

CONISTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



ANNUAL REPORT

2007-2008

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2007-08

Since our last AGM in March 2007, the Management Committee has held 11 meetings.

At the last AGM a suggestion was made that the wall between the two community rooms on the first floor should be replaced by a sound-proofed folding partition. This project has taken much time and effort during the year but was achieved in May and has transformed the space available, enabling many groups such as keep fit, pilates, toddlers and dance to enjoy the larger space. We hope that we will now be able to attract other groups who previously found the rooms too small for their needs. We are grateful to South Gloucestershire Council and Almondsbury Charity for their grants towards the cost of this work.

We were sorry to lose Ruth Ramsay but have welcomed Kate O'Brien 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. Thanks to Kate's efforts, a new website has been created (conistoncommunitycentre.org.uk) and attractive publicity produced for the building and its activities for all age groups and interests.

Keep Fit & Boexercise, Children's Creative Dance, Toddlers Group and the Watercolour Class are well supported. The reports of all the groups using the Centre are enclosed in the Annual Report.

The Committee continues to work hard to ensure the financial viability of the Centre. A successful Christmas Fair and several car boot sales helped to swell the funds and we also increased the hire charges from April. We have attempted to get all the member groups to cover the cost of their instructor's wages from subscriptions although some new groups are still subsidised from general funds.

We are very pleased to receive small grants from South Gloucestershire Council during the year to support the Toddlers and Women's Groups and a grant from Patchway Town Council to help with running costs.

The Association is pleased that the Centre is used during the summer holidays for a summer play scheme and on some weekends for craft fairs. Advice sessions have been held weekly during the year by North Bristol Advice Service and Priority Youth Housing and Connexions have recently started a drop-in weekly session. The Police have continued to operate 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 in fund raising for Phase 2 of the Community Centre which will include a community café and foyer on the ground floor, community space on the first floor and offices on the second floor. The rent received from the offices will contribute to the costs of running the building.

I would like to thank all the members of the Management Committee 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

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2007-08

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

User Groups

Little Sunbeams Nursery:	Mrs Jane Croker
Women's Group:	Ms Tracy Lawrence
Tiny Tots Toddlers Group:	Mrs Sharon Walker
Arts & Crafts Group:	Mrs Mandy Knock
Filton College:	Ms Alison Hall
Community Learning Service:	Ms Maggie Haycock
Children's Creative Dance:	Amy Garrahy
Watercolour Group:	Mike Grotzke
Ladies Keep Fit Group:	Ros Wilson

Affiliated Groups

Coniston Primary School:	Mrs Jackie Drewitt
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Individual Members

Mrs Annette Morgan

Representatives of Statutory Bodies

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

Trustees

Rev. Barry Penn
Mr. Charles Horton.

CONISTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER - KATE O'BRIEN

This year saw the launch of Coniston Community Centre's new website www.conistoncommunitycentre.org.uk allowing promotion of current information on events, courses, news and programme details at the Centre.

We held a successful Children's Fun Day in February to enable 4-11 yr olds to have their say in the development of phase two of the community centre by designing a concept community centre. The results of this consultation were interesting, based around the topics of environmental, health, play and housekeeping, such as: more plants; vegetables on the roof; and healthy international food served in a cafe, for low income people. A Circus Skills trainer was on hand for the afternoon, to teach focused activities during break times!

Fitness Pilates and Dog Training have been new additions to the programme, both of which are now popular session on the programme. We await to hear from the Planning for Real process to drive local residents' need and are responding to feedback from Patchway Festival events for further development work. This year I have supported Keep Fit and Children's Dance to strengthen their activities and encourage more members. Both session have been moved to earlier times, to enable easier access. The Children's Dance Instructor ran successful assemblies in schools, to promote the class and the children held a dance display at Patchway Festival in Scott Park. Throughout the year work with the Patchway Art & Craft Club has been discovering the needs of members, in the view to strengthening Club activities and support.

This year's Christmas Fayre was a success in raising funds for Coniston Community Groups and the Centre. There was a real buzz throughout the afternoon. There was a chance to consult with local residents on activities they would most like to see at the centre, to aid future development. A special thank you should go to Father Christmas for making an appearance!

This year has seen the start of Connexions West of England and Priority Youth Housing Young Person's Job Shop started as a regular feature of the programme. It now supports local 16-19 year olds in gaining the skills needed to secure a job and pursue a career. An increasing number of young people have now applied for local jobs and college courses, especially in qualification towards the construction industry.

As Community Development Worker this year I feel this has been a successful year. Now I have made more contacts and have established myself in the community, I look forward to the next year with positivity, knowing we have some good projects in the pipeline!

CHILDREN'S CREATIVE DANCE

The Children's dance class is held each Thursday after school from 3.30 – 4.30 at Coniston Community Centre, with Amy Garrahty leading the group. We changed our times recently and have attracted some new members.

We are always welcoming to new people who want to join. The children are seven to eleven year olds who put a lot of effort into choreographing the dances which were performed at Patchway Festival

If you wish to contact me about the class my number is 0773145885.

Amy Garrahty

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 and this year it was held on Saturday 12 July. This year we welcomed art work displayed from the Watercolour Group.

We are looking to run an Art & Craft Programme to encourage individuals to realise their artistic ability in drawing skills and trial craft applications to diversify their new ability. We have now been successful in securing Quartet Foundation funding to do so and look forward to starting the Patchway Arts Programme next academic year. Members of the Club have recruited new members during Patchway Festival 2008.

CONISTON WOMEN'S GROUP

Successful funding was secured this year for the Women's Group from the NHS Primary Care Trust to run sessions promoting healthy lifestyle choice, through healthy bodies and minds. Topics covered have been food and immunity; beneficial properties of food; five a day; healthy cooking techniques; self esteem; laughter and personal qualities and attributes. A new qualified leader should start in September 2008.

Community Learning Service : Report – 2007-2008

The Community Learning Service (CLS) has been working in partnership with Coniston Community Association to deliver courses to local people for several years. The past year has been very successful and we have been able to offer a variety of courses to residents living in Patchway and also to people living further away.

CLS delivered courses linked to skill required for the workplace, including 'Introduction to Retail' and 'Creating Confidence'; CLS also ran an 'English Skills' course for people whose first language is not English. All were well received by those who enrolled.

CLS also delivered a series of courses to a group of local women. They were able to learn how to manage stress through a variety of complementary therapies. The women were so engaged by these courses that they progressed on to an accredited aromatherapy course, which was also delivered at Coniston Community Centre by the local college.

In August 2007 CLS enrolled 3 local Learning Champions to promote learning activities to other residents. Together with other Learning Champions from across South Gloucestershire, they attended an accredited training programme at Coniston Community Centre from September to December 2007. All were successful in achieving an OCN certificate at Level 2.

To enable local parents to attend courses, CLS worked in partnership with Little Sunbeams Nursery to offer crèche places for learners with pre-school children. This worked very effectively and enabled more learners to attend our courses.

CLS has already started booking space at the Centre for courses that will run during 08/09 and we look forward to continuing our strong working relationship with Coniston Community Association Committee.

Maggie Haycock - July 2008

Filton College Flexi IT Centre Coniston Road Community Centre

The Flexi IT Centre has been open at the Community Centre on Mondays and Wednesdays since September 2006.

The enrolment of students has been steady and we now have around 20 students. The students have to attend for a minimum of 2 hours each week, but a number attend for over 2 hours on both Monday and Wednesday!

On a Monday morning the flexi centre is closed to students and classes are run for specific courses. From 12 – 4pm the flexi centre is open.

On Wednesday morning the flexi centre is open from 9.30 -1.30pm and we then run 5 week introductory classes from 1.30 – 3.30pm. These classes are ideal for students who have never used a PC before. It introduces them to using the mouse and keyboard and allows them to build up a little confidence before joining the flexi centre.

During the flexi centre open hours, students book 2hr slots into the register at a convenient day and time and learn using a variety of resources, workbooks, internet etc.

English and Maths is also covered during their IT learning and National Tests in Literacy or Numeracy is achieved.

Fitness Pilates Monday Evenings 6pm to 7pm

The Fitness Pilates class has been running since October 2007. 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. While the class is currently a little quieter due to the onset of summer holidays, we have had up to 10 participants per class and I am looking to build on this for September, so that we are consistently achieving high numbers. Those that do 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 last year.

Faye

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KEEP FIT WITH BOXERCISE CLASS

The Ladies Keep Fit Class runs at Coniston Community Centre on Thursday nights. In June 2008 the class time was changed from 8.15pm to 6.15pm and lasts for one hour. The class has been running for 2 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 is 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 second year running in June. Last year they were recognised for this achievement in the Patchway people. Sandra and Lyn have continued to work hard on the promotion side of things and we have had an advert in the recently Patchway activity directory as well as the Patchway People.

Recently the community centre has suffered a break in and unfortunately some of the kit, mainly boxing equipment, has been stolen. This matter is currently being dealt with and we hope to purchase replacement kit soon.

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)

Little Sunbeams Neighbourhood Nursery

This has been a challenging year as we have sought to encourage parents and carers to become more actively involved in fundraising and the management of the nursery. Now that Little Sunbeams has been operating for a number of years, we have revised our Business Plan and assessed occupancy levels. In light of this review we will have reduced opening hours of 8am to 4pm with effect from September 2008.

Over the last year we have continued to work closely with the Nursery Class at Coniston Primary School and have also provided crèche places to support adults undertaking training at the Community Centre. We have also developed links with Patchway Children's Centre and Traveller Education.

Following receipt of a grant from South Gloucestershire Council, we have been able to begin developing our outside area for the benefit of the children.

During the next year, our plans include promotion of the nursery in the local area and accessing grant funding to enable us to replace flooring in the main room.

North Bristol Advice Centre Welfare Benefits Advice Service 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

Tiny Tots Toddler Group

This group is an informal, friendly meeting place, where local Parents and Carers can get together for a coffee and a chat, while their children play happily alongside them.

We are open on Tuesday and Friday 9.30 – 11.30 am term time, and some holidays. There is a fee of £1.00 per session for one child and £1.50 for two or more, which covers the cost of a cup of tea or coffee for the adults and biscuits for the children.

The group is running well at present with approximately 12 regular members (adults). With more who drop in from time to time.

Occasionally we have outside visitors in, for example, Patchway Library came to do a story time with the children, a book seller who visits at least once a term and leaves a selection of books for a week, for every 10 books sold the group receive, Concept Photographers at the end of last year, which proved to be very successful we received commission of £71 which is being used to buy new toys and equipment and go towards our end of term party. They have already been booked to come back in November this year in time for photographs for Christmas.

New members are always welcome.

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.