



# Community Matters

'Unity at the Heart of Our Community'. The Cornerstone Centre is a thriving hub of activity at the heart of the Whaddon, Lynworth and Priors Estates.

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June 2026

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HELLO FROM ALISON:

DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome to the Cornerstone Centre newsletter.

I was recently invited to speak at the NHS Retirement Fellowship about the work of The Cornerstone Centre, and I came away feeling deeply blessed. Sharing the story of who we are and what God is doing through this place reminded me again how much of our work is shaped by simple, everyday acts of kindness. This year especially, we have been moved by the generosity of our community. People give their time, their friendship, their skills, and most beautifully, their hearts. It is a living picture of what it means to serve our community as Jesus would.

I want to personally thank everyone who has been involved in making this place as special as it is. Your prayers, your encouragement, and your giving make it possible for us to continue being a place of welcome, dignity, and hope to all.

ALISON X





# THE CENTRE

The Centre has had lots happening. Alison has had a booklet produced talking about the Social Value and all the activities and support that we do.

Jon has been at it again with his drill! After the new chairs came last year we noticed the table tops looked a bit shabby, so these too have now been replaced.

It is with deep sadness that we must share that Tony Solomon, our chair of Trustees, passed away in early May.

Tony was much-loved by his family, colleagues and was a friend to many. He touched the lives of so many people through his kindness, warmth, humour and generosity and he will be profoundly missed by everyone who knew him.



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## VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT: MARY

### Where do you volunteer?

I head up the Charity Shop.

### What inspired you to start volunteering here?

I use to go and shop in the Care Shop before it was at Cornerstone. I came to help with a one off charity lunch, like what Soup lunch is today. From then I have helped in lots of areas, including soup lunch and serving in the cafe and I have settled on the Charity Shop, I use to help Pat sort donations and then when she left I was roped in.

### What's your favourite part of volunteering here?

Seeing people coming in with their donations and spending time with my team of Charity Shop helpers

### What do you enjoy doing outside of volunteering?

I enjoy coffee out with friends, spectating skittles games and cooking.

### What does this community mean to you personally?

Enjoying people's company. There is always someone to talk to and always something to do.

### What would you say to someone who is thinking about becoming a volunteer?

Come and do it! We are a nice, friendly group of people!



# CHRISTMAS

It may seem odd to write about Christmas in June, but we have not had the chance to tell you all the great things that happened!

Our Charity Shop, as always, ran their Christmas Table from early November into January and over £2,000 was made! Hoarding away donations throughout the year to make sure the table is full of new, Christmassy items to entice buyers to part with their money.

As you may know, some of the profit from the Charity shop goes into a grant fund to help those in our community. Due to how lucrative the charity shop has been this year the grant is very happy and was able to pay for Christmas Soup for everyone! It was so lovely to give everyone all the usual extra goodies with soup and then tell them it was free!!

Little Pebbles, After school club and Campfire all had their own parties. Afterschool club did some Christmas craft, had fizzy pop and played pass the parcel. Campfire had a Christmas social and went ice skating!

The Pantry were part of the Lidl toy drive. Lidl customers were given the option of buying and donating toys for local pantry's to give out to the children of the families of their users.

Art Club had a party with Cheese and crackers and sang carols!

And to top it all off Jon was doing snowman latte art in the cafe, and biscuits and mince pies were readily available.



## CHELTEMHAM TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

### STADIUM TOUR

On Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May, Jon and 18 of the Cornerstone Community took a trip down the road to the home of the Robins. They had a private tour of the stadium, hearing stories and some of the history from Dave and Kaylene of the Supports Liason team.

*"The whole experience was interesting... ..I really enjoyed it!" - Janet*

The whole group had a lovely time and talked about it for days afterwards.



# THE ZONE!

After stopping, due to COVID, we restarted *The Zone* in May. Headed up by the wonderful Janet and her team of volunteers they eagerly invited all the day centres and care homes who used to attend.



The Zone is aimed at adults with disabilities the team is providing providing games, activities, crafts, snacks and good fun!

Offering a space for adults with disabilities is very close to Janet's heart as she cared for her brother for many years. She has seen first hand how sometimes they are forgotten.

In 2015 the eligibility for attending Day Centers shifted and Michael, Janet's brother, would come home asking where his friends were who no longer were eligible for a space.

The Zone has no eligibility criteria. Everyone is welcome!

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## JOY EVENINGS



Since our last news letter we have had another Joy Evening. Last month we had Rachel Bourner singing and The Joy Jukebox. She sang hits by Adele, Ritt Momney, Oasis, Beatles, George Ezra, Whitney Houston, Abba, Neil Diamond and many more. For the classics the words came on the screen for everyone to join in, Hey Jude and sweet Caroline being the favourites.

After ending the night with *Angels*, her Durham College Karaoke Song, an encore was requested (required). As John Denver's *Take me home, Country Roads* had been requested earlier it seemed fitting for that to be the encore. However she realised she didn't know the verse tune....So James, having sat next to Rachel's husband for the evening, suggest he help her out. So with no musical training, and a clear disclaimer that Rachel was better he lead the crowd.

Joy Evenings are a joint venture between The Cornerstone Centre and St Michael's Church. The thought behind it was to bring some joy to the Cornerstone Centre's users and community!

# COMMUNITY EVENT

Jon and a team of volunteers joined in with the Oakley and Whaddon Community event. A multi-Agency event, The Cornerstone Centre were there alongside Cheltenham Borough Council housing services, the Children Society, Aspire Foundation and Children Lead the Way.



It was a great fun filled few hours in the sunshine with a fabulous turnout, we hope everyone who attended had a great time.

*"That pizza was BANGIN" - A young person in attendance*

They rocked up with pizza ovens and enough dough for 50 pizzas but ended up serving 75 people!



# STAFF AWAY DAY

The Cornerstone Staff team took a day out and left our volunteers in charge of the Centre and headed on a staff training day. Lead by Catherine Pearson they dove straight into the Enneagram. The Enneagram is a personality framework outlining nine interconnected types, each with core motivations, fears, and behavior patterns, used to understand oneself, relationships, and personal growth more deeply.

We spent some time sorting characters from *Friends*, *Harry Potter* and several *Disney* princesses into their numbers based on the little information the shows and films give you about them. What is Gunther? is he a 2? Is he a 9? We will never know!

Then we figured out that, as a team, we're very well rounded except for several 'enthusiasts'!

The point to of this exercise was to figure out how everyone worked as individuals so as a team we can better understand how each other works and we can work well together. It also helped to spend some time away from The Centre, getting to know each other a bit better outside of the Enneagram to form stronger relationships.

# BLOOD PRESSURE

We have joined an initiative, funded by NHS Gloucestershire, with 10 other community organisations, offering free blood pressure checks. This is with the hope of allowing those who should check their blood pressure a more convenient way to do so. Allowing them to do so whilst they are in these community organisations doing their usual activities.

Our staff and volunteers are helping to make checks practical and reassuring within our community. A big thank you to NHS Gloucestershire for helping to fund the project.



# EARLY YEARS

Our work with preschool age children continues to develop and grow. We have seen an increase in numbers at our Play Trail, Peep group for parents and carers with children under the age of 2 years. Peep groups aim to help parents understand how to enhance their child's home learning environment, which has been shown to have a big impact on children's outcomes.

*"being a bit anxious I was very worried I was doing things wrong....but this group allowed...me to grow in confidence." - A first time mum attending Play Trail*

Little Pebbles has been gradually growing in numbers since September. We have worked to introduce a Peep theme each week, allowing our lovely volunteer, Emma, to work towards becoming a Peep practitioner. We are extremely fortunate to have a team of committed and skilled volunteers in our early years team. Another incredibly experienced volunteer, Lou, undertook training with Mel to deliver another Peep programme called; TALK, 'Talking and Listening Kit'. We are offering a small pilot of this course during June to support local families with children aged 2-4 years where there are concerns about Speech and Language development.



# ST MICHAEL'S NEWS

Easter started with one of St Michael's annual highlights on Maundy Thursday - The Last Supper. We came together to experience The Passover Celebration that the disciples shared with Jesus before the events of that first Easter unfolded. It was a joyous evening sharing the most delicious roast lamb and roast potatoes. If you have never experienced it, be sure to save the date for next year.

Towards the end of May we hosted a christian aid coffee morning. With homemade cake fresh teas and coffees a lovely morning and we raised £350!

Community, connection, adapting - just some of the words as we prayed our way around the parish boundaries and celebrated communion at Priors Farm. Fuelled by jelly babies!



# LOOKING FORWARD



Looking into the summer, and beyond at Cornerstone there is lots to look forward too!

- We have our *New* annual [Volunteer Picnic](#) in June to all get together as a community with our volunteers and their families to have a picnic and play some games.
- [Holiday at Home](#) will be taking place next month. We will be visiting England, Jamaica, Nigeria, Kenya and St Helena. We look forward to what James and his army of volunteers will put on.
- [Campfire](#) are going on a trip to the youth festival [Satellites](#) in August for 5 days. We hope they will have a great time and it will be a memorable point on their journey of faith.
- We are in the process of getting our [LinkedIn page](#) up and running. Hoping to reach more of the businesses and organisations that could help with volunteering hours, grants through this more professional social media.
- We are going to be trialing with a [Cafe Food Taster](#) session so we can see what food is on offer and gauge interest in rolling it out on more permanent basis.
- There will be another [Joy Evening](#) in the autumn. Keep the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October free and ready your dancing shoes...

Don't worry if you can't make it to any of these things, our newsletter will be gracing your inbox again in December telling you all about it!

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## DROP IN SESSIONS

We have regular drop-in sessions from multiple agencies around Cheltenham:

- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) have started running sessions in the Centre on a Thursday Evening.
- [A Borough Councillor](#) Drop-in on a Friday morning gives local community members a chance to voice their issues directly to a councillor.
- [Bereavement Cafe](#) is happening on Wednesdays for those who need to talk.
- [P3](#) have been in to talk about housing needs and help and support those who have housing issues or face evictions.
- [Police Drop In](#) are happening monthly on Wednesdays so members of the community can pop in to have a chat with a PCSO if they wish.
- [Listening Post](#) have been using our space and offering sessions for users.

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## MIGHT YOU HELP US FINANCIALLY?

We are so thankful for both the one-off donations and for those who have set up a monthly standing order. We are blessed with some grants from charitable trusts, but they are always time limited. A regular source of income from individuals is therefore a great help - plus if you are a taxpayer we can claim back extra from the Inland Revenue. Might you think of setting up a standing order? Even a small regular amount is an immense help.

Please get in touch for more information!

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And Finally...

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# Thank you to all donors, volunteers and supporters!

There is countless other support that we simply do not have room to mention. So, a huge thank you to everyone who has donated, volunteered, and attended our activities to support the Cornerstone Centre. We could not do what we do without you.

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These are just a few of the organization  
we work with:



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1 Severn Road Cheltenham  
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The Cornerstone Centre

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Charity Number: 1085991

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