

Camphill Devon

Spring Newsletter

A snapshot in time

I was asked to write something for this newsletter and I realised this will be my last time. I thought I might write about many good times at Camphill Devon, with the people we support, employees, volunteers and families. Of moments like the time I used all my skills, knowledge and experience to encourage someone to do something that would be beneficial to him, and he dismissed me saying, "Don't worry about it John. Just forget about it!" You know people are secure and self-confident when they patronise you and metaphorically pat you on the head.

Rather than give in to the temptation to be nostalgic, I would rather invite you to take a look at this photograph that I came across only a couple of weeks ago. This image represents much of what is good about Camphill Devon. Here is a man, preparing food in his own kitchen. He shares the house with others, but at this moment it is **his** kitchen, and he is making his own meal. There isn't a support worker at his shoulder... it's just him. Any awareness of the photographer has disappeared by the time the photo was taken, leaving just this man and his thoughts.

Take a closer look and you will see that he is deep in concentration. And he looks contented. Six years or so before this photo was taken, he was making it clear to all at Camphill Devon that this was the life he wanted to be living. And there he is.

Best wishes as always
John Green



We have our new entertainment system in the Hall for all to share and enjoy. So, in the future, we can bring back film evenings, watch live sports events and play Wii games together. It will also be used for training and learning and comes with plenty of storage.



New Chief Executive

I am delighted to have been appointed Chief Executive of Camphill Devon. Having just started in March it is certainly very early days, and an unprecedented and complicated time for us all.

I have spent the last few weeks getting to know the people we support, the amazing team of staff and volunteers, and of course the wonderful facilities.

Camphill Devon is clearly a special place, and I am very much enjoying meeting all the people that live and work here. In the next chapter of Camphill Devon, I am looking forward to seeing where areas of improvement can be made and developing increased opportunities for the people we support to influence and get involved in. As CEO I take my responsibilities seriously to support people to live the life they want to live, and I am excited to be able to contribute to this.

We are an 'intentional community' and provide incredible lifestyles for people wishing to own and contribute to the community in which they live. We are on a rural site with outstanding countryside to enjoy and manage, as well as amazing workshops for natural crafts, arts and land work. We are also just a mile from the local town where many of the people we support have community links for shopping, the local pub, farm work, leisure, employment and voluntary work.

If you're looking for a special place for someone to experience truly person-centred care and support, or an amazing place to work or volunteer do please get in touch.



Steve Whittingham

Chief Executive

Camphill Devon Community



The birds and the bees.....



Our woodpecker
enjoying a snack

Camphill Devon is in such a beautiful location, which we are reminded of more at this time of year, when the birds start singing and the flowers start growing. We have deer in the woods, bats, ducks, badgers and bees. In addition to normal workshop activities, in the metal work room they have made their own bird table and the woodwork group has made a bird feeding station allowing people to watch our variety of birds and, of course, the occasional squirrel. We also have a resident woodpecker who enjoys the peanuts.

Val, our metal workshop leader, has also recently brought in tadpoles for individuals to watch develop, which adds a new dimension to the workshop and introduces topics of conversation and learning.

Interestingly, a study done at Exeter University showed that there was a correlation between the number of birds people could see outside and their levels of stress and anxiety. It suggested that seeing larger numbers of birds in your garden in the afternoon could lower depression and make us feel happier!

The study also showed that people who spent less time outside were more likely to feel depressed in their lifetime.

The key components of the study concluded that nature has a direct affect on our well-being and, in particular, having trees, shrubs and birds close by made a significant difference to the way people felt. Other information that is good to know is, in most cases, it's not only okay to feed wild birds but it's also good for them. The extra boost of calories and nutrition they get from bird feeders helps to reduce stress during breeding months, gain strength needed for migration and to survive a harsh winter.



Keep calm, wash your hands, and carry on...

The Coronavirus outbreak is, of course, a difficult time for everyone, and for some of the people we support particularly hard to understand. Their day-to-day activities are no longer taking place and several staff are now absent from the site. The staff teams, who know each person well, are, of course, supporting people through this confusing time.

Camphill Devon Community has implemented the Government's advice to socially distance and to avoid non-essential travel and contact with other people.

Measures have been put in place to ensure that no-one leaves the site unnecessarily, and only essential workers will travel to the site to provide care and support.

Our Day Services provision has been closed until further notice to ensure that people do not gather in groups. Instead, day activities will be structured within the houses to ensure that people remain occupied, are stimulated and can exercise their choice within certain options. We have a wonderful site and the people we support will continue to have access to the open, outdoor space, following Government guidance.

Families and friends have been asked not to visit their loved ones on site, and I know that people will understand the importance of this. However, it is vital, of course, that you are able to maintain usual contact, and if an appropriate option has not already been established (i.e. phone, social media, FaceTime, Skype, etc.), please don't hesitate to contact the house directly and we will set this up as best we can.

House staff will, of course, continue to visit town to shop for essentials, and by hook or by crook are generally being able to locate sufficient supplies.

Our offices are now closed and key staff will continue to support Camphill Devon via home working. If you need to make contact with the office please call the usual number and the call will be diverted as appropriate.

We very much appreciate everyone's support and understanding of these arrangements during this difficult time.

I am sure you will agree that our team of staff and volunteers is fantastic, and is really stepping up to the mark in these challenging times. I am sure you will convey your appreciation and good wishes whenever you are in touch.

I wish everyone well and if you require any further information please don't hesitate to contact us.



This is the view from our memorial garden

Steve Whittingham



Introducing Paul



Paul is our new land worker at Camphill Devon, he brings with him a wealth of knowledge and skills in site management. In past jobs, he has managed sites but had little experience of working with adults with learning disabilities. I am glad to say he has taken to the job like a duck to water, he has an excellent working relationship with everyone, also always noticing jobs that need doing and is happy to muck in and help.

Paul out collecting eggs with Sylvia and Toby



Home learning

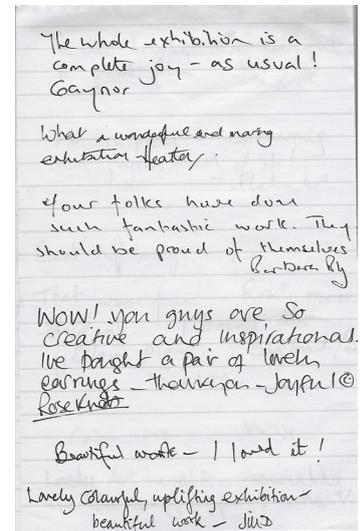
Our learners have now finished their 'Art and Literacy' course here at Hapstead. College staff have been coming in every Monday afternoon during term time and six learners have been working towards their certificates. The next course the college will be running is on Time and Money and again will involve lots of crafts and creative activities including sewing a wallet, and making a clock.

Birdwood

The Birdwood House exhibition in Totnes was a great success. It is such a wonderful gallery in a great location and we always get plenty of footfall. It is great to be able to talk to the wider community about Camphill Devon, meeting people that have known us for years, some that have heard about us and others that had no idea we existed. We hope to have another exhibition there again in the future but for now its back to making more pieces and coming up with new ideas. It is, of course, great for everyone to see their hard work on display, appreciated, loved and bought by members of the public. Well done everyone who helped to raise over £2,000 for Camphill Devon.



Individuals had their pictures taken beside some of their work.



One page out of about 20 in the comments book.

Camphill Devon

Supporting adults with learning disabilities

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Postponing, not cancelling celebrations

It is worth mentioning that it is our 40th year here as Camphill Devon. In the current circumstances we will not be holding a fair, or celebration, until the coronavirus is under control but we look forward to having a large celebration when the risk is over.

Keep safe everyone.

Please help us to save on postage: to receive regular Newsletters from Camphill Devon Community, please email admin@camphilldevon.org.uk requesting 'Newsletter'

