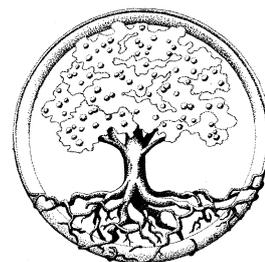


COLE STREET FARM COHOUSING COMMUNITY

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



NEWSLETTER – October 2005

Autumn at Cole Street Farm

This will be our first Autumn in Gillingham, and it is a pleasure to watch the passing of the seasons. The chestnut leaves are looking quite brown, the sumach is taking on a scarlet hue, while the viburnum has been turning orange for some time. Berries are glowing, and the equinox was celebrated with blackberry and sloe picking. The swallows are still around, and the birdsong still glorious on a sunny morning.

Saturday 20th August saw the first Threshold Centre Circle Dancing event. The weather was beautiful and we had a lovely time dancing on the grass in the dappled sunlight. Thanks to those who joined us, and we look forward to welcoming you again. Taize evenings have also begun on the first and third Tuesdays of the month (8 - 9pm) and the numbers are swelling by the week. More on Circle Dancing and Taize with Christina under Courses and Events.

We had our first completely eco-B&B guest recently. Arrived by train, was picked up in one of our two Prius-hybrid electric/petrol cars, borrowed a community bike for one trip out, and went walking on day two, thereby attracting a 10% discount on the B&B cost! Also got stuck in helping with a 'community bonfire'. Congratulations Nicola on being first of many! Hope to see you again soon.

Courses and Events.

Costs given are non-residential unless otherwise shown. Vegetarian B&B is available on site for £25 per person per night. 10% accommodation concession for those arriving by public transport, and we will meet you from the station, with advance warning!

October

Nurturing break weekend – postponed till future date.

November

Work/experiencing community weekend

We'll be tackling indoor and outdoor jobs (a great way to experience community!) as well as having leisure time together (bonfire on November 5th).

Becoming Bolder instead of Older with Persephone Arbour – could ageing possibly be the grand adventure? Prepared to break through conventional expectations of growing older? Have you enthusiasm and vitality to look at deeper aspects of yourself, courage and boldness to explore aspects of conscious ageing? Persephone has more than 30 years international involvement with personal development using

music therapy, meditation and group facilitation. She has very rich life experience and is known for her creativity and insight. She works in ways which suit the individual participant, so come and explore some of the myths about ageing with Persephone.

Date: November 19th-20th Cost: £90, including lunch. Deposit: £20 B&B accommodation and evening meal available @ £30 per night.

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.

Date: 7pm Fri. 25th Nov. – 4pm 27th Nov. Cost: £70 incl. lunches. Deposit: £20. Special rate full board/ accommodation £20 per day.

New Year – we plan to hold a residential event over New Year. Contact Jane or Michael at info@thresholdcentre.org.uk for more details.

Ongoing: Circle dancing in Shaftesbury on Friday from 7.30 – 9.30pm. Please contact Christina to confirm dates/place; Taize singing on first and third Tuesdays of the month at Threshold Centre (8 –9pm). Phone Christina on 01747 835298 for further details.

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.

Report on Creating Cohousing Workshop – September

On the weekend of September 16/18th the first Creating Cohousing Workshop took place. A couple came all the way from Spain, others from N.E. England, Leeds and Oxford as well as more local attendees. More people applied than we had room for, so if you are interested in coming to the next (in November), please book right away to avoid disappointment, on the booking form at the end of the Newsletter. It was a great experience for us, as it was our first full weekend. The constructive feedback from our guests will help us continue improving as we grow.

It was a huge success, with participants buzzing with excitement and ideas, and the shared feeling, once again, seemed to be that 'cohousing is an idea whose time has come'.

Phase 2's

The recent Creating Cohousing workshop was immediately preceded by an afternoon for those who have expressed a keen interest in exploring the possibility of becoming resident here, once planning permission has been received and the building work completed – hopefully by late autumn 2006. We plan to follow this pattern for the next two cohousing workshops.

We start with bring and share lunch (wonderful how it all comes together so deliciously! See next newsletter for Pete's superb vegan choc. cake recipe) then tour the site and have a talk about what accommodation may be available, costs, legal framework, next steps etc. and finish late afternoon. Next steps include a series of residential getting-to-know you visits to ensure both sides are completely happy before final decisions are made.

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 and B&B may be available at a reduced rate, though priority is given to those attending the subsequent cohousing course. It is essential to book a place in advance.

Planning

Submission of our Planning Application is expected soon, once we have provided validation of the environmental benefits this project will offer. To this end we have enlisted the help of two local professionals, Francis Topping and Julian Brooks who is an accredited assessor for the Eco-Homes rating scheme.

Publicity

We have felt like media ‘celebs’ recently, with the Guardian and Sunday Times property section interviews, plus their ‘snappers’ (photographers to the uninitiated!) obliging us to take up extraordinary stances to look ‘natural’. Since the Guardian article appeared we have many enquiries from people excited by the ideas put forward, wanting to visit and participate in the courses.

The Shaftesbury and Gillingham Show was a fantastic one-day event where our display was part of the ‘Organic and Sustainability’ marquee, (run by WORM – Wessex Organic Movement). There was a good degree of interest in what we are doing and intend to do, with people really reading the info. and chatting, not just glancing and moving on. And there was much to move on to. At heart it is a real country agricultural show with tractors, show rings, prize bulls and rosettes, but over the years it has grown to include so much more. A most notable element being locally produced food and drink, of which Dorset is rightly proud. So there were marquees full of bread and cakes, cheeses and hams, cider and chutney, pasties and blueberry muffins and much much more besides. A local caterer in our marquee was offering organic lunches, and together with free hand massages from Neal’s Yard remedies, we were well looked after! The day ended with hot air balloons filling the summer evening sky. The weather had been wonderfully hot and sunny (contrasting with last year when tales told of vehicles being towed out of thick mud) and thousands of people had a great day.

Thanks for help.

We have been visited by Honza Mark 2 from the Czech Republic, who helped us over a number of weeks with maintenance and outside work, in much the same way as Honza Mark 1. We would like to thank both for all their hard work on our behalf, and hope they were able to improve their English and take back positive memories of our community. Thanks also to Stuart and Alex for their input with our computer questions during their stay.