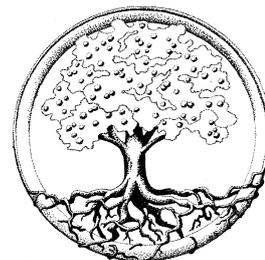


COLE STREET FARM COHOUSING COMMUNITY

THE THRESHOLD CENTRE
Cole Street Farm, Cole Street Lane,
Gillingham, Dorset SP8 5JQ
www.thresholdcentre.org.uk
info@thresholdcentre.org.uk



NEWSLETTER – December 2005 Seasons Greetings and a very Happy New Year!

Award for The Threshold Centre!

The Threshold Centre has won a prize in the North Dorset District Council's Tourism 'People and Places 2005' awards. We came first in the Best New Businesses section, and are now the proud possessors of a cut glass trophy and mounted certificate.

The Threshold Centre was nominated because of *'its exciting vision of bringing eco-tourism to North Dorset, attracting new visitors to the area through the combination of its innovative courses on sustainable living and its eco-B&B facilities'*. Course participants had come from afar afield as Spain, Wales and the North of England, and agreed they would not normally have visited North Dorset, but had been attracted by the course content and the Centre. Mention was made of the 10% discount for visitors arriving by train as *'a practical demonstration of the Centre's commitment to the principles of sustainable living'*.

We would like to thank Fiona Ferguson for nominating The Threshold Centre, and look forward to her next visit.

Our First Birthday!

We have now been in Cole Street Farm for just a year, and would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people, old and new friends alike, who have been so supportive and helpful. We have spent much effort this year on the existing buildings, maintaining and repairing and bringing up to standard. We have welcomed our first B&B and rental guests, and put on a string of interesting workshops. Our Open Day was attended by more people than we could ever have imagined. Two of our members are now trustees of the Three Rivers local community Partnership. We have discovered Moviola and Arts Centres' productions. We have been amazed by the Gillingham Festival, the Shaftesbury and Gillingham Show, and discovered the joys of summer fetes and street markets. And through it all work has proceeded on our planning application for the Phase 2 vision. Quite a busy year!

Our local church at East Stour is holding a Christmas Tree Festival, and as a local business we will be supplying a decorated tree. We will be making the decorations from recycled, found and natural materials, (though the idea of pedal powered lights didn't get any takers!)

Recent Workshops

Our two latest workshops, Creating Cohousing and Becoming Bolder instead of Older were both fully booked, and we will be running both again in the new year for those we had to turn away, (see Programme of Events). Once again participants came from a wide area as well as from the immediate locality, many choosing the public transport option and thereby attracting their 'eco-tourism discount'. Some feedback received on the cohousing weekend: *'...well thought through and facilitated weekend, responsive to participants' requests.'* *'A very comprehensive and well presented course.'* *'The warmth and concern of all the Threshold members is invaluable and makes me want to return.'*

Publicity

The article in the Family section of the Guardian produced a huge response. It took our admin. team a while to reply to all the emails and letters that poured in. So many people seem to be thinking that cohousing is the way forward for them and their friends, and many individuals and groups of people want to come on our next workshops on the subject to learn how to do it for themselves. We are also getting many people interested in becoming part of our group and booking into our Phase 2 afternoons

that precede the workshops. If you are part of a cohousing group, Alan is happy to come to facilitate a workshop for you. Please email us with a request or to get more details.

The Blackmore Vale Magazine featured a photo. recently of two of the Core Group members with their Toyota Prius 'green' cars. Very special cars – they are hybrid electric and petrol, and automatically shift between the two. So when moving slowly in traffic, or cruising, the electric battery side will take over, and it is estimated that petrol consumption can be cut by a half.

As our snail mail list has now grown very long, and the administration time and cost is escalating, we now feel we must ask for a financial contribution. If you would like to continue receiving the newsletter by post, please send us £5 to cover 2006. Thanks.

Planning

Our planning application should be submitted in January. We have received much help and support in the locality, and are hoping that the huge amount of preparatory work carried out to further our case will now bear fruit.

Phase 2's

Creating Cohousing workshops are preceded by an afternoon for those who have expressed a keen interest in exploring becoming resident here, once planning permission has been received and the building work completed.

We start with bring and share lunch. (See later for Peter's superb vegan choc. cake recipe) then tour the site and discuss what accommodation may be available, costs and legal framework, and finish late afternoon. Next steps include a series of residential getting-to-know you visits. Potential Phase 2 joiners will be in agreement with the vision and values set out in our Outline document and will have completed and returned our Questionnaire in advance.

There is no charge for the afternoon. It is essential to book a place in advance.

Dates: Fri. 24th Feb. and Fri 5th May.

Programme of Events

Cost of weekend courses (from 7pm Friday to 4pm latest on Sunday) £90 including lunch, tea/coffee snacks. Accommodation, breakfast and evening meal at Threshold Centre £35 per night. A non-returnable deposit of £20 is requested to book a place on a course or B&B.

Concessions may be available, please apply in writing.

December

FULLY BOOKED New Year retreat – hosted by Michael Giddings and Jane Stott.

Over the three days there will be time to explore and learn from the closing year, and set intentions for the coming year. We will develop our programme as a group, to include meditation, country walks, visualisation, healing, conversation and whatever else evolves. Participants will be asked to join in with table setting and washing-up.

Date: 4pm Fri. 30th Dec. to after lunch Mon. 2nd Jan. £150 incl. full board.

February

FULLY BOOKED Creating cohousing - what cohousing is and how to get started. Whether you are just starting your exploration, or in the perplexing thick of it, and whether you're an interested individual or already part of a group, we aim to help with your questions. Led by Threshold Centre residents. (See also May).

Date: 7pm Fri. 24th Nov. – 4pm Sun 26th Nov

April

Bolder & Older with Persephone Arbour and Richard Whitfield – could ageing possibly be the grand adventure? Prepared to break through conventional expectations of growing older? Have you courage and boldness to explore aspects of conscious ageing? Persephone has more than 30 years international involvement with personal development using meditation, structured conversation and experiential group facilitation. She has very rich life experience and is known for her creativity and insight. Richard is author, poet, teacher, parent and grandparent, and has extensive experience at home and oversees in both personal and social policy issues involving human development over the life cycle.

Date: April 8th-9th

Easter Retreat with Michael Giddings and Jane Stott – a time for inner reflection (and outer activity!) in a restful peaceful setting.

Date: 7pm Fri. April 15th – after lunch Mon. 18th Cost: £150 incl. full board.

May

Creating cohousing - Led by Threshold Centre residents

Date: 7pm Fri 5th May – 4pm Sun 7th May

Sound Workshop with Shirlie Roden: 'Finding your Power'. She writes, “the most powerful place we can be in is the Present Moment. It is only your mind that is holding you back from realising your greatest dreams” Following her hugely successful one-day workshop in 2005, Shirley is returning for a weekend which will use sound and chanting, meditations and group empowerment to explore the theme. Having graduated from Warwick University with a BA in English and European Literature, Shirley became an international stage performer, singer/songwriter, workshop leader and sound healer. She has worked with rock musicians (like Ray Davis /Kinks, Suzi Quatro), written and acted in stage musicals and plays (Roy Orbison story, Prisoner Cell Block H) and released five albums of her own material. She has led workshops in Australia, Malta, Croatia, Hungary, Poland and for the past ten years in Slovenia, where she has received wide acclaim for her innovative sound work and the healing power of her singing voice.

Date: May 12th–14th

June

To be announced - Sacred/historical sites
Walking/cycling

July

Creating Cohousing – Residents of The Threshold Centre

Date: July 7th - 9th

The Way of Council with Pippa Bondy. Learning from other cultures and other times, this gives an opportunity to experience a variety of forms and uses of the ancient way of council, bringing attention to consensus building, shared visioning and deepening communication in everyday life. After seventeen years as a physical therapist, Pippa founded Ancient Healing Ways – an organisation bringing together ancient and modern healing methods. She has introduced ‘Way of Council’ extensively across the UK and Europe, working in educational and business establishments, in hospices and pain clinics, with community and spiritual groups.

Date: July 21st - 23rd

For further details of any of our activities, please contact Caroline/ Gay/ Michael at 01747 821929 or e-mail info@thresholdcentre.org.uk If you would like details about hiring our group space, please phone 01747 821929 and leave a message for Jane.

Peter’s vegan chocolate cake recipe.

Mix together in a large bowl

8 ozs flour (half wholewheat is nice) 8 ozs sugar (never said it was good for you)
2ozs cocoa pdr (pref. Greens and Blacks) 2tsp bicarb. of soda
1tsp salt

Separately, mix together

6fl oz cold water 2fl oz veg. oil
2tsp vanilla essence 2tspn lemon juice or vinegar

Add wet to dry and whisk till the lumps are out.

Grease and flour two 8” or 9” tins, or one 9” x 13” tin and pour in mixture. Bake at gas mark 5 or 180F or 350C for 25 – 30 mins or until the knife comes out clean.

Choc. Icing

10 ozs icing sugar 6 ozs org. soya spread
1 tsp salt 1 tsp vanilla essence
5 ozs cocoa pdr (again - Green and Blacks) Water

Mix by hand, adding 4 - 7 tbsps water, 1 tbsp at a time, until you achieve a consistency you like.
Spread on cooled cake. Enjoy!

Seasons Greetings and a very Happy New Year!