

Christmas Cheer

Our students love being creative and hands-on throughout the year, but Christmas is a particularly special time where it becomes even more magical to share in festive crafts and cheer. This year, our Christmas activities once more brought us all together as a community. Fantastic craft activities designed by staff and a range of festive and natural materials, coupled with love, care and attention from students, staff and their families made for some magical moments at our Christmas craft afternoon.

We were delighted to share in some moments with families working on their activities and joyful faces throughout the event, especially during a visit from the comical Grinch. The Grinch was so popular at last year's event, he simply HAD to attend again! Seeing so many fantastic Christmas jumpers and outfits made for a special afternoon to launch the festive period at The Sheiling Ringwood.

Our talented students also delighted our Board with handmade Christmas gifts. Each trustee received a gift bag brimming with Christmas treats, all handmade by college students who paid a special visit to deliver the bags in person and to pass on their warmest Christmas wishes.



Amazing Artwork

One of our talented college students has been continuing to pursue his passion for illustration, going from strength-to-strength and bringing happiness to many through his colourful and characterful artwork. He beautifully captured our Trustees on canvas as part of their Christmas gift and also provided the front-page illustration for the latest edition of the Camphill Pages. Well done, Ewan!



Our Ethos and Anthroposophical Roots

Katie, Head of Health and Therapies and I attended a conference at the Goetheanum in Switzerland. The conference was held to celebrate 100 years in social development supporting people with special needs. It was a powerful and worthwhile event, full of learning experiences and positivity and it broadened our understanding of the General Anthroposophical Society. 900 people attended from all over the world.

The Goetheanum is the school of spiritual science whose aims are to support anyone looking for greater understanding of Rudolf Steiner's work and how anthroposophy relates to different fields of work: medicine, education and social therapy and biodynamic farming.

Some of you may relate to anthroposophy by thinking of the therapies we offer at the Sheiling, our festival celebrations, our beautiful buildings and site, all of which are reminders of where we began, 'our roots'.

The Sheiling began as a vocational Camphill community and, whilst this has evolved as all communities do, this does not mean that we have lost our sense of community. What makes a community? The key pillars: care for others, self-care, and care for our environment, and this is exactly what we all do well at The Sheiling Ringwood.

While we focus on our future, it is important to remember where we come from. If you walk around our beautiful site, you will see the Eurythmy hall, Raphael our therapy building, our Chapel and Feirefis House. These places are all wonderful reminders of the past. Although we move with the changing landscape and requirements of modern times and make the necessary changes for progression, at the Sheiling we are lucky enough to have a vision and ethos that also works to preserve our sense of community and build a harmonious future for all.

Eszter

Deputy Head of Residential Services



Trustee Spotlight

I am Julian Pyzer. I have been a trustee here for 11 years, but my first involvement with the Sheiling dates back to December 1981 when I came to stay here for a few months whilst helping to set up, and then move to Sturts Farm, a few miles up the road in West Moors. This is now an independent Camphill supported living and social initiatives venture.

Previously, after studying biochemistry at university in the seventies, I spent 3 years at the original Camphill school, near Aberdeen. This was an incredibly formative experience; the amazing people (staff and children), tough work ethic, and the incredibly rich cultural life of the all-encompassing residential community have left impressions that have lived on ever since.

I worked mostly in the garden, learning biodynamic horticulture and have worked within biodynamics and special needs ever since, eventually landing at the Steiner-inspired Ruskin Mill College in Nailsworth for 15 years and ending up as Head of Residential there.

Now retired, I am currently the only trustee with direct experience in Camphill and residential care. My roles within the trustee group include attending the Equality and Diversity Working Group, a focus on the Health and Therapies team, the residential work in general and Feirefis in particular, as the household with under 18-year-olds. I am also the chair of the Safeguarding Committee. In these last two, more formal roles, I am likely to be phoned when there is an inspection. This has happened 3 times in the past 3 weeks, but the most memorable occasion was when I was on a small beach in Devon, which turned out to be just a mile from where the inspector phoning me lived!

A few words about why I value being a trustee here: Camphill was a pioneering venture, starting in the middle of the last century and leading the way in showing respect to people with disabilities.

The rest of special needs care and education slowly caught up, and then, in some ways surpassed what many Camphill centres were showing. Partly because of this increased concern and care throughout the UK, assessment and inspection processes were also becoming more stringent, and, as hinted at by Jon in his article last year, the Sheiling, along with many other Camphill centres,



Sheiling Garden



was challenged to maintain its ethos and integrity, whilst complying with governmental requirements.

The Sheiling Ringwood emerged earlier and in better shape than many others, and I have been lucky enough to join it after it had been through its hardest struggles.

As I said, my Camphill experience was formative, so it is indeed a privilege to be part of it again, this time in a setting that has its roots in the past of Steiner and Koenig but is also nourished by the best of what the present has to offer, and remains awake and actively growing into the future.

The Sheiling is also the best run organisation I have known. By that, I don't mean most successful or efficient, though it is those too. I mean that the ethos that results in the superb education and care that the students receive, truly lives throughout the whole organisation, so the cultural life, staff, buildings and land are also fully respected and cared for. This is genuinely holistic, and I believe is a quiet, almost hidden, special ingredient that enables the incredible teamwork to happen.

Julian

Staff Courage

Each year, we are all encouraged to take on a challenge of courage as part of our Michaelmas celebrations. As a community, this encouragement is to all students and staff alike. This year, Jenny, our Positive Behaviour Support Lead took on a fire walk, raising money for a local mental health charity.

After just an hour of training, Jenny bravely walked across the hot coals 3 times! We are pleased to report that her feet are fine and she's feeling very proud!



Seasonal Festivals

The vibrant festival calendar we all look forward to has continued with huge amounts of enthusiasm once again this year.

Students decorated jars for a magical lantern walk around our site. Walkways were lantern-lit and canopied areas were shining down upon everyone as they walked to the sound of splendid songs from students and staff in full voice.

Groups and classes also learned more about poetry and art for Remembrance Day and felt the enchantment of walking the Advent spiral, which is always one of our most memorable occasions.

Students are now eagerly anticipating Christmas which shows in their wonderful class work but also in the spirited carol singing and the excitement that we have had the pleasure of sharing. We have also seen some wonderful Christmas jumpers and accessories as students make their way around the site.



Contribute and Connect with the Parent Forum

After the success of the first in-person Parent Forum meeting held in October, the next meeting onsite is Friday 14th February 2025 at 1.30pm. The spotlight feature is Signalong followed by a relaxed networking session.

The idea of the forum is for parents/carers to meet in person (and previously via Microsoft Teams) to converse, share ideas or to just listen in a non-judgemental environment. We all have different thoughts and feelings on a wide range of subjects with the common factor being our children/young people.

We are a unique group of people who can help each other navigate looking after our young people, share ideas, learn about various subjects and have great conversations with other parents/carers who actually do understand-or at least understand more than others might. A bonus is the various members of staff that attend the meetings, an ideal opportunity to pick their brains and learn about their specialist subject!

The forum has continued to evolve since it started in 2020. In general, a meeting starts with the previous meeting minutes being "signed off" by a couple of thumbs-up, followed by an informative and interesting update from the different areas of the school and college.

The spotlight feature changes at each meeting: we have covered Fundraising, EHCPs (which turned into individual EHCP events) and the Mental Capacity Act to name a few. Any ideas for future development of the forum are welcome.

The meeting is very relaxed and questions can be raised at any time and these often lead to further questions or start interesting conversations. Also, if you would rather come along just to listen, you are more than welcome. If there is a subject that you are interested in, the Parent Forum team would be happy to include these in future meetings or feedback on an individual basis. The spotlight presentations are often shared (as are the meeting minutes) so you can listen without trying to take detailed notes.

The first in-person meeting was a huge success, lots of attendees chatting, meeting for the first time or meeting in person for the first time, sharing ideas, whole group and smaller group conversations in a relaxed environment with the added bonus of tasty treats.

If you would like to attend the next meeting or would like further information, please contact health@thesheilingringwood.co.uk

Helen

Sheiling Parent and Parent Forum Lead

In response to Parent Forum suggestions, we will be adding a new page to our website thesheilingringwood.co.uk. Available in January, this page will share a variety of useful links for parents and carers. This page will be located under the 'About Us' tab on our Home Page.

A Site for all Seasons



Breaking Barriers

In October, Jenny and James, our Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Team, attended The Loddon Conference. They are familiar with The Loddon as we are linked via PROACT-SCIP-UK® training. The theme for this year's conference was 'Breaking Barriers - Communication at The Heart of Behaviour'.

The aims of the event were to promote understanding of the importance of recognising the central role of communication in behaviour and the significance of breaking barriers to provide meaningful support.

The key messages align with our work at the Sheiling and to further explore and share knowledge via the platform of the conference was a fantastic opportunity. Key messages included: to improve quality of life outcomes, minimise the use of restrictive practices, communicate well, listen and understand, improve wellbeing and reduce placement breakdown.

The team heard from inspiring presenters with lived experience like Iris Benson MBE - Iris is a Service User Carer Representative, Expert by Experience, lead on No Force First and Service User Lead on Values Based Recruitment and a Peer Worker for Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust in Liverpool. She is passionate about co-production, co-delivery and recovery. Iris has been accessing services for over 25 years and is passionate about using her lived experience to inform the transformation of services to better support others. Believing that everyone has a gift, and that people should be enabled and fully supported to be able to use their many talents, to harness all the strengths they have to help others, and to give hope and opportunity to all for a very different future, resonated with us..

The team were also fortunate to be able to attend presentations that discussed and explored how technology and a range of media can influence and evolve practice to benefit students.

This was an inspiring conference which provided the opportunity to ensure best practice, knowledge sharing, growth and progression.

Fundraising Update

A massive thank you to the team at The Fish Inn, Ringwood who have continued to hold their fantastic quiz nights and coffee mornings in support of The Sheiling Ringwood throughout this year.

Thank you to The Original Factory Shop, Ringwood for choosing to support us as their charity of the year; this year they have raised a fabulous £150 for our students.

All donations have benefitted projects chosen by our Student Council.

The build of our new double classroom is progressing well and we look forward to its launch in 2025. We are fundraising to equip this state-of-the-art SEND learning environment to the highest standard for the benefit of students.



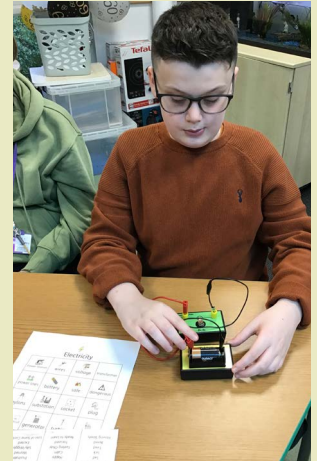
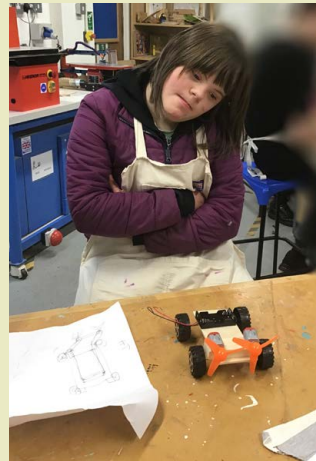
JustGiving™

If you're interested in supporting for us, either by holding your own fundraising activities or volunteering for us, please contact the team via fundraising@thesheilingringwood.co.uk or call 01425 477488.

Superstars and Cars

Kessi's class have been 'super students' through this term especially via their learning about electricity and circuits. They have shown enthusiasm but also huge amounts of knowledge and understanding which they have used to design and build their own toy cars.

Each car is powered by a small fan and motor connected and tested by them. They have also demonstrated their fabulous woodworking skills including cutting, sanding and drilling in order to bring their designs to life. It has been delightful to see the group not only progress their subject knowledge but also successfully combine subject skills and be able to present us with unique and well-made cars.



Online Safety

We are proud to share that we have successfully gained the 360 Degree Safe - Online Safety Mark by South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL).

This accreditation is externally assessed and therefore a significant achievement. It celebrates approximately 7 years of development whilst working with SWGfL and the 360Safe tool to influence best practice and quality in Online Safety. This is a challenging accreditation for a SEND provision to achieve, so is a success to be proud of.



Supportive Students

Sophie's class, based in Briery, showed wonderful drive and determination to create Christmas crafts to sell at our Sheiling Christmas Craft Afternoon. They were inspired to raise money for Naomi's House as a charity close to their hearts as part of their mini-enterprise and ASDAN units. They raised over £30.



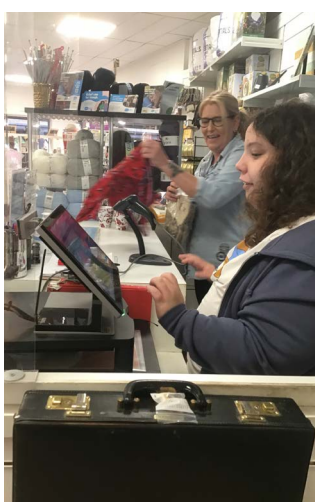
Embracing Opportunity

One of our Upper School students has been enjoying a work experience opportunity at the Sue Ryder Charity shop in Ringwood.

Following a confident interview and the successful completion of a taster session, an offer was made to join the Sue Ryder team working at their charity shop one morning per week for six weeks.

The role involved a variety of tasks that included sorting donations, labelling, operating the till and lots of customer service. To maximise the experience, she also travelled to and from the placement on local public transport.

Feedback from the Sue Ryder team and customer compliments were super and highlighted what a polite and wonderful ambassador for the Sheiling they had worked alongside or been greeted by.



Pressing News!

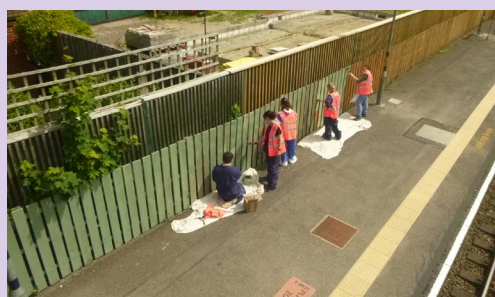
This term, Jill's class enjoyed apple pressing with Gary, our Biodynamic Gardener. It was a captivating process that all the students could contribute to. They were very helpful and careful to ensure they produced plenty of juice. The class enjoyed the tasty and refreshing results of their hard work!



Maintaining Station Standards

College groups have continued to make regular work experience visits to Hinton Admiral, our wonderful, adopted train station that provides us with a host of different opportunities for our students.

Groups have prepared and painted fencing that runs the length of the platform. Students were very dedicated as this is a very long fence and required a lot of patience! They have also worked hard keeping the car park area free of leaves and litter. Visitors to 'our station' often comment on the welcoming space that has been created.



From the Principal

Dear Parents and Carers,

The year of 2024 is ending and, at the Sheiling, we are looking back over a successful year in so many ways! There were plenty of inspections from Ofsted: one for college education in May, one for school education in November and another for the school residential house in December. We are pleased to be recognised for the 'Good with outstanding features' provision that we offer to the students and we await confirmation of our latest Care inspection grading which was incredibly positive. However, perhaps most importantly, the inspectors shared their observations of how students make very good progress in all aspects of their lives because of the joined-up approach and relationships of all staff supporting each student. The opportunity to feel safe, to make friends, to learn to communicate, to learn important life skills - all key aspects of growing up and getting ready for life as an adult!

The Sheiling has a Student Council, a group of both school and college students who come together as nominated representatives from their class, to discuss issues of importance. They created a list of things to discuss with the Senior Management Team and two of their representatives joined us this month to present the feedback from their latest Council meeting. It was a joy to hear both confidently share their issues ranging from the need for new swings, iPads for all students and more clubs alongside lessons to support their mental wellbeing - to a deeper and warmer swimming pool!

It is well known that schools and residential settings like ours often struggle with staffing, both recruitment and retention. We are delighted to share that the Sheiling currently finds itself in a good position with only very few vacancies to fill in both education and the houses. This means that, in all classes and houses, we have teams of colleagues who are accustomed to working together, who know your children well and can offer consistent support. Recent staff surveys have indicated that people are happy to work at the Sheiling, and they consistently share that the best part of their role is the work they undertake with the students and, secondly, staff mention that they enjoy the teamwork, ethos and culture alongside the good terms and conditions of employment.

We hope that you had a chance to look at our website or social media postings recently as we are sharing the live progress of our newest asset: the new-build double school classroom called Parsifal which will offer an existing group of students a spacious and well-equipped learning space and we will also be able to offer more new students a place at the Sheiling in the second classroom! It is exciting to see the build take place, starting with the demolition of an old residential house, to a big hole in the ground and now we have the skeleton of the new classrooms appearing!

For those of you who are interested in the name Parsifal: it is based on a legend of a young, adolescent man who went on a quest for the holy grail and, on his journey, he had many adventures and had to overcome many challenges. Through forming relationships with those whom he met on his way, through showing courage and determination, Parsifal reached the grail castle. The story can be compared with the journey of life that we each go through and the challenges and hurdles that we need to overcome.

Lastly, I would like to share with you some news from the Trustees as they recently appointed 2 new people to the Board, one with financial expertise and one with health and social care expertise. We are delighted with the appointments as the group now has a rich array of areas represented to support and challenge the Senior Management Team as well as help shape the future of the Sheiling.



Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a joyful New Year.

With kind wishes

Corine

Policy Reminder

A reminder that our regulatory policies and our Statement of Purpose are reviewed regularly and are uploaded to our website for easy access. To view, please visit our website, www.thesheilingringwood.co.uk.

However, if you would like a hard copy, this can be accommodated, please just get in touch.

As part of our ongoing commitment to improve accessibility, we have updated the format of these documents.

Dates for your Diary



Christmas Break

21st December - 5th January 2025

(inclusive)

Half Term

15th February - 23rd February 2025

(inclusive)

Easter Break

3rd April - 21st April 2025

(inclusive)

Our Environment

We are all very appreciative of our inspiring and therapeutic woodland site. As always, we would like to extend thanks to our Facilities Team and their fantastic work in maintaining and developing our grounds and facilities.

This term, we have seen fast-paced progress on several projects and, notably, the largest is Parsifal, our new double classroom which is taking shape.

Our Sheiling Bees finished the year in fine form producing many jars of honey. Some jars were used during festivals for staff and students to enjoy and others are sold in Reception. We have now winterised our four hives; they have plentiful stores and we hope to have a good start to Spring 2025 with our bees!

Throughout the year, the team have been producing a range of high-quality products using natural materials readily available within our grounds. These have included chopping boards, bird boxes and charcuterie boards. Many of the items are sold at events and it is heartwarming to know our Sheiling products are being appreciated not only by our Sheiling family, but far and wide.

A lovely addition to these products are the pieces whereby a small amount of preparation is undertaken by the Facilities Team and then classes work to build and produce similar pieces of their own to take home or to fundraise for the Sheiling.



Social media

We are keeping our X (@sheilingringwd), Facebook (@sheilingringwood), Instagram (thesheilingringwood) and LinkedIn (The Sheiling Ringwood) pages up-to-date. So check them out to see what is happening across the campus, events, see great new pictures and even keep in touch. Our YouTube channel (The Sheiling Ringwood) is another fantastic source of information and activities.



Enjoy the Festive Break