

Connect

Tenants and Service Users' News DEC 2013



Features:

Christmas activities

Board member and staff corners

Banding Together

Kicking bad habits

Keeping things clean

Welcome

Welcome to the Christmas edition of Connect.
Season's greetings to you all.



This edition features some inspiring stories of recovery and the commitments you make to take care of yourselves and others around you. We also have news about the band Level 7, the staff and board member corners and a programme of events you have helped choose and organise over Christmas. By popular demand, some puzzles have also been added to this edition.

As always, your feedback about St Martins' communications with you, or any aspect of our services, is welcomed. Feel free to contact me with your suggestions.

John Thompson Chief Executive

Tel: 020 7704 3820 Email: JohnT@stmartinoftours.org.uk

Board member applications

St Martins is looking for a current or past resident to join its board of management. A number of residents have applied for the position and interviews will be held on 13th December at St Martins' head office.

The board of management meets four times a year to discuss direction and strategy. Having representatives on the board with lived experience of how St Martins delivers its services is important. Candidates will receive news about their application to join the board before Christmas. Good luck to everyone applying!



Banding Together

Level 7 is a new band formed of staff and residents at Davenant Road, who play together every couple of weeks. Kofi told Connect how things are going.



“There are normally four of us in the band. Andrew and Sam play guitars mostly. Yvette is our singer and I do the drums and sometimes bass guitar, when Sam goes on the drums. We switch instruments. The idea is to try out different instruments and learn from one another.

The band’s name is taken from the Recovery model. Level 7 of the Recovery model is about learning and developing and that’s what we do. We play in a small studio. At first we played at Davenant Road with acoustic guitars and bongo drums. But Sam and I wanted to have a go on a proper drum kit. So we moved to the studio where we can make as much noise as we like.

The longer we’re together as a band the more stuff we’re learning. Some of our covers are quite tight now. We do a soft version of *Sweet Dreams* so the vocals stand out. We’ve been playing *Knocking on Heaven’s Door* for a while now. But Sam’s also written some of his own stuff. We’ve been using Sam’s songs for a short ‘Rockumentary’ that has been filmed about our band. You’ll be able to see it in April 2014 at the Odeon on Holloway Road.”

Staff Corner

Meet St Martins' Director of Development and Property Services.

“Hi, I’m Jonathan Mumford, better known as Jon to those of you I see around when I visit your homes.



I am the Director of Development and Property Services at St Martins. Together with my colleagues Loretta Foote and Waldemar Prucnal, we deal with the property side of St Martins. For example we are responsible for:

- Making sure that our new developments are built to St Martins' specifications.
- Modernising and improving our existing buildings.
- Ensuring that routine equipment servicing and safety checks are carried out.
- Dealing with repairs in a timely and efficient manner.

I started my career in 1972 as an architectural trainee for my local council. I spent the next 20 years working firstly as an architect in private practice, followed by a spell in retail development, before moving into the voluntary sector in 1991 with my first housing association.

I joined St Martins in 2009 and during the last 4 years I have seen a lot of very positive changes. Our new homes at Chalkhill Road and Wilton Square, together with the modernisation projects at Wilton Villas, New North Road and Ferrini House, are just some examples of where St Martins has been reinvesting money on your behalf.

As we continue to make plans for further new developments and modernisation programmes in our existing homes, I feel positive about the future for St Martins and its residents. I consider myself fortunate to be able to continue my 'bricks and mortar' career working for such a worthwhile organisation.”

Kicking bad habits

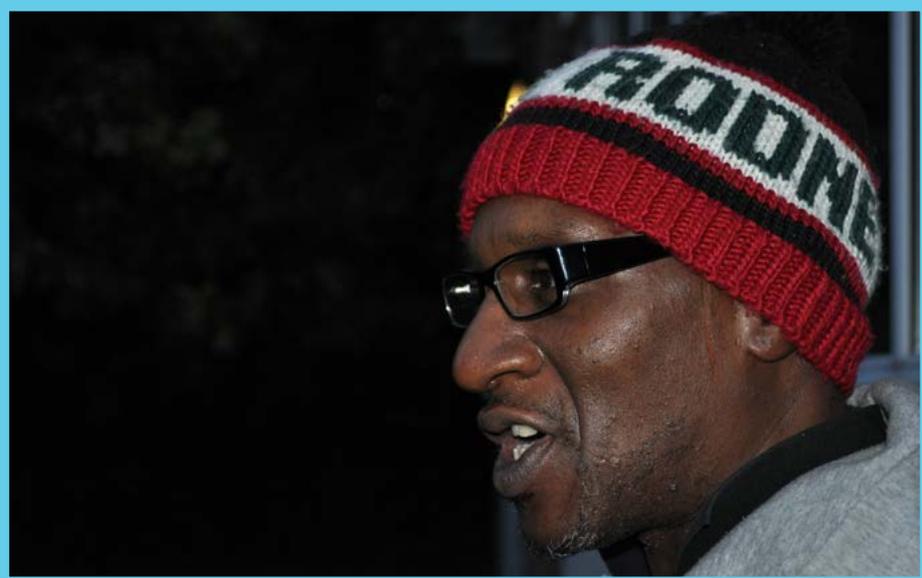
Don's inspiring story of recovery.

“People tried to help me for years. But it was only when I made the decision to break the cycle, that I stopped using and abusing drugs. I reached the bottom. I have been to the place where you have nothing left except the breath in your body. That's when I made the decision to take control. Any change has to start with you. People can help you, but it's your decision not to take drugs, to be strong. I was adamant that I didn't want the drugs in my life any more.

It's hard. Of course it's hard. And your body protests to begin with, because it's so used to the poison you've been feeding it. I came out in a rash when I stopped using. I had terrible pain in my knees, my shoulders, my elbows. When I was using I didn't feel pain. It was there, but I was numb to it. I'd sleep in the street, on concrete. I'd injure myself and not even notice. But when I'd gone through the pain of withdrawal and all the toxins started to come out, I started to feel really good.

I like where I am now. I feel so much more alive. I appreciate the simplest of things, because I had nothing before. My mum is proud to call me her son again. People treat me with respect. Because of my experience I have a lot to contribute and give back to society. I go to a recovery centre where people are encouraged to write, play music and be creative. I found that I like encouraging others, helping them to focus on the positive.

I have a lot of people to thank for helping me. I'd especially like to thank Ed Moses who believed in me every step of the way. The people at the recovery centre and St Martins have been good to me too. They're helping me to apply for peer support worker jobs. Helping people to kick bad habits and access services motivates me. I've realised that the most important thing in life is to help others and you have to look after yourself to do that.”



Keeping it clean

Bernard and Michael on why work and taking care of others matters.



Bernard: “I’m always cleaning this place. It gives me work to do. I like singing while I work too. Everyone knows me and my singing. And my little jokes. I keep it clean with the humour though. Like I do with the old cloth and the old spray.

I used to work for a butcher in south London for years. I sometimes started work at 4am and worked until 6 or 7pm. The meat cart used to come by and drop stuff off early doors, see. I was lucky. I had a good governor. The money wasn’t much to begin with, but the governor raised it, when he saw me working hard. He knew I had a wife and kids to support. It’s the small things like a bit of consideration that matter.”

Michael: “Before St Martins, I lived in a studio flat in Hounslow. I’ve been here a year. I’m happy here. I’m a happy person. I also like to be busy. I help friends, friends who stay indoors and don’t do anything. I go round and help clean. I do shopping for them. Sometimes they make me food and say thank you. But you’re not always thanked for helping others.

I like going swimming and being active. I’m a religious person and believe that God will help me, if I need it. But I also know I have to do things for myself, like laundry, cleaning and taking care of myself and others. I work in a church as a volunteer. I help keep the church clean too. What I’d like to do is return to living in a little studio flat. I want to work to support myself, so I’m applying for a job at Asda. You need to start somewhere.”

Board Member Corner

**New board member
Clive Blackwood
introduces himself.**



“This is my first experience in becoming a board member of any organisation. I am relishing the opportunity to work with the senior management team at St Martins and offer an element of critical oversight for the delivery of high quality services. I hope my previous and current working experience within mental health provider services will add some clinical working knowledge to support the vision and values of the organisation, as well as strengthening outcomes and service quality.

I worked for several years as a qualified social worker in both Child Protection and Adult Services. Then I spent about 10 years within Adult Forensic Mental Health and I was a former approved mental health practitioner.

In 2007 I moved into my first non-clinical role with North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT), as the Service Manager for mental health services. In 2009 I moved to NHS Islington community services, where I currently remain as an Assistant Director of Services.

In the short time since I have become a board member, (I was elected in September 2013), I have seen and heard about the good work within the organisation and the level of expertise developed within different projects.

I am excited to be able to participate in some key organisational strategy decisions as a board member. My aim is to ensure that these decisions are in the interests of the organisation and also beneficial to existing and future residents of St Martins.”

Christmas Events Diary

Here are some of the main activities taking place around the festive period. Staff will be able to tell you more details nearer the time. Please note that the timing of some events may change. You will be kept informed about any changes to the plans.

Chalkhill Road

- 24th December**, Chinese meal.
- 25th December**, Christmas meal with presents and a quiz.
- 26th December**, Ten Pin Bowling.
- 28th December**, Trip to Hackney Empire.
- 31st December**, New Years Eve dinner.

Davenant Road

- 8th December, 7.30pm**, Suggs from Madness 'my life story' at the Garrick Theatre.
- 9th December, 4pm-8pm**, Carol singing in Trafalgar square.
- 21st December, 6.30pm**, Festive film night at Davenant Road.
- 25th December**, Christmas dinner and games.

Ferrini House

- 10th December**, Ten Pin Bowling.
- 25th December, 3pm**, Christmas Dinner.
- 26th December**, Pub Quiz, cold meats, side dishes, fruit and seasonal cakes and biscuits.

New North Road & Wilton Villas

- 17th December**, Christmas Disco.
- 18th December**, Making and putting up xmas decorations.
- 19th December**, Winter Wonderland Trip.
- 24th December**, Traditional Christmas meal.
- 25th December**, Christmas buffet with staff.
- 26th December**, Buffet & Bingo.

Wordplay

The words; 'presents', 'tree', 'snow', 'pudding', 'holly' and 'santa' are hidden in this puzzle. Can you find them?

X	T	X	Z	X	G	X	X
P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S
X	E	Y	A	X	I	Y	N
Y	E	Z	N	Z	D	Z	O
Z	Z	X	T	Y	D	X	W
Y	X	Z	A	X	U	X	Z
H	O	L	L	Y	P	Z	X

Sudoku

Each grid of 9 squares and all horizontal and vertical lines must include the numbers 1-9 without any repetitions.

6		5	7	2			3	9
4					5	1		
	2		1					4
	9			3		7		6
1			8		9			5
2		4		5			8	
8					3		2	
		2	9					1
3	5			6	7	4		8

- 318 - 320 St Paul's Road • London N1 2LF
- T 020 7704 3820 • F 020 7704 3832
- www.stmartinsofours.org.uk