



Christmas Message



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External Edition

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Funders and
Supporters of West
Sussex Mediation
Service.*

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Image: Nick's
Golden Retriever
Chester

Firstly, Season's Greetings to everyone!

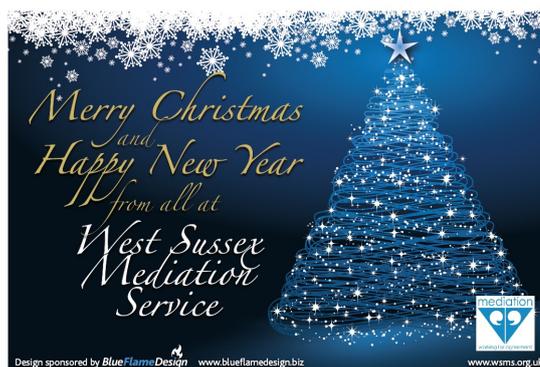
2021 has proven to be another very challenging year all round due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, whilst WSMS has also experienced its share of challenges, our major funders have continued to support the Charity, which is a real testament to the value of our service. We remain extremely grateful to them for their continued support and encouragement.

As the year draws to a close, I would like to express my thanks to all our staff, volunteers, mediators and my fellow Trustees for their adaptability and perseverance over the course of this year. As I highlighted in my address at our recent AGM, our charity is nothing without our people, and the commitment of our core base of staff, mediators and volunteers remains strong, which has been inspiring to see. I am very grateful to everyone for their continued contributions.

In particular, I would like to thank everyone for their ongoing flexibility around home working and undertaking mediations online wherever possible. This flexibility really has made, and does make, a difference in the ability to maintain our service provision during this period of uncertainty.

Now that the festive season is upon us, I would like to sign off by wishing a happy, healthy and peaceful time, and a prosperous New Year to you all, and to your families.

Nicky Neal-Smith
Chair





News



Christmas Events - quite understandably, a number of people were reluctant to attend our Christmas gathering on 3rd December, due to the new Covid-19 variant. We did however, decide to go ahead, rather than make a last minute cancellation. We had fifteen guests in the end. It was a pleasant evening with good company and good food. Unfortunately, Nick forgot to record any images on the night.

Our thanks go to our retired mediator, Bob, who helped with the opening up and closure of the venue at the end as well as showing us where all the facilities were. Thanks to a kind donation by one of our mediators, David and money taken from a Christmas Raffle, we were able to cover the vast majority of the costs of holding the event. Our thanks also to all those who contributed food or prizes.

The Quiz Night proved to be more of a failure. Nick had an audience of only two! If anyone would like a copy of the quiz, which is in the form of PowerPoint slides, to enjoy with family or friends over the holidays then just drop an email to our Co-ordinator, Nick. There are a total of 42 questions.

Class of 2021- our training course for new community mediators will conclude on 15th December with 11 of the 12 original volunteers 'graduating'. It is likely, with Christmas fast approaching, that we won't have the opportunity for most of them to engage in casework before the new year. When that comes about we would dearly love for our existing mediators to step forward and co-mediate with them while they gain their feet. We have the cases, we just need your help in resourcing referrals.

Christmas Closure – with Bank Holidays falling at week-ends there is a significant holiday period this year. See **Page 3** for full details.

Covid-19 – in light of the latest variant of the Coronavirus causing some concern, it would seem unlikely that WSMS will be returning to face to face mediations, in the near future. We know that a number of our mediators are not keen on exercising their skills online as an alternative, but that does deplete our resources during busy times. If you have been absent for a while, please do consider 'trying your arm' at some Zoom mediating to help keep the wheel turning in these difficult times. We have had some good successes operating this way. We are happy to offer practise sessions on Zoom, including the use of breakout rooms, etc to help you on your way. We want our mediators to be able to keep up their skills, if there has been a time lapse due to Covid.





More News



Telecoms — We have recently been informed by the owner of the company that provides our broadband and phone systems, Ewen Bonnyman of Keytech Networks, that he has sold his business. This means that service provision has transferred to a company called TelcoNet.



We have spoken to the new provider who assures us that nothing has changed and the same personal service will apply. There will be no interruption in service and our phone numbers remain unchanged.

Mediator Supervision - two of our experienced mediators, Mary and Eva, have kindly offered to provide supervision sessions to our mediators. Following a consultation with them we will roll out a programme in the new year.

Chichester University - following some work by one of our trustees, Monica, we are currently in negotiation with staff at the university with a view to facilitating the placement of law students with our charity in 2022 to mutual benefit.



We are also interested in gaining the help of 2nd year students to develop our social media presence and enhance our website. This could take place in May 2022, if not before.

We have taken on students on work placement before and have kept in touch with some of them. One such person is Viktorija who is now in her third year at Portsmouth University. She actually attended our Christmas event on 3rd December, with her parent. We wish her well with her final studies.

Networks - We recently had a meeting with a professional, in the field of charity fundraising, who gave us some very useful tips and advice. One thing that she mentioned, which we have tried to promote before, is utilising the power of the networks of everyone connected with the charity. It can be



surprising what connections we all have, either directly or indirectly via extended family, friends, workplaces or social circles. If you have connections with the rich, famous or those with influence, who may be able to help us on our journey, and you are comfortable with sharing, do discuss options with Nick, our Co-ordinator.



Christmas Closure



CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

23rd Dec - Closing at 5.00pm
24th - Final check of emails/messages
25th - Closed Bank Holiday
26th - Closed Bank Holiday
27th - Closed (BH in lieu)
28th - Closed (BH in lieu)
29th - Checking of messages only
30th - Ditto
31st - Ditto
1st Jan - Closed Bank Holiday
2nd - Closed (BH in lieu)
3rd - Checking messages only
4th - Open as normal

In case of any urgency, call Nick on his mobile - 07768 872676



Online Christmas Shopping



✨ Ready for Some Magic? ✨

This Christmas, turn your ordinary online shopping for gifts and more into extraordinary FREE donations for us, thanks to @giveasyoulive!

When you sign up to support us, Give as you Live Online will give you access to a winter wonderland of free fundraising. Just shop using their website, app or Donation Reminder at over 5,500 top stores - including John Lewis & Partners, Boots, The Entertainer and more - and they'll pay us a free donation for every order you place!

It's completely free for you and us, and we receive 100% of the funds you generate! Sign up to support us today:

https://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/wsms?utm_source=charityemail&utm_medium=post&utm_campaign=ChristmasEmail&utm_content=021221

mediation
working for agreement

Give as you Live®
Online

HAVE A MAGICAL CHRISTMAS

Turn your ordinary gift shopping into something extraordinary for us

Generate free donations on online purchases at 5,500+ retailers

www.giveasyoulive.com/join/wsms
Simply visit the above link to get started

Argos, Waitrose, Corgi, Hamleys, Shop Disney, LEGO, M&S, Sainsbury's, Firebox, ALDI, Groupon, Boden, Wiggle, Very, and many other retailers.