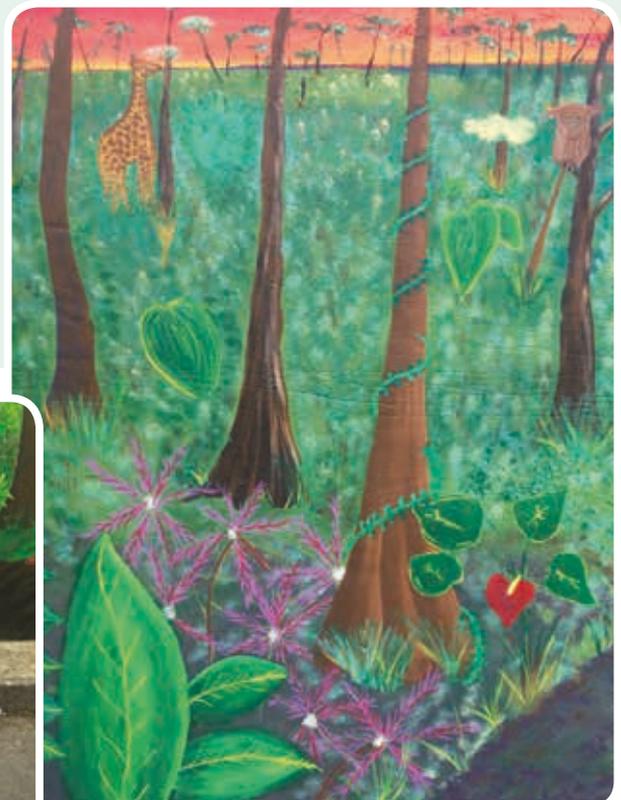


## Mural at 340 Lower High Street, Cheltenham

Having received some funding for specialist paints, brushes etc. the Focus On Art group began their painting of a rain forest mural in May. The mural on one of the outside walls at the rear of the Independence Trust centre in Cheltenham, measures 12 metres long by 3.5 metres high. The mural depicts a sunset and lush tropical vegetation together with animals, birds and insects you would expect to find in rain forests. The art group met on a weekly basis (Tuesdays 10am-3pm) and it took approximately 12 weeks in total to complete. It was a blessing that the weather was good.

The group's idea for the mural was born out of discussions around creating some ownership of the new environment they found themselves in since moving over from Milsom Street. They also wanted to create an environment which was relaxing yet inspiring others to engage with art. This project was a team effort and helped promote self-esteem and build confidence. It was lots of fun, very therapeutic and rewarding for all involved.



(Creators of the mural: Steve Cowlshaw, Olivia Tracey, Ross Green, James Eden, Ange Chappell, Angie Hill, Natasha Day, Liz Price)



# World Mental Health Day: Tackling Stigma

**For World Mental Health day this year the topic was stigma. As an organisation that works with people with a variety of mental health issues, stigma is a common theme that our clients have to deal with on a daily basis.**

As a Community Bridge Builder one of my roles is to challenge clients perception of how they feel they are perceived by the community. I often hear 'I will never get a job, who would want to hire me'. Mental health has come a long way in the past few years and the stigma that surrounds it is slowly starting to subside. To address the topic of this year's World Mental Health day, the Cheltenham locality collaborated with the University of Gloucestershire in particular the Positive Society. The Positive Society is a university society that was set up to raise awareness of mental health issues, not just in the university but within the community.

The work they do is fantastic and they have volunteers whose studies sometimes do not include anything around mental health - they are there due to their desire to tackle stigma. Stigma is a hard subject to create a visual representation of, however, we felt it best represented by walking a mile in someone's shoes. The University set up a cake stall in the campus that would not only sell cakes but promote the Independence Trust and the work that we do. Each individual who took an interest would receive information about our service and then be sent on a trail that was marked by footprints each with a quote or description from someone who has suffered from Mental Health issues.

The trail led people to the Independence Trust's stall which was in the Brewery. At this stall people were able to talk to members of the Cheltenham team about what they did and were also able to talk to clients about their experiences. It was a brilliant day that I believe had a lot of success in addressing stigma. From this collaboration we managed to raise over £60 which will be used to fund the mural at the back of 340 High Street. To me the money was not the most positive outcome of the day.

This would have to be the awareness that was created around people who suffer from mental health issues. Every individual has their own interpretation of what mental health is and how it affects someone, but many of these people are not aware of the services that offer support outside of the NHS. This is a shame but through this collaboration we have managed to change this even if it is only a small percentage of the general public that are now aware, it is more than were aware before.



# Celebrating World Mental Health Day

**It was a crisp early morning start for us setting up the stall in Stroud Farmers Market. With a large selection of homemade cakes, jams, chutneys as well as a selection of handmade crafts, this was an opportunity for clients and carers to exhibit their extensive skills and talents.**

Along with a cauldron of steaming hot carrot and coriander soup this hooked people in where we were able to ask, "What does a good day look like to you" and people would post their thoughts on our large interactive A frame.

People were very supportive when we asked their thoughts about stigma and mental health some with thought provoking stories, others just pleased to be able to talk about mental health. Clients, carers, volunteers, Kathryn from the social inclusion team, colleagues and not to mention our local MP Neil Carmichael joined us for a fun and very worthwhile day. We were also holding events in Cirencester and Cheltenham.



## Hi my name is Anni

**I first came to Independence Trust at the beginning of 2015 as I was feeling suicidal and very depressed. I started attending the art group running at The Wellbeing Centre in Stroud. After attending for a while I began to feel able to help others within the group as well as working on my own pictures. I have a portfolio including acrylic paintings which I sketch from using my imagination and even from my dreams!**

Independence Trust has enabled me to have the self-confidence as an artist to grow enormously and I now have a fully booked diary of exhibitions of my work in local cafés and public venues as well as a big exhibition and programme of workshops planned for the Nature in Art venue in Gloucester. I have worked with Lisa who is a bridge builder -she has helped me get out into the community and to realise my dream. Van Gogh once wrote that he would be happy if only he 'could have a little exhibition of his work in a local café'...

Here are some of the venues Anni has exhibited her work: Cirencester Hospital, Upper Lock Café Stroud. So why not call in and have a look yourselves. See below for future dates and venues.

- **Black Book Café (permanent)- along with other works of art from Independence Trust clients**
- **Henry's Café - Minchinhampton (permanent)**
- **Sociallight Café (current - Jan 29th 2016 )**
- **Star Anise Café (Apr 24th - May 22nd 2016)**

...brilliant work Anni and your sales have already outstripped the unfortunate Van Gogh who sold nothing in his lifetime!



# Welcome to Simon Price

**I've recently started working for the Independence Trust as Peer Coordinator, and I have been tasked to work on co-production, the client voice, and to support peer-work across Wellbeing Services.**

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself, and give an open invitation to all colleagues and clients, to come and engage in conversations that will hopefully enrich what we do; and will raise the client voice (and genuine involvement) in the life of this organisation.

It is my longstanding belief that the client voice, lived experience and expertise (knowledge of what 'works best' for them) should be at the centre of all that we do in the recovery, wellbeing and mental health field. Without this, our practices are but a shadow of what they could be. With the centrality of the client voice maintained, recovery will not only run smoother, but our practices as professionals will also become much more empathic, more animated, and more engaged with what we are doing; in short our day to day practice will become both more interesting, ethical and more effective.

As we all know, it is not always easy to be open to the client voice - at times there are competing constraints and difficulties that make it challenging for us to remain open, curious and empathic. Sometimes it is difficult to listen, to really listen and to begin to open a space where coproduction and collaborative working can take place. If we are going to manage to do it at all then we must support each other to do so, colleagues and clients alike.

I first came to discover the power of peer support, and to really come to believe in its value, by accident. Left on the far end of ludicrous waiting lists, whilst suffering myself from mental health difficulties through my late teens and early twenties, I was thrown upon self-help and peer support out of necessity. It was only over time that I came to really appreciate its difficulties and its immense benefits. I began volunteering for, and receiving support from, the charity Rethink.



I began learning about various approaches to recovery and wellbeing and I began finding ways of speaking about mental distress from speaking to others, from literature, from film, from spiritual traditions and from the arts. In time I met a group of people who I could feel safe with and with whom I could start the work of recovery, together we learned from each other, shared ideas and perspectives, and asked of each other 'What works for you?' We all came back with our own answers in our own time and we gave each other the space to do so.

That was some years ago now. Much has happened between then and beginning work at the Independence Trust, but through all of that time I can honestly say that my enthusiasm for, and indebtedness to, peer support has never waned.

Along the way I have set up and facilitated anxiety management, anger management and advocacy skills courses and I have helped people to set up many peer support and art groups and projects. I ran my own therapeutic writing group for many years

**I would like to hear from any clients or colleagues at the Independence Trust who would like to talk about peer work, self-help, co-production and collaborative practices. I would particularly like it if peer leads and those who use Independence Trust services could get in touch and meet with me to talk about how you would like to be heard by and to be involved in the organisation.**

**If you have any ideas about what could be put in place to help you to feel more involved in and heard by The Independence Trust, then please do contact me at [simon.price@independencetrust.co.uk](mailto:simon.price@independencetrust.co.uk), or call me on 07587035278. I look forward to hearing from you, or working with you soon. Let's start these important conversations today.**

# 'Reach for the Sky'

**It is the aim of the project to fundraise enough money to encourage clients of Independence Trust, Gloucestershire, to experience a real helicopter flight over the Gloucestershire countryside.**

The Independence Trust helps those with a variety of mental health, health and other issues and through the flights it is hoped that the experience will increase their wellbeing and really allow them to do something that they may not have been able to do, without a little help. As a client group, running this project, we want to give something back to those who just need a little help.

The project is kindly supported by Heliflight (UK) who will be running the flights using their superb Bell Jet Ranger Helicopter, which will set off from their base at Staverton, Gloucestershire airport.

Each flight costs £695 and can accommodate 4 people, for 1 hour.

Our first fundraiser will be **Name the Bear**.

"The bear" will visit Winget House in November and will continue to visit different locations across Gloucestershire:

**23rd November - 4th December Mill Place, Gloucester**

**7th - 18th December Main Place, Forest of Dean**

**4th - 15th January 340 High Street, Cheltenham**

**18th - 29th January Parliament Street, Stroud**

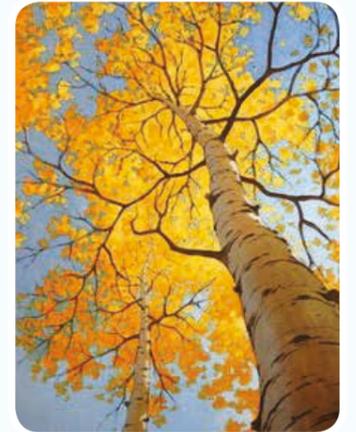
**1st - 12th February Beeches Grove, Cirencester**

**16th February Coombe House, Tetbury**

**23rd February St Birinus, Lechlade**

**25th February The Tyndale, Dursley**

A grid of one hundred squares has been created. All those interested will be able to put their name, contact number and a suggested bear's name on the grid. The grid will then be cut into squares and put into a hat. A draw will then be done.



Martin Adams  
& 'The Bear'

# The Cheltenham Dozen have fun in Dorset

By Karen Griffin Hill

Weymouth was the destination,  
And the aim of the game was fun  
As 12 of us filled the minibus and  
Our holiday had begun.  
The hotel on the Promenade  
Welcomed us - bathed in sunshine.  
We queued to collect our room keys,  
And very soon I had mine.  
Not half an hour later,  
And I'm outside for a stroll.  
I check out the shops, the harbour,  
And watch the seawaves roll.  
That night the dinner was also fun  
The waiter made sure of that.  
When asked what an item on the menu was,  
He replied "It is mushy pat...a!"

Next day and Monkey World calls us.  
It's an attraction like no other.  
We enjoyed visiting the primates  
And, not sure, but was one Rays' brother?  
Day three and I go off on my own  
While others visit Chesil Beach.  
I go up in the sky in the Sealife Tower,  
And then walk along the beach.  
That wasn't as easy as it sounds,  
As a tri-athlon was taking place.  
I visited the Sealife Centre,  
Instead of joining the race!  
It's time to go home, as day 4 arrives,  
And this holiday's been the best.  
I've had a laugh, and made new friends,  
But now... I need a rest!

# Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service working for a safer Cheltenham



Hello, my name is Dave Pike and I am your Local Risk Manager for Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue within Cheltenham borough.

My top priority is to work towards a safer Cheltenham through prevention, protection and education.

Starting with my top tips to stay safe from fire:

- **Ensure you have a working smoke alarm installed on all levels of your home. Test your alarms weekly and never remove batteries for other devices.**
- **Never leave cooking unattended and avoid cooking after drinking alcohol. The majority of fires start in the kitchen. Always turn off kitchen appliances when you have finished cooking.**
- **Never leave candles unattended, tea lights in particular as they can become extremely hot.**
- **Don't overload sockets – only one plug per socket. Always turn off plugs when they are not in use, except those that are designed to be left on, like freezers.**



**Make sure cigarettes are extinguished properly and never smoke in bed.**

- **Check on older relatives and neighbours to ensure their safety.**
- **If you are going to light your fire, make sure you have the chimney swept.**
- **Plan an escape route and ensure everyone knows it.**
- **Close doors at night to stop fires from spreading.**
- **And always in the event of fire, get out, stay out and call 999.**

But finally I would also ask you to take a look at the Fire Risk Factors table, showing the top 7 common risk factors that can increase the likelihood of suffering injury or death from fire in the home. Now ask yourself:

Using the risk factors, do you know of any older or vulnerable people who haven't got a smoke alarm and may be at risk? If so ask them if they would like a Free Smoke Alarm and Home Safety check from their local community fire station by calling 0800 180 41 40 or go to [home.safety@glosfire.gov.uk](mailto:home.safety@glosfire.gov.uk)

## Fire death risk factors

- Mental health
- Poor housekeeping
- Alcohol
- Smoking
- Drugs (prescription or illegal)
- Limited mobility
- Living alone



## Dear Reader

**In April 2014, due to circumstances beyond my control, I returned to the UK from abroad, where I'd lived for many years. I had my own business there and lived a very productive life. I lost all that and was forced to return to the UK with only a backpack of my belongings. With no contacts in the UK I arrived back with nowhere to go and spent my first six months here homeless.**

I eventually managed to procure temporary accommodation in a halfway house where I had my own room in which I spent most of my time.

The loss of all I'd worked for and the circumstances that led to my unscheduled return to the UK has been a very traumatic experience. I had long suffered from depression and anxiety which has been greatly intensified by the painful events that led me to my current situation.

With continuous medication from my doctor and support of Independence Trust I am managing to overcome some of those problems and would dearly love to re-establish myself as a productive member of society, something that, at one point, seemed nothing more than a lesson in futility.

I used to be a very keen hiker, camper and photographer and had published several photo books, including a guidebook. These attributes defined who I was as a person and how people saw me. I had lost everything, including hope, but with the help of Independence Trust I now believe I can at least start to look forward.

Through Independence Trust I secured a grant which has made it possible to continue with my love of photography.

In the latest advancement to my rehabilitation and integration, after more than a year in temporary accommodation, I have secured my own flat in the private sector, which I recently moved into. Words can't express enough how this will change my life for the better.

I am now volunteering with Independence Trust as a Peer Lead where I enjoy organising walks along the many beautiful tow-paths around the Stroud area and planning other activities.

Slowly but surely I am climbing my way out of the deepest, darkest hole I'd ever before encountered and thanks to the continuous help and support of the kind people at Independence Trust I can see some light at the end of that tunnel.

Thank you so much to everyone at 'Inde Trust' and best wishes for the future. May you continue to receive the support needed in order to help others. Keep up the good work.



# Flower Arranging Taster Workshop

**This taster was just one of many opportunities for people to get involved in a therapeutic workshop. These ladies were driven by enthusiasm after watching a demonstration of flower arranging by trained florist, Venet Poyser.**

They mastered the skill pretty quickly, picking up tricks of the trade and produced something wonderful to take away. Venet was very proud of what they had managed to achieve and so were they.



## Nature in Art Gallery and Museum

**The Nature in Art museum and art gallery is located in a beautiful Georgian mansion on the outskirts of Gloucester. The Independence Trust have been working with Nature in Art**



**to set up an exhibition of clients artwork in the summer of 2016 (16th – 29th August). There will also be the opportunity for demonstrations and sketching / painting sessions in the extensive grounds.**

This exhibition is being organised by Stroud Bridge Building client Anni Dalton and her worker Lisa Nash and the other Wellbeing localities have been asked to contribute artwork as well. All types of art media are welcome as the spacious exhibition room includes cabinets, plinths and hanging space. Ideally the artwork should be 'nature themed' (animals, birds, landscapes etc.) but Nature in Art said they are happy to include other types of art as well.

If you are interested in getting involved in any way (either by contributing art work, organising or manning the exhibition during August) please get in touch: 01453 767999.



Winget House, Gloucester  
340 High Street, Cheltenham  
The Main Place, Coleford  
Meadow Bank House, Cirencester  
Tyndale Centre, Dursley  
Jameson Court, Moreton-in-Marsh  
Parliament Street, Stroud

(01452) 317460  
(01242) 512812  
(01594) 837690  
(01285) 659127  
(01453) 547225  
(01608) 652232  
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