



## NATIONAL NEWSLETTER Autumn 2011

# INTRODUCTION

### ***From the Chairman***

On January 31<sup>st</sup> 2011 David Coltart, our Chief Executive retired after 5 years of committed service to Explore. The Board of Trustees are grateful for his leadership and all that he did for Explore and wish him a happy retirement.

The Board of Trustees were delighted to be able to appoint Chris Ford as Chief Executive with effect from February 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 as he had many years of experience in education and had hands-on experience of Explore as he has been Chairman of the Hants Explore Local Community Action Group since taking over from Rex Chester in May 2010. We look forward to the further development of Explore under his leadership.

John Kent

### ***From the Chief Executive***

Six months into the position of Chief Executive I am excited and encouraged by the tremendous potential of the work of Explore, and its increasing relevance in today's society with the opportunities that must be grasped if we are to begin to address the needs of young people.

My own background in education, 16 years as a Headmaster in Fareham, Hants, gives me the experience of working with teenagers as well as the ability to 'speak the language of schools'. This I believe will assist me in gaining access to the schools

In addition, policy makers at a local and national level are more willing to listen to someone who has been 'at the chalk face' – literally! Explore's aim will be to influence such policy makers.

In this context, I have had the opportunity to speak to a number of politicians at Westminster with useful seeds sown; one outcome being the proposal to set up new Explore groups in several constituencies. Encouraging links have also been formed with influential figures in the Catholic Church and Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, with the intention to strengthen and develop these in the coming months.

## **The context of Explore's work**

- A recent survey from the Centre for Social Justice highlighted that by the age of sixteen half of children will see their parents separate, with all the emotional trauma and distress that this involves.
- Dr. Neil Warren, psychologist, and founder of the online dating service eHarmony, writes, ***“Most people want to get married and stayed married. They just can't seem to figure out how to go about it. People often marry simply because they are attracted to each other. What they don't realise is that happy marriages are built on 'highly informed and carefully reasoned choices', along with commitment and hard work after the knot is tied”***
- Joanna Moorhead, writing in the Guardian, ***“A marriage, it seems to me, is a long and often difficult journey. It may have times of great happiness but it will also have times of great sadness; times where the path is easy and your tread is light, and times when the going is very rough, and you put one foot in front of the other without being able to see very far ahead.”***  
Perhaps more marriages would survive if our expectations were more realistic.

## **What does Explore offer?**

In essence, by enabling young people to have a dialogue with married couples about their relationship and the basis needed to sustain it, Explore offers hope, aspiration and a goal for the future. Much of the media is relentlessly negative and cynical about the prospects for marriage, and the role of Explore is to promote the possibility of lasting relationships to those in our society who are crying out for the assurance of stable family life.

## **The Explore Consultation Day**

This was held in February 2011 at Tim John's school, one of the Trustees, and involved Local Community Action Groups (LCAGs), Staff and Trustees. It proved positive and focused with a renewed emphasis on localism i.e. a 'bottom up' approach as opposed to 'top down'. Energising the existing LCAGs as well as seeking local fund raisers would be paramount, while at the same time encouraging emerging groups to develop. Finding a 'mover and shaker' to lead these LCAGs would be vital. It was also agreed the production of attractive, relevant and good quality literature was essential if Explore is to become more widely known and I am able to report that a new prospectus with inserts is well on the way to completion for September and the new academic year.

## **The dilemma/dichotomy**

Being candid, a balance needs to be struck between strengthening existing LCAGs and further expansion. However, the hope has to be that new areas will catch the vision from the impact of Explore's work (possibly from neighbouring areas) and very quickly become self-generating with effective Chairs, committees, finance etc. Essentially, established LCAGs could mentor emerging groups.

## **New LCAGs**

For your encouragement and prayers, embryonic groups are appearing in North Kent and the West Midlands. Indeed, a recent Half Day Conference in Solihull at the school of Bill Sedgwick, one of the Trustees, was particularly successful and this augurs well for future expansion in the area. There are also real possibilities of a work in South West Bedfordshire and South East London.

## **The Trustees Board**

Three long standing Trustees stood down at the AGM in June 2011.

**John Kinder** - Financial Trustee from the early days of SEMT.

**James King** - also an adviser coach, with Kent area contacts.

**Jim Leftwich** - a former Chairman of Trustees, and Chairman of Bucks and Oxon LCAG. We acknowledge the debt that Explore owes to these men and thank them for their passion and commitment over many years.

At the AGM two new Trustees joined the Board.

**Sir Jonathan Portal** – Financial Trustee who has his own accountancy business.

**Crispin Drummond** – Former international banker and who now owns a bespoke bookshop in Winchester.

### **Explore Finances**

As I write the Charity is in a sound financial position, however, without major funding in the coming months there could be a 'dark hole appearing' in the New Year. We are in large measure, apart from the income from schools and the Associate Membership Scheme, reliant on gifts from Trust Funds.

We acknowledge with gratitude the following major gifts since February 2011.

The Dulverton Trust	£30,000
The Rank Foundation	£20,000
The Jerusalem Trust	£10,000
Bernard Sunley Trust	£10,000
The Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust	£ 5,000

There have been a number of smaller gifts as well as a remarkably generous individual amount of £50,000 from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

Suffice it to say we are sincerely thankful for all the gifts in these economically straightened times.

If you are not already a member of the Associate Membership Scheme, which enables supporters to donate to Explore on a regular basis, but would like to do so please make contact and details about the Scheme will be provided.

### **FINALLY**

The work of Explore cannot be maintained without the unstinting support of volunteers, local officers and Patrons. We are indebted to your good wishes, monetary gifts and ongoing thoughts and prayers – please do not stop!

With warmest thanks,

**Chris Ford**  
**Chief Executive**  
**01329 280635**  
[fordsatfareham@aol.com](mailto:fordsatfareham@aol.com)

**Explore**  
**PO Box 667**  
**Fareham,**  
**PO14 9LU**

[www.theexploreexperience.co.uk](http://www.theexploreexperience.co.uk)