaus does. They can take in someone homeless off the streets, give them work, accommodation and an allowance, I think it's fantastic," he says.

He loves the challenge of a new Community, and moved from Preston to Medway to help them when they were first setting up. "My long term goal is I'd eventually like one day to be a Community Leader and have my own Community somewhere."

Ronnie went to prison after getting into a fight in a pub soon after losing his mother to cancer. "I was still grieving and all the anger came out with that. I'd never been in any kind of trouble before," he said. When he came out, he was relieved to find accommodation and work in a B&B, but when the owner expected him to work virtually round the clock, he left. On the streets again, he wandered into a church, where the priest turned out to be a trustee of Emmaus Preston and was able to find him a place there.

His father didn't want him to come back home again when he left prison. "He's very 'old school', he felt I'd brought shame on the family," he says. "Emmaus took me in when my dad wouldn't have me back, and now I'm repaying them with my time."

Hanging in his room is a beautiful cross-stitch embroidered picture of an angel, which he says reminds him of his mother. "I lost my mum to the big C. But I picture her as an angel. I'm sure she's looking down on me and she's proud of what I'm doing."

Volunteers



Volunteer Richard Keep is a piano restorer who has turned his talents for French polishing and wood renovation to transforming our donated furniture. He's been volunteering at Emmaus since just before the shop opened three years ago and also set up our website. One of several volunteers from St Helen's church in Ore, he can be found in the workshop whenever he doesn't have a piano to work on. "In these straitened times there's not so much work about and I'd rather be here than sitting at home twiddling my thumbs," he says.

Richard taught himself French polishing by borrowing a book from the library, and enjoys passing on his skills to Companions. "I'm hoping we'll get someone who's a trained carpenter or restorer so I can learn from them."

His favourite piece so far is an Ercol sideboard donated by another volunteer, which was too dark for modern tastes, so he gave it a new lighter finish and the shop was able to sell it for £175.

"Even if someone can only afford a very cheap piece of furniture we should try and make it look decent; quite a lot of things just need a good clean. Some bits of furniture can be very frustrating, but when you see the end result it's worth it."

Sainsbury's Donate Food



Sainsbury's supermarket has started supplying us with short dated produce that would otherwise be thrown away. Under the food donation scheme we are able to pick up a daily selection of fresh fruit and vegetables, bread and other produce such as eggs and ham from the Sedlescombe Road store, thanks to the supermarket's public relations adviser Tracy Blackman. The short-dated cakes and pastries are proving particularly popular with hard-working Companions and volunteers! ■

Our Supporters

We are extremely grateful to the wide range of people and organisations who have given, or continued to give us donations and help over the past few months. In no particular order our thanks go to:

- St Mary's Church, Northiam
- Christopher Maxwell-Stewart
- Mary Scanlon Smith
- Mr and Mrs Parham
- Mrs H Seal
- Mr and Mrs D Funnell
- Mrs A Pink
- Rosemary Pegram (The Clothworkers' Foundation)
- The Catenians - Hastings Circle
- Santander UK
- Pastor Gwilym Hughes & The Sunday Funday Team - Elim Church
- Craig Atkins - Orbit Housing Association
- John Hesse - Southern Landscape Services
- The Francis & Eric Ford Charity Trust
- The Isabel Blackman Foundation
- Sainsbury's, Sedlescombe Road

Merry Christmas!



Emmaus Hastings & Rother would like to wish all our supporters a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Fundraising Update

With 13 Companions on site, we're almost full again and looking to our next expansion. We need to raise £160,000 for Phase 2b, and we're hoping to order the pre-fabricated units over the winter so that the final stage can be open by next summer, bringing the Community to its full target size of 23 beds.

We have also won £50,000 of business development funding in the Santander Social Enterprise Development Awards, which will enable us to install a lift, put in a second mezzanine storage floor in the warehouse, install a proper phone system, and develop our waste recycling. The award also includes business support from Santander and input from the London Community Foundation.

We are planning waste management training for Companions, which will give them a professional qualification, and also allow us to dispose of more waste free of charge at the Community Recycling Facility at Pebsham. Our main aim is to resell or recycle everything we receive, but inevitably we end up with a certain amount that can only be thrown away, especially when we carry out house clearances.

The wooden planters outside the accommodation block provided by the Hastings & Bexhill Wood Recycling Project are being filled with plants to landscape the site so that it looks a bit less like a warehouse and more like a home. Craig Atkins of Orbit Housing Association has given £500, and John Hesse of their landscape contractor Southern Landscape Services is doing the work.

We're delighted that the new One-Stop Shop in Ore Valley Road have chosen us as one of their store charities. Many thanks to Heidi Lord for nominating us. ■

Support Us!

If you'd like to support Emmaus Hastings & Rother please complete and return this form to the address below.

I enclose a donation of £ _____ payable to Emmaus Hastings & Rother.

Forename: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Gift Aid Declaration

If you are a tax payer you can help us recover income tax on your donation by signing below.

I would like to recover income tax on this donation and any I might make from now on.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax equal to the tax we reclaim on your donations.