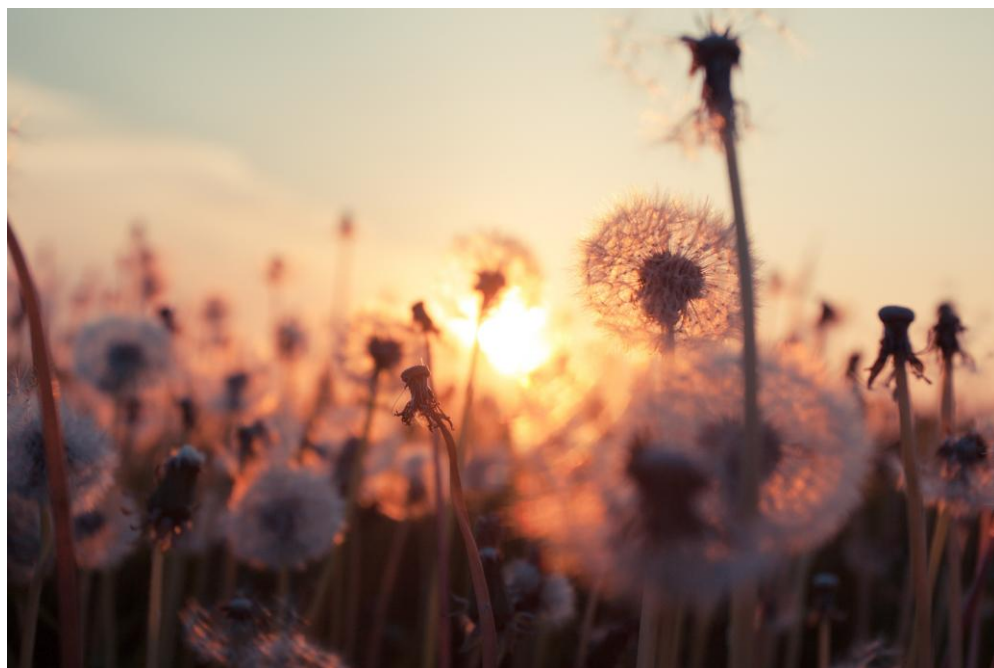




acorn
PREGNANCY
COUNSELLING CENTRE

Autumn Newsletter 2026

Updates and highlights from this season



Thank you for taking time to read our update and news about how Acorn is making an impact in our local community.

We hope you enjoy it. Feel free to pass this on to anyone who you think may also be interested in our work.

www.acornworthing.org.uk



A chat with Steph

What is your role in Acorn?

I'm the Schools' Coordinator and I also present lessons in the local secondary schools that we go into.



How long have you been involved with Acorn?

I started as an assistant to the presenter about 14 years ago and gradually gained in confidence, becoming a presenter about 12 years ago. I started in my role as Schools' Coordinator (volunteer) about 10 years ago.

Can you give an outline of what you do?

I contact schools in the area annually, asking if they would like us to take a lesson for each of their year 10 students during the year. I am also part of the presenting team who deliver the lessons. Our lessons are 50–60 minutes long, depending on the individual school's timetable.

We start each lesson explaining who we are and introducing the other half of Acorn's work; the counselling side. We explain what counselling is/is not, where they can find us, and the issues surrounding pregnancy loss and unintended pregnancy which people come to talk to us about. We emphasise that all we offer is free of charge.

We then invite the students to think about what it might feel like to have an unintended pregnancy, showing them a short video clip of a 16-year-old girl finding she is pregnant, telling her boyfriend and seeing their reactions. We ask the question, 'what would you do?' which they chat briefly about in pairs after the video.

Each pair are then given the task of thinking about the good things and difficult things surrounding each of the three choices available to them i.e., parenting, abortion and adoption at birth, before feeding back to the whole class for discussion.



The third part of the lesson involves students each being given a card with a development of the foetus on it e.g. fingernails start to grow, heartbeat starts, adult height determined

We show a few pictures of the foetus during various stages of development, emphasising that 8 things happen at conception, before asking them to come and put their card where they think it might be on the 40-week lifeline on the table (*pictured left*).

They then stay standing around the lifeline as we put the cards in the correct places. The students are invariably very surprised!

We also show them **four life size models** of the foetus at 12 weeks, 16 weeks, 22 weeks and 30 weeks. At no point is there any judgement for getting it wrong. On the contrary, we say we would have got them wrong before learning this!

We talk about the legal limit for abortions in the UK, how they are done, and at what week in the pregnancy some premature babies are now surviving.

The lesson ends with three ‘opinion’ cards. These are not placed on the timeline as they are not fact, but it is important for each of us to have our own opinions and not to ever judge others if their opinion differs from ours. ‘When does life begin?’, ‘Is a foetus, a person?’, ‘Is a foetus, alive?’ We leave these questions at the edge of the timeline for the students to think about quietly and not discuss.

As presenters and assistants, we *never* offer our opinions.



What prompted you to want to be part of the Acorn team?

Two members of the Acorn schools’ team came to give a talk at a meeting I was at, and what they shared absolutely fitted into where my heart was and I was keen to join the team and signed up there and then.

What do you find most rewarding about volunteering for Acorn?

Engaging with the students, answering their questions and meeting them where they are in their life’s journey. I love hearing their answers and also seeing their incredulity when we show them the lifeline and the development of a foetus!

Can you give a summary of your life experience, passions, and hobbies?

I am a retired primary school teacher and I am married to a retired vicar. We have 4 grown up children and 13 grandchildren. I love walking by the sea and being outside in nature. We have a large family, and there is nothing I love more than being with them.

Is there anything else you want to share?

It’s a huge privilege to be part of Acorn’s work and we are so grateful to be allowed into schools to share the lesson we present. It also helps us to stay relevant and up to date with the school curriculum.



Do you want to be part of our schools’ team?

As you can see from Steph’s information above, the schools’ team is such a valuable part of Acorn’s work. We always welcome new assistants to join us! Assistants don’t present the lesson but support the session leader in the classroom in practical ways. Could this be something that you or someone you know may be interested in? If so, please contact the office at office@acornworthing.org.uk



Broadwater Carnival

We were delighted to have a display at the Broadwater Carnival in July. It was a sunny day and there were many families enjoying the day.

Our quiz fliers were a great way to engage with passers-by. A QR code/link took people to our website where there were a few multiple-choice questions to answer. All who took part were put in our draw to win a digital £25 voucher, so that was a strong incentive! After giving out fliers, we had several good conversations with the public about what Acorn does.

We are very grateful to all our volunteers including a couple of people from our charity partner, Carpenter Box, who manned our stall in shifts throughout the day.



Caroline, a schools' team member at our stand



We've moved... upstairs!

On 1st August Acorn moved from 2 downstairs rooms to 1 counselling room upstairs in Pilgrim House. The move came about at the request of our landlords, to accommodate the needs of everyone using the building.

It has meant that we have downsized and so had to sell some furniture and give away items to charity! We have managed to get everything in the counselling room, along with having some storage space allocated to us in another upstairs area.

We are grateful for those who helped with the move, we couldn't have done it without you!

Office administration will now be done remotely, and some admin processes have been changed to accommodate this.

The new room is very pleasant, and we hope that clients will find it to be a welcoming space for them.



Thank you to Worthing Wellbeing Walks



We are very grateful for the kind donation of £175 from Worthing Wellbeing Walks following on from their fundraising quiz. Lamorna, the founder, presented Gillian and Patrick with the donation at our room in Pilgrim House recently.

Acorn had a small team at the quiz and as our team won, we also received an extra £40 prize money for Acorn!

Patrick was given the opportunity to share about Acorn at the quiz, which was a great opportunity to raise our profile.



Social Media

Welcome to Rachael from *Shake it up Creative* who has taken the role of Acorn's Social Media and Marketing Manager. The trustees were pleased to meet her at their meeting in August. Rachael brings her expertise to creating content for our social media platforms.

As an Acorn friend please do continue to like and share Acorn's posts on Facebook and Instagram 👍

Look them up on www.shakeitupcreative.com/about-us/



Freshers Fairs

We had stands at local college freshers fairs again this year. We were at Worthing College on the 10th September and Northbrook on the 15th September. Our aim was to raise awareness of Acorn with all who attend those events, and hope that if anyone needs our services in future, they will remember that we could help them! As with Broadwater Carnival, we did a quiz with a voucher to be won, which proved popular! A big **thank you** to all volunteers who helped.



Could you display leaflets?

We have a selection of stationery, including leaflets and posters, that we're very happy to distribute if you can use them, such as for a noticeboard, a school or an office. There are also some business cards from the office that can be popped in a pocket or bag. Alternatively, they are available to download from our website: www.acornworthing.org.uk/downloads



Feedback about Acorn



Here are some recent comments we have received:

"Amazing! I did not know if it would help me as I was hurting so much. The hurt didn't disappear, but the sessions gave me space to explore my grief and the tools to explore my feelings" – Client

What was helpful?

"Giving the students a voice – they really enjoyed the session and made lots of excellent contributions" – Teacher

If you would like Acorn to share with your group or club about our counselling and/or schools' work, please contact us for an informal enquiry at office@acornworthing.org.uk or 01903 823893

Thank you for your continued support of Acorn 😊