

COLE STREET FARM COHOUSING COMMUNITY

THE THRESHOLD CENTRE

Cole Street Farm, Cole Street Lane, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 5JQ

NEWSLETTER – MAY 2005

To put new friends in the picture - a core group of four people have been resident here since November, with one other to join very soon and one in July. The property is an old 6-bedroomed farmhouse, with seven holiday cottages and two barns for conversion. Architectural plans are nearly complete for conversion of the outbuildings, so we are becoming clearer about what can be offered to potential Phase 2 residents, (i.e. after the conversion work) and what will make up the design part of our final planning application.

Phase 1

We may soon have a one-bedroom short-term holiday rental space available: this is an ideal way for potential long-term members to come and experience living with us. We also have B & B facilities in the house.

Phase 2

If you are seriously interested in becoming a Phase 2 member, the sooner you visit the better. Mutually convenient dates can be arranged. We can provide you with a briefing document about the vision and intended facilities here. We hope that Phase 2 will be complete in Spring 2006.

Work week

We had a busy and successful work week with about a dozen visitors coming and going throughout the time. Many thanks for all the hard graft, we achieved so much with your help. The two-day 'introduction to permaculture' course, when a strategy for the site was planned, proved fascinating and we now have a scale model on which we can try things out and obtain an overview. Many thanks are due to Ann Morgan for passing on her knowledge in such an easy-going and informal way.

Not only are we left with happy memories of the week, but also 'lost property'! If the owners of a light blue, medium size fleece, and a khaki-green top get in touch, we will be happy to return them.

Gillingham life

We are enjoying gradually becoming part of the life of the town. Set as it is at the confluence of the rivers Shreen, Lodden and Stour, the local community partnership is named the Three Rivers, and Caroline and Alan have volunteered to be trustees. Having been inspired by the annual general meeting, Gay is joining one working party, ACRE (Artists Concerned with Respect for the Environment). We have enjoyed trips to the art-film night at the local arts centre in Gillingham, and also in Shaftesbury.

We are using the skills of practitioners at the local holistic health centre, from where a yoga teacher comes to the house to give one-to-one lessons. Local tradespeople are

carrying out work for us, and giving us an insight into recent history and who's who in the town. The local wholefood shop, having just re-located from Shaftesbury before our move here, is benefitting from our custom, and we are avid readers of the local weekly Blackmore Vale Magazine – the best freebie 200 pages of what's going on ever to be seen. (Time Out eat your heart out!)

Help from Honza

With so much to undertake with building maintenance and garden work we have been lucky enough to have had a few weeks help from a young man from the Czech Republic, (here to improve his English and research into environmental building/permaculture/rural skills) and in doing so have opened up growing space we didn't know we had! We now have raised beds behind the kitchen, and a cleared (and carpeted) bank that allows in light and sunshine. The ivy has been removed from much of the house, (leaving a little for the nesting birds) to allow the old stone to start drying out. Gutters have been cleared, laurel bushes and conifer trees have been cut back or removed altogether, and our wood store increased. Much needed decorating has been started and work undertaken on individual cottages. A huge thank you to Honza and we look forward to his return for a couple of weeks in June.

Spring at Cole Street Farm

A deer was spotted strolling along a field hedge this week – reminding us that this area used to be a huge royal oak forest. Sparrows are nesting in a bird box on the ivied wall, and starlings in-between stones in the gable end. Swans fly overhead in the morning and in the evening, and we saw a bird of prey lazily wheeling round and round the other morning. The swallows arrived last week and are flying in and out of the woodshed, hopefully nesting. The constant birdsong is a delight – from the dawn chorus through to dusk. The cherry trees have been blossoming for weeks now, and in the recent storms covered the ground with white confetti.

Open Table

We have been welcoming interested and interesting people to our Wednesday evening gatherings. Guests have included local councillors, members of self-build/embryo co-housing groups, trustees of the Three Rivers Partnership, complementary health practitioners, a rural skills teacher, a tree surgeon, and many more. Future Open Table evenings will be taking place on Tuesdays.

The Threshold Centre – that's us!

After a slow debate, we have chosen the name The Threshold Centre to include our courses, B&B, and future facilities here. If you'd like to know more about our plans, just ask for our Outline Development Plan documents. Courses planned so far are listed below. We're also considering a workshop on how to start a co-housing project: let us know if you're interested in this.

Courses

(B&B available on site or locally. 10% accommodation concession for those arriving by train/bike, and we will meet you from the station.)

June

We still have a couple of places available on the **Healing with Sound** workshop and so include again the information in the last newsletter:-

Saturday June 4 – Find Your Own Sound

A 1-day in depth workshop with international Sound Healer Shirlie Roden. Shirlie says -

‘You carry with you the most healing instrument of all: your own voice. This workshop will offer you an introduction to using your voice for release, self-healing, relaxation and meditation. Using a simple, practical method to work with the tones of the voice, you will discover and learn how to use a personal sound which suits your voice, body and emotional needs. No musical experience is necessary – everyone can make wonderful sound and everyone can sing’.

Shirlie is author of the book and CD ‘Sound Healing’ and has recorded several albums of her songs. She is also a composer/lyricist and concert performer and has appeared in many West End musicals. She leads workshops internationally and is well known for the healing power of her voice. We are delighted to have her with us in June.

Cost is £45 for the day. Numbers are limited, so contact us as soon as possible to secure a place. B&B accommodation available @ £20.

Individual Sound Healing Sessions

Shirlie is happy to book individual healing sessions. She will be staying on after the workshop for a day or two so, if you want to take advantage of this opportunity for a personal healing session, please let us know soon. These sessions last two hours and cost £45, though concessions may be available for real need.

Circle Dancing and Taize Singing with Christina Baines. Christina’s move to us has been delayed, but we hope to be able to offer these regular events by June.

July

Make your own Eco-paints:- a weekend with Paulina Wojciechowska (see www.earthhandsandhouses.org) Her book ‘Building with Earth’ is published by Chelsea Green Publ. @ £24.95. Cost £90 Date tbc

August

The Ancient way of Council:- a weekend with Pippa Bondy (see www.ancienthealingways.co.uk) - a practice of speaking and listening from the heart, a path towards peacemaking. A must for anyone who is part of a group/team/family/business where clear and measured communication is vital. Cost: £90 Date tbc

For further details of any of our activities, please contact Caroline Sharman or Gay Ellis at 01747 821929 or e-mail sharmancaroline@hotmail.com or ellis@gs.freeserve.co.uk