



# West Sussex Mediation Service External Newsletter

## Year end

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### *External Edition*

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Yet another financial year has concluded for our charity. We follow the traditional financial reporting period of 1st April to 31st March each year.

2020/21 has certainly been a different one for us financially, due to the pandemic. However, in the early months, we were able to tap into Emergency Covid-19 funding. We are grateful to Awards for All (Big Lottery), The Sussex Community Foundation and Tesco Bags For Good for their supportive grants during a difficult period. We also received funding support during the year from The Henry Smith Charity (£10,000 for two years), Ecclesiastical (Movement for Good Scheme—£1,000) and £600 from Crawley based Longley Trust.

Whilst some of our funding may have diminished, such as our earned income, we were able to save on expenditure. With no face to face mediations taking place we didn't need to hire any meeting rooms and volunteer mileage expenses were cut out for the same reason.

Surprisingly, our fundraising income held up, primarily due to some fantastic support from various **Waitrose** Branches who engaged in their Community Matters Scheme and the fantastic efforts of the **Barns Green Cobra Group** through the sales of handmade face mask on their 'mask trees'. Their efforts alone achieved £840 for us and, so far, over £10k overall for all the good causes that they are supporting. Sales of face masks continue, so we anticipate receiving further funds.

We also engaged in Crowdfunding for the first time through the **Aviva Community Fund** (£645) and held our first online fundraising event (Virtual Balloon Race with Ecoracing— £225). See Page 5, as we are proposing to engage in another Balloon Race in June.

In the very final days of March, Nick our Co-ordinator tried an impromptu fundraising experiment (see Page 4). We would have broken even if it had not been for some late payers.

## Mediation Voucher Scheme

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has developed a mediation voucher scheme, for Family Mediation, whereby a contribution of up to £500 per case/family will be offered to the mediation costs of a child arrangements case, encouraging people to seek to resolve their disputes outside of court where appropriate to do so. WSMS has applied to be part of the scheme and are currently waiting for further confirmation.



The purpose of the scheme is to promote the benefits of mediation and divert matters where appropriate away from the family courts. The scheme will offer mediation participants a financial contribution of up to £500 per family towards the total costs of their mediation. This payment will be made directly to mediation providers by the Family Mediation Council which is administering the scheme on behalf of the MoJ.

Before confirming to clients that a voucher is available, mediators must make a request for voucher allocation, and receive a case reference number from the FMC – this is to ensure that vouchers are only allocated where funds are available. The £1m funding might not stretch too far. Hopefully there won't be too much of an administrative burden for our Family Caseworker, Karen.

## Jumble Trail

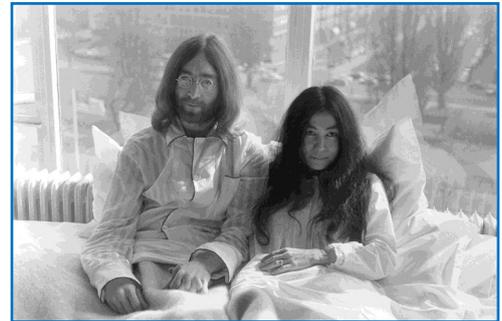
Ever heard of a 'Jumble Trail' before? It's a community event open to anyone. On a selected date, people are invited to sell preloved goods from their drive, garden or agreed public space. There is no charge for participation. Those taking part will be added to a map or directory of all sellers on the day. It's a lot simpler than loading up the car and paying to attend a Car Boot Sale and is a way of having a clear out or raising some funds for charity. Our Service Co-ordinator, Nick, has been made aware of one being organised in his local area, around Billingshurst, and hopes to have a fundraising stall for WSMS. He will be looking to sell a few of the many books he has managed to accumulate over reason weeks and a few other things that need to be rehomed from around the house and sheds.



We will publish further details when we know more.

## Bed-ins for Peace

As the Vietnam War raged in 1969, John Lennon and his wife Yoko Ono held two week-long **Bed-ins for Peace**, one at the Hilton Hotel in Amsterdam and one at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal, each of which were intended to be non-violent protests against wars, and experimental tests of new ways to promote peace. The idea is derived from a "sit-in", in which a group of protesters remains seated in front of or within an establishment until they are evicted, arrested, or their demands are met.



The public proceedings were filmed, and later turned into a documentary *Bed Peace*, which was made available for free on YouTube in August 2011 by Yoko Ono, as part of her website "Imagine Peace."

Moving on to 2021, and two of our mediators happened to hold a scheduled Zoom meeting with clients recently. They (the clients) were happily in bed together on their laptop. The mediators showed due concern and enquired as to whether they were unwell. The contrary appeared to be the case and their Zoom meeting continued. We are intrigued as to what the setting for the joint mediation meeting is going to be, if that goes ahead. Hopefully Peace will prevail for all concerned and Yoko would be proud of them!

To make us all feel old, Yoko is now aged 88 years old, ailing and wheelchair bound. She has reported assets of \$700 million and still owns multimillion-dollar properties in Manhattan as well as hundreds of rolling acres in upstate Delaware County. She lives in the same sprawling nine-room apartment, on the seventh floor of The Dakota building that she once shared with John.

## Face to Face Mediations

Some of our mediators have been keen to know when the service might resume face to face mediations. In line with the Covid-19 lockdown roadmap, we will be considering arranging face to face joint mediation sessions from **17th May**, subject to any updates from the Government. We would vett venues closely before choosing them and would favour our own meeting room for cases near to Horsham. We do not feel it is appropriate, as yet, to set a date to resume home visits. This could be some time away still. This falls in line with all our Sussex Mediation Alliance partners.

## Media experiment

As alluded to on Page 1, Nick recently tried a last minute experiment. The intention was to see which (if any) of our social media channels, or press contacts, could 'make some noise' for us as we attempted to reach out to supporters. We had identified that we still had a funding gap of several thousand pounds as we reached year end. Nick posted on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. He also raised a Press Release, which luckily was immediately picked up by the JpiMedia Group that controls the likes of West Sussex County Times and the Worthing Herald. Both these newspapers uploaded our story onto their website in rapid time. Here is the link to the Worthing Herald entry: <https://tinyurl.com/f478nda>

Take up was a pleasant surprise. Our good supporters at Worthing Homes reached out to us with further funding support. We heard from the High Sheriff of West Sussex offering his support and an ex colleague of Nick's who wanted to sponsor an application to the Police Property Act fund. Six donations were made through our text donation platform Donr and a good number of donations via our website Donation page linked to Giveasyoulive. A number of those donations also attracted Gift Aid.



## What services we offer

Just a quick reminder. Here are the services we can provide appropriately trained and experienced mediators for:

Community—Neighbour Disputes (Free)

Intergenerational — Conflicts within families, across the generations (Free)

Workplace — (chargeable but very competitive rates)

Family — (Divorce & Separation) Chargeable but competitive rates

Civil/Commercial — eg Contracts, Trader/Customer disputes, etc (Chargeable)

Conflict Coaching — where formal mediation cannot take place (usually free).

## Virtual Balloon Race - No.2



We are taking part in another **Virtual Balloon Race** with Ecoracing. This one celebrates the coronation of the Queen and starts (virtually) from Westminster Abbey at 12pm on 2nd June. (The Queen was crowned on 2nd June 1953).

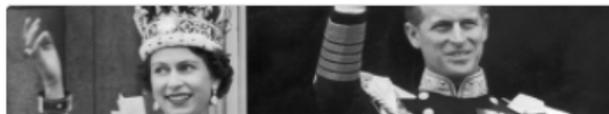
To purchase your balloon and to have a bit of fun tracking progress, go to our page here: <http://ecoracing.co/user/page/1668>

You can pick the shape and design of your balloon, its thickness and helium content. You can buy balloons as a gift, or in the name of a loved one.

Prizes include £500 cash, an Apple iPad and book vouchers. One lucky supporter of WSMS will win a £25 Gift Card. The odds of winning that be in your favour. Last time our mediators Nick & Ginette won our lovely hamper.

Balloons are only £3 each and you can buy as many as you like. Why not challenge other family members, friends or colleagues.

All the money raised will help our charity to survive another year and continue to do the valuable work that we do in the community.



### Coronation Race

Launches 12pm 2<sup>nd</sup> June for 7 Days from

Westminster Abbey

<https://ecoracing.co/user/page/1668>