

## **The Petersfield Counselling Service**

Many thanks for your warm welcome and for allowing me to come and speak to you about the work of the Petersfield Counselling Service: something that might be called the best kept secret in Petersfield, and which owes so much to you, Churches in the Petersfield area. It is perhaps not very well known because by its nature counselling requires confidentiality at its core.

We are a small registered charity that works to provide affordable counselling for people in need in the area, and we owe our foundation to the initiative of the Churches and the medical establishment in Petersfield back in 1987, so there has been an important link with the Churches from the start.

Our team of 16 fully trained and qualified counsellors provide upwards of 1,200 hours of counselling a year. They each see three clients a week, and on average clients come for between 20 and 30 sessions, till they feel ready to move on. The issues we deal with include anxiety and depression, relationship and family difficulties, loss and bereavement, stress, anger and emotional and physical abuse. Many of our clients come at the suggestion of their GP, but some find out about us on-line or through word of mouth, and we would welcome referrals through churches too.

Our counsellors work voluntarily but receive travelling expenses. We have two experienced supervisors who we pay to give the counsellors the fortnightly supervision of their work that is a requirement of the profession nationally, and we pay a part-time director to manage the whole service on a day to day basis. We are very dependent on the local hospital for rooms that are not being used in the evenings which we are able to use for free, but we have to pay for the rent of premises for day-time work with clients who cannot manage evening sessions. Then there is the cost of insurance and affiliation to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Our costs last year were just over £30,000 and while most of our income comes from the contributions that we ask from our clients – we currently ask for a minimum of £20 per session – not all of them can pay much, and we depend heavily on donations to remain viable.

We are particularly grateful to local churches for their support, financial and otherwise. We have received significant donations this year from the Methodist Church, St Laurence and PACT. We are allowed to use the Methodist premises for our training days three times a year, and we thank St Peter's for the use of their Church Hall for our AGM, and for fortnightly evening supervision sessions in their parish office. So I would like to emphasise how grateful we are for your donations, and please keep them coming.

But I would also like to invite your suggestions for any way in which together we might share in marking the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our foundation next year. We are passionate about the work of the service, and would value the opportunity not only to celebrate our birthday but also promote awareness in the local community of the work we do. I am ready to come and talk more about our work with your congregations and groups if that would be welcome.

Thank you.

Robert Gussman, Chairman of Trustees

[rwslgussman@hotmail.com](mailto:rwslgussman@hotmail.com)

For counselling appointments, ring 07833 966 974

Also see our website: [www.petersfieldcounsellingservice.co.uk](http://www.petersfieldcounsellingservice.co.uk)