

The Bridge Trust



Annual Report 2006 - 2007

SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

In 2006 we accepted seventeen new residents, of whom seven remain with us. Of the eighteen who left during the year, sixteen were re-settled into more suitable accommodation (a success rate of 88%). Three of these were re-settled via our Supported Move On scheme and six moved into their own housing association flats with Trust support.



Occupancy of our houses, therefore, averaged 91% throughout the year. This would have been higher but for a dip in referrals and therefore successful applications in the third quarter.

Considerable improvements were carried out at all our houses during the year, most noticeably at North Farm House with the installation of entirely new kitchen units, a second sink and drainer and two new cookers which effectively almost doubled the size of the kitchen. Each bedroom also had its own wash-hand basin installed.

The new House Sponsorship scheme has been very successful, raising over £3,000 in the first three months. The money will be used to clear the garden at Strang House and to make the houses into more comfortable homes for the residents who will be consulted about the plans.

STREET TEAMS

Through a Volunteer Co-ordinator, a Street Team Project running 4 nights a week, 52 weeks a year operates in a central Tunbridge Wells Car Park.



Over 40 dedicated volunteers provide food and, if asked, support and practical assistance to the street homeless and socially isolated.

As a non-statutory organisation, the Street Teams are able to engage with this sector of the community, often being one of the first links away from homelessness.

Charity Shops and Warehouse

The Bridge Trust operates two charity shops, one in Tonbridge and the other in Tunbridge Wells, as well as a furniture warehouse which is situated in Cannon Lane, Tonbridge. In addition to the revenue raised through sales to the public, the retail outlets also provide furniture and household items for our residents when they move to their own accommodation.

Events

The 2007 Sleepout was both the wettest and the most successful so far. The revenue was boosted by a Battle of the Bands which preceded the Sleepout at Tonbridge School. The total sponsorship was in excess of £12,500. The Sleepout is the Trust's best known event and in addition to raising funds for our work it attracts attention from the local press, helping to publicise the message of homelessness in West Kent.

As the Trust was without a fundraising manager for several months, the Fun Run had to be cancelled but will resume again in 2008. A number of smaller events were organised by local groups and schools, raising in excess of £10,000 between them.

YOUNG PEOPLE (16-17 YEAR OLDS)

West Kent Youth Nightstop

We are hoping to take this much awaited project forward during 2007. We will be appointing a member of staff to concentrate on its feasibility and set-up over the coming year.

Nightstop is a nationally proven model entailing provision of emergency accommodation for the young single homeless in the homes of approved volunteers.

The approach is intended to keep the young person in a safe and friendly local environment whilst allowing agencies time to look at alternative accommodation or use mediation services to help them return to family where this is appropriate.

Affiliated to Nightstop UK, The Bridge Trust has received funding to create a Nightstop scheme in West Kent.

Supported lodgings

The pilot for supported lodgings proved successful for one young homeless person this year but sadly raised too many issues for the Bridge Trust to continue the scheme in its present form. We are hopeful however that it will be seen as the way forward for young people in the future.

ADVICE CENTRE AND MEDIATION

The Advice Centre provides independent and impartial advice and has averaged over 350 referrals a year since it opened in 1999. For many the centre has been a first port of call when people don't know where else to turn. As well as personal contact, referrals are received from other agencies who have been unable to provide the same service as ourselves.

We also provide a Mediation Service where this is considered appropriate. Wherever possible, we aim to prevent someone becoming homeless and this can sometimes be achieved through an experienced mediator who will meet in a neutral location with the client and their family, in the hope that a compromise can be reached. It has proved especially helpful with young people, either preventing homelessness or opening positive communication with family members.

FUNDRAISING



CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

For the year ended 31 March 2007



This has been my 3rd year as Chairman, and it has been a year of exciting change. As Chairman, it has been my privilege to work closely with the new Chief Executive, Brendan McGowan, and together we have set the foundations for a programme of development and expansion.

Every aspect of the Trust's activities has been revisited to ensure it is up to date and relevant to the Trust's objectives – we expect to complete a major review of all of the Trust's policies and procedures, and an improved strategy to control risk is in the process of being finalised and adopted.

The Board of Trustees released reserves to update our IT infrastructure and the Trust now has reliable hardware, a properly established network and industry standards of security and data storage. The network has been extended to the retail outlets and Projects, and in combination with our networked client database our work with clients is better organised, coordinated and informed. The support we provide to clients is now better - we know this because we have introduced better monitoring of outcomes, incorporated in the new database, as well to completely overhaul our client involvement strategy and the ways we listen to our clients.

The Board of Trustees is taking significant steps forward in the way it manages the Trust's activities with the adoption of an over-arching strategic document this year. This will set the parameters within which the Chief Executive will produce a 3-year Business Plan, reviewed annually. Additionally, the roles of Trustees – strategy setting, risk management and performance overview and staff – operational, have been re-established and the Board has become more effective and productive as a consequence.

A particular highlight for me this year, was the sponsored Sleep Out, the venue for which was kindly provided by Tonbridge School. The shock-

ing weather conditions didn't dampen the enthusiasm of both sleepers and volunteer helpers, even if it did dampen the less well protected cardboard shelters! To think that some people are forced to do this night after night out of desperation is a timely reminder of why the Trust was established, and why it is important that we continue our work, but more importantly that we continuously seek to raise our standards and do what we do as well as we possibly can.

As with all periods of change in a business, particularly following an extended period of constancy, some well-known faces have left the Trust's employ. They will be sorely missed, and we are grateful for their hard work and loyalty over the years. The up-side, of course, is that we are able to welcome new people to the Trust, and we have been particularly fortunate in the calibre of people we have been able to recruit.

The Trust still faces many challenges – an uncertain funding environment, the increasing problem of youth homelessness being but two – but I am confident that the improvements we have made, at all levels of the Trust over the last year, have established a degree of stability and preparedness for these challenges that is heartening to me. The Trust is moving into a new and exciting period where innovation, change and achievement are encouraged and expected, and I'm proud to be a part of it. My heartfelt thanks go out to all staff and volunteers for their hard work, dedication and enthusiasm, without whom the Trust would not exist.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Wykes". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bob Wykes

REPORT OF COUNCIL MANAGEMENT

For the year ended 31 March 2007

The Trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act, present their Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2007. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005), Accounting and Reporting by Charities (revised March 2005), in preparing the annual report and financial statements for the charity.

Reference and Administrative Details: The Trust employs 14 staff. In addition, at least 10 volunteers assist in the running of the shops and warehouse, and c. 40 volunteers comprise the Street Teams.

Structure, Governance and Management: The Bridge Trust Corporation is a charitable company limited by guarantee and was established in October 1995. It is governed by up to 20, but not less than 4 Trustees in accordance with the memorandum and articles of association. There are currently 6 Trustees on the Council of Management. The Council has established 3 sub-committees, each chaired by a different Trustee, to oversee Administration & Human Resources, Fundraising and Projects. Finance matters are dealt with by the Hon. Treasurer and the CEO directly.

The Trustees are responsible for the overall direction and management of the organisation. They are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and can hold office until the second AGM following their appointment when they are eligible for reappointment. Trustees are recruited to ensure the charity has access to a comprehensive range of skills and on the basis of the specific needs of the Bridge Trust.

An induction programme is provided for all new Trustees to facilitate their ability to contribute to the management of the charity. New trustees receive key documents relating to the charity including the Trust's bylaws, the latest annual report and accounts, minutes of recent trustee meetings, guidance booklets from the charity commission, the development plan and a selection of the charity's publications. New trustees have face-to-face meetings with the senior

staff of the charity on a regular basis as part of the induction process. New Trustees are invited to attend a board meeting prior to their appointment.

The Trustee Board meets 4 times a year where decisions are made relating to issues affecting the charity. Training needs of the Trustee Board are assessed and met as necessary on an ongoing basis.

The Trustee Board delegates responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the charity to the Chief Executive.

Risk Management: The Trustees have approved, implemented and regularly review a formal risk management plan, which is operated by staff on a day-to-day basis. Senior staff and Trustees work together to revise the risk management plan annually, identifying emerging risks, prioritising them in terms of potential impact and likelihood of occurrence.

The risk management plan covers financial, operational, systems and other risks. A number of internal procedures are in place to provide assurance against identified risks in order to uphold the integrity and reputation of the charity. These include: a development Plan, annual business plans and budgets which are approved by the Trustees; regular review by the Trustees of financial results, variance from budgets and financial targets; risk management, delegation of authority, policies and procedures. Additionally, Trustees are kept up to date with any changes in governance requirements to ensure they are fully informed of best practice.

Objectives and Activities

Our vision:

Relief of Poverty, and relief of persons in conditions of need, hardship or distress by reason of their social or economic circumstances.

Our mission:

To intervene, guided by a Christian vision, in the cycle of homelessness, unemployment, benefit dependency and exclusion that blights many people's lives, and support them into self reliance, via employment, allowing them to be independent for the rest of their lives.

Our work:

We work to alleviate and, ultimately, end homelessness.

Strategy: The Trust's activities are based on its Development Plan which was approved by the Board of Trustees on 27 June 2006.

Significant Activities

Supported accommodation

We provide 20 units of supported hostel accommodation, in 4 buildings; 2 are in Tonbridge and 2 in Tunbridge Wells. These projects are managed by the Support Services Manager and support provided by 3 Project Workers. Every client receives a support plan within a week of moving in, of which their resettlement ambitions and plans are a key component – support plans are reviewed every 3 months.

Supported Accommodation - Achievements and Performance

The Trust adopted several housing standard performance monitoring indicators during the year – arrears and voids were within target. 92% of clients were resettled. Additional expenditure of £22k was approved by Trustees for essential maintenance works, mainly at North Farm House and Mersey Rd, and CRASH, the building trade charity, generously modernised the kitchens at Strang and Shipbourne. The Trust's overall improvements to IT benefited the Projects with a networked PC at North Farm House, as well as the introduction of a client database, allowing consistent real-time updates and coordination of client activity and progress. Perhaps our greatest improvements have been in the way we engage and involve our residents in the management of their homes.,

Street Team The Street Teams continue to give support and succour to the street homeless in Tunbridge Wells; there are 4 teams that work Monday to Thursday, providing an invaluable respite and emergency resource for the most vulnerable people in the town.

Advice Centre — Based in our offices in Tonbridge town centre, the Advice Centre had over 300 enquiries last year and is run by the Advice Centre Manager.

Advice Centre - Achievements and Performance

The Centre was accredited by the Legal Services Commission this year, as an approved advice and guidance centre. As in previous years, the commonest cause of client's housing problems was the breakdown of a relationship. The Advice Centre Manager ran a mini-pilot for Supported Lodgings with a successful outcome, and with additional funds raised in the year, we will be employing a part-time Nightstop Coordinator to build up the Mediation and Nightstop elements of Shortstop, and to lay the foundations for an effective Supported Lodgings scheme.

Fundraising Programmes: The performance of the Fundraising Manager this year is remarkable, since she didn't start with us until August – for 4 months, therefore, we were without a Fundraiser at all. The Sleep Out was particularly successful, despite horrendous weather, thanks to the resilience and hardiness of the participants, raising over £10,000.

We were also particularly pleased to be chosen by the Phil Collins tribute band, No Jacket Required, as their sponsoring charity.

Communicating with supporters: During the year, 6 issues of our Newsletter were sent out to members of the Trust. We also revamped our website to make it easier to access.

Financial Review: The Statement of Financial Activities for the year shows total incoming resources of £441,659 (2006: £401,724). In addition to income from licence and support charges of £187,079 (2006: £186,716),

the charity received donations and gifts of £61,497 (2006: £59,867) plus grants of £59,000 (2006: £32,647). The retail outlets contributed a net £5,084 (2006: £3,839).

Overall there was a deficit on unrestricted funds of £18,696 (2006 surplus: £14,069). This reflects additional spending on the properties included within maintenance costs, which were £28,594 (2006 £17,676) and additional spending upgrading the IT systems of £7,136. Restricted funds included grants of £27,500 in respect of the costs of employing a part-time Nightstop Coordinator and First Steps (refurbishing the Training Centre), which are expected to be expended during 2007/08.

Reserves: The reserves are available to fund revenue or capital expenditure, and are established over time through accumulation of net incoming resources from the charity's activities. As of 31 March 2007, designated reserves were £120,000 (2006: £128,000). £8,000 was utilised against unplanned expenditure on maintenance during the year. This designated reserve equates to 3.5 months of the current year's expenditure (2006: 3.9 months). Trustees have agreed to work towards building up a designated cash reserve of 6 months expenditure, which for this year equates to £216,053. The policy was formalised at a recent Board Meeting and is included in a Strategy Document.

Plans for the future: Our plans for the future will be set out in the development plan, which is currently being reviewed. Our existing plans include continued development of Shortstop, which helps homeless young people avoid hostel accommodation through the use of supported lodgings, Nightstop, Mediation, Floating Support and Employment and Training support.

Council of Management's Responsibilities: The council of management is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Company Law requires the council of management to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the

state of affairs of the Trust and of the Income and Expenditure of the Trust for that period. In preparing those accounts the council of management is required to:-

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Trust will continue to operate

The council of management is responsible for maintaining proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the Trust and enable it to ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 1985. It is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Trust and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statements of disclosure to auditor:

- A) so far as members of the council are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditors are unaware, and
- B) They have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as members of the council of management in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

C) Auditors:

A resolution for the re-appointment of Creaseys LLP as auditors will put to the Annual General Meeting.

The Report of the Council of Management has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part VII of the Company's Act 1985 relating to small companies.

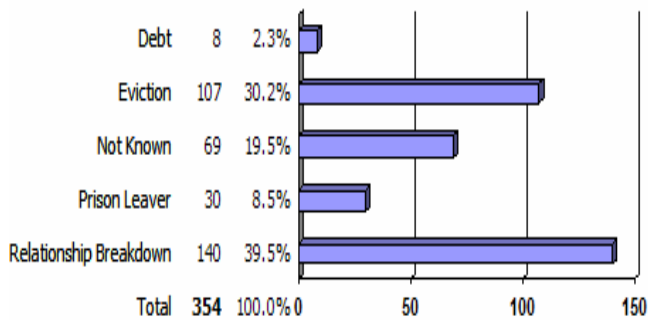
REFERRAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 2006-2007

REFERRALS

The Trust received 354 referrals in 2006/7, a slight increase on the previous year (351).

We ask everyone who uses the Advice Centre to help us collect statistics — the primary reason for our clients' housing crisis (Figure 1), as with last year, is 'Relationship breakdown' (39.5%) - an increase from 33% last year.

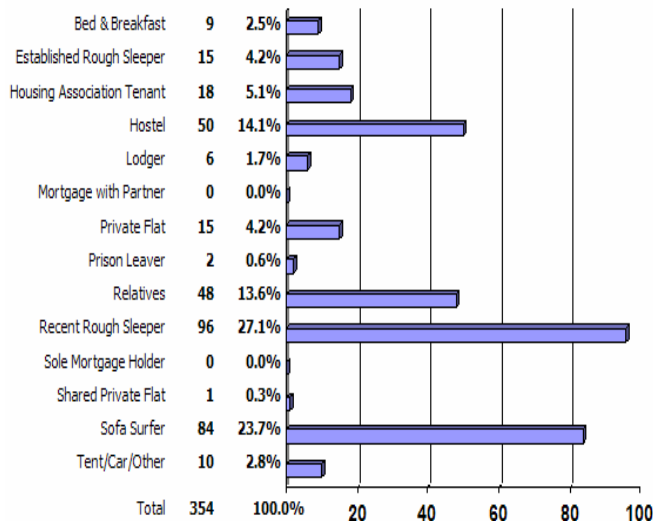
Figure 1: Primary cause of Housing Crisis



At just over 30% 'Eviction' from private rented accommodation is also of serious concern.

We also asked the Advice Centre clients where they were currently sleeping (Figure 2). 96 of our

Figure 2: Advice clients previous accommodation



clients had slept rough and 84 were sleeping on someone else's floor — a similar proportion to the previous year.

ACCOMMODATION

In 2005 we accepted 25 new residents — this year it was 35. 18 residents moved on in the year, of which 16 were resettled; a success rate of 89%.

Voids were less than 9% (within target). Most referrals to the Projects were 'Self Referrals' (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Referral Sources

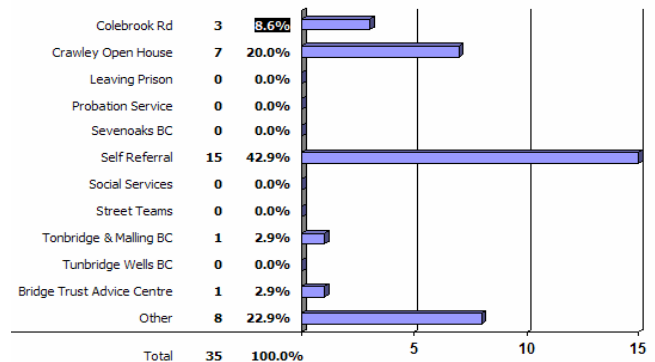
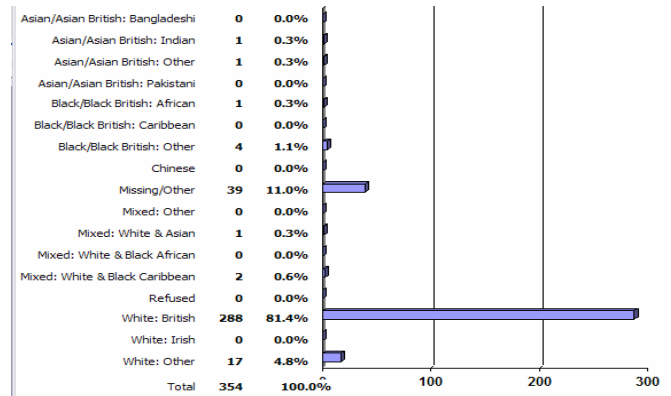


Figure 4: Ethnicity of Referrals



Ethnicity (Figure 4) of referrals and our residents is in-line for the demographics of our operational area, and the average age of our residents is 35.

The Trust invested a significant amount of its reserves into planned maintenance of the Projects this year; at North Farm House we installed brand-new kitchen units, a second sink/drain and two new cookers. Refurbishment works effectively doubled the size of the kitchen. Every bedroom also now has its own wash hand-basin.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2007

	Restricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2007 Total £	2006 Total £
Incoming resources				
<i>Incoming resources from generated funds</i>				
Voluntary income				
Donations and gifts	57,547	3,950	61,497	59,867
Activities for generating funds				
Events income	11,381	-	11,381	7,535
Charity shop and warehouse sales	117,243	-	117,243	109,679
Investment income	5,189	-	5,189	4,730
<i>Incoming resources from charitable activities</i>				
Licence charges	73,509	-	73,509	73,146
Support charges	113,570	-	113,570	113,570
Grants	27,400	31,600	59,000	32,647
<i>Other income:</i>				
Sundry income	270	-	270	550
	406,109	35,550	441,659	401,724
Total incoming resources				
 <i>Less: Cost of generating funds</i>				
Costs of generating voluntary income				
Fundraising - staff costs	16,169	-	16,169	26,414
Fundraising trading: costs of goods sold				
Charity shop and warehouse expenditure	112,159	-	112,159	105,840
	277,781	35,550	313,331	269,470
Net incoming resources available for charitable application				
 <i>Charitable activities</i>				
Project expenses	250,218	7,301	257,519	235,996
Advice	40,428	-	40,428	15,797
Governance costs	5,831	-	5,831	6,748
	296,477	7,301	303,778	258,541
Total charitable expenditure				
	424,805	7,301	432,106	390,795
Total resources expended				
	(18,696)	28,249	9,553	10,929
Net movement in funds				
 Reconciliation of funds				
Funds brought forward	283,125	73,736	356,861	345,932
Funds carried forward	264,429	101,985	366,414	356,861

SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2007

	2007		2006	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible fixed assets		244,518		252,110
Current assets				
Debtors	28,843		25,670	
Balance at bank and in hand	158,132		161,327	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
	186,975		186,997	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<hr/>		<hr/>	
	(45,079)		(53,272)	
Net current assets		141,896		133,725
		<hr/>		<hr/>
Total assets less current liabilities		386,414		385,835
		<hr/>		<hr/>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year		(20,000)		(28,974)
		<hr/>		<hr/>
Net assets		366,414		356,861
		<hr/>		<hr/>
Restricted funds		101,985		73,736
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	144,429		155,125	
Designated fund	120,000		128,000	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
		264,429		283,125
		<hr/>		<hr/>
		366,414		356,861
		<hr/>		<hr/>

These summarised accounts are extracted from the statutory financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2007. The Annual Accounts on which the Auditors gave an unqualified opinion were approved by the Council of Management on 12 September 2007 and will be submitted to the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies. This summary may not contain sufficient information for a full understanding of the affairs of the charity. Copies of the full accounts and the Auditors report can be obtained from The Bridge Trust at 17a Quarry Hill Road, Tonbridge, Kent

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S STATEMENT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BRIDGE TRUST CORPORATION

We have examined the summary financial statement which comprises the Summary Statement of Financial Activities, Summary Balance Sheet and Report of the Council of Management.

Respective responsibilities of the council of management and auditors

The council of management is responsible for preparing the summarised annual report in accordance with United Kingdom law.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statement within the summarised annual report with the full annual report and financial statements, and its compliance with the relevant requirements of section 251 of the Companies Act 1985 and the regulations made thereunder.

We also read the other information contained in the summarised annual report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summary financial statement.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 1999/6 'The auditor's statement on the summary financial statement' issued by the Auditing Practices Board. Our report on the company's full financial statements describes the basis of our audit opinion on those financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion the summary financial statement is consistent with the full annual report and financial statements of The Bridge Trust Corporation for the year ended 31 March 2007 and complies with the applicable requirements of section 251 of the Companies Act 1985, and the regulations made thereunder.

Creaseys LLP

25 September 2007

Chartered Accountants
Registered Auditor

12 Lonsdale Gardens
Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN1 1PA

Patrons

Lord Astor of Hever; The Rt. Rev Brian Castle, Bishop of Tonbridge; The Rt. Rev Michael Nazir-Ali, Bishop of Rochester; The Rt. Rev John Hine, Auxiliary Bishop for Archdiocese of Southwark; Mr Tim Haynes, Headmaster of Tonbridge School; Lady Sue Stanley; Mr Simon Mayo, Radio and TV Presenter

Directors

Bob Wykes	<i>Chartered Engineer - (Chairman)</i>
Simon Braid	<i>Chartered Accountant</i>
John Hopkinson	<i>Events and Conference Organiser</i>
Phil Bisson	<i>Retired Civil Servant</i>
Colin Mark	<i>Publicity Consultant</i>
David Glynn	<i>Chartered Civil Engineer</i>

Staff

Brendan McGowan	<i>Chief Executive</i>
Jean Millman	<i>Receptionist/Administrator (left, 31/3/2007)</i>
Clare Michelmore	<i>Accounts Officer</i>
Ann Ebbels	<i>Accommodation Officer</i>
Lynne Mephram	<i>Advice Centre Manager</i>
Stephen Taylor	<i>Support Services Manager</i>
Sally Ramkurrun	<i>Project Worker</i>
Bob Seal	<i>Project Worker (left, 31/1/07)</i>
Jasmine Simmons	<i>Project Worker (left, 04/04/2007)</i>
Julie Maddock	<i>Tonbridge Wells Shop Manager</i>
Michelle Barbour	<i>Tonbridge Shop Manager (left, 25/11/06)</i>
Michael Roe	<i>Warehouse Manager</i>
Nic Wright	<i>Street Teams Co-ordinator (Volunteer)</i>
Wendy Denman	<i>Project Worker</i>
Sue Shergold	<i>Fundraising Manager</i>
Byron Archibald	<i>Warehouse Assistant/Van Driver</i>
Mike Bassett	<i>Tonbridge Shop Manager</i>

Volunteers

The Bridge Trust is most fortunate that it has the services of more than fifty volunteers who assist with the Street Teams, Homeless Shops, Advice Centre and Administration.

Administration Office & Contact Details

17a Quarry Hill Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2RN

Tel: 01732 368363 Fax: 01732 369534

E-mail: info@thebridgetrust.org.uk

Website: www.thebridgetrust.org.uk

Advice Centre

1 Skinners Terrace, Tonbridge, Kent

Tel: 01732 369874

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