



SKILLWAY

This News letter comes with our sincere wishes that you enjoy a meaningful Christmas and enter 2017 in good heart.

We write in a period of intense cold and although Skillway IS cold, it is not as uncomfortable as it has been in the past. We consider ourselves to be blessed that we now have the mezzanine floor above the metal workshop which helps to keep the latter warm, we have some good heaters in the mezzanine which just about manage to keep us comfortable enough to work (!), and the wood workshop remains as warm as last year, but brighter from its coat of paint and more efficient storage. None of this would have been possible without the financial support of The Community Foundation for Surrey (The Dora Fedoruk Memorial Fund and Fidelity UK Foundation), our generous donors Nigel and Jean-Philippe, and the hard work of some of our wonderful staff members.



We have also equipped the mezzanine with laptop computers, drawing boards and the necessary tools to teach basic technical drawing and CAD (computer-aided design), courtesy of a grant from Parsons Brinckerhoff. The first pupils have achieved a BTec module, which gives them a qualification to add in to a portfolio of experience when they approach colleges or employers. So the premises all look very professional, and operate in that way; not bad for redundant Chapels.

We do not forget the brilliant work being created in the Creative Arts studio "round the back". Catherine and Helen and their helpers produce some lovely pieces, with flair and imagination, and manage to inspire some troubled youngsters who will hopefully go on to use the skills acquired for therapeutic or work purposes.

This term has seen a repeat of last year's problem with recruiting pupils. All the schools tell us how valuable our work is, but they find themselves with even greater financial restraints, and a growing need to prove themselves through adherence to the requirements of Ofsted, league tables and definition of success through exam results. WE know that not all youngsters will thrive on a diet of academic subjects - many find their way in life when enabled to use their hands and their creativity. The numbers are slowly picking up, and we have, unusually, a small number of Home Educated pupils for whom our offerings seem to be a real bonus.

At the end of December, Vivien will be standing down from some of the regular admin work as she finds herself with more need to be flexible and at home. The Trustees have kindly agreed to appoint her as a Trustee which will enable her to retain some "duties" such as speaking at fund raising events, supporting Greg and the team, helping to manage any major projects etc. Greg has kindly agreed to take on some more of the management of the overall organisation, and will be visiting schools, and directing and inspiring staff and volunteers more, rather



than necessarily always being in the workshops. However, Greg's greatest gift is his management of the pupils, when they are good and when they are "bad", and he will still be very involved with that. His job title will change on 1st January to General Manager. We are well on the way to appointing a person to take on the secretarial duties and to support Greg and you will be informed of that development in due course.

PLEASE NOTE: We have new email addresses:

Greg is: workshop@skillway.net Vivien is: office@skillway.net Loraine is: grants@skillway.net

The new secretary will be: secretary@skillway.net

Please put these into your address book and remove the talktalk addresses. Thank you.

These changes have come about in a drive for more efficiency, and to go with our new branding. You will note the new logo at the top of the front page. We have a new flier and are working on other brochures that are necessary. For the moment the current website contains everything that you or any interested person may wish to know, but we will be "refreshing it" shortly.

This year we have been very fortunate to welcome two new Trustees to the Warehouse Christian Trust, who have a particular watching brief for Skillway - David Hart, a retired Insurance Broker and Nick Harris. Nick volunteered at Skillway for a couple of terms while on garden leave and although now extremely busy in the baking industry, his insight from close involvement with the staff and the youngsters, coupled with his business acumen, is much welcomed.



We have also been much blessed by having the Godalming Town Mayor, Councillor David Hunter adopt us as his Charity for the year, very dynamically supported by his staff at the Town Council to whom we extend our sincere thanks. We have already had some super events, including the opportunity to collect donations at the Christmas Festival on 26th November. The next event raising funds is at the Wilfrid Noyce on 25th February. Do come and do recommend it to your friends.

We are toying with the idea of finding a Patron, with a big "name", who might have some influence in educational policies and/or funding. If you know someone you think might fit the bill, please get in touch confidentially. We cannot promise that we will follow through, but would be glad of your suggestions and your prayer in this matter.

While you are shopping for your Christmas presents and doing all that on-line grocery shopping for the festive period – do you realise you could be contributing to Skillway? There are over 3,000 shops and sites on board ready to make a donation, including Amazon, John Lewis, Aviva, thetrainline and Sainsbury's – it doesn't cost you a penny extra! Here is what to do:

1. Head to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/skillway/> and join for free.
2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping.
3. After you've checked out, that retailer will make a donation to SKILLWAY for no extra cost whatsoever!

There are no catches or hidden charges and SKILLWAY will be really grateful for your donations.

Thank you for your support - and here is another thought - why not ask 5 of your friends to do the same?



It remains for us to thank ALL of those who support us through funds, volunteering, spreading the word and praying. THANK YOU ALL.

May you all be blessed with health and happiness in the coming months.