



Maidstone Community Support Centre

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in a writer and joint bookman

The Anniversary Edition



Celebrating 40 Years of Maidstone Community Support Centre



This August marked a major milestone for us at MCSC.

Our charity celebrated its 40th anniversary.

Whilst the charity itself was formally established on 12th August 1986, the Centre opened its doors the following year. The team will be celebrating next year's 40th anniversary of the building becoming MCSC.

For nearly four decades, we have been providing affordable, accessible office space and sessional rooms to hundreds of charities and community groups across Maidstone and Kent.

An Historic Building with a Rich Story.

- **1891: Originally built as the Howard de Walden Institute for Women, offering practical education and skills for young Victorians.**
- **1897: Accommodation for London nurses during a Typhoid epidemic**
- **WWI: Served as a Voluntary Aid Detachment (V.A.D) hospital**
- **1920's: Accommodation for nurses' working at the General Hospital.**
- **1983: Hospital moved to a new site in Barming, the Centre is for sale.**
- **1985: Don Brand and 10 charities purchase the building.**
- **1987: MCSC opens its doors.**

The Centre has been transformed through local vision into a dedicated, permanent home for charitable and voluntary organizations.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT CHAPTER

Whether hosting counselling sessions, volunteer training, community radio broadcasts, or simply offering a warm cup of tea and a friendly chat in the Sunflower Café, MCSC remains an irreplaceable community asset.

"By providing an affordable and welcoming base, MCSC enables small charities and local initiatives to focus on what matters most: helping people in need across Maidstone."

Happy 40th Anniversary to MCSC.

Here's to celebrating four decades of foundation this year, looking forward to next year's milestone celebration of the Centre's opening, and honouring many more years of bringing people together.





Celebrating 30 Years of Rubicon Cares

Rubicon Cares was established in 2006 as a Non-Profit Making organisation relying on donations and goodwill.

In 2011 we received 3 year funding from the Ministry of Justice which allowed us to become a Registered Charity. Since then we have had further successful funding bids from various national and local funders and grant giving trusts.

Our mission is simple but powerful: to help people move from surviving trauma related to crime and abuse, to rebuilding hope and resilience. Ultimately enabling people to restore their sense of self and purpose, improve their emotional/psychological wellbeing, improve their connections with others and improve their day to day lives.

Rubicon Cares is a unique innovative Kent & Medway based charity providing free specialised trauma counselling to people affected by any crime; the crime can be historical, current, reported or unreported. In a response to a gap in victim services within Kent & Medway.

Social Value

We believe the decrease in trauma symptoms, increase in client emotional / psychological wellbeing, decrease in medication and increase in overall functionality because they have dealt with the impact of the crime incident has a wider positive impact on society. The individual will be working and contributing to the local community, they will not have a high need for health services (physical or mental health), there will be decreased chances of repeat victimisation, decreased chances of possible offending behaviour and they will be able to engage in or maintain healthy relationships. Therefore, there is a positive impact on health services, criminal justice services, education, the voluntary sector and society as a whole.

We are focused on providing a fast response when the victim identifies they are ready to access counselling.

Research has shown the quicker a victim can access therapeutic support the less likelihood there is of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder developing. We believe this would in turn have a positive impact on the number of people accessing other services such as NHS services.

With the work we have been doing since 2006, we have played a vital role as advocates for victim rights and needs within our County and have been at the heart of important changes at strategic level regards recognising victim needs, identifying gaps in provision and highlighting poor practise.

Celebrating 10 Years of 21 Together



**We've reached a very special milestone.
21 Together is officially 10 years old!**

Ten years ago, our founders came together with hope, love, and a shared belief that every child and young person with Down's syndrome deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential. What started as a small but powerful idea has grown into a supportive, inclusive charity that now stands alongside families at every stage of their journey.

Over the last decade, we've seen first-hand the difference that the right support can make. Through our education and communication groups, young people have grown in confidence, developed essential life skills, formed lasting friendships, and found their voices. Families have told us how vital it has been to feel understood, supported, and part of a community that truly cares.



WE ARE 10 YEARS OLD!



For 10 years, we've continued to grow and expand the support we provide to children, young people and families. In the last year alone, we supported:



10 Years of 21 Together

Ten years ago, 21 Together began with four parents, each raising a child with Down's syndrome and sharing one simple belief: every child deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential.

What started as a small, parent-led support group has grown into a vibrant, county-wide charity, with families still at the heart of everything we do.

Today, we support hundreds of children, young people and their families across Kent through specialist communication groups, education and professional outreach, community support, family training and inclusive regional hubs.

As our community has grown, so has our reach. Our services are now expanding into Thanet, helping even more families access specialist support closer to home.

Over the past decade, we've created opportunities for children and young people to find their voices, build confidence, develop lifelong skills and form lasting friendships. At the same time, we've empowered families and professionals to build more inclusive communities where people with Down's syndrome can thrive.

As we celebrate 10 years of impact, we're looking ahead to the next decade. With your support, we can reach more families, strengthen our services and ensure every child and young person with Down's syndrome has the opportunity to live a happy, rich and fulfilling life.

Celebrate 10 years of 21 Together

Join us at our 10th Anniversary Gala for an unforgettable evening — while helping us celebrate everything we've achieved together and raise vital funds for the next ten years.

Join us. Celebrate with us. Help shape the next 10 years of 21 Together.



Get Involved



Donate



Celebrating 35 Years of Crossline Christian Couselling Service

Crossline was established in 1991 to provide professional and affordable counselling for people who are hurting or struggling with life's challenges. The organisation began through the vision of Elisabeth Newman (pictured) who recognised the need for affordable counselling services in the Maidstone and Medway area.

In its early days, Crossline offered just five hours of counselling each week and was supported by six volunteer counsellors who generously gave their time and skills to serve the local community. Over the years, the counselling team has grown significantly, and in 2013, Crossline was offered a dedicated counselling suite at The Vine Medical Centre in Maidstone.

Today, Crossline is based at the Maidstone Community Support Centre and supports approximately 60 clients each week through a team of 23 volunteer counsellors and four qualified supervisors. We provide open-ended counselling, both face-to-face and online, and all our counsellors receive regular professional supervision, ensuring a high standard of care and support. Crossline also serves as a training hub for trainee counsellors who need practical client experience as part of their professional qualification. While much has changed since 1991, Crossline's core ethos remains the same: to offer professional and affordable open-ended counselling to people of all faiths and none. We are committed to keeping counselling accessible and affordable; however, even with our subsidised recommended fees, long-term counselling remains beyond the reach of some clients. In response to this need, Crossline launched its Bursary Fund in 2022, helping to ensure that financial circumstances are not a barrier to receiving support.

Client Testimony

I'd like to start by saying that Crossline has literally saved my life. Just over two years ago for various reasons my life was torn apart, and I was struggling to see any light ahead of me and I was giving up on trying to find a way out. I'd previously used Crossline around 10 years ago and it was suggested that I should try them again. I made the initial call and spoke to a lady who explained that there was a waiting list and that she would give me a call when there was an opportunity for me to come in weekly. Unfortunately, my personal life worsened and became unbearable, so I called Crossline and asked if I could come in sooner. Thankfully, Crossline gave me a weekly appointment two weeks from that call. Not only on a day that would help me with my job (I'm self-employed), but also at a time that meant I wouldn't lose too much money. Being able to accommodate my needs made all the difference when I was struggling not only mentally, but financially as well.

I've been coming to Crossline for two years now. I never thought my journey would still be ongoing. During that time, I've had the safety and security of the same room and the same counsellor every time I've been. That means so much when you're struggling with your own problems. I credit my counsellor with helping me understand who I am, working with me tirelessly to help me become the best version of myself and being my 'trusted person in my safe space'.

My current journey is nearing an end with Crossline. My counsellor has worked so hard to help give me the tools to overcome my problems (of which there were many) and make my own life more enjoyable for myself and mostly my son. The difference between the person who walked into Crossline and the person who writes this is night and day! Crossline has helped me get my life together, to be the best version of myself and thankfully I'm still here to hopefully support them by sharing my story.

Finally, when I was at rock bottom and I couldn't find £30 a week to continue my weekly appointment, my counsellor said that there was a bursary and that I could pay as little as £5 a week. When every day is shrouded in anxiety and depression, it's those gifts of kindness that make a difference and give my son a daddy who he's proud of.



Over 40 Years of Maidstone Community Support Centre



Maidstone Borough News April 14th 1988

Advertising/Editorial ☎ 678556

Good news for the disabled NEW CENTRE OPENS

A NEW centre for the disabled, which will give handicapped people in Maidstone the opportunity to relax or even learn new skills, has been opened.

For the Maidstone Organisation for the Disabled, who are behind the new centre in Marsham Street, it is the climax of nearly seven years of hard work.

The project, has been supported by Kent County Council and Larkfield soft tissue manufacturer Kimberly-Clark.

The main room at the new centre has been named after Kimberly-Clark in recognition of the effort of hundreds of employees at the company's Larkfield Mill who helped to raise more than £2,000 during a number of sponsored events.

David Morrey Jones,



• David Morrey Jones of Kimberly-Clark; Ernie Flood, chairman; Bill Jackson, secretary; Mayoress of Maidstone, Mrs Joan Milner; and Cllr Doug Milner, Mayor of Maidstone, watching computer operator Annabel Sims.

play a variety of board games, listen to the radio, watch television or learn new skills such as computing or even cooking.

The Centre offers assistance for the disabled from

holidays at home or abroad, and assistance in making appeals to local Government bodies or tribunals.

The Centre is in the process of creating a guide that will indicate which

cannot be overcome. This new Centre will provide facilities for local handicapped people to meet any challenge.

The Centre is now planning to launch a further



What's inside?



This year MCSC and some of our Member groups have been celebrating special anniversaries

see
inside!



MCSC 40th

Rubicon 30th

21 Together 10th

Crossline Christian
Counselling Service 35th