

Mental Health Awareness and Fundraising

Many Suburb residents maybe unaware that the Free Church has recently been trying to bring our attention to the subject of our mental health. As part of this welcome initiative there was an opportunity for us to learn more when Professor Tim Kendall came to the church to give a talk on the subject entitled Mental Health: Present & Future.

Ian Tutton, the Minister at the church, introduced the Professor, and told us how there was a serious challenge to society in raising mental health awareness, and how important it was to support local providers. Many readers of this article will have been touched by those with mental health problems, maybe in the family, in friends or the workplace, and perhaps even in themselves. Recognition of a problem is the first step to finding a solution.

Prof Kendall is, among other things, National Clinical Director for Mental Health NHS England and Consultant Psychiatrist at the Sheffield NHS Foundation Trust, and he started his talk by telling his audience of his early days working in mental health in Sheffield explaining how he felt to understand psychosis you had to live with those who suffered from psychiatric disorders to get a service user perspective.

He explained how treatment had changed with asylums being shut and community care expanded. In the early 1980s Sheffield, with a population of half a million had 2,000 mental health beds – now there were 100. Now the emphasis is on early intervention with the intention of helping patients to get back home and into work, often using treatments such as cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT).

Although mental health care is better than it used to be, access is still difficult and despite the provision of additional resources we were told that, for instance, still only one third of children get the treatment they require; so the public campaign to ensure politicians understand the need for adequate provision continues.



Ian Tutton introducing the speaker, Professor Tim Kendall

The Professor explained that the situation in mental health was better than before, but that there were still problems to be tackled; among them the Mental Health Act was a one size fits all approach that limited the capacity for action, and private provision of facilities for those with severe problems was very costly.

Despite the impression that one gets from the media coverage that there is a constant crisis in mental health he, without denying that there are problems, remains optimistic about the future, which, although surprising, was somehow comforting.

A question and answer session chaired by Karen Turner, Director for Mental Health England, followed with the proviso that it was fine to be political. Ian opened by asking about the situation for 15 to 25 year-olds, who were neither children nor adults, and whose problems became more severe and difficult to treat when tackled later in life.

Questions followed about recognising problems while at school; the reaction of employers when confronted by problems at work; the treatment of an ageing population with dementia; how

to cope with the speed of modern life, and the digital world; treating veterans, and others, with PTSD; rising rates of suicide, and self-harm.

The answers to many problems lay not so much in drugs, but in talking therapies and the use of psychological well-being practitioners; working with families, friends and within the workplace; adjusting the environment around dementia patients; recognising problems in A&E and transferring patients to psychiatric services.

Suicide rates, which had been going down until 2008, had risen in every country after the crash, but had thankfully now plateaued. Apparently 75% of suicide cases had never sought help, a figure which demonstrates

the need to remove the stigma of mental problems. Problems related to modern living, such as those caused by the speed of life or social media would only really become apparent in the next decade, and treatment would develop in tandem.

The most important thing for all of us was to raise awareness in the community of the ubiquity of mental health problems, and the ways of getting help without feeling shame. Ian and the Free Church congregation deserve our thanks for trying to bring this subject to our attention. Suburb News wishes them luck with their ambition to raise £15,000 for an outdoor gym for inpatients at the mental health unit of Edgware Hospital.

TERRY BROOKS

The Free Church Mental Health Campaign

Over the past year the Free Church has been raising awareness in the church community around issues of mental illness, health and wellbeing.

Some one in six adults have either a common mental health disorder – usually depression or anxiety, or a severe mental illness, such as psychosis e.g. schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. This one in six figure comes from the most recent survey and paints a particularly worrying picture of mental illness in young women aged from 18-25, where the rates are higher than any other group.

Mental illness has a high cost – to the individual, to those around them and to society. It can prevent people from enjoying and taking part in life, as well as looking after themselves or others. The links between mental illness and physical health are also now better understood; some long term physical conditions, such as diabetes or severe neurological illnesses, can be hard to manage which can cause depression and anxiety. This in turn makes the management of the condition worse. So a cycle of difficulty emerges.

The Dennis Scott Unit, Edgware Hospital, is the inpatient psychiatric unit that covers the Borough of Barnet. There are three wards with capacity for 62 patients, and the wards are almost always full. All of us within our local groups will have knowledge of people who have required the support of mental health services and may even have required admission to the Dennis Scott Unit.

At the Free Church we have been supporting the Dennis

Scott Unit by collecting money to enrich the ward environment beyond that which the NHS provides. The church congregation has developed contacts within the Unit and initiated various projects – Christmas presents for all those on the wards, Easter eggs & daffodils in April and strawberries & cream tea for Wimbledon finals weekend. We have now been asked to fundraise to provide outdoor gym equipment (as you will find in many of the parks in Barnet) to encourage physical activity for those who are inpatients.

We all know the benefit of exercise for our physical and mental well-being, and at present, the facilities within the outdoor areas are bare and hence some basic equipment is urgently needed. Depending on how many pieces of equipment are placed in the two areas for the three wards, this project would require approximately £15,000. Each piece of equipment costs about £1,500 including installation.

We are approaching various organisations on the Suburb to ask if they would collaborate with us in this project by arranging fundraising activities. So far we have organised a flower festival, two concerts, a seminar and have raised £2,000. We did a sponsored walk from the Dennis Scott Unit to our church on January 20.

Please do consider whether this is a community activity you would like to join in with. Any donations that individuals would like to give would also be gratefully received.

PENNY TRAFFORD,
IAN TUTTON

Become a volunteer



Lead advocate, Shailja Kumar, with a volunteer.

Volunteering has so many benefits whatever your age – it can open up a whole new world and give you purpose and satisfaction.

Becoming a volunteer helps you to strengthen your ties to your community and meet new people. It is also beneficial to your mental health as it increases your confidence and self-esteem, gives you a sense of accomplishment and helps you develop a more positive outlook on life.

Advocacy in Barnet is a small North London charity, which is celebrating 20 years of helping people in the London Borough of Barnet. It offers a free, independent and confidential advocacy service to people over 50. Advocacy in Barnet has a number of different projects designed to help and support people through difficult times and is looking for people who have some time to spare and wish to give something back to their communities.

Don't be put off by the word 'advocacy' – we are not legal types, although people with a legal background do make excellent advocates. Advocacy means taking action to help you say what you want, secure your rights, represent your interests and obtain the services you need. Among our team of well-trained and experienced volunteers we have people from a variety of professions, for example GPs, lawyers and teachers.

Our newest project is about supporting lone older people leaving hospital, whether it is to a care home or their own home. Our volunteers provide support through all stages of the discharge process. The

transition from private living via hospital to a care home can be traumatic. Giving up one's home and independence can be a real blow to people's sense of themselves, particularly if they are on their own. For people who are returning to their own homes adequate support will prevent avoidable re-admissions and save the NHS money and resources. People sometimes leave hospital without important possessions, like their false teeth or batteries in their hearing aids – a transitions volunteer will help to make sure these items travel with their owners to reduce anxiety and ensure wellbeing.

A typical recent case was of an 80 year-old woman who lived alone. She was awaiting discharge to a care home for the first time. As a result of a conversation with one of our Volunteer Advocates she indicated that she really wanted to return to her own home. Our Volunteer Advocate liaised with a social worker on the ward and the patient was discharged to her own home supported by a package of care that included daily visits from a carer.

We also provide a cancer advocacy service, which provides one-to-one support, help and advocacy for people over 50 living with cancer and their families.

If any of our work would be of interest to you and you have around four hours a week to spare, why not call on 020 8201 3415? We provide excellent training and on-going support and would love to hear from you – change your life and join the Advocacy Volunteers.

Archives Books

An interesting article from the Archives Trust analysing the details from Hampstead Way in the 1911 Census has been held over to our next issue due to lack of space.

In the meantime the Archives team would like to remind readers that they could take the opportunity to visit Fellowship House and select a book from those listed below to read instead:

John Atkin: Hampstead Garden Suburb during the Great War. £10
Henrietta Barnett: The Story of the Growth of Hampstead Garden Suburb. £5
Handlist of the Hampstead Garden Suburb. £1
Kitty Slack: Henrietta's Dream. £5
Micky Watkins: Henrietta Barnett, Social Worker and Community Planner. £10
Micky Watkins: Henrietta Barnett in photos. £3

Welcome to St Jude's

Ash Wednesday February 14
9am Imposition of Ashes
Mothering Sunday March 11
8am & 10.30am
Palm Sunday March 25
10.30am Liturgy of the Palms
(begins at Church Rooms)
Maundy Thursday March 29
8pm Liturgy of the Last Supper
Good Friday March 30
10.30am Liturgy of the Cross
Holy Saturday March 31
8pm The Easter Liturgy
Easter Sunday April 1
8am & 10.30am
Easter Celebration

Plus the regular:
Sunday 8am
Said Eucharist,
Sunday 10.30am
Sung Eucharist,
Thursday 9am
Said Eucharist

All Welcome

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