

The Christian Community

Stroud Congregation Newsletter – May 2018

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Community Flexibility

Our building project is finally about to start – can you believe it!! And it is going to bring all sorts of ‘disruptions’ to our peaceful community life. It is impossible to say quite how that will look but for one we will all have to become a lot more flexible as regards parking and the new access around the back of the property down a temporary ramp to our ‘new’ west entrance area through the altered annexe. There will possibly be times where we will not be permitted to enter the chapel due to work on the east end of the roof area but hopefully that will be kept to an absolute minimum. The builders seem like they are very willing to accommodate our day to day needs, especially as regards the services, so we hope that will reduce the disruptions. For the rest there will be unavoidable noise from the building work which we will have to meet with the best inner calm and peace we can muster. A healthy exercise. And for the rest – well done to all who have inwardly and outwardly carried so much to get us to this point. It is a very exciting phase of our congregational life and we all look forward to the results – probably summer 2019!

Farewell Community Room!

It will be a poignant moment to say goodbye to our beloved Community Room, Office, Kitchen and Wake Room that have served us so well all these 49 years at 73/75 Cainscross road. The contractors take over the site on the 9th July and the demolition work is planned to begin on the 19th July. We will have had to have salvaged and moved and stored everything that we want to hold onto from the old building, and that will take a week or two to do; so realistically we will need to be moving our community life over to the annexe during the second half of June. News will go out asking for helping hands when the timing is clear.

With all this in mind it feels right to use the Community Forum planned for Sunday the 10th June to say a hearty (and tearful) farewell to those spaces so full of community history. Please come prepared to share memories and anecdotes and pictures if you have from the life of the community and the building so we can honour her.

Financial Update

Our appeals for people to start making a regular contribution towards the running of The Christian Community in Stroud, or to increase existing contributions, have unfortunately not met with much success. We are seeing a steady monthly shortfall in income of just under £600 a month, which corresponds quite closely with our projection that contributions would need to rise by 17.5% this year in order to make the accounts balance.

What can we do about this? It is still an unfortunate fact that well over half the people on our contact list do not make a regular contribution – if all of them were to start giving even £5 a month we would have a small surplus. So please think about what the continued existence of The Christian Community means to you, and demonstrate it in a very practical way. There are forms in the foyer, and relevant information towards the back of the Programme, or you are welcome to approach Daan Rens or Paul Abel.

Children's Camp

Our annual children's summer camp will take place from the 21st – 31st July 2018 at Colin Godman's farm in Sussex. Forms and details are available on the camp website www.cc-camps.org or enquire with Aaron.

Data Protection Regulations

Most of you will be aware that new regulations come into force on 25th May 2018, which mean that we need your renewed permission to keep contacting you by means of post, email or phone, and to store your relevant personal details.

Many of you have already responded to the emails which have been sent out, but for those of you who have not yet responded, including all those of you who do not have an email address, a letter is included with this Newsletter which you must return to us if you want to continue hearing from us. (If no letter is enclosed, then it means that we have already heard back from you and you don't need to do anything else.)

Youth Camp in Spain

24 young and old participated in our youth camp at Los Portales eco-village from the 4th – 16th April outside Seville in Andalucia, Spain. We worked and played hard and mixed with the wonderful community of 30 people who live there as well as several youth volunteers who were also working there at the same time. We ran a treasure hunt for the local children and parents, went for adventurous hikes to dams and waterfalls, built a huge compost heap into which we placed the biodynamic preparations, sang, played games, danced, studied our dream life, cooked, cleaned, weeded, milked goats, held a Close of Day every evening and two Acts of Consecration (one in Spanish), built shelters, slept like logs, toured Seville, etc etc. We were all somehow touched and moved inwardly by all that we could experience on this fabulous trip and are keen to do something like this again. The people at Los Portales were not only very generous with their time and spaces but seemed to enjoy our presence so much that they have enthusiastically invited us to return again next year. Let's see.

West End Development

Some of you will have seen the plans displayed in the Community Room for the development of the flats on the plot of land to the west of our current building. The latest design has been altered in response to preliminary feedback from the Planning Department, and now consists of five flats, all of which are spoken for by people connected to our congregation. The plans will soon be ready to submit for full approval, after which (fingers crossed) the project will hopefully be able to move on to detailed design and Building Regulations approval.

Once planning approval has been granted, the land will be sold by The Christian Community to Stroud Wayfarers Housing Community Benefit Society, which is the newly established organisation set up to offer shared ownership and affordable rented accommodation to people who want to live in small mutually supportive groups such as this. More details are on the boards in the Community Room.