



The Threshold Centre

Cohousing Community, Cole Street Farm, Cole Street Lane,
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OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIVING AT THE THRESHOLD CENTRE

Our community is constantly evolving and opportunities for newcomers to join us arise from time to time. We are a friendly cohousing educational community with a sustainable living ethos, near Gillingham, Dorset, and the first group to offer affordable housing in conjunction with a local Housing Association.

Members live here either as owners, part owners or rental tenants of the units, depending on availability. We also have a room in the main farmhouse available for short/medium term self-catering stays for those who wish to get a taste of cohousing in action. We welcome people interested in exploring co-housing or community. Prospective residents are very welcome to come for a weekend at our B&B rates, to see if the place would suit them for a longer stay.

Room in Farmhouse

A room has come up for rent in our farmhouse from November. Please contact Caroline on 01747 835274

If you are interested in the above, or would like to go on our list for future vacancies, please get in touch. We seek residents who would enjoy being part of a supportive community and would be prepared to join in shared activities – these include running workshops, some meals, meditation, gardening and social time. See our website for more information.

SUSTAINABILITY

A number of projects are in hand towards our on-going mission to improve our sustainability. We have increased the number of water butts around the site for rainwater harvesting and are looking to add to their number as funds allow. At the moment the water gathered in the three vast butts collecting the rainwater from the new-build barns is pumped over the road to the kitchen garden, and we are now exploring the possibility of having a solar powered pump rather than electrical, and also one for use in the gardens to move the water we collect off the polytunnel. Andrew, one of our residents, has been lining the inside of his old cottage with amazingly thick insulation panels and has constructed an inner porch. He is also considering another layer of glazing on his already double glazed windows, as Gay, his next door neighbour has done. She is in the process of having a side conservatory built, to complement extensive internal insulation work carried out earlier this year.

We are looking into the possibility of acquiring more photovoltaic panels under the government's FIT scheme and progress will be reported next time.

One of our residents is also exploring the feasibility of boring for our own water. We know from the history books that Gillingham had 5 public wells and that this property also had its own water supply – as did most farms. Apparently the water here is clear and sweet, so that's a good place to start from.



PROGRAMME OF EVENTS - 2011

The cohousing and work weekends prove very popular, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Cohousing Workshops

These are residential and run from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. They provide an opportunity for individuals or groups to experience life in a cohousing community for a weekend, at the same time learning how to go about setting up a project. They are very popular, so book early to secure a place. 2010 charges: £140 for course, lunches, snacks and evening meals. B&B £25/£35 per night, depending on location.

Nov. 18-20 and Feb. 17-19

Gardening/Work Weekends

We offer bed and board in exchange for your help and it's not all work! Arrive in time for Friday supper if you can, otherwise early on the Saturday.

Dates tbc for 2012

Open Lunches and Open Afternoons for Visitors/Enquirers

These take place on the *first Sunday of each month from 12.30 – 3pm. An informal gathering with a chance to look round and meet the residents. Please let us know (on 01747 821929) if you would like to come, and bring vegetarian food to share.

*except when the 1st Sunday is the 1st of the month, then the open lunch will be on the 8th.

Open Meditation

We are now changing to full moon meditations suitable for all levels of experience. Please contact us (on 01747 821929) for dates and if you would like to join us. There is no charge, but donations are welcome.

COMMUNITY GARDEN NEWS

It doesn't seem long since I was writing about everything in the garden coming up.....and here we are at the beginning of September picking and cooking and freezing and eating and giving away an abundance of squashes, beans, tomatoes, potatoes, salad leaves, cucumbers, carrots, etc., etc. It has been a very productive year despite the disappointing weather.

Our rainwater collection system on the polytunnel has been working a treat, but we still haven't found a way to irrigate the polytunnel from the tanks. We are now thinking solar pump, so that will be our next investment, but in the meantime it has been a long summer of daily watering by hand.

Thanks must go to Michael who takes his coffee over most mornings, opens up the polytunnel and does all the watering (although others have of course done their share!). Anyway the polytunnel has been bursting with produce (not to mention colourful nasturtiums and volunteer sunflowers) from quite early on, and this winter we plan to fill it with salad leaves so we can eat salads all year round.



Next year we must also invest in some netting and make some lightweight frames to keep off those pesky cabbage white butterflies and pecking pigeons – although I have noticed that we don't have too much of a problem considering the number of brassicas we have, and I wonder if that's because there are lots of lovely tasty nasturtium and some old salad leaves that got left in the polytunnel and which are now infested with the caterpillars!

The village green has looked lovely all summer, with its wildflower patch under the trees in the middle and beautiful roses, sunflowers, lavender and sweet peas around the edges in residents' gardens. And then there's the crab apple tree in Amanda and Peter's garden, which has been absolutely covered in apples and gave rise to a whole weekend spent making crab apple jelly, chutney, cake and vodka(!) in the farmhouse kitchen. Even our struggling apple trees in the orchard have produced lots of apples, and the hedgerows are full of sloes, blackberries, more crab apples and even damsons dropping from a tree along the lane.

Linda Philp



PERMACULTURE COURSE

The Permaculture Course has been running smoothly with our small (but perfectly formed!) group, and we took a break in August as most people were away.

Please feel free to join us for one or more weekends, or sign up for the full course starting again in April next year.

Permaculture Course 2012

Introductory weekend
Saturday 28 - Sunday 29 April.
Saturday 10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. or 6.00 p.m. (including optional DVD)
Sunday 10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

Cost £150.00 (concessions may be available, please enquire). Tea, coffee and lunch will be provided. B&B accommodation may be available on request.

Please bring outdoor clothing for practical sessions.

This Introduction to Permaculture will provide you with a taste of all aspects of Permaculture Design (including Permaculture ethics and principles; gardening; agriculture; woodland; agroforestry; water; buildings and communities). It will include some practical sessions.

Full Permaculture Design Course consisting of 6 weekends (the 4th weekend in May, June, July, September, October and November), will cover all of the above aspects in more detail and will also include a number of visits and an opportunity to undertake a design project.

Cost £480 for 6 weekends (£600 for both courses).

The teacher is Stephen Nutt, who has been teaching Permaculture for 23 years, and he will be assisted by Linda Philp (Course Convenor), with an occasional session by an outside speaker.

Contact: Linda Philp
01747 825477
lindascabbagepatch@yahoo.co.uk

THE YURT

As mentioned in the last newsletter we now have a 6 metre Yurt sited in between the community veg. garden and orchard, though it is actually a 'ger' as the design uses straight rather than curved poles. It is the largest size that has a completely open space, without centre supports (dragon posts).

A glimpse at Ebay under 'Yurt Specialists' revealed a business operated by a couple in Oxfordshire.

The woman is Mongolian and her parents have a yurt factory, so it is good to support a poorer nation by importing the real thing from Inner Mongolia. It is made from traditional willow poles, with horsehair ropes, elm crown and hand made felt. The door and crown are hand-painted with traditional Mongolian designs which are also used on the canvas.

We took a day to unpack and erect it. Everyone around on the day took a part in putting it up as a community exercise, pooling our experience and expertise. We then took time to sit inside and celebrate the space. It really is magical.

It has now been used for meetings and workshops. We will shortly put in a small stove for a '7 Words' meeting before we take it down for storing over the winter.

Andrew pp Yurt Group (Andrew, Linda, Michael, Stephen)



RUNNING A BUSINESS AT THE THRESHOLD CENTRE

Astrocal started nearly 7 years ago in November 2004 with the design of the first Moon Calendar. Every year since then, we've designed new products and our business has grown. Working from home has meant that as the business grew so did the boxes of stock and packaging until every room in our home was full, including the attic! We were bursting out. We lived on the first floor which meant that we had to carry every box up the flight of stairs which was back breaking and tiring. Luckily our wonderful landlady in Hove was supportive to us and the business and allowed us to expand into her garage.

Moving to Threshold last September was so exciting on every level. One of the most major changes was that the business moved into the office in the farmhouse which is on the ground floor. What a relief – no more lugging heavy boxes up flights of stairs and no more living amongst boxes – our home became our living space once more and it has been a great gift.

We now share our office space with the community office which works really well. We have a computer desk, a packing station and large shelving which holds all of our stock. It's so much easier to work as everything that is needed is in one place which makes so much difference. The commute to work is absolutely gorgeous, walking across the green with its flowers, trees and general lovely feel. What a start to the day! Tina still works from home designing the calendars as she needs the space to do this without distractions.

One of the major benefits of running a business from a cohousing community is that there is plenty of help at hand if needed which is especially useful when we get a large delivery of stock and when we go away. Our lovely neighbours are happy to help sending out orders while we relax on holiday!

The main challenge is that being around other people can be very distracting. When we lived in Hove, all winter we'd be working on our own. Now, we have plenty of opportunity to chat and catch up with what's happening. Something that's very enjoyable but not very conducive to working. So, we've had to become much more aware of boundaries and structure, allowing for time to catch up with others as well as focusing purely on work.

We have recently just become aware that we set up our business at the same time Threshold was born. In November, it will be 7 years, our first Saturn square birthday! Moving to Threshold has allowed Astrocal the opportunity to stabilize and to expand naturally, moving on to the next stage without limitations. We very much appreciate our new home and office here at Threshold.

Ceri & Tina

www.astrocal.co.uk



EXTRA EVENTS AT THE THRESHOLD CENTRE

7 Words



'7 Words' is an ongoing rolling series of 7 weekends that you can join at any point, led by James Burgess and assisted by Richard Grey who is a Threshold resident. Its purpose is to guide students through a process of personal transformation that addresses all major life issues from relationship to spirituality, decision-making to visioning.

Weekend No.1 – Self-confidence:
12/13 Nov 2011

Weekend No.2 – Influence:
10/11 Dec 2011

Weekend No.3 – Relationship:
14/15 Jan 2012

Weekend No.4 – Life Management:
10/11 Mar 2012

Weekend No.5 – Getting what you really want:
14/15 Apr 2012

Weekend No.6 – Having a clear conscience:
12/13 May 2012

Weekend No.7 – Enjoying opportunity:
30 Jun/01 Jul 2012

Join at any point. Come to one or more weekends. Attend missed modules the following year, if you wish.

Contact me for more information about any of the above, and please forward to others you think may be interested.

Richard Grey: 07736 735 298

7 Words Guide

E: 7wordsrwg@gmail.com. Check out our new website ...

www.7words.co.uk

'You are Amazing'

These classes, run by Caroline & Amanda, are now fully subscribed for this term.

They are designed for those seeking to expand their awareness beyond the apparent reality of everyday, using light, colour, sound and aroma as the basis for self-discovery and healing.

If any of you would be interested in a postal version of the course please contact Caroline (01747 835274) for more information.

The term dates for next year are:

Term 2 7th Feb - 20th Mar 2012

Term 3 1st May - 12th Jun 2012

If you, or anyone you know, would like to be added to our mailing list, please email the office at: info@thresholdcentre.org.uk. To avoid disappointment, please phone before visiting. We welcome visitors to our monthly Open Lunch and Open Afternoon, to Open Meditations, to Work and Gardening Weekends and the various courses that are run here. Please remember that this is also our home and we have busy lives, so turning up hoping to be hosted and shown round could end in disappointment - Thank you.

With best wishes from us all, Jane, Amanda, Peter, Monty the dog, Caroline, Susannah, Bill, Michael, Gay, Andrew, Linda, Ceri, Tina, Julz, Carla and Heather, Julie, Richard, John and Jamie, Stephen and not forgetting Muriel and the cats.