Join us for the Christmas Meal together at Cosmo in West Quay South on Wednesday 13th December 5 p.m.

Cost is £15.99 per head for the option of the traditional Christmas cuisine or choose from a wide range of cuisines including continental options from the range on the buffet. Monies to be paid by December 6th. Please see Ramesh Heer or Michelle Emereau for details.

**Details of Closure dates for Christmas**

The last Wednesday drop-in will be December 20th. We will re-open on Wednesday 10th January 2018.

**For details contact:**
Project Leader: Michelle Emereau on 07784365892 emereau5@msn.com

Project Assistant & Men’s Support Group Ramesh Heer on 02380 225473.

Activity Co-ordinator & leader of ‘with a song in mind; art group and ‘Not Staying in’ social group Saire Herschel 07585616204 saireherschel@gmail.com

Floristry, cookery, wellbeing and sport juliejaneanstey@gmail.com 07738681906.

For W.R.A.P. support group Michael Johnston mj.jammy81@gmail.com

For ‘knit and relax’ contact Flori on flori_fernandes@hotmail.com

For Women’s group contact Frances on 07850189069

**Who we are**

We are a voluntary charity set up by Frances Heather, who has retired as an Occupational Therapist from working in the NHS in mental health. The project is managed by a committee of trustees and run by a part-time project leader and members with lived experience of mental health issues. We offer support, training, mentoring & opportunities to people experiencing mental health issues.

**Where do we meet**

We currently offer a weekly drop-in at Freemantle United Reformed Church 257 Shirley Road, SO15 3HS, and other mid-week groups across the week at Freemantle Community Centre, Randolph Street, Central Baptist Church, Devonshire Road, Polygon SO15 2GY and The Third Age Centre, Cranberry Terrace. SO14 OLH. We also get involved in a number of extra-mural activities and sports across the city.

**How to get involved**

Anyone who has experienced mental health issues is welcome to be involved, together with carers, relatives and friends. We also welcome people as volunteers; especially those with lived experience and/or skills they would like to develop and share. We particularly encourage service-user led initiatives. We accept referrals from the statutory services and welcome people to come along and visit us and for individuals to apply to join us. Our committee is run by a number of service-users who are our members and help to run the project. The committee meets on a bi-monthly basis. We have fortnightly member’s forums where people can discuss various topics and express their views. We also have sub-committees for fund-raising, social committees etc., and run small groups on healthy lifestyle and wellbeing.

**Format:** 10.30—11 a.m.—meet and greet, tea and coffee, 11 00 a.m. Quiz 11.30 a.m.—member’s forum or committee meeting bi-monthly 12.30 p.m.—activities: ‘make n’ mend’ sewing club 1st and 4th Wednesday, 2nd Wednesday, floristry or encaustic art, 3rd week wellbeing Wednesday with hand massage, self-care, manicures etc., and gardening group, organised sport (once a month) plus walks and swimming groups. Table games, card-making available most weeks or choose own activity. Termly pottery classes. Recovery Star with Michelle fortnightly and music appreciation, creative writing groups etc.

contact M. Emereau on 07784365892 emereau5@msn.com

Autumn 2017
What we have been up to:
Thanks to People’s Health Trust funding we have not only managed to survive as an organisation, but are now beginning to thrive as we have been able to take on more staff and develop more of our activities.
This past summer term has seen our members getting more active. We started doing sailing when Julie, one of our volunteers and tutors, started volunteering at the Testwood Lakes for sailing. Following a period when the lake was closed due to problems with algae, we started to explore the possibility of using Southampton Water Activities Centre and since mid-summer have been taking people sailing there instead. They have a wide range of boats to use including the sonar, which is a keel boat and very accessible from the pontoon and quite stable; even for people with physical disabilities. This has worked out very well for us as Adam, who runs the centre has been very helpful and welcoming to our group.
Members also had the opportunity of taking some ‘taster’ courses in canoeing and rock-climbing. Members who took part in these activities thoroughly enjoyed the experience and it was great for team building too. Members also learnt of the opportunity to continue these sports through the ‘sailability’ programme on a Monday evening throughout the summer and ‘paddleability’ on a Saturday. In the near future, we hope that some will follow up the rock climbing with a rope handling course and that we will be able to achieve some funding to put on more taster courses in rock-climbing and canoeing and also arrange some horse-riding sessions locally.

Poetry corner:

A poem about mental health

When it seems like the whole world’s against you
And the black clouds bar your way
Thinking nice thoughts
Will brighten up your day.

It’s not just about the pills
Although they may be helpful
It’s practising the mental skills
And to yourself being truthful.

There’s more to life than mental health
But is that really true?
The more that we accept ourselves
The better will do.

c Saire Herschel 28/10/17
CREATIVE OPTIONS MEN’S SUPPORT GROUP

The group offers men who may be suffering with mental health issues such as stress, depression and anxiety a chance to meet others suffering the same difficulties. It is a safe place to share experiences to gain and give peer support.

The Men’s Support Group have visited the Submarine Museum in Gosport, and have also visited Eastleigh and Winchester. At present they are organising a day trip to the Tank Museum in Bovington, Dorset.

The support group meets every Friday from 10:30 to 12:30 at the Central Baptist Church, Devonshire Road, Southampton SO15 2GY. For further information contact Ramesh Heer on 02380 225473.

Alison McGregor Boat Trip

We went on a boat trip on the Solent. It was a nice evening, if a little cold, but we were furnished with warm crocheted and insulated blankets and hats and hot chocolate. The sea was quite calm and the sun was out. We were lucky enough to see the Red Arrows fly past and do their famous acrobatic display as part of Cowes week, which was really exciting.

It was really nice to go on a proper ride out in a boat, have a good chat and generally enjoy ourselves. Hopefully we will do it again.

- Sue
Keeping the Hope Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day

Friday September 8th 2017

Friday 8th September saw the third Annual workshop to be held by Creative Options organised by Saire Herschel and hosted by Central Baptist Church. The day was supported by the British Red Cross, The Good Mental Health Company, Recovery College and Samaritans. A number of other organisations attended and were represented.

The theme for the day was ‘The river of hope’ and the river of despair’ and this was portrayed by two rivers running through the room with the opportunity to write or draw responses at various stations on the course of the river. Throughout the day there was interactive theatre with three different scenarios showing aspects of people’s lives who might be at risk of suicide. This time it was our own members who participated in the acting. The audience were invited to join in with discussion and reflection on each of the drama pieces and then to visit the ‘rivers’ at various points to write their reflections on each aspect of the journey. There was a reflective room where people could go and sit quietly and add their thoughts to the ‘tree of hope’ as well as record their responses creatively in other ways and this was well received.

Will a gin and tonic fix this?

‘River of hope, River of despair’

And now for something completely different!

Painting to Music sessions

Emma Bailey is delighted to be able to offer three introductory sessions in painting to music with Saire Herschel

On Wednesdays 1.00 p.m.—2.30 p.m.
November 15th, 29th and December 13th
At the Freemantle United Reformed Church
(during the main drop-in)

Using a variety of media Emma will lead people in making a response to music

All materials and Tuition provided
(no extra charge other than normal drop-in fee)

We have been delighted to welcome Emma Bailey as a new member/tutor in our midst.

Emma comes to us with a history of being in education and a skilled craftswoman. She now delivers one-off sessions of arts and crafts for us and teaches cookery and wellbeing when our other tutor is not available

Emma is also a member of the Shirley Warren Community Art club and now co-leads this group with Frances Heather.

In the New Year she will be offering a number of workshops on a Tuesday also.

Emma has recently started her own business enterprise called ‘Create and Prosper’ and is offering workshops in the community i.e. ceramics, glass painting etc.,
(fur further details contact Emma on 07986 367 165)
You are warmly welcome to the second of a new set of (and last one for this year)

**Mental Wealth Trialogues**

Organised by Creative Options Community Project, Hosted by the Third Age Centre

The Third Age Centre, Cranberry Terrace, Southampton SO14 OLH
Thursday December 7th 6.30 p.m.—8.30 p.m.
Free of Charge, Refreshments provided
All welcome

Mental Wealth Trialogues are held all over Europe, bringing people together to share their ‘wealth’ of experience of mental health and wellbeing rather than concentrating on illness. Whether you have lived experience or not, are a carer or professional or just someone who wants to understand more—this is an opportunity to share in a free space.

Meta from ‘Living in Harmony’ held two drumming sessions and ‘With a song in mind’ singing group held some community singing. Councillor Paul Lewzey was in attendance and Alan Whitehead also gave his support. Stephen Press, one of our Trustees, was the MC for the day. The first thirty people to attend all received surprise gifts. Everyone in attendance received either a keyring or a fridge magnet with a design by our own Sue Burnett. The day culminated in a song and a chance for the actors to share what it was like to be part of the drama. All together the day was very successful indeed. People were given a glass votive with a ‘t’ light in it and instructions on how to participate in the world suicide awareness day on the Sunday together with an invitation to join others at the peace fountain for the occasion. Thanks is conveyed to Central Baptist Church for hosting the event, Southern Health Foundation Trust and Brendan O’Reilley for sponsoring the event. We are also grateful for Claudia Murg from ‘we make southampton’ for coming and making a film of a drama and offering to get this professionally edited for us. (This will be available any day now!) Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make the day a great success.

Sunday September 10th World Suicide Awareness Day at the Peace Fountain

On World Suicide Prevention Day a number of us met at the Peace Fountain at 8pm to mark the passing of those who lost their lives through suicide by lighting a candle. The candle lighting was also to signify hope to the rest of us who had either survived, or lost someone through suicide. Although we were few in numbers it was a very spiritual experience and we hope to do it again next year.

Saire Herschel 29/10/17.
Saturday November 11th saw a number of our members join a party of forty plus other people to attend the ‘Premier’ of the movie ‘I’m your Number One Fang!’ which was a murder mystery play performed by Southampton University Players hosted by Mark and Co. at the Brooke House Country Club Botley. As it will be plain to see from the photographs a very good time was had by all. As we are both members of Southampton University Players and have acted ourselves in murder mystery plays; Ron, was determined to really enter into the spirit of it all and turned up dressed as Lord George! If you have never been to a murder mystery you do not know what you have missed. It is somewhat a surreal experience that whilst sharing a delicious meal and chatting with your fellow guests there are people having major crisis and arguments in your midst! Many of our guests found this totally hilarious and entertaining. The plot was very interesting and entertaining. We were introduced to Don Cannoli the great film producer and Director of Bueno Pasta Pictures whose film was being premiered. As usual, in these murder mysteries, the evening, which started with glamour and glitz descended rapidly into chaos and a dastardly deed was afoot! In fact, in this case, it was two dastardly deeds! with two murders to solve, but fortunately only one murderer to guess. The acting was so good that when the time for the revelation came no table had the answer correct, which is very unusual apparently. Thus, the cast decided to draw lots to decide who would win the prize, and actually

‘Lord’ George (Aka Ron) and Frances
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Martin, Shaz and Gosia

Is it better face to face?
There was a radio programme where it was stated that people with mental health issues apparently find it easier to send text messages than talk face to face. This is why so many people apparently rely on texting. However, receiving long text messages can be very difficult. Also, with a text message its easy to misconstrue the message due to the lack of visual cues. Sometimes people find receiving lots of text messages; especially very long ones, quite stressful. It can be especially difficult if it is late at night or early in the morning. It is also difficult when its talking about issues to do with other people, which becomes gossip. This results in a great deal of upset and can cause relationship difficulties. Texting is not generally a good way to share emotions or for discussion of deeper issues. Sometimes when people receive a lot of requests or demands to do certain things i.e. meet up at a certain time, this can also seem like bullying. All we would ask is for people to think twice before they text and think whether it would be better face to face. If anyone has any difficulties with anyone within the project, please do speak to a member of staff in the first instance to share your concerns rather than talking to other members of the group about it. Lets all work together to make a more harmonious group

Have you filled in your membership form yet?
Whether you have been coming a long time or not, we need a membership form filled in. We have dispensed with the old referral system and now have a membership form. We need your details on record. These details will be for the Trustees and staff only and personal addresses and telephone numbers will not be divulged to anyone else, but kept confidential. Please see Ramesh as soon as possible if you need to fill in a form.
Fancy getting yourself fit?

Recently, we met up with Frank at Southampton Healthy Living Forum, who runs studio Red in Shirley Southampton (just above Sainsburys). Frank has offered our group corporate membership for up to 10 of our members to belong to the gym for a very low cost indeed. **We now need a minimum of 6, preferably 8 people to sign up to go to the gym regularly and commit to pay £12.00 a month to Creative Options.** This is a fantastic deal, which works out only £3.00 a week each and you can go as many times as you like and you can go on your own. **Please get in touch with Michelle if interested in participating in the scheme.**

Fancy a dip?

We offer the opportunity for people to go swimming at the Shirley Pool on a Wednesday morning together. This is subsidised by Creative Options Project. We are also trying to organise a monthly sport trip i.e. badminton at St. Marys sports hall, which will also be at a reduced cost. If interested see Julie Anstey.

Winter sailing arrangements:

Now the clocks have gone back, there is no sailing on a Monday evening. However, 'sailability' are offering monthly sailing sessions on a Saturday and the next one is Saturday November 18th 10.30—12. Noon. If interested see Julie Anstey.

Monday sailing with 'sailability' will re-commence in the Spring.

It was a very good evening of good food, fun and company and we raised around £600 profits for Creative Options Community Project. Many, many thanks to all those who supported and bought tickets for the evening.

Special thanks to Stephen Press, one of our Trustees, who came along and supported with his family and friends and filled a whole table. Many thanks to the University Players who gave their services free. Thanks to Mark and the crew at Brooke House Country Club and all the staff for the excellent meal. Thanks too, to the Archers Trust because they gave us recently a surprise gift of funding which enabled us to book taxis to get our members out to the country club.

The University Players have offered to do another play for us in the New Year and as this has been so successful, it is well worth the consideration —so watch this space!
Are you interested in photography?
Would you like to learn to use a digital camera?
Would you like to learn how to edit and crop your own photographic work?

If the answer is yes, then Maybe you would like to join our fortnightly photography group at Freemantle Community Centre Randolph Street, SO15 3HU. The group is run by an experienced voluntary tutor. People meet up every week at the Freemantle Community Centre at 11.30 a.m. One week the group go out and take photographs. These sessions are free of charge. The second week they come together in the art room and use the computers to digitally enhance and work on their photographs. This session is £2.50 to cover the cost of the room hire and refreshments. The group also go on field trips using the minibus approximately one a month. (Cost £2.50 towards fuel.)

There is also an opportunity to learn computer skills with our member of staff Paul. This is for beginners or improvers.

This group will only continue if there are a minimum of 3 persons attending each week, so if you want photography to continue, you must support it!

Next Meeting: - Monday 20th November 11.30 a.m.
Freemantle Community Centre Randolph Street.

Creative Expressions’ weekly art club
Fridays 2 p.m. At Central Baptist Church, Devonshire Road, Polygon, Southampton SO15 2GY

Do you enjoy art? Are you creative?
Would you like to learn more about drawing and painting?

Are you looking to doing something creative in the company of others? If the answer is ‘yes’, then maybe our weekly art group may be just the thing for you. Once a month the group use different ‘creative expressions’ i.e. painting to music, poetry or prose. Once a month there is a visiting tutor and the other weeks vary including trips to art galleries etc. If interested please see Saire Herschel.

“Out of the blue!”
We received a telephone call from the Archers Trust the other day. We had applied to them last year but were unsuccessful. However, this year, their Trustees decided they would like to fund us. They telephoned to ask if we were still working and we were glad to be able to report we were now a Registered Charity, which they were pleased about. They then said they would like to give us £500! This money will help subsidise the gym work, the field trips for photography and pay for transport for the social evening and Christmas events. We are also in the process of re-applying to the Big Lottery for funding for our special events and courses and Sport England for our extra-mural activities and sports.

Are you good at Fund-raising?
We are organising a fund-raising committee and looking for people to join us and bring ideas. This is a very good thing to do as voluntary groups need to be active in raising their own funds. However, experience tells us that the larger sums of money that are usually needed are not normally raised this way. Fund-raising can, and does, however, raise the profile of organisations, which is perhaps the main value. Please contact us with your ideas if you would like to help us.

Fancy doing a sponsored swim or sky-diving for us?
We are also interested to hear if there people who are out there who may be willing to do some fund-raising for us. Be it adventurous or creative, we are keen to hear from people who may enjoy doing this kind of activity who may be looking for a charity to support. Now we are Registered with the Charity Commission, we are hoping that there may be those out there who would like to consider us to be their next project.

Please let us know if you are aware of any possibilities for Corporate sponsorship also.
On the second and third week of every month there is usually a cookery session. One week it will be meal cookery and the next time it will be cake-baking. Julie, one of our members heads up this work. This is an ideal time to gain some skills in cooking nutritious healthy meals as well as having the opportunity to do some good old fashioned home-baking and practice those all time favourites as well as trying new recipes i.e. sugar free cakes.

In future, the classes will only run if there is a minimum of three people attending. In order for us to continue these cookery groups the sessions must be supported.

For meal cookery, let Julie know by the second Wednesday of the month you want to cook and for cake-baking, the third Wednesday of the month. Non-returnable deposit of £3.00 for meal cookery and a meal for two persons costs £6.00 in total. You have the option of doing a meal for one or two persons. Cake-baking is a deposit of £2.00 and £4.00 in total to take the cakes home. Contact Julie if interested. On 07738681906.

Saturday November 18th Christmas Market at Shirley Warren Action Church, Warren Crescent. SO16 6AY 10 a.m.—2 p.m.

Creative Options will be having a stall to sell hand-made items—gifts and cards. Your support on the stall or at the event itself will be most welcome.

Come and have a ‘knit and a natter’!

The knit and relax group is headed up by Flori Fernandes and meets fortnightly on Thursdays, at Central Baptist Church from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Its open to anyone with lived experience who enjoys knitting, crochet or stitching / embroidery. We are a small, friendly and flexible group, open to men and women, with a range of abilities and experience. You don’t have to come to every session, although we’d like it if you could. The first hour and half we chat, work on projects, help each other out and share our problems and hopefully solve them! We work on various projects and are currently doing items for Christmas fair. We have a cuppa and sometimes home-made cake. Why not come and join us and see if its for you! you’d be very welcome.

Next meeting: November 23rd 2.30 p.m. at Central Baptist Church, Devonshire Road, Polygon SO15 2GY

Are you looking for support?

Would you like to meet and discuss things in confidence with other like minded women?

If the answer is yes, then our fortnightly Women’s support group may be for you.

We meet at 2.30 p.m.—4.30 p.m. at Central Baptist Church on Thursdays (fortnightly—opposite week to ‘knit and relax’). Sometimes the group go out on social outings.

The group is open to anyone :- with an ongoing mental health issue, newly diagnosed or just needing some emotional and psychological support..

We have a time of sharing with one another and then may explore a theme relevant to the needs of the group.

The group is very confidential.

£1.50 including refreshments (and often home-made cake)

Next meeting: Thursday November 16th 2.30 p.m. at Central Baptist Church, Devonshire Road, Polygon SO15 2GY

We will be discussing at this next meeting what the ladies would like to do for Christmas i.e. a Christmas outing for tea to a garden centre to see the Christmas crafts and gifts—your ideas are welcome please.
Wellness-Recovery-Action-Planning (W.R.A.P. Support group)

This fortnightly group is a member-led support group for people who have done their W.R.A.P. Courses with the Recovery College. The group is aimed at supporting people to use the W.R.A.P. Programme that they have been taught and to put it into action in their lives. Headed up by Michael Johnston the group meet on a drop-in basis at 2 p.m. On Tuesdays fortnightly at Central Baptist Church. Refreshments are provided and the cost is £1.50 to cover the room hire and refreshment costs.
For W.R.A.P. support group Michael Johnston mj.jammy81@gmail.com

‘Make n’ Mend’ with Karen Tait and Upholstery group

The first and last Wednesday of every month sees us busy beavering away on sewing machines and it is a hive of activity. These session are also an opportunity for people to learn to make repairs and alterings and gain confidence in learning how to use a sewing machine. Sessions are just £1.00 per session (on top of the attendance fee of £2.50.) Then when you have finished the project you just have to pay the balance of what the project cost—usually between £5-£7 depending on the item. People can bring their own materials and projects and receive free tuition. Also, anyone wanting to learn to do repairs etc., at no cost. We charge very little to cover the cost of competed projects—which are really lovely! We are also trying to produce a number of items for sale i.e. Tissue bags, cushions, sewing bags etc., Karen also leads us in bi-monthly encaustic art lessons where we learn to make beautiful pictures, keyrings and fridge magnets in wax. We also have two-week courses in Pottery each term with Sarah Rinaldi.

‘With a song in mind’

‘With a song in mind’ continues to go from strength to strength with an average of ten people attending each week. We welcome new members and people are free to bring along their own instruments. ‘With a song in mind’ meets every Monday from 2 30 p.m. 3 30 p.m. At the Third Age Centre, Cranberry Terrace. We sing and play a wide variety of music from Bob Marley to Crowded House. We also draw from world music and sing international songs and songs from different cultures. This is a free group and refreshments are available. It is hoped that an evening group may be started in future.
Contact Saire on 07585616204. saireherschel@gmail.com

We are participating in a carol service at Central Baptist Church on Sunday 10th December at 6 p.m. We will be performing a mixture of repertoire including a carol written by Saire Herschel especially for the group. New members are always welcome to this weekly free music group.

Are you interested in Alternative Therapies?

Would you like to:-
Learn about essential oils and their uses?
Learn about massage?
Learn how to make your own massage oils?

If the answer is ‘yes’ then this ‘taster’ course might be for you.
Julie Anstey, one of our member tutors, is a qualified further education tutor and has delivered a number of courses for the Council in alternative therapies.
Julie is offering a ‘taster’ course for our members in the New Year for 6 weeks of around 2 hours each week. The cost will be around £2/£3 per week per person and will be subsidised. This will include all instruction and the opportunity to take items home which have been made. If you are interested then please contact juliejaneanstey@gmail.com 07738681906.