

COMMUNITY BASE NEWS

A home for community and voluntary groups in Brighton and Hove • www.communitybase.org



Spring 2010

**Brighton and Hove
community job search**

**LOOKING FOR A
COMMUNITY JOB?**

**Brighton and Hove
volunteer search**

**WANT TO
VOLUNTEER?**

**Brighton and Hove
service search**

**NEED A LOCAL
SERVICE?**

**Brighton and Hove
venue search**

**LOOKING FOR A
ROOM TO HIRE?**

COMMUNITY BASE LAUNCHES NEW SERVICE TO HELP JOB SEEKERS

Community Base has launched *Brighton and Hove community job search*, a service listing community job vacancies with local charities and other community organisations online and in Community Base's reception.

Brighton and Hove community job search joins Community Base's three other online information services - *Brighton and Hove service search* listing local community services, *Brighton and Hove volunteer search* listing volunteering opportunities and *Brighton and Hove venue search* listing local rooms and halls for hire - on its website at www.communitybase.org.

Information is not just accessible online - details of job and volunteering opportunities are available in

Community Base's reception, as is Community Base's poster guide to *community services in Brighton and Hove*, which is also distributed widely across the city.

Deborah Sprackling, Community Base's receptionist/administrator, came up with the idea of *Brighton and Hove community job search* after seeing a big increase in the number of people coming into Community Base's reception looking for work during 2009.

"Employers will always advertise in newspapers and in other ways," says Deborah, "but what *Brighton and Hove community job search* allows them to do is connect directly with people specifically looking for a local community job. It also lets us give more information

to people coming into our reception looking for work."

Anyone subscribing to *Brighton and Hove community job search* is sent details of new community job vacancies by email for as long as they want to be sent them.

"Our community information services are getting more and more popular," says Community Base director Colin Chalmers. "The number of visits to our website went up by 39% last year while *Brighton and Hove volunteer search* had an 84% increase in hits and *Brighton and Hove service search* an increase of 125%."

"These figures show we're doing something right, and we think we know what it is - we create simple, free services in response to the needs of the people coming to us for help."

**COMMUNITY BASE
PUB QUIZ**

Thursday 20th May 2010
8pm, Lord Nelson, Trafalgar Street
Free! Prizes!

**REFUGEES -
THEY'RE WELCOME
HERE!**

Monday 14th June 2010
Community Base
6.30pm film+food
7.30pm speakers+discussion

**COMMUNITY BASE
OPEN DAY**

Monday 5th July 2010
1pm-4pm meet the groups+films
4pm discussion
5.30pm party!



Become a fan of Community Base on facebook



Follow Community Base on twitter

COMMUNITY GROUPS' USE OF COMMUNITY BASE MEETING ROOMS UP 50%

Charities and community groups without offices at Community Base hired Community Base's meeting rooms for more than 1,300 hours in 2009, an increase of more than 50% on the previous year. The number of group hiring rooms increased too, from 42 to 58.

Community Base building manager Annette Moss puts the increase down to the quality of the rooms - Community Base's 100 seater conference room has a projector and screen, hifi, wifi, kitchen and beautiful views - and the low cost.

"Having somewhere to meet is essential for community groups," says Annette, "and a lot of them don't have much money. We halved the cost of our conference room to outside community groups to £15 for a three hour meeting in 2008, which has meant a lot to groups that have to pass a hat around at the end of meetings."

You can find all Community Base's monitoring figures for 2009 and a comparison of figures over the last five years at www.communitybase.org/realhelp.

ENERGY USE CUT FOR FOURTH YEAR RUNNING

Community Base's energy use dropped for the fourth year in a row in 2009 despite extra heating being used during the severe weather in December.

Community Base building manager Annette Moss is proud of the achievement, which she puts down to a range of energy efficiency measures such as improved insulation, solar panels on the roof and the recently installed powerPerfector, a magical machine than cuts electricity use without anyone noticing.

"We're serious about cutting our carbon footprint and are putting a lot of effort into finding ways to cut our energy use while making people more comfortable," says Annette. "We've joined the 10:10 campaign which commits us to reducing our energy use by 10% in 2010, and with a bit of help from our powerPerfector we think we can do it."

"We desperately need new windows to improve the insulation of our building in winter and keep it cooler in summer and we hope to start installing these this year. But how fast we can install them throughout the building depends on our finances."

NEW GROUPS AT COMMUNITY BASE



CREATING A FUTURE AT COMMUNITY BASE

Creative Future, who moved into Community Base at the beginning of March, have worked with hundreds of marginalised artists and writers since starting up in 2007. The group runs everything from mentoring programmes involving one-to-one support from an arts professional and arts and writing courses to work opportunities in the creative sector.

"We try to bridge the gap between community arts and the professional arts sectors," says Dominique De-Light, one of Creative Future's project directors. "We give those excluded by society the chance to reintegrate

through their own talents by providing training, support and exhibiting and publishing opportunities."

Dominique De-Light established the First Base Arts Project when she was writer-in-residence at Brighton's First Base Day Centre between 2003 and 2008. Creative Future's other project director Simon Powell is a cartoonist and film-maker who developed an arts project in East London for homeless and ex-homeless artists.

Creative Future has a website at www.creativefuture.org.uk and its phone number is (01273) 234780.



Some of the POhWER team at Community Base

POhWER RANGERS!

National charity POhWER has set up a regional office at Community Base to provide a Sussex-wide advocacy service for people being looked after by local authorities and NHS bodies who are unable to make their own decisions.

POhWER's advocates get involved when someone without close family or friends is unable to make their own decisions because of dementia, a disability, a brain injury, a coma or for some other reason.

"Decisions in the NHS and social care are always driven to some extent by cost and what's easiest for the organisation," says Damian Brady, POhWER's director of operations, "and the best interest of the

individual can get lost. When Parliament established the role of independent advocate it was recognising that people who can't make their own decisions need someone promoting their interests when important decisions about their future are being made. We'll be going out across Sussex from our office at Community Base to do just that."

POhWER was set up in 1996 by service users in Hertfordshire and since then has grown into a national charity with around 170 employees. POhWER is still run by a board of service users.

POhWER's website is at www.pohwer.net and its phone number is (01273) 234868.



DEBORAH'S HAVING TWINS!

Community Base's receptionist/administrator Deborah Sprackling is having twins!

Deborah and husband Sean are expecting the birth of their twins, a girl and a boy, in July with Deborah likely to be going off on maternity leave in May.

"We're thrilled to be expecting twins," says Deborah, "and it's been very touching the way people at Community Base have been sharing that excitement with us."

"People keep bringing me apples and treats all the time. Val, one of the legal secretaries at the Immigration Legal Service (ILS) here, hand-knitted four beautiful little cardigans, and we've also been given a hand-crocheted cardigan and jumper and a sweet cloth teddy bear from a couple who've been coming into reception at the moment to get advice from the ILS."

"We've built up an amazing team of locum workers who all get the importance of running a reception as busy as Community Base's in an efficient and friendly way. These locums will be running reception while I'm away and I'm sure they'll do an excellent job."

A DAY OF DISCOVERY...

Community Base will be holding its 2010 open day on Monday 5th July.

Community Base open days, which have been held every two years since 2000, offer an opportunity for anyone to visit groups at Community Base (and for groups to visit each other!), discuss issues affecting the community and voluntary sector,

watch films, eat cake and party!

Most groups' offices will be open to visitors between 1pm and 4pm, when there will also be films and snacks in the conference room. There will be an open discussion at 4pm - and the partying begins at 5.30pm.

More information nearer the time at www.communitybase.org/lopenday.

A BIG CHEER FOR AMAZE



Amaze, a charity at Community Base that helps parents and carers of children with special needs, will be holding its first-ever comedy fundraising event The Big Cheer for Amaze on 17th June at Brighton Dome Concert Hall.

Amaze are organising The Big Cheer in association with Baby Cow Productions, producers of Gavin and Stacey, The Mighty Boosh, Nighty Night and Saxondale.

Tickets cost £25 and are available from the Dome's website at www.brightondome.org or from their ticket office on 01273 709709.

A MEDITERRANEAN FEAST



The Mediterranean Resources Network - or Mernet as it is known to its friends - held another of its Mediterranean feasts in Community Base's conference room on 20th March.

Mernet, who moved into Community Base in 2007, has put on feasts at Community Base every few months since 2008. The events bring together members of the Mediterranean community and other local residents to enjoy healthy food, music and dance from many Mediterranean countries.

CORE FUNDING ROCKS

AudioActive

AudioActive got some good news recently when the Arts Council told them they were awarding them a grant of £68,000 over two years to meet their core running costs.

The money will allow AudioActive to employ two part-time workers as well as the one already employed and provide a stable base for the dozens of music projects it runs with young people and marginalised groups in and around Brighton and Hove.

AudioActive's manager Adam Joolia, says, "It's rare to get this level of support, and quite a vote of confidence in our work. We've never had core funding before and this grant will allow us to be a lot more innovative."



Councillors Keith Allen, Amy Kennedy, Rachel Fryer, Mayor Ann Norman, Gill Mitchell and Keith Taylor meeting groups at Community Base on 29th March Photo: Cynthia Mann

COUNCILLORS BRAVE WEATHER TO VISIT COMMUNITY BASE

Brighton and Hove City councillors braved horrendous weather to meet charities and community groups at Community Base on 29th March.

Most groups at Community Base came along to the event to tell councillors about their work including Sussex Interpreting Services, East Sussex Credit Union, Amaze, Immigration Legal Service, Friends, Families and Travellers, the Carers Centre, NHS Support Federation, Carr-Gomm, Carousel, Assert, Rhythmix, Crossroads, Mosaic and Brighton Housing Trust.

Councillors attending the event included Mayor Ann Norman, Labour group leader Gill Mitchell, Deputy Green group leader Amy Kennedy and Keith Taylor, one of Community Base's local councillors.

After chatting for an hour over lovely vegan food prepared by Brighton Voices in Exile, everyone watched *Welcome to Community Base!* a short film made in

2007 to celebrate Community Base's tenth birthday. The film, which shows the range of services offered by groups at Community Base and the community spirit in the building, got a round of applause from councillors.

Labour group leader Gill Mitchell said she found the event really helpful. *"It was good to meet the faces behind the emails and should certainly be repeated."*

"It was a fantastic opportunity to connect with councillors in an informal, friendly environment," said Mike Holdgate of Novas Scarmen, who provide support to activist citizens and small community groups. ***"They seemed genuinely interested in the work we do and I have no doubt that some really positive things will come out of it. Let's do it again!"***

• You can watch *Welcome to Community Base!* by going to www.communitybase.org and clicking on the YouTube logo.

COMMUNITY BASE LAUNCHES PETITION TO KEEP DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

Community Base has launched a petition calling on Brighton and Hove City Council not to withdraw the discretionary rate relief it has given Community Base since it opened. Community Base has always been granted discretionary rate relief in two or three year blocks - but this year was told it would only be granted for one year while a review was carried out.

The council's decision to review Community Base's rate relief comes hot on the heels of its decision to stop Community Base earning £18,500 a year from advertising on its north wall (see below). If Community Base lost its discretionary rate relief it would cost it a similar amount.

Community Base's treasurer Bob Cristofoli and director Colin Chalmers met Brighton and Hove City Council leader Mary Mears on 5th March to discuss the council's relationship with Community Base. They requested that, in light of the council's decision to stop Community Base earning income from advertising, the council agree to maintain Community Base's discretionary rate relief for the next five years. No such guarantee was forthcoming at the meeting or in subsequent correspondence.

"These are difficult and unstable times for groups running frontline services at Community Base," says Community Base director Colin Chalmers, *"the last thing they need is the increase in rent a withdrawal of rate relief would inevitably result in."*

"We've launched this petition to give people who think the council should continue to support Community Base a chance to have their views taken into account when the council makes its decision."

Community Base's petition will be presented to a full meeting of Brighton and Hove City Council on 15th July. Petition forms can be printed off from www.communitybase.org/petition.pdf.

LOSS OF ADVERTISING INCOME 'A REAL BLOW'

Brighton and Hove City Council's planning committee has withdrawn Community Base's permission to have advertising on its north wall which gives Community Base an annual income of £18,500.

Community Base was granted planning permission for advertising on its north wall in 2004. There were no objections to this year's application which was backed by 24 letters of support from local community groups, individuals and neighbours, including the newsagent and pub directly in front of the advert and the Brighthelm Church & Community Centre next door.

All Conservative councillors at the 3rd

February meeting of the planning committee voted to stop advertising on the wall while all other councillors present supported Community Base's application to renew planning permission. One of Community Base's local councillors, Pete West, spoke to the committee in favour of the application.

Alan Hodge, Brighthelm's manager, who wrote a letter supporting the application, says, *"I can't imagine why the council took this decision, the adverts have always been far preferable to the blank ugliness of the wall itself. It can't be because the area is deemed "ad free" because the council make income from advertising on lampposts*

across Queens Road – and that's inside a conservation area, while Community Base isn't. I hope this decision will be reconsidered and reversed."

Community Base director Colin Chalmers, says *"Charities are always being told to be more self-reliant and business-like, but when we make a deal with the private sector that is supported by our local community we get treated like this. This decision was a real blow and we're going to do all we can to reverse it."*

Community Base has appealed against the decision and submitted an amended application to Brighton and Hove City Council.