



Supporting Families and Friends of Prisoners

Action
For
Families
Enduring
Criminal
Trauma



AFFECT NEWS

Sharing news and support for families

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Notes from the Chair HAPPY NEW YEAR

Dear Ones, I am writing this at the time of the first anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. What a failure of mankind to have embarked on a European War, with the resultant loss of young lives and the destruction of so many people's hopes and dreams. We must never take Peace for granted.

In regard to AFFECT business, we continue to fulfil an extremely useful social function. There are now nine Trust Board members, who are supportive and active in the work of AFFECT. Thank you all. You are all volunteers, who can choose to do as much or little, so your attendance at Board meetings, contribution to discussion and decisions, and your enthusiasm makes it all worthwhile.

The Group Gatherings continue, a bit sporadically, but well-attended, and highly rated by participants. Thank-you Brenda for facilitating the latest one.

The process of recruiting Telephone Support Workers continues, and welcome to our newest recruit, Sandy, who will also undertake the Project Development role.

We have applied for a Lottery grant for the third year, so fingers crossed.

If you follow the news, you were probably appalled to hear that the MP Lee Anderson has called for the return of the Death Penalty. Those of you who have, or have had members of your family in prison will have fear driven to the core of your being. The United Kingdom should be showing leadership on such contentious issues and prioritising the prevention of crime, the proper funding of mental health services, and a prison regime which encourages active citizenship programmes to reduce the risk of re-offending. Thank goodness there are MANY good, compassionate people who speak sense and epitomise a good society. Be kind, take care of self and others.

Love, as always, Carol (Chair)

Take Time for Now

January is the busiest time of year for me and a great deal of small tsunamis, but significant ones, have come my way...

Today I was just taking time to catch up on some tv programmes and watched Ben Fogel's 'Scotland's Sacred Islands.' This comes at a time where I know I need desperately to plan an escape but I had forgotten just why I prefer isolated places.

On hearing Ben speak I thought of this to share in the newsletter

Take time to just be 'present'

Take time to be here and now.

Do not bring the baggage of yesterday to today or take the baggage of this day to the next.

Take time for 'now'

Take time to relax and breathe

Take time to feel the air, feel the land, feel the water, feel the sea.



Take time to be here and now.

Take time to appreciate the true wonders this earth has to offer.

At times like this I sometimes imagine all around the world a million other people sitting down for a moment and doing just the same as me.

We are not alone, and this planet has a wealth of wonders to share, we need to take time to appreciate what we have and where we are.

I plan to have a day or more where I will do just that. I saw this image of a place in Northern Ireland taken by Joe Cornish a photographer I admire. Took me a bit of detective work to find the location he used. I have even found the most perfect cottage to rent nearby. I used to dive off for my photography hobby when my partner was with me outside. I have not picked up the camera since. In recent times I have felt the deep-seated desire to return to my art. Perhaps to try and express something inside.

I have all my life done some kind of art as a hobby, even as a young child I would find a place to sketch and sit there all day, sometimes more, returning over and over until I got what I was looking for. Sometimes not even drawing just observing anything and everything of the scene. I've somewhat lost that since losing my partner to incarceration. During the lock down I had no place to even find minor respite and forgot just what it meant to sit and do nothing but breathe for a day. I managed last summer to find one-day and it was heaven just sitting in a spot lulled by the ocean and the tumbling pebbles.

I went to a spot I have frequented for over forty or more years. Now it's time to go back and explore as I used to and find new places to add to my escape list. It's taken many years to find this part of me again. I'm not there yet, but I can see the path.



Maria

Co-founder of prison gardening scheme, The Glasshouse, Kati Hammerton-Stove helps female prisoners gain RHS qualifications:

“I have always done work for charities. I had a long career in global PR, then started sourcing ethical products and owned a shop. One day a volunteer introduced me to East Sutton Park women’s prison in Kent. It had lots of unused glass houses, which we realised could create a supportive environment for the prisoners where they could gain new skills. So, the idea for The Glasshouse, was born.

Whether the women have gardening knowledge or not, our training helps them to connect to nature and the RHS Level 2 qualification it provides equips them with skills they can use for life after prison. Even if the women don’t continue working in horticulture, they take away a new-found love for plants.

Through the enterprise, our team of ex-offenders grow and nurture beautiful, resilient houseplants that can be sold through our online shop. We also run a corporate gifting service and plant-scaping for offices, hospitality and retail.

Some teams can work outside of prison on ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) in our shop in Cranbrook, selling plants in person. It’s rewarding to see our women sharing their horticultural knowledge to speak to customers. All profits are reinvested to expand and grow our prison programmes and for ex-offenders post release.

Many former prisoners told us The Glasshouse changed their lives and helped them make it through their prison term. I hope one day this project will be available in all female prisons.”

For more information about the project, visit RHS.org.uk/hopeandhouseplants

Our next Group Gathering

Will be on a Saturday soon, date tbc, by Zoom. If you would like to attend, please reply to your invitation and you will be given details. These gatherings are well worth attending as you will meet other people who have loved ones facing long periods in prison and you can talk in a safe place.

Data Protection

AFFECT keeps very limited information on our Members, namely name, email and telephone details. If you would like to be removed from our records, please email affect01@hotmail.com or ring Carol on 07833 458415

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In keeping our distance from those interested in research and or programmes related to our supporters’ concerns, we are drawing on long experience, that an approach initially presented as a genuine inquiry can turn out to be exploitative, and damaging.