



acorn
PREGNANCY
COUNSELLING CENTRE

Annual Report 2021

“Wonderful charity!”

“I can’t believe how much speaking to someone once a week changed my life at such a hard time. Wonderful charity!”

These are the words of an Acorn client who has received counselling support in the last year.

Acorn stayed open in lockdown!

In spite of the restrictions imposed as a result of Covid-19, Acorn has remained open to clients with our Centre Manager and counselling volunteers working from home.

Counselling remotely

Clients have been offered telephone and online counselling instead of face to face and the steady stream of referrals has meant as many sessions have been held with clients as in 2019.

Sadly schools were closed

Whilst our schools work inevitably stopped following the closure of schools, the schools team are ready to return when this is possible.

*Richard Marshall, Chairman.
April 2021*

Clients’ comments:


‘Here are some more comments from our clients over the past year:

‘Thank you once again for the help and support. Acorn is an incredible charity that we are very lucky to have’

‘I thought the counsellor was excellent. Very professional, pragmatic and non-judgemental’

‘I just want to say a huge thank you to my counsellor and Acorn Pregnancy for the support, kindness, comfort and reassurance over the last few months. I am eternally grateful’

‘I was really impressed with how quickly I was able to receive help. This was very important to me. My counsellor was fantastic’

See you at the
**AGM on Zoom Mon 21 June
at 7pm!**
RSVP 

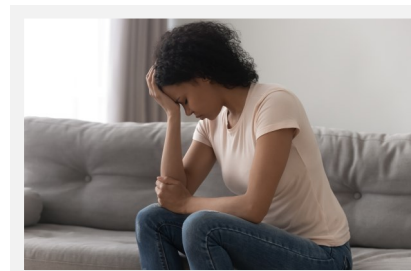


Acorn Counselling

Britain lockdown and our counselling goes digital

Phone and online service

We adapted our service during the year to offer telephone and online counselling.



Face to face counselling finally resumed

Having found new premises and after completing appropriate risk assessment and Covid-19 protocol procedures we restarted face to face counselling towards the end of the year.

Clients get more choice

We now offer both face to face and telephone/ online counselling services depending on client preference. We see this as an important development of the service Acorn is able to offer for the future.

Helping our clients

59 clients made contact with us during the year of which 32 came to appointments.

4 of these were for unexpected pregnancy counselling, 7 for initial assessments only, with some 21 clients seen for up to 10 weeks of pregnancy loss counselling sessions each (predominantly miscarriage and abortion).

189 hours of counselling in 2020

In total 189 x 1 hour sessions with clients were held.

How did they find Acorn?

Over the past year the main sources of referral have been:

- 41% Time to Talk
- 16% Website
- 12% GP

Acorn has a great reputation in the NHS

At a time of considerable pressure on the NHS it is pleasing to note how Acorn has been acting as a referral point of choice for the NHS Counselling service Time to Talk due to Acorn's reputation and specialised service offering.

Pregnancy counselling team

Thanks to the team

Our counselling service has been provided by a team of 4 counselling volunteers supervised by Angela Watt. During the year we have said 'goodbye' with our thanks to Alison Crosthwaite. At the time of writing we currently have 3 counselling volunteers covering the work.

Can you help?

We are seeking additional volunteers to cover this core part of the service provided by Acorn and if you are aware of anyone suitable please let us know.

I just want to say a huge thank you to my counsellor and Acorn Pregnancy for the support, kindness, comfort and reassurance over the last few months. I am eternally grateful.

Client

Acorn in Schools

Schools work disrupted by pandemic

Sadly some students have missed out

Sadly this year due to the pandemic we have not been able to provide our interactive sessions covering relationships and the story of pregnancy.

Acorn's enthusiastic team can't wait to return to school!

Our team is however ready to return to the schools and we anticipate that a full programme of visits will occur in the next academic year.



I would love to have your team in for the new term in September 2021!

Teacher

Acorn's premises



Covid made Acorn homeless!

As mentioned last year as a result of social distancing measures we were required to vacate our rooms at Action for Deafness.

Searching for somewhere

The premises sub-committee was reformed and after viewing various options agreed a 5 year

lease on 2 offices at Pilgrim House near West Worthing station.

We're delighted with our new place

The premises are entirely suitable for our use and we are very pleased with their provision. If you would like to see them please contact the Centre Manager who will be delighted to show you around



Acorn's new counselling room

Acorn Centre

Centre Management

Angela Geach has continued to work as our part time (12 hours per week) employed member of staff. She remains the first port of call for any enquiry about Acorn in particular from clients. Amongst other things she has been responsible for ensuring our new premises are fit for use including development of our Covid-19 protocol. We greatly appreciate what she brings to the role.

Trustees

Five trustees in 2020

During the year there have been 5 trustees – my co trustees being Mary Parish, Patrick Woodward, Gillian Woodward and Pam Denman, the latter 2 appointed at the AGM. The trustees have met several times during the year by Zoom tackling a variety of issues not least the change in premises and adapting the service following the impact of Covid-19.

Official bodies

Acorn continues to be registered with the Fundraising Regulator and remains a member of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations and of the British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy.

Communication

Acorn news online

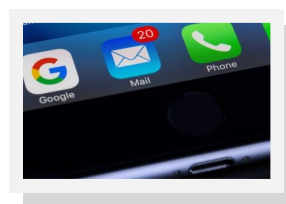
In addition to the Centre Manager's monthly mailing to members, this year we have developed a quarterly Acorn update. Available on our website, it is also mailed to all those interested including clients who are given the invitation to sign up for it at the end of their course of counselling sessions. We have noted that a number of clients are so appreciative of the help they have been given that they want to stay in contact with Acorn and/or contribute financially. The updates are a way of keeping in touch with those who may become important ambassadors of our work to others. We are grateful to Gillian for producing this regular communication.

Acorn video

Although we have not been able to conduct the visit programmes to churches and other community groups we had intended, we instead prepared short video clips of our counselling volunteers explaining the work they do. These were sent to a number of groups and in particular were shown within various online church services.

Live streaming for mental health awareness week

The work of our counselling volunteers also featured within Worthing Mental Health Awareness week in October. Interviews with 2 of our counselling volunteers were streamed over a 30 minute session increasing awareness of the work of Acorn.



Acorn's Patron



Tim Fooks

Tim Fooks, Acorn's patron in 2020

As mentioned last year Tim Fooks, who has been High Sheriff of West Sussex for 2020/21, was appointed Acorn's first patron.

His appreciated commitment continues

We have appreciated his commitment to Acorn and ideas for promotion of the work. We are glad that he will be continuing in this role with us.

Thank you once again for the help and support. Acorn is an incredible charity that we are very lucky to have.

Client

Finance

Boosted finances

Our financial position has been boosted over the past year by both an increase in income and a reduction in expenditure.

The increase in income has been a result primarily of receipt of a number of one off grants including those from Sussex Community Foundation, Worthing Community Chest, Souter Charitable Trust and the Coronavirus Community Support Fund. We were also a designated local charity for the Co-op local community fund being one of three charities supported by Co-op members buying goods at 3 local stores.

We are grateful to our financial supporters

Our expenditure reduction is mainly a result of lower rental costs. We are grateful to all those who support Acorn financially.

Thanks due to Patrick, who is standing down

I also want to pay tribute to our Treasurer Patrick Woodward who has signalled his desire to step down from the role after many years' service. He has carried out his duties with great care and diligence and

we really do appreciate the time and effort he has devoted.

We're seeking a new Treasurer—any ideas?

We are pleased that Patrick will continue as a trustee but we are currently seeking someone to replace him as Treasurer. Do let us know if you are aware of a suitable person.





The Future



Acorn has emerged strongly from a challenging year

This has been a challenging year for Acorn as it has been for many other charities. However we have come through it strongly due to the commitment of all those who work for and support Acorn whether volunteering, donating or praying and we are grateful to all of them.

We have ended the year having adapted the way we deliver our service and establishing a new physical base.

Reaching out to people

For the future we need to continue to develop the ways we reach out to people. As part of this, given the importance of our online presence, we have decided to refresh our branding and website (our new logo is at the start of this report). The logo reflects the cycle of life with the heart of love at the centre of all we do. You will see more of the fresh colours and look as we seek to appeal to a digital generation.

People are at the heart of Acorn

People are at the heart of all we do and it is our aim in the coming year to continue to serve the people of the Worthing area with, in the words of one of our clients, '*support, kindness, comfort and reassurance*'. We desire that more people become aware of the existence of Acorn and involved in its work.

Richard Marshall, Chairman. April 2021

Volunteering for Acorn

“Fantastic” Acorn volunteers

Our volunteers are special people, in fact a client said: “my counsellor was fantastic!”

We would welcome your help

We are looking to increase numbers in every role (see below) but we particularly need a treasurer and more counselling volunteers. If you would like to join our fantastic volunteer team, please let us know.

office@acornworthing.org.uk

Counselling volunteer	School's team	Admin	Treasurer	Trustee
Church friend	Fundraiser	Donor	Prayer partner	Member

Like a visit from Acorn?

If you'd like an Acorn speaker at your group or to apply for Acorn's schools team to visit your school's year 10 students, do get in touch.



Charitable Objects

Summary of the objects of the charity as set out in its governing document:

To educate people on the subject of pregnancy and the termination of pregnancy and its effects.

To preserve and protect women's health and to provide advice, counselling and assistance to women and their families who are suffering from any effects or distress as a result of pregnancy or following an abortion, miscarriage, cot death, still birth, or loss of a child.

A summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects is contained in this report.

Administrative information

Name of charity:	Acorn Pregnancy Counselling Centre Limited
Registered Charity Number:	1094389
Company registration number:	04407431
Registered office :	Pilgrim House, St Dunstan's Road, Worthing, BN13 1AA
Trustees:	Richard Marshall (Chair), Mary Parish, Patrick Woodward, Gillian Woodward, Pam Denman
Company secretary:	Patrick Woodward
Treasurer:	Patrick Woodward
Centre Manager:	Angela Geach
Independent Examiner:	Anthony Jackson, CPFA
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank, South Street, Worthing

Contact Acorn

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