

unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for
Voluntary Service 2008

The Beacon Friends Newsletter



Autumn 2011

This edition of the Friends Newsletter is aimed at providing you with an insight into Beacons Counselling's purpose quest.

James Harper, introduces the process and why Beacon became involved.

"Given the growth and new services in Beacon over the last few years, it became clear at the start of the year that it was time to have a think as an organisation about what Beacon is here for, what is its purpose. There is also clear evidence from research that any organisation which has a clear purpose is more resilient through tough times, and the current economy and outlook just add to the reason for doing this now. Though there is a statement of aims in the governing document this is from 27 years ago and does not really cover the purpose. To produce the best result it seemed worthwhile creating a way to involve the whole organisation rather than have something created by one person or a committee, and this is where the trustee Bruce Bissell came in.

Following a series of conversations with Bruce, it became clear that discovering Beacon's purpose using a process Bruce was familiar with would give Beacon the best result, as it was not based on a few people or on coming up with a strap-line or mission statement. Rather it was a process that genuinely engaged with people and aimed to involve everyone in the organisation, and also one where everyone's thoughts carried equal weight.

The excellent people at the *nowhere* group advised on using their "7 Generations Thinking" and they very kindly designed and produced some massive sheets of paper that would enable the exercises to be recorded. Between May and the end of August, over 55 people took part in the exercise, which involved looking back as far as the 1950s, at the current times, and up to 10 years into the future. This was done for the topics of mental health, counselling & psychotherapy, and for Beacon itself (obviously only going back to 1984!). Members in each group gave their thoughts on the major themes, changes, facts and events in each decade relating to the 3 topics, thus bringing up a detailed picture of what was happening and society's position at various times, and allowing a picture of the major trends over generations to emerge.

(continued overleaf)



James continues ...

"Looking into the future became easier as a result. The groups included the cross section of Beacon, with counsellors, receptionists, supervisors, admin volunteers, trustees, and office staff all taking part. The data from each group was collated and condensed. The information was shared with the 7 Quest weekend participants, who had to read, learn, and inwardly digest all the information. The intention behind that was for each member to represent all of the people who had taken part in the exercise, thus giving voice to the whole of Beacon rather than individual opinion. The make-up of the group (3 counsellors, 2 supervisors, a trustee, and the manager) was intentional so that the people that make up the majority of the numbers at Beacon had the largest representation on the weekend."



The group working together



Bruce Bissell, Trustee, writes:

"One of the most significant experiences in my business career was working with the *nowhere* group in terms of the positive impact it had on the people throughout the business. I was delighted when two of my friends in *nowhere*, on hearing of my involvement with Beacon, agreed to help with the Quest and its preparation. James organised a great group and I quickly got to know them during our work on Friday night. The team threw itself into the task without doubt and it was a delight for me to see the same energy as I had previously experienced, released as the Quest unfolded. When the breakthrough occurred and the Beacon purpose was revealed early on Sunday morning, the sense of being as one and of achievement was palpable. I hope, going forward, we can share this with everyone in Beacon"

Quest Group

James Harper
Joan Tsalikis
Margaret Parker
Jed Bridge
Fiona Douglas
Pam Smith
Julia Larmer

Supported by
Bruce Bissell

Facilitated by
Nic and Susie Turner
from the **nowhere**
group



Comments from Group members

Joan Tsalikis writes, "The feedback from all the different parts of Beacon, which we all had been absorbing in the days before we left, meant that I arrived at the farm with a strong sense of how Beacon started, of the idea which inspired it and the challenges facing it. This stayed in the back of my mind throughout the time."

The weekend itself gave us freedom to be by ourselves in the present, feel the peace and be open to ideas. It was enlightening to be amongst the animals, hills, rocks and trees and in such a magnificent place. The direction from the course leaders was constructive and did not limit the thinking in any way, so insights seemed to develop so naturally within the group. It was such a generous gesture by the nowhere group and I felt privileged to be part of the process and of Beacon. It was inspiring and we will endeavour to share our insights later in a meaningful way with everyone."



Margaret Parker, writes, "Arriving at Bank Top Farm in a mixture of excitement and nervousness about what the weekend would hold for me and for Beacon, I was pleasantly surprised at the comfort of the accommodation and the homely warmth of the welcome from our hostess, whose catering skills were outstanding. Nic and Susie, the facilitators, provided a well-paced process through which we explored the purpose of Beacon."

A challenging and thrilling weekend which I wish everyone could have experienced."

And finally

With the Purpose Quest Weekend discovering Beacon Counselling's purpose from all of the notes from the group plus the hard work on the weekend, it is now important to bring the purpose back to Beacon by informing everyone of the outcome. In order to do this justice, a special event is being set up for all volunteers, staff, and Friends of Beacon. The event will be short but very interesting and hopefully with a result that all will agree is right for Beacon.

**Thank you from all at Beacon Counselling to
Nic and Susie Turner from the nowhere group
for their gift of the purpose quest weekend to us.**

**You are invited to
Beacon Counselling—Sharing our Purpose
Friday 11th November—An evening presentation
Please book this date in to your diary.
Your invite will be sent to you soon.**

Other News



"Sunny Jim" raises funds for Beacon Counselling

Our thanks go to Jim Hall, one of our Counsellors at Beacon, who attended the Woodford Community Day to raise funds for Beacon. Jim creates a variety of animal shaped balloons for the adults and children. A total of £90 was raised and trustees Joan Tsalikis, Pauline Hobin and Brian McCluggage worked alongside Jim handing out our information leaflets.



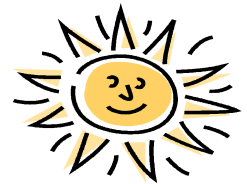
Client waiting times

New clients currently have a comparatively short time to wait and see a counsellor. We currently have a waiting list of 25 clients waiting for ongoing counselling, this compares to approx 150 this time 2 years ago! This has been helped by improved procedures and increasing the number of counsellors. About 14 new clients are added to the our lists every week.

Wellbeing Tip

This week Stockport celebrated its 3rd Wellbeing week. The key message throughout the week is there are 5 ways to wellbeing

1. **Connect**
2. **Be active**
3. **Take Notice**
4. **Keep Learning**
5. **Give**



The latest evidence shows that by adopting these simple steps you can improve your wellbeing and increase your life expectancy by 7.5 years.

For more information please visit www.stockportmind.org.uk



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