

CONISTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



ANNUAL REPORT

2008-2009

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2008-09

Chairman:	Gwyn Williams
Vice-Chairman:	Lew Gray
Secretary:	Lucy Hamid
Treasurer:	Megan Williams

User Groups

Little Sunbeams Nursery:	Mrs Jane Croker
Women's Group:	vacant
Tiny Tots Toddlers Group:	Mrs Kirstie Ford
Arts & Crafts Group:	Mrs Mandy Knock
Filton College:	Ms Janetha Gledhill
Community Learning Service:	Ms Maggie Haycock
Children's Creative Dance:	Amy Garrahy
Watercolour Group:	Mike Grotzke
Ladies Keep Fit Group:	Lin Russell

Local Organisations

Blakeney Road Allotments Association	Lorne Richardson Carol Richardson
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Individual Members

Mrs Annette Morgan, Mrs J. Drewitt, Mrs Venetia Lewis

Representatives of Statutory Bodies

South Gloucestershire Council:	Cllr. Ken Graupner
Patchway Town Council:	Cllr. Lew Gray

Trustees

Mr. Charles Horton, Mr. Gwyn Williams, Mrs Megan Williams,
Mrs Lucy Hamid, Mrs Annette Morgan, Mr. Lew Gray, Mr.
Michael Grotzke, Dr. Ken Graupner,
Mr. Lorne Richardson.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2008-09

The most important and exciting thing to report this year is that the Big Lottery has agreed a grant of almost £400,000 towards the cost of Phase 2 of the Community Centre and that Patchway Town Council has agreed to make up any shortfall in the contract price from its own funds. This means that work will commence early in 2010 and by the time we hold our next AGM, we should be in the new building! Phase 2 will include a reception area and office as well as a community café on the ground floor, a large community room (which can be divided) on the first floor and various offices and interview rooms for advice services on the second floor. We are represented by our Chairman on the Project Steering Group which meets monthly with the architect and on the Partnership Board which includes the new groups which will use the building when it is complete.

Since our last AGM in July 2008, the Management Committee has held 7 meetings and has worked hard to keep the community centre well maintained and used by as many local people and groups as possible. We increased the rent from April to help cover the high bills for services, but we still keep the charges low for local groups. A successful Christmas Fair again attracted a good number of people and raised a few hundred pounds for our funds, but the most important aspect is the enjoyment of those who attend as well as those who organise these events.

You will see the detail of the groups which use the Centre in the following pages, but I would like to draw your attention to some new developments in the year under review:

- A new fitness group: Stretch & Relax for over 50s, started in February and we have recently been successful in attracting funding from Quartet for equipment and publicity;
- A new group for young adults with learning difficulties: Midweekers, started in March and we are pleased that this is well attended by a deserving group in our community for two sessions a week;
- Age Concern now runs a chiropody service - nail cutting for £10 - from the community centre and this is very popular with local people;
- Coniston Medical Practice arranges a regular diabetic eye clinic in the centre.

We were sorry to lose Kate O'Brien but have welcomed Karen Cheal to replace her as Community Worker employed by Southern Brooks Community Partnership, working to involve more members of the community in activities at Coniston Community Centre. Karen has been working with the Stretch & Relax group and plans to continue to work with the Art & Craft Group and Watercolour Class to develop and help their groups.

We have been very pleased to receive a capital grant from South Gloucestershire Council during the year towards installing a sprung wooden floor for the large community room in

Phase 2 of the building and also a grant towards employing a receptionist in the Centre. We are grateful for a grant from Patchway Town Council to help with running costs.

Advice sessions have been held weekly during the year by North Bristol Advice Service and Priority Youth Housing and Connexions ran a drop-in weekly session for some time, but this has recently relocated to Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre. The Police have continued to operate a Police Post on the second floor as a base for Community Beat Officers and Community Safety Officers.

The Association looks forward to working closely with the Town Council and Southern Brooks Community Partnership developing new services in the Community Centre to provide for the needs of the community in the Coniston area.

I would like to thank all the members of the Management Committee and our staff for their hard work and support during the year and look forward with confidence to the developments in the next twelve months.

Gwyn Williams
Chairman

CHILDRENS DANCE CLASS

The children's dance class is held on Thursdays at 3:30pm till 4:30pm during term time. The children come over straight after school; most of them come from Coniston Primary, but two come from another local school. We start the class with a warm up set to music then work on what ever piece we are creating at the time. I choreograph most of the dance but give the children a chance to create some as well. We then practice old dances that we have performed before, so the children can work on improving their style and performance.

The group took part in Dance Explosion which was held at Saint Chad's church hall in July. This was a great experience for those who took part. The girls made me so proud, dancing on stage in front of a full house with poise and confidence. They performed two dances, one jive style to Elvis Presley's Jail House Rock, and the other to Abba's Dancing Queen. After the show the children were brimming with a great sense of achievement. They also got their photo in the Evening Post.

Amy Garrahy

PATCHWAY ART & CRAFT CLUB

The Art Club meets on Wednesday evenings at 7.30 p.m. and continues to flourish. We are a friendly group, caring for each other, and welcome new members. We help each other with our differing skills and interests such as embroidery, painting china, drawing and painting, knitting, card making and glass painting. We also enjoy social events during the year.

The Art Club organises an Exhibition each year as part of Patchway Festival in July. This year we welcomed art work displayed from the Watercolour Group and an art competition created considerable interest.

New members can be assured of a warm welcome.

Mandy Knock,
Secretary

FITNESS PILATES

The Fitness Pilates class has been running since October 2007 on Monday evenings from 6-7 p.m. The class works on building participants' strength and flexibility and aims to promote health, relaxation and well being. We always begin with a warm up and breathing exercises and then work through the major muscle groups in the body, particularly focusing on core strength through the abdominals and back.

We have up to 10 participants per class and are consistently achieving high numbers. Those who attend, do so regularly and have all commented on improvements to their strength. The class is a friendly group and I feel that they have significantly improved since the class started.

We have been running a separate Pilates for Mums class on Thursday mornings during the year but, as numbers have dropped at present despite publicity through Health Visitors and ante-natal classes, we have decided to stop the class while I am away on maternity leave and restart it with new publicity next year.

Faye Webber

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North Bristol Advice Centre

Welfare Benefits Advice Service at Coniston Community Centre

NBAC has been providing a welfare benefits advice service located at the Community Hall for just over two years. We had a few sets backs as the member of staff running the session left for a new job and it took a while for people to get to know we were there.

However we have seen 54 new clients and advised on a total number of 92 issues this year. We have advised clients on a range of benefit entitlements from Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance to income Support, Job Seekers Allowance and Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. We have also advised on other areas of case law such as debts, employment, family and housing. From this number 29 clients were disabled and 48 were British white. The majority of the clients were council tenants who were aged between 25- 44. We have raised **£40,904.84** in previously unclaimed benefits. All statistics are from 01.04.07 to 31.03.08.

We continued to publicise our service and have been recently to Patchway festival and Coniston fun day where we took part in the general festivities. We look forward to continuing the advice session to the community of Coniston.

Janice Bohin

Coniston Advisor

North Bristol Advice Centre

MIDWEEKERS GROUP

The Midweekers Group, for young adults with learning difficulties, has progressed steadily since our launch in March. We now hold two sessions a week: one a social evening and the other a life skills session. We use a social education model for both groups, but more intensively in the Life Skills session. We have covered topics such as healthy living and obesity, exercise, budgeting, assertiveness and interview skills. We have also done work around the environment and sustainable living (the group are very impressed with the rail water toilets in the community centre!) In both groups we have done work around personal hygiene and learnt new skills.

We had two visits from a qualified Beauty Therapist, who taught members how to care for their hands and feet before training us all in the art of hand massage.

We have had several trips out with the group. In the summer we had a picnic at Blaise Castle, a mystery walk around Portishead and a trip to a fruit farm to pick strawberries in support of our work around local produce.

The group is attracting around 25 members on an evening and on average 10 on the Life Skills session in the morning. We have at least five volunteers, all of whom hold CRBs. The group paid for one volunteer who did not have one.

In conclusion, the group is running very well. The benefit of the group for those attending is extensive. The group make up a disadvantaged section of our community and the sense of inclusion and social interaction gained from the group is huge. The volunteers are also experiencing personal development. They are learning new skills and expanding their social lives at the same time.

We hope to have a successful year in 2010. I will continue to attempt to secure further funding to ensure that the group can continue with its work.

Caroline Poole
Group Leader

KEEP FIT WITH BOXERCISE CLASS

The Ladies Keep Fit Class runs at Coniston Community Centre on Thursday nights at 6.15pm and lasts for one hour. The class has been running for 3 years. It is lead by Ros Wilson, a qualified Fitness and Circuits Instructor.

The class incorporates circuit training, boxing techniques and stretching. Circuit training works by mixing cardiovascular fitness (i.e. skipping, running) with resistance work (i.e. press-ups, weights) to increase fitness levels, tone muscle and potentially encourage weight loss. Boxing techniques are a great way of improving cardiovascular fitness as well as improving confidence and stress reduction. All members of the group have reported increased levels of fitness and a general sense of well-being since attending the classes.

Recently the class has seen an increase in members which has been greatly welcomed. At present we have between 8 and 12 ladies coming each week. The few dedicated and hard working original members of the group still come constantly and are always enthusiastic and motivated. This has helped the new members to settle in well and the group is extremely friendly and welcoming as well as hard working! We know have a broad range of ages ranging from 20-60 and have had increased interest since the time of the class has been changed.

Some of the members took part in the British Heart Foundation Run for the third year running in June.

The class is a joy to teach and I benefit greatly from the enthusiasm and commitment of all the members. I look forward to the fun of the coming year!

Ros Wilson
Fitness Instructor

PATCHWAY WATERCOLOURISTS

The Patchway Watercolourists meet each Friday afternoon between 2 pm and 4.30 pm, upstairs in the Coniston Centre.

The watercolourists tackle a different project each session and enjoy a chat and tea and biscuits. Roma the tutor gives direction, but artists can choose their own activity if they wish. Recent projects include reflection, still life, composition and perspective, trees and tonal colour exercises.

In recent months the group has held an exhibition in Patchway Library, sent paintings to the Twinning Project in France, shown work at the Flower Show as part of the Patchway Festival, and held an event at Gorse Covert as a special event for the Festival. People were invited to join us in painting at Gorse Covert as a tester workshop, then the group had their photographs taken cutting a cake shaped like a paint palette, which they ate!

Our Summer Programme includes a few outdoor sessions. We went to Blaise Hamlet in June, and spent a pleasant afternoon in the sun painting the cottages. In August we are going to Kingsweston House to spend our usual Friday class painting outside, and we hope to fit in one or two more trips over the summer. We have all found working in the sunshine very pleasant and this has been reflected in some lovely paintings.

There will be a group visit to the Clifton Arts Club Exhibition on Saturday 26th July, where we hope to gain inspiration and see how other artists work.

Our group is friendly and supportive, a wide range of styles and abilities exist, (no experience necessary - just an interest in watercolour painting), and there is no commitment; it costs £3 each session, and you can buy materials from the tutor for a small weekly charge, (paper 25p a sheet). We run all year, apart from Christmas week and the second week in August.

If you are interested in joining us, ring Roma Widger 0117 9241930, or just turn up.

Little Sunbeams

Over the last year we have continued to provide flexible and affordable childcare for local residents enabling them to work or undertake training. We have worked with the local authority to improve the service that we provide and during the summer we were invited to take part in a new government initiative 'Every Child a Talker' which aims to assist children with speech and language development.

We are keen to develop relationships within the community and took part in the summer fun day organised by Southern Brooks. We also have regular contact with the local health visitors and arranged transition visits for children that were leaving us to go to the Nursery Class at Coniston Primary School. Our Nursery Manager is part of the advisory body for Patchway Children's Centre and this year we have undertaken joint work to support a local family.

Our plans for the year ahead include applying for funding to develop our outside space and for a sign for the nursery.

Jane Croker
Manager

OVER 50S EXERCISE CLASS

The over 50's exercise class started in the beginning of February this year. This class happens on Thursdays at 2:00pm till 3:15 and is a friendly informal group. The class costs £3 per session and works on a drop in basis. The class is tailored to the level of the group, and aims to improve strength, flexibility, posture, and balance. I aim to give members of the group a feeling of well being and a space where they can focus on themselves. We warm up the muscles, do cardiovascular exercise to music, yoga style stretches, contemporary dance sequences, work with the exercise bands, finishing with a relaxation set to soothing music with a short neck and shoulder massage.

The class is struggling with numbers which is a real shame because the regulars that attend value the class and want it to be a success. They can't understand why it is poorly attended because they think that there are a lot of local people of this age who would benefit from the class.

The group has been given some funding, which is a great encouragement. The advertising has not been effective so far, so we need new advertising ideas. It would be a real shame if this class doesn't succeed, so hopefully it will grow and be a real asset to the people of Patchway.

Amy Garrahy

Coniston Community Development Worker—Karen Cheal

I have now been in place as the community worker for the Coniston area for 12 months and I feel it has been a challenging year but a successful one with a lot of changes to come in the community centre to keep me busy. I have made more contacts and have established myself in the community; I look forward to the year ahead.

Produced two newsletters for Coniston.

June 2009—Worked with Age Concern to set up and promote a toenail cutting service. This has been very well attended.

July 2009—Family Fun Day at Coniston Parade as part of Patchway Festival, hosted a BBQ for 100 local residents. Sponsored by Aztec Hotel, who sent a chef to cook all the food. Activities for the young people supported by Merlin Housing and SBCP. Drumming workshops and DJ mixing were among some of the things to do. Great deal of local interest in not only the free fruit at Patchway Festival, especially with local young people. The event provided an excellent opportunity for Southern Brooks workers to promote their local work, namely Family Support, Youth Work, Youth Intervention Work and Community Development. A very successful and well attended, fun event.

August 2009—Attended the grant evening. The Community Centre has been given a grant for a part-time receptionist that needs to be spent in this financial year.

Working with the groups using the Community Centre to find out support that they require. The Watercolour Class is going so well that I am now working with the Volunteer Centre to find someone to help.

September 2009—Secured funding for Stretch and Relax class to run for 12 months with new equipment and publicity: £1110.

October 2009—Produced display boards about activities that take place in the Community Centre for the Community Showcase. Megan and Gwyn attended on behalf of the committee. The event was attended by a number of groups from Patchway and was a great day to network.