



# A new chapter begins

In our Autumn Newsletter this time last year, we put out an appeal to our supporters and friends asking for help in finding a new, permanent home for our society. We asked also for your prayers in our search for a base that could eventually provide us with purpose-built counselling suites, supervision and training spaces and modern offices.

Twelve months on, we are delighted to share the fantastic news that after months of searching and as a result of an incredible gift from the Jean Marie Gunn Trust, we have been able to secure premises which we can now call our new home. Following some refurbishment work to enhance disabled access etc., we hope to move in later this year.

Originally known as 'The Old Shambles', our new premises in Billericay High Street will allow us to be in the heart of the community in a central location in the diocese and will give us the space we need to deliver emotional and mental health therapy to children, young people and their families. It will also provide a springboard from where we can further develop and grow our services.

Chris Tisi, our Chair of Trustees sees this move as a milestone in our history and would like also to share his thoughts with you:

*"As a charity we are reliant on the goodwill and incredible support of so many people, without whom we would not, and could not, survive and we are so very grateful to all those who consistently offer encouragement and support. It is a sad truth that the demand on our services continues to grow and the support we have received from the Jean Marie Gunn Trust, and the continuing help of*



*our volunteers and fundraisers, will enable us to create the solid foundation from where we can develop our services further and continue our work protecting and improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing."*

And so it feels as though we are on the threshold of a new and exciting chapter in the life of the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society and on behalf of our staff and trustees, we would like to thank everyone for their suggestions, good wishes and prayers over this last twelve months. We look forward to sharing updates in our newsletters during the coming year as we settle into our new location, and I would like to add my personal thanks to the trustees of the Jeanne Marie Gunn Trust who by their generous gift, have made this possible for us.

*Bernadette Fisher*  
**Director**

## Walking the Camino de Santiago



Good luck to our friend Louise who is walking the Camino de Santiago and raising funds for us in October this year. Louise had originally planned to walk the

route three years ago to celebrate a milestone birthday and following treatment for cancer but had to postpone her plans due to the pandemic.

If you would like to support her, she has set up a fundraising page on Just Giving: [www.justgiving.com/Louise-Geddes](http://www.justgiving.com/Louise-Geddes)

**If you are feeling adventurous and would like to undertake a challenge for us, please contact Damian at [ddillon@bccs.org.uk](mailto:ddillon@bccs.org.uk)**

## New website

We are delighted to launch our brand-new website this month with a new, more user-friendly interface. Finally, our supporters will be able to make donations and pay for their Christmas cards directly on our website by using our new payment platform. We have a new newsletter sign-up facility too and hope that you will be able to find your way around our site more easily. Take a look at [www.bccs.org.uk](http://www.bccs.org.uk)

A huge 'thank you' to our friends at Design Portfolio for their help with this re-platforming.

## New term – new beginnings

As September gets under way, we welcome back our schools' team now rested after the summer break and ready, as usual, to embrace the new term and all that it brings. When we start 'afresh', it naturally allows us the opportunity to look back and reflect. We have worked determinedly over the last year to provide support to children, young people, parents, carers, families, and school staff alike and will seek to expand our provision even further this year. We firmly believe that working collaboratively and holistically is the only way to best support children and young people. A joined-up way of thinking between us, parents, carers, and school staff is the only way to ensure our support isn't stand-alone, and can reach its fullest potential as a result.

In addition to our readiness for therapeutic provision, we are also primed to roll out our brand-new training programme which has been created by some of our most experienced

## Skydiving - feeling adventurous?

Imagine the adrenaline rush as you leave the plane at 10,000ft, heading towards the earth at 120mph for 7,000ft of free fall, then the tranquillity as the parachute deploys and you gently descend back to terra firma.



We are looking for people to make a sponsored 10,000ft freefall parachute jump, so why not take on the challenge of a lifetime whilst at the same time raising vital funds for **bccs**.

therapists who are working in our schools and so are living and breathing the same complex challenges that school staff, carers and families are facing. We thank you for your continued support in us and the work we do.

We were proud to share this article from a head teacher at one of our primary schools who speaks enthusiastically about our way being "heart-warming" and "professional" – that's exactly what we strive to be. We want you to know the children referred to us are in safe hands. We are delighted that the impact we are having is referenced here because 'making a difference' is at the heart of what we do. We pride ourselves on our working being not only reparative, but sustainable. Please do take a moment to read this article.

We wish our schools, families and young people every success during this new academic year.

# bccs' work at The Bishops' School

How did we manage without **bccs**?

We all know that unhappy children struggle to learn, and I think in schools we are getting better at being curious about the reasons for them finding school life and learning difficult. **bccs** counsellors have been a lifeline for our children – and our staff – for many years now.

We are a medium to large primary school in North Chelmsford, one of a handful of jointly Catholic and Anglican schools in the country, and the only one in Essex. We have well over national numbers of SEN (Special Education Needs) pupils, and a steady stream of pupils who need some extra emotional support from counsellors specially selected and trained for working with them. At the moment, we receive a day and a half's counselling each week; that's room for about 9 children.



The pupil pictured helped create and design this display in the school counselling space.

Here's what some of our pupils tell us:

*'She [the bccs counsellor] makes me feel less stressed out and I like the art we do. At the end I feel happier because I have seen her.'*

*'Before I go, I feel both happy and a bit scared because I know I can share my difficult things. Afterwards I feel a lot calmer. It's nice to know you've got someone to speak to.'*

*'It lets my imagination go wild – and I don't have to do work! Making a clay castle made my mum and dad proud of me.'*

Here's what our Pastoral Lead told me:

*'The bccs approach to supporting our children is both heart-warming and professional. They involve every aspect of the child's life – parents, staff, friends, to give the best possible service to children in their care. It's a joy and inspiration to work alongside them.'*

**bccs** don't just provide counselling for children. Their work in supervising our staff, who are coping with pupils whose behaviour can be distressing and de-skilling, is incredibly insightful and supportive – often giving keys to unlocking the way to fruitful relationships and understanding between staff and children. And our staff are vulnerable human beings too, so being able to offer them counselling when the need is there is a massive way in which we as a school can show our support for them too.

Finally, the adaptability of the **bccs** team has meant that we have also been able to provide our staff with basic attachment training, our parents with anxiety training regarding transition to the Foundation Stage, and our local group of Deanery Headteachers with mindfulness training and insights into solving the sometimes seemingly intractable problems in our communities. It's great work!

Thank you, **bccs**, and all who support you, for the great impact you have in our school.

**Thank you to Greg Watters, headteacher of The Bishops' School and the pupils and staff for allowing us to share their thoughts with you.**



## Christmas Craft & Gift Fair

Our Christmas Craft and Gift Fair will be held at The Mill Hall Arts & Events Centre, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh SS6 7ED on Sunday 6th November from 10.30-4pm.

There will be lots of stalls selling crafts and gifts so come along and pick up a few early Christmas presents and enjoy some refreshments while helping us to raise vital funds for our work.

There is free parking at the venue and admission is **only £1.50** for adults and free for children under 14.

Do you have something which we could sell on our stall? Christmas cakes, chutneys, Christmas tree or house decorations, candles, floral centrepieces, or wreaths - any or all donations welcome!

We are very grateful to one of our long-standing supporters who has organised this for us and are looking forward to a very successful event; we hope to see you there!

If you are interested in having a stall at the event or can offer a donated item for the **bccs** stall, please contact Damian on [ddillon@bccs.org.uk](mailto:ddillon@bccs.org.uk) / 07912 308000



## Christmas cards, now in stock!

We know that everyone will be feeling the pinch this autumn but have taken the decision to go ahead with stocking our Christmas cards as usual this year and are keeping the price at £3.99 per pack.

To place your order, you can return our enclosed order form using the envelope provided or you can use the new payment platform on our website to order and pay for your cards directly. Visit [www.bccs.org.uk](http://www.bccs.org.uk) and look for the Christmas tab then click onto the Christmas card page where you will find all our payment methods.

Cheques should be made payable to **'bccs'** or **Brentwood Catholic Children's Society**.

## Tree of Angels

For the last two years we have hosted an online **Tree of Angels** platform which allowed our supporters to light up an Angel and post a virtual greeting or message of remembrance in the name of a loved one.

This year, our Tree of Angels can be used again during November – the traditional month of remembrance – to post a prayer or dedication for someone who has died. It will continue to light up during Advent so that Christmas messages can also be shared with friends and family all over the world. You can upload a photo which will be displayed when you click on your Angel and there is a facility to share the link to your Angel with friends and family via social media or email.

Simply visit [www.visufund.com/tree-of-angels-2022](http://www.visufund.com/tree-of-angels-2022) or go to the Christmas tab on our website at [www.bccs.org.uk](http://www.bccs.org.uk) and click on our Tree of Angels link to make a donation and light up an Angel.

## Annual Prize Draw

This year we have decided to keep costs down and do our bit for the environment by cutting down on the number of prize draw tickets we have printed. We will therefore be sending out only ONE book of tickets rather than two along with our Newsletter.

Our Annual Prize Draw is always well supported, and we are grateful for every raffle ticket sold. However, we are in need of volunteers to join our team of ticket sellers - whether you can sell one book or a hundred! If you require additional tickets or would like to join our team of ticket sellers please contact Damian - [ddillon@bccs.org.uk](mailto:ddillon@bccs.org.uk)

If you would like to take part, please return your ticket stubs and cash/cheque in the envelope provided.

**1ST PRIZE £300**

**2ND PRIZE £150**

**3RD PRIZE £100**

**The Draw will take place on  
Tuesday 10th January 2023.**

