

Christmas Weekend



On Thursday evening and Friday, the Trustees met to organise the weekend and to discuss important issues like what we do once the Elton John AIDS Foundation Award ends next year. We were also concerned by the snow which fell overnight transforming Shallowford into a veritable Winter Wonderland but

also bringing hazardous travelling conditions. In the end very few people cancelled on account of the weather. So congratulations to everyone who showed true courage in battling with the elements and the railway system.

Surprisingly, this was not only our first white Christmas Weekend, but also our first entirely male one. Of course, there was some counter-balancing effect in our all-female team of therapists, and some diversity to be found in the wide age range of members. Perhaps the harsh winter conditions outside brought a heightened sense of isolation and dependence on our own resources...but for whatever reason...there was a great feeling of camaraderie and a splendid generosity of spirit...which made it very special.

The changes at the house have helped to make our weekends more agreeable. The bar is staffed by Simon or one of his family, an outside company takes care of the linen ...so there is now no need to bring towels and soap and by summer we should have even more en-suite rooms after some major refurbishment

Thanks to Karl for organising the raffle which raised £170 and to everyone who contributed prizes and bought tickets. Thanks too to Danny for hosting the bingo, which people reported as being great fun. Finally, a heartfelt thank you to everyone who expressed their appreciation of the weekend in their evaluation forms...I got a lump in my throat whilst reading some of your comments.

Keep well

Maurice

Reflection from Tom

My time in the open group reinforced the belief that the Trustees work on Thursday and Friday, to ensure the long-term future of "Living Proof" weekends, was in fact our most important duty. In addition to the issues that were raised, lurked the reality of the potential isolation that we all face once the effects of the "Comprehensive Spending Review" begin to happen to us all.

It all highlighted the value of "self-help" and the reality that it is **US** that can, in so many effective ways, best provide some of those services we so desperately continue to need. It seemed

to suggest to me the possibility of returning to those days is the '80's, before any formal groups were established when we used to meet in each other's homes. Would that be such a bad thing?

Resignation

We wish to express our regret at Ian's resignation from the Board of Trustees for health reasons and thank him for all the hard work he has done for the Group. We also hope that his forthcoming operations will be successful and look forward to seeing him back with us in the future.

The Future of "Living-Proof" Weekends

The trustees spent most of Friday debating the group's financial sustainability after EJAF Funding ceases in September 2011. It was decided to make use of our recent fund-raising award to employ Andrew Farrow, a professional fundraiser for up to four days, and to hold a one day meeting in Birmingham in January. There are already 3 funding applications being processed which will be forwarded to Andrew for his professional appraisal prior to submission. The Board unanimously approved the priority of ensuring a sustainable annual programme at Shallowford. If we are successful, as well as continuing to recruit new members at a subsidised rate, we would also be able to extend subsidised places to existing members. Once this has been secured we would then like to create opportunities for new "specialist" weekends, probably in partnership with other HIV Agencies.

Fund Raising

You can now donate by PayPal on the Group's website <http://www.nltsg.org.uk/donations.htm>

Keeping in touch

Join the Yahoo group to keep in touch

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/nltsgmembers/>

Dates for 2011

25 – 27 March

8 – 10 July

23 – 25 September

16 – 18 December

