

# Please help us to buy a home of our own

**At Homeless Care's 30th birthday party Ann Widdecombe launched the Home of Our Own campaign, to raise £1million for the purchase of a new day centre in Maidstone.**

Miss Widdecombe, ex MP, star of Strictly Come Dancing and long time supporter of the charity, explained that although the current rented premises in Knightrider Street, had served the charity well, the rising numbers of homeless people in our town meant that the building was now too small to house the 40 to 50 men and women attending each day. "I look forward to seeing the target achieved," she said and thanked the current staff

and the army of people who had volunteered with Maidstone Christian Care and now Homeless Care, for their dedication and the hard work that had made a difference to the lives of so many people."

The event was held at Maidstone Girls Grammar School, a fitting venue, as it was here that the charity was born when pupils and teachers from the school started a simple soup run to help homeless people. How could they have known that all these years on, their soup run would have grown into Maidstone's leading charity for homeless and vulnerable people?

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*Ann Widdecombe, The Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Derek Butler and The Lady Mayoress*

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## Why do we need a new Day Centre?

As Ann said, our current rented premises in Knightrider Street have served us well but are now just too small and if we do nothing, we will have to start restricting the number of people who come through our door for help. Of course the practicalities like providing hot showers, clean clothes and home cooked meals are essential. As a matter of routine our staff help new clients to sign up for benefit entitlements, like Job seekers allowance, (JSA) as well as signposting individuals to a specialist agency for help with physical and mental health issues and often, the effects of abuse and a chaotic lifestyle. All that is absolutely necessary but if we are to help people to turn their lives around there is so much more to be done. One to one work is known to be effective and we would also like to run lifestyle training sessions such as 'being work ready' or how to maintain a tenancy. In order to carry out these activities we need more room. And we must consider the increase in demand for Food for Thought, our community food share scheme for which we need more storage space.

## How you can donate.

Via our website [www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk](http://www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk) and click on the donate button

Cheques or cash will be gratefully received at Maidstone Day Centre, 15 Knightrider Street, Maidstone ME15 6LP  
Telephone: 01622 674064

Text MDCC15 £5 or MDCC15 £10 to 70070

All donations can be Gift Aided so that (at no extra cost to you) we receive an extra 25p for every pound donated— visit our home page for the Gift Aid form or see Threshold rear page for full information.  
[www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk](http://www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk)

## Thank you

30 years ago homeless people came to what was then Maidstone Christian Care soup run, for help but all these years and two day centres later, the problems have not gone away and the number of people who are homeless or hungry has grown considerably. We should all be proud that Maidstone is such a caring community and the dream is that one day we will do ourselves out of a job. But until then, there are people out there who are going through dark days in their lives, please will you help us to help them?

## Harvest Festivals

**We are so grateful** to all the schools and churches for their very generous Harvest Festival donations to Food for Thought, our community food share scheme. Thank you everyone.

This year has been particularly bountiful and we are very grateful to everyone who has helped to fill our store cupboards.

All the food will go to people who would otherwise go hungry so we would like to say a big thank you to each of the children, teachers, vicars and parishioners and to everyone at home who contributed. Without your kindness, many people in our community would be worried about where the next meal is going to come from and in 21st century Maidstone, this is a shocking fact of life.

**You will probably never know if the young mum or the elderly couple you pass in the street are some of the people whose lives you have touched.**



Brookfield primary School

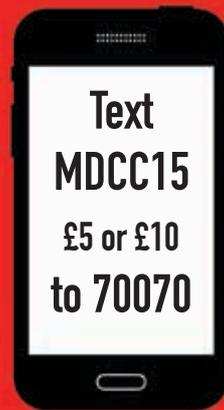
## You Can Help

It's that time of year again and The Kent Messenger is once again joining with Homeless Care to launch **You Can Help**, the annual Christmas food drive campaign. It will start on Friday 25th November and run until New Year's Eve.

At the participating stores, shoppers will be asked to buy an extra item or so and place in the special trollies set up for donations. All the food will be collected by our volunteers, brought back to Maidstone Day Centre where it will be sorted and stored so that over the next few months we will have sufficient to distribute food parcels to people who would otherwise go hungry.

A list of the supermarkets, churches and schools taking part will be published in the Kent Messenger on Friday 25th November, so please pick up a copy. You can also check this out on our website [www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk](http://www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk)

**Every £ is one nearer our target.**



Just Text Giving  
by vodafone



You can give online through [www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk](http://www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk) or text MDCC15 £2 / £5 / £10 to 70070 to donate now eg MDCC15 £10

## Other people's lives

### Frank died alone on a piece of waste ground

#### Frank Bundock-Baker

was one of Maidstone Christian Care's early and much loved clients. He was a familiar sight in the town, walking up and down Week Street sometimes holding onto a bottle but he was at heart a gentle man and on a good day he could pass for a mill owner in his camel coat and trilby hat. The last time we saw him he said that that he had applied for a flat and he hoped that there would be a little garden where he could plant things. Within 48 hours the sad news came that early in the morning Frank had been found dead on a piece of waste ground in the centre of town. Sadder still, a couple of days later we heard that a flat had been found for him and it had a little garden.



### Philip

Philip last worked as a security guard for a distribution centre in Kent, but like many others, he was made redundant and he had to leave his flat, joining the ranks of the UK's 600,000 hidden homeless, the men and women who are sofa surfing, that is sleeping at a friend's house until the welcome wears out or the landlord intervenes.



One of the worst aspects of living on streets was the insecurity and never feeling safe, particularly at night, when he would get very little sleep. Then there was the boredom, with so many hours to fill. He started using substances such as spice and other legal highs, to take himself away from the misery. Philip told us that, "During this period of homelessness, I found the day centre a vital source of support, more so than any other agency or charity." It gave him a place of safety and enabled him to maintain contact with his sister by email.

Eventually Homeless Care staff found him a room in a shared house and this made a massive change to his life as he now feels safe and comfortable. He is continuing his search for work so that one day he will be able to move into a place of his own. Philip has been through a disturbing time so for him, the future is just one step at a time.

### Angie

She spoke about the practical problems of living rough. "The first week in the town centre I was pickpocketed, attacked

and had all my stuff stolen. You have nowhere to hide from these people so I avoid the town centre at night. At kicking-out time there are a lot of people fuelled by drink and drugs. I didn't think it would be like this."

Like others, Angie resorted to living in a tent but as she told us, in winter it gets dark halfway through the afternoon but you can't have a light or a fire because then people can see you and you get kids ripping your tent. I was in a safe place for a couple of weeks, but I was spotted by a council employee and ordered to remove my tent, so, ironically, even when you are homeless you can be evicted!"

"Without the support of the Day Centre, it's facilities and contacts, I don't know where I'd be today."

## New Trustees



**Clare Hudson.** Clare (above) spent over twenty years as a practice Nurse, a job that she loved. A seasoned volunteer, she had worked with Medway based Kent Women's Aid helping women who had experienced domestic violence. For fifteen years Clare was a member of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP East Sutton Park. "The work really widened my horizons, she said, "and it was particularly satisfying when we were able to exert influence for change for the women." We first met Clare at the start of 2000 when she joined Maidstone Christian Care's Sunday breakfast team, cooking bacon, eggs and sausages at what seemed like the crack of dawn, when Maidstone Christian Care took over the United Reformed Church's kitchens to prepare a hot meal for homeless men and women in the town.

"We all need a place of our own and my previous experiences have shown clearly the chaos and sense of loss that ensues for people who are homeless and the importance for health, well-being and self esteem of having a home. It may be that my experience of General Practice and my medical background might be useful."

Andrew Stickells joins us from Royal British Legion Industries, a Kent based veterans charity, where he manages their volunteering programme of activity across the South East. Born and bred in Maidstone, Andrew is extremely passionate about supporting the community which he is proud to call home – "having seen how homelessness has developed and grown in Kent over the last decade and working directly with homeless young people in the area has instilled in me a desire to help these individuals move towards independence". Andrew has a vast amount of experience *continued second column overpage*

# Please help us to help others

Maidstone Day Centre is there to help homeless and vulnerable people turn their lives around. The initial need is usually for hot showers, a good home cooked meal, clean clothes and a warm sleeping bag for cold nights. After that work starts on obtaining benefits, medical attention and addressing any drug/alcohol or mental health needs. The search for accommodation will be next on the list, way before job seeking, because you are unlikely to find work if you do not have an address.

We rely on donations and grants to run this service and we are always grateful to receive financial support whether by regular giving, wills or a one off gift.

## Increase the value of your gift

Using Gift Aid means that for every pound you give, we get an extra 25 pence from the Inland Revenue, helping your donation to go further. This means that £10.00 can be turned into £12.50 just so long as donations are made through Gift Aid. Imagine what a difference that could make to our work and it won't cost you a penny more. So if you would like your donation to go further, please Gift Aid it by completing the form left and returning it to Homeless Care.

## How to give

By cheque payable to: Homeless Care and send to: The Treasurer, Homeless Care, 6 Denton Close, Maidstone, ME15 8ER or by direct transfer to Homeless Care's bank account: Sort Code 40-52-40 Account Number 00023904

Go to our website: [www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk](http://www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk) and click on the 'donate' button on one of the pages. To find out more about giving through regular donations, wills or with cash, please ring The Hon. Treasurer on 01622 202239

**GIFT AID DECLARATION** To: The Hon Treasurer, Homeless Care, 6 Denton Close, Willington Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 8ER

I wish Homeless Care to treat all donations I have made in the last four years and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid donations

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name (in caps) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I am a UK taxpayer and I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. If you pay income tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return. Please notify the Treasurer of Homeless Care if you wish to cancel this declaration, change your address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income or capital gains.

Registered charity number 1151412

**Remember we need volunteers**

please call 01622 674064 for further information!

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in working with volunteers, supporting young people and organisational development from his roles with The Prince's Trust and Community Links Bromley.

## Happy Birthday Homeless Care!!!

It was 30 years ago when the story of Homeless Care started with Maidstone Christian Care. See our story on <http://www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk/providingsupport.html>



Staff check out the cake: Amanda Jeffrey, Stephen Diner, Manager: Zofia Grzymala, Mike Philips, Tracy Maybank, Maria Dungate.

In a clients own words (about Maidstone Day Centre).

*"When you are unemployed you are just a number but coming here you are human and you have a name."*

Every £ is one nearer our target.



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HOMELESS CARE

MAIDSTONE DAY CENTRE

FOOD FOR THOUGHT  
Community Food Share Scheme

GOODSELL HOUSE

MAIDSTONE CHRISTIAN CARE



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**Maidstone Day Centre**

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[www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk](http://www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk) [www.homelesscare.org.uk](http://www.homelesscare.org.uk)

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