

Town Crier helps to welcome Catalyst guests

A Drop In session has been held to introduce Chris Kirvan, as the new Chief Executive of Colchester Catalyst Charity to the various organisations with which the Charity works on a day to day basis.

The event was held in Colchester in January, it was informal giving maximum opportunity for networking and was attended by almost 40 guests in total. A second event, planned for Clacton, had to be abandoned because of the severe weather conditions during the snow and ice of early February.

Chris said:

“The Drop In session was really well attended and everyone seemed to enjoy



Town Crier, Robert Needham, helps Chris Kirvan (right) and Stephanie Grant (second right) to greet guests Michele Steel (left), Essex Equipment Services, and Paul Guest (centre) from the Short Term Wheelchair Loan Charity

the party atmosphere with the Town Crier welcoming everyone in his own unique way. The Charity works with a wide range of people and organisations, so this was the perfect opportunity for me to meet those I will be working closely with in the future”



Carol Nice (left), Stepping Stones Nursery and Pam Cook, Colchester Toy Library, chatting at the event



Chris Kirvan (second right) meets, from the left, Jane Blomely, Youth Enquiry Service, Jan Farquharson, MS Society Colchester and Maria Hales, Youth Enquiry Service



Town Crier, Robert Needham, recounting information about his Town Crier's Staff to Tony Frost, Chairman and Chris Kirvan, Chief Executive.

SOME OF THE MAIN GRANTS MADE SINCE THE LAST ISSUE OF UPDATE.

Clacton Family Trust <i>Building and Improvement Project</i>	£40,000	Open Road <i>Medical Equipment for SOS Community Bus</i>	£5,406	United Response <i>Bathing Equipment</i>	£2,775
Hospice at Home <i>Marie Curie Nurses</i>	£25,000	The Ark Centre for Children <i>Toys</i>	£5,000	Ling Trust <i>Kitchen refurbishment</i>	£2,500
Stepping Stones Nursery <i>Sensory Room</i>	£11,000	CCVS <i>Shopmobility Accommodation</i>	£5,000	Wheelchair Service <i>Equipment</i>	£1,900
Autistic Society <i>Minibus</i>	£10,000	Centreline <i>Community Project</i>	£5,000	St Clare's Nursery <i>Equipment</i>	£1,800
Neuro Rehabilitation Department CGH <i>Standing Frames</i>	£10,000	Halstead Day Centre <i>Parker Bath</i>	£4,500	North East Essex PCT <i>Assessment Equipment</i>	£1,560
Halstead & Sudbury NCT <i>Postnatal & Breastfeeding support</i>	£7,034	Clacton District Stroke Group <i>Equipment</i>	£3,705	Study of Infant Death <i>Special equipment</i>	£1,034
Clacton & Tendring Shopmobility <i>IT Equipment and Scooters</i>	£5,650	Balkerne Gardens <i>Nursing Beds</i>	£3,000	Stepping Stones Nursery <i>Touch Screen Computer</i>	£1,000

UPDATE



FROM COLCHESTER CATALYST CHARITY

ISSUE 23: SPRING 2009

New post of Chief Executive for Colchester Catalyst Charity

Following the retirement of Bart Walsh, after 10 years in post, Chris Kirvan has become the new Chief Executive for Colchester Catalyst Charity. Chris was formerly the Town Manager for Colchester and has worked closely with various charities in the past.

Chris said, "Bart is obviously a hard act to follow, he has helped the Charity to achieve a great deal in the ten years he was here. However I am really enjoying taking over his responsibilities and

working with the Board and Stephanie to ensure that we continue to help to relieve health related difficulties within the community of North East Essex specifically where that help is not available from statutory providers."

Chris has been busy meeting new contacts and colleagues, learning more about health related issues and planning various events for the future.

Colchester Catalyst's Chairman, Tony Frost, said, "We are delighted to welcome Chris, who is working closely with our Administrator, Stephanie Grant, to develop achievement of the Charity's aims. We want to provide help where it will benefit the greatest number of people whilst ensuring that our grants and support are used effectively and efficiently.



Chris Kirvan, seated, Chief Executive, and Stephanie Grant, Administrator, in the Colchester Catalyst office.

We particularly welcome the opportunity of supporting new projects to improve healthcare in North-east Essex".

i INFORMATION

Catalyst has been established as a grant making trust for almost 20 years, providing financial assistance for:

- Local charitable organisations supporting people with medical conditions
- Special needs for individuals
- Respite for carers
- and more

If you are interested in applying for support, contact Administrator, Stephanie Grant, on

01206 752545

or colcat@btinternet.com

Stephanie will send an application form with guidelines and criteria, or be happy to discuss your application initially by phone.

Colchester Catalyst Charity
Catalyst House, Newcomen Way
Colchester, Essex CO4 9YR

Useful links

- ◆ Self Directed Support – www.essex.gov.uk/sds
- ◆ Independent Living Centre (for appointments only please phone 01206 518888).
- ◆ Short-Term Wheelchair Loan Charity – 01206 518524 (10-12 noon Monday to Friday)

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR INNOVATION

Colchester Catalyst Charity is searching for exciting new projects to support. If your group has an innovative idea which meets our criteria, contact Chris Kirvan on 01206 752545



ON THE LOOK OUT FOR INNOVATIVE IDEAS

This unique charity provides financial assistance which can help to alleviate healthcare problems for those living in North-east Essex, when it is not available from statutory providers.

In the past Catalyst has financed:

- ◆ special medical and mobility equipment for individuals or groups
- ◆ respite for carers of those with medical needs or disabilities
- ◆ therapeutic counselling
- ◆ larger projects such as building extensions or minibuses

Now we have our ears to the ground for excellent ideas for the future!

Annual Report published - more applications and more individuals helped than ever before

Colchester Catalyst Charity's Annual Report for the year ended September 2008 was recently published, showing the largest number of applications ever received from individuals. There were 284 applications, a 19% increase on the previous year, with 240 of them approved, 17 were deferred, requiring further information, and only 27 were unsuccessful.

Most of the budget for individual needs, almost 80%, helped to provide essential equipment to help with mobility and medical problems.

Many of the other applications were from organisations, some of them charities in their own right. There were 49 general applications, an 11% increase on last year, with 27 being successful and providing

support for a wide range of projects from buildings to equipment.

Direct charitable expenditure was up by 7% on the previous year to almost £510,000.

Unfortunately the investment climate during the past year was not helpful, with a reduction in the value of the Company's investments of £2.9m.

Tony Frost, Chairman of Colchester Catalyst Charity, said:

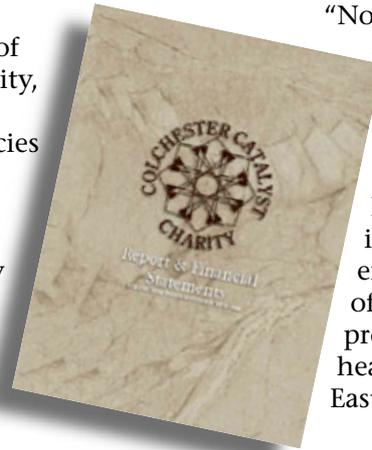
"The conservative policies of the Board concerning investment and distribution over many years enables the Charity to weather financial storms, and to continue to play its part in improving the provision of health-care

throughout the area of benefit"

The Charity has helped with the continued development of the Independent Living Centre, enabling it to be a beacon of excellence in collaborative provision of care and service to the community.

Tony Frost continued:

"Notwithstanding the chill wind of recession which will be blowing for some time, the Charity is able and keen to play its part in encouraging and enabling the process of enhancing the provision of healthcare in North East Essex"



MAKING SENSE OF A NEW SENSORY ROOM AT STEPPING STONES

In November 2006 Stepping Stones Nursery had to vacate their existing rooms at the Wilson Marriage Centre. Fortunately they had strong support from involved parents, statutory agencies and the community and eventually they were able to move into a new purpose built nursery in the grounds of the same site.

This was a tremendous result for the families they help and they moved into their new premises with great excitement.

Previously Stepping Stones had gradually developed a soft play and sensory room. It was obvious that the new nursery needed a new improved version



THE NEW SENSORY ROOM...

straight away! They liaised with Spacecraft who drew up a design and provided a quote. Like most charities they began fund raising and applied to Colchester Catalyst Charity for support. Catalyst was able to match the other funding they received and Stepping Stones now have a wonderful new soft play and sensory area.

The room is used by babies in a Tots Group, 2-5 year olds in a Nursery and 5-16 year olds in their After School Clubs. It is also well used during school holidays

when Stepping Stones are able to provide respite. Parents relax there during Support Group meetings and it has proved to be invaluable - meeting the needs of a whole range of disabilities, both physical and for children with developmental delay.

Children who have multi-sensory disability love it and those who have limited language skills enjoy making sounds into the microphone and watching the lights move around the screen. It has also proved to be a great benefit for older autistic children who go there straight from school and just chill out under the lights, listening to the music!

Carol Nice, Group Co-ordinator of Stepping Stones said:

"We are once again very grateful to the Catalyst Charity for their support and we know how lucky we are to have such a unique organisation supporting local charities like us."



...AND A SOFT PLAY AREA FOR THE TODDLERS



Catalyst answers an SOS

In June 2008 the Catalyst Charity awarded a grant of £5,406.19 to Open Road to enable them to provide medical equipment, (medical stretcher bed, heart defibrillator, oxygen equipment, spinal board and patient carry chair) for the SOS community bus which operates in the High Street on Friday and Saturday nights as a safe haven to reduce the negative impact of the night time economy in Colchester. A life was saved on its very first night out.

During the rest of the week the bus serves as a community resource, providing advice and information services on first aid, substance misuse, education, training and outreach work.

Stand up for Standing Frames



Colchester Catalyst Charity recently donated £10,000 to the Neurological Rehabilitation Team at Colchester General Hospital towards the purchase of standing frames for their patients in the community.

Regular standing is beneficial in controlling spasticity, preventing contractures and maintaining strength of postural muscles as well as preventing osteoporosis and maintaining respiratory, bladder and bowel function. The level of disability in many patients renders them unable to stand without the support of these specialised frames.

Three standing frames were purchased last year and are in regular use. It is our intention to audit the benefits gained by the clients and this will be reported back to the charity in due course.

Jane Forster, Specialist Physiotherapist, on behalf of the Neuro Rehab Team, said:

"We are extremely grateful for this donation. Having the equipment at home allows patients to stand daily and negates the need for lengthy and often exhausting trips to the hospital. Once again, our sincere thanks to the Catalyst Charity for their help in the purchase of these substantial pieces of equipment."

Need a free short-term loan?

When the Colchester Branch of the British Red Cross transferred its equipment loan store to Chelmsford it caused great concern. Colchester Catalyst had supported the service, including the supply of a quantity of wheelchairs and it was quickly realised that the non-availability of wheelchairs for short-term loan could cause considerable local hardship. A partnership of concerned people was formed and their determination and commitment enabled the establishment of a new project, thus ensuring the continued provision of wheelchairs for loan.

The Short Term Wheelchair Loan Charity has already reached a milestone in the first few months since it commenced operations. So far, over one thousand people have been helped by the scheme which has an active partnership with local health departments and the Colchester Catalyst Charity.

With the help of Colchester League of Hospital Friends, Colchester Borough Council, the Essex Equipment Service and staff at the Essex Rivers Wheelchair Service the scheme was launched. Once the project was able to stand on its own feet it was established as a charity and is now run independently in its own right with a well-qualified team of trustees.



Over seventy wheelchairs are available for free loan. People benefit from being able to borrow a wheelchair at short notice whether needing it following an accident, a release from hospital, having a relative to stay, or just taking out a friend or relative for the day.

The Charity operates from Catalyst House in Newcomen Way on the Sevall's Business Park. Paul Guest, the senior volunteer in charge of the scheme said: "We are open between 10 am and 12 noon each weekday morning. All we ask for when anyone needs to borrow a wheelchair is proof of identity and a small deposit which can be refunded upon the wheelchair's safe return."

The chairman of the Wheelchair Loan Charity, Bartholomew Walsh said: "The scheme has provided a valuable resource for those who do not qualify for an NHS wheelchair but who need the use of a wheelchair to improve the quality of life, and to maintain dignity and independence."

The scheme relies completely on the help given by volunteers, particularly Paul. He stressed that no appointments are necessary, although to avoid a wasted journey it is always best to give them a call

01206 518524

