

# THE seaview NEWSLETTER



WINTER  
2025/26

## THE BIG SLEEP

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## DON'T MISS!

## CHRISTMAS AT SEAVIEW

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## MEET OUR FUNDRAISING SUPERSTARS!

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“Every time I show up to something put on by Seaview I fall a little bit more in love with them!”

**ANDREW PARISH**

## INTRODUCING MAKE A HOUSE A HOME FUNDRAISER

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# WELCOME

Dave Perry, Chief Officer

As Seaview comes to the end of this memorable 40th year supporting those living on the margins of society, the team is humbled by the depth of care and compassion shown by our many supporters who have really inspired us and spurred us on during what has been a challenging year. I hope you enjoy reading about the celebrations and fundraisers and, if one of them is you,

**“Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!”**

Our team is working hard and dedicated to supporting those who come to Seaview for support and we hope our work to improve health, wellbeing and housing for everyone helps to build a stronger community for all and a legacy for those who follow in our footsteps!

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# THE SEAVIEW WAY

Sue Burgess, Projects Manager

The Seaview Project has extensive experience supporting people facing homelessness, social exclusion, and complex needs. The organisation has a strong track record and revered legacy of delivering frontline outreach, wellbeing services and partnership working with statutory and voluntary agencies.

Seaview is an established local charity having first begun in response to local need over 40 years ago. While the people have changed the approach to the work hasn't. Seaview retains the same ethos as back in 1985 when it was first established. The approach to the work is person centred, needs led and ensures all those who come through our doors are validated, heard, and given chances to make right whenever a boundary has been broken.

In 1985, at a time when terms such as 'trauma informed', 'psychological environment', 'co-production' weren't used or existed, Seaview was leading the way by working with a minority group that was often dismissed or judged. By recognising the person behind the problem, Seaview has been seen to validate, respect and listen to anyone who works with our services. Many people, including rough sleepers have felt ignored, judged and misunderstood in our community and have flocked to Seaview as a place of safety where basic needs can be met with warmth and respect.

Visiting professionals and organisations have acknowledged this over the years and still to this day Seaview retains its working ethos and benefits from seeing very real, positive life changing case studies that have shown our approach really is ahead of the curve and has set a precedent for other organisations to follow suit. In fact we are often asked to provide training in person centred, boundary driven, recovery training which can currently be seen by a group of Connect Peer Leaders training professionals across the county [www.seaviewproject.co.uk/training/](http://www.seaviewproject.co.uk/training/)

The Seaview frontline workers are trained in best practice, safeguarding, risk assessment, professional boundaries, homelessness legislation and more. The organisation has established systems for monitoring, reporting, and quality assurance, ensuring accountability and effective use of funding.

Seaview Project has the infrastructure, governance, and financial management capacity to deliver the service safely and effectively, including experienced management oversight and strong local partnerships. This ensures the service is resilient, responsive and capable of achieving its intended outcomes. Seaview has stood the test of time as an independent charity responding to local need and in 2025 celebrated it's 40th anniversary, acting as a beacon of hope and support to those marginalised in our community.



# THE BIG SLEEP



“ It gave me the smallest insight into what people on the streets experience every night. ”



## A Night of Solidarity, Awareness & Incredible Community Support

Seaview Project's Big Sleep 2025 was an inspiring and powerful event that brought our community together in solidarity for people experiencing homelessness. Despite the cold night, supporters, volunteers and participants showed up with warmth, compassion and determination – helping to make this year's Big Sleep one of our most impactful yet.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of everyone involved, we are proud to share that over £30,000 was raised. These vital funds will directly support Seaview's homeless services, helping us provide food, advice, advocacy and ongoing early morning outreach support to those who need it most.

Beyond the fundraising success, Big Sleep 2025 played a crucial role in raising awareness of the realities faced by people who are homeless or vulnerably housed. Spending one night outside offered participants a small glimpse into the challenges many people face every day – sparking important conversations, reflection and a deeper understanding across our community.

The event was also a powerful reminder of what can be achieved through community support. From participants who slept out, A4A volunteers, local businesses, the Foreshore Trust and staff who worked behind the scenes; the sense of togetherness was truly remarkable. Every message of encouragement, every pound donated and every hour given, helped amplify the impact of the night.

We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who took part in Big Sleep 2025. Your support not only raised essential funds but also strengthened our shared commitment to tackling homelessness with compassion, dignity and hope.

Together, we are making a real difference – and the Big Sleep 2025 is a night we will not forget.



# THE BIG SLEEP

## Toni Sheppard (Tea)

Well what a day and night!!

After an amazing evening of entertainment and some beautiful tales of survival, those of us camping out got ready for a night with "Amy" (Storm Amy which impacted the night).

She was a terrible host; what with her flatulence, constant weeping and moaning, it was a bit tricky to rest!

I have only ever camped out for the obligatory school trip in junior school and the odd Glastonbury here and there, but haven't experienced the real state of emergency that is homelessness.

I have had the imminent fear of not having a roof over my head for a couple of reasons;

- After having spent 7 months in residential rehab for alcohol addiction, I had nowhere to go.
- I became seriously ill with pneumonia, sepsis and organ failure that led to a 22 day coma, which left me with amputated toes. It was realised that I couldn't return to my 1st floor flat. Combined with experiencing domestic abuse and violence, I had to rely on my parents house to convalesce and wait on the long list for accommodation.

Consequently, I am very grateful for the roof over my head.

The Big Sleep was an opportunity for a reality check. "This could easily have been you Tea", were my thoughts. I tried to prepare, but who has time to do that in the real scheme of things?

I grabbed my old shower curtain that I now use as a mess mat for when I'm painting, my waterproofs; my old sleeping bag and ground mat; dug out my old horse riding thermals and of course, made a flask of tea!

I soon realised that preparation is EVERYTHING. Trying to set up in driving rain, gales and ambient lighting is virtually impossible.

I did my best with bits of string and attempted to barricade myself under the shower curtain. It couldn't be done. The gales (or Amy's Wind!) just kept coming.

I found that I was near obsessed with protecting my 'stuff' from the elements, NOT particularly myself, and maintaining some kind of privacy? This surprised me.

It was mainly the noise and constant flapping of everything that kept me awake. I wasn't cold; soaked, but strangely not cold. It was only in the light of day that I noticed that my skin was freezing. That did concern me. It indicates how rapidly something like hypothermia, pneumonia and frostbite could occur without obvious symptoms.

I got to sleep an hour before we were woken 'to move on' and have breakfast.

Learning outcomes for me;

- Your physical and mental health is on the line, right from the start.
- Though the next day was bright and breezy, there would have been no way to dry off my kit in preparation for another night out.
- If I had to do that every night, I would have to drink to cope.
- I'm aware that after 2 nights sleeping rough, I would be very ill and after a week, dead. I have health issues that could not manage such exposure.

I am thankful for the opportunity to have had this experience (Ta to Da and Sister for sponsoring me!), because I got to experience one night of the uncertainty, the impact on mental, physical and emotional health, the practicalities and the virtual impossibility of existing without support when you find yourself bereft of a basic and essential human need.

The Seaview Project is able to support every issue I have mentioned. And that is a literal life saver. I know that having a roof over my head, saved mine.



# THE BIG SLEEP EXPERIENCE

## Stephen Royston

In October, I took part in The Big Sleep, to help raise funds for the Seaview Centre in St Leonards in its 40th anniversary year. Seaview provides a range of services for vulnerable people, including supporting rough sleepers.

I am extremely grateful to the many villagers who generously sponsored me, including any who chose to donate anonymously, whom I was unable to thank personally.

This is how The Big Sleep challenge was promoted: *For one night only! Taking place on the night of 3rd October, swap your bed for a sleeping bag and give a homeless person a chance of a better future. The Big Sleep encourages teams and individuals to sleep out in a secured space, and experience a little of what it's like to sleep rough.*

So I signed up for it in July, which gave me plenty of time to circulate people to ask for sponsorship donations.

I had successfully completed The Big Sleep the last time it took place, in 2016. On that occasion we slept in sturdy cardboard boxes on the beach at Rock-a-Nore in Hastings Old Town. I recall that I got off to sleep fairly easily that night, but was awoken in the small hours by the sound of very heavy rain pummeling my cardboard box. For the rest of the night I needed to prop up the sagging box with my hand. I managed to last the course, but the box collapsed almost immediately after I vacated it.

(Incidentally, one of my fellow sleepers is now a prominent MP; whenever I see her on TV, I am reminded that I once spent the night with her!)

It was only when I received details, 24 hours ahead of the event, of the arrangements for the 2025 Big Sleep, that I learned we would not be provided with cardboard boxes this year!

With no time to find a suitable cardboard box for myself, I borrowed a tarpaulin. It was fortunate I did so, because there was heavy rain and strong winds during the night.

It was certainly a rough night. But it was one night only for us, and we all had the luxury of warm, dry homes to return to in the morning. The 20 or more rough sleepers in the town are not so fortunate.

Overall, the event went well, despite the awful weather. Thanks to the generosity of friends and neighbours, I managed to raise nearly £2,500 for a cause which I believe to be a really important one.

As you can see from the photo, it's all behind me now!

Thanks again to all who supported me; it means a lot.



We are so grateful to each and every one of our fundraisers for the Big Sleep. Every donation, little and large, has helped us to ensure we can continue to provide support and necessities to those experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping on our streets.

These two individuals, Stephen and Adam, made a tremendous effort and were the two highest fundraisers of the whole campaign.

To celebrate their huge success, we interviewed them to find out how they did it!



INTRODUCING: STEPHEN

**How did you raise such an incredible amount?**

I simply contacted (by WhatsApp mainly) pretty much everybody I know: I set the scene by emphasising the incredible and vitally important work done by Seaview, and asked everyone to share my JustGiving page as widely as possible.



**Do you have any fundraising tips that you could share with us?**

Start fundraising ASAP. Also, send out a reminder closer to the event itself. I hesitated to do this, but it generated a considerable extra sum!



**If you could only give someone one piece of fundraising advice, what would it be?**

Be selective about which campaigns to fundraise for, so as not to 'bother' people too often with requests to donate. In my case, this was my first significant fundraising campaign since the 2016 Big Sleep, so I felt OK about asking for donations again. Incidentally, I raised the most money in the 2016 campaign too!



INTRODUCING: ADAM

**How did you raise such an incredible amount?**

I am extremely fortunate in having a wide network of friends, who already knew of my passion for Seaview, as we did a major fundraiser over our wedding period where we asked for donations for 'outreach at Seaview' instead of wedding presents. Everyone already has enough toasters ... so it was a simple switch to ask for cash. We printed a QR code which went straight to a portal where people could pay directly.

For 'The Big Sleep' I reached out to my friends, with the very specific request to help fund 'outreach' to buy sleeping bags, flasks, etc. as well as pay for the team to go out to the places where homeless people might congregate to support them and try to gain their confidence enough to receive help if they need it.

The whole event is so brilliantly conceived, is easy to understand and everyone liked the idea of sponsoring me to sleep out and suffer the discomfort which for so many people is not a choice ... they wanted to see me suffer!!

**Do you have any fundraising tips that you could share with us?**

I have found it's always better to fundraise for something specific. Something can people can visualise and know how exactly they are helping.

Use humour and lightness of touch. Most people don't want to face a 'guilt-trip' into why they should donate, this can make them feel awkward and less inclined to support you in the long-term.

Use inspirational stories... Seaview has so many fascinating and inspirational tales to tell. By making it personal people can relate to a situation and understand the need for support.

Let people know the results of their donations, the success they have contributed to.

Don't ask too often! Your friends and family can soon suffer from 'donation fatigue' if you constantly badger them. Find new ways of changing up the request ...keep it fresh!

Be *personal*. For each 'push' I write a basic outline plea, and then top and tail it with something unique to everyone I'm asking, so they feel as if this is a unique request to them individually. I would never send out a 'blanket mail' without personalising it. It takes *much* longer, but is *much* more effective at getting results.

**If you could only give someone one piece of fundraising advice, what would it be?**

Tell a personally compelling and empathetic story, so people can understand why they should give and what the results might be.



# RESPECT TO SEAVIEW

By Sharon Lisa Rhodes

This is more than survival.  
This is about dignity.  
About Hastings.  
About Seaview.

Born in Hastings, pain ingrained,  
Mind on fire, couldn't tame the flame.  
Mental health battles, nights in vain,  
Bottle in hand just to numb the chain.

Homeless, hopeless, tent in the rain,  
Countryside cold cutting deep in my veins.  
World walked past, but one place remained,  
Seaview saw me, respected my name.

Seaview, they see you, they free you,  
Through the struggle, they lead you, believe you.  
When the system deceives and it leaves you,  
Hastings forever - respect to Seaview.

Juliette reached out, gave me ground,  
An address, some hope, turned my life around.  
Housed outta Hastings, I made that vow,  
Quit the drink, stand tall, live proud.

Years rolled on, I returned one day,  
Not broken - but stronger, with something to say.  
Worked with the team, helped pave the way,  
Annie at the helm, true queen of the bay.

See they know your story, they know your scars,  
They ain't chasing numbers, they ain't chasing stars.  
It's person-centred, respect at heart,  
They meet you as human, that's where you start.

Thatcher closed Hellingly back in the day,  
People thrown out, no help, no way.  
But Hastings rose up, built Seaview's flame,  
Community spirit, remember the name.



This is Hastings - resilience in the blood.  
Compassion in the cracks when you're sinking in the mud.  
When the system shuts doors, Seaview builds trust,  
From the ashes of the struggle, it was us, it was us.

Now it's Dave on the line when the weekend calls,  
Steady voice, strong hands if I stumble or fall.  
He's backing my vision, he's part of it all,  
Housing co-ops rising, breaking the wall.

For the people who can't keep a tenancy key,  
We're rewriting the script, making history.  
Watch this space, remember my name,  
Hastings together, we're changing the game.

Seaview, they see you, they free you,  
Through the struggle, they lead you, believe you.  
When the system deceives and it leaves you,  
Hastings forever - respect to Seaview.

Juliette, Annie, Dave, Maggie and the crew...  
Every step I've taken, I owe it to you.  
Seaview's not a service - it's family.

It's Hastings, it's hope and it's forever.

*By Sharon Lisa Rhodes*



# HASTINGS HALF MARATHON

## Team Seaview, 2025

After a rocky start to the 2025 Hastings Half Marathon, Team Seaview laced up their trainers and showed up with resilience, teamwork and determination to carry them across the finish line.

Some members of our team ran on the original date, a rainy Sunday morning in March, and others chose to run on the rescheduled date of October 5th fighting against strong winds and the cold.

The already challenging course was made even harder in the brisk October air with the winding roads and steep Hastings hills. It was inspiring to see such an enormous number of people committed to their challenge, many running for charities.

Despite the blustery winds and the chilly October air, crowds lined the course cheering and shouting the runners every step of the way. It was a privilege to see such a large number of people coming together as a community. It proves that there is a space for everyone when it comes to fundraising and awareness.

Our team wore blue with pride and together raised a fantastic £4800 which will help us continue to provide much needed support for vulnerable adults in Hastings and St Leonards.

We would like to extend another heartfelt thank you to each of our runners and to every one of their sponsors who contributed to our grand total. Also, to each of the members of staff, volunteers and stewards of the Hastings Half Marathon who made the event possible. The funds raised for Seaview and the awareness spread at the Hastings Half Marathon makes it one of our most successful events each year.



# "THE BEST AGM EVER!"

## Celebrating forty years of Seaview

We had such an enjoyable afternoon on Wednesday 23rd November celebrating the enormous successes of Seaview at our Annual General Meeting. It was a pleasure to host such a large crowd in our Wellbeing Centre, we are so fortunate to have such an incredible community rallying around us, interested in the progress, achievements and future of our wonderful charity.

Together, our attendees listened to inspiring stories about significant moments in Seaview's extensive history, about the tremendous changes that have happened since our small beginning. Our Chair of Trustees, Dr Anna Barnes, and Seaview Projects Manager, Sue Burgess, spoke about some of those moments right at the beginning of Seaview's journey and emphasised how the ethos of Seaview has always been about responding to local need and filling the gaps in services available. Seaview's growth through the years has truly been shaped by its community and service users.

It could be argued that our wonderful guest speaker, Steve Manwaring, HVA, Chief Officer said it best, that even after forty years of change, "you are still valuing the same things". It was refreshing to hear about Seaview's revered legacy from another professional who could appreciate not

only the social impact Seaview has on clients but also the behind the scenes work it takes to be so successful for so long. Steve acknowledged that part of Seaview's success was that "Seaview isn't just about the basics, it's about the springboard". This was such kind feedback to receive, as everyone at Seaview works so hard to encourage and nurture our service users into reaching their potential. It was fantastic to hear that others could recognise that our efforts are working.

After the presentations we were able to see forty years of history displayed as an exhibition in our newly redecorated gym area, capturing moments and memories of past and present members of the Seaview community. Photographs, quotes, letters and newspaper clippings lined the tables celebrating just how far we have come in forty years.

It was such a special afternoon, and we are so pleased that so many people were able to join us in celebration. Thank you to all of our speakers, Dave Perry, Anna Barnes, Sue Burgess, Steve Manwaring, Abby-Lee Widger and Sharon Rhodes.

We hope you enjoyed the afternoon and will join us again in the future.





# CHRISTMAS CAROLS

## A very special 40th anniversary celebration

What a phenomenal turn out we had for our very special 40th anniversary carol concert!

It was so wonderful to see that not only was our Christmas congregation full, it was overflowing! Every seat was taken with people lining the side aisles and the back of the church too! We had queues down the street with excited members of the public looking forward to a festive evening of entertainment.

And what a truly incredible show it was.

We opened the night with a beautiful rendition of Hallelujah brought to us by Sound Waves Community choir.

We loved listening to each of our guest speakers: Rachel Lowden, Dave Perry, Sharon Rhodes, the mayor Cllr Becca Horne, Cllr John Cannan, Sue Burgess and our trustees Gary Rodgerson and Marie Casey.

We were sad to announce that our 40th anniversary concert was the penultimate performance for our friends Now and Then a 'cappella group. We have had the pleasure of their company and harmonies for a number of years now and they have always been a popular performance. We are grateful that

for so many years they have been kind enough to join us and chose Seaview as their charity beneficiary for many of their own concerts. They will be certainly be missed as one of our performers but we are sure they will join us in the congregation in future years!

We are delighted to confirm that together we raised a truly incredible £1407.33!

As we mentioned during the concert, we are entering a financially challenging year so community support is more important now than ever. The money is going to make such a huge difference for our charity and clients and we are so grateful for your support.

With so many people in attendance and working behind the scenes our list of thank yous could run on for pages! But in the interest of keeping it short, thank you to everyone who attended, donated, and participated - every single penny helps. We truly could not have put on such a spectacular evening without you. Please be sure to take a look at the fabulous photographs taken by John Cole, featured on 'Our Gallery' on the Seaview website.

We hope you will all join us for the next one, keep an eye on our website and socials for more information.



My names Rachel, I am sing with the choir the Shady Pines, and we have had the privilege of singing at The Seaview Carol Concert for 9 years!

I am honoured to say a few words on the special 40th Anniversary year for Seaview. My parents Barry and Chris ran a charity for those experiencing homelessness in

Colchester in the 90's, and I witnessed first-hand what that entailed.

It is in the spirit of celebration that I would like to recognise the people who keep this vital service running, every day and every night. I would have liked to have named them but that would have taken more than the two minutes I have been allocated!

Staff and volunteers offer clients practical, physical and emotional support. **They see people, and to be seen is everything.** They then respond to need as best they can.

The full cold moon this week represented transformation, courage and gratitude. Seaview workers offer the opportunity for people to transform their lives and help them on that journey. They manage trauma, despair, poverty, hunger, loneliness and ill health. They show courage and commitment to changing the social and political narrative, and daily fire fight with limited resources.

I also think they have a lot of fun and bring creativity, warmth and share laughter together, because as humans that can be our shared gift.

We stand in gratitude and solidarity as a community. A strong community of Hastings and St Leonards and on behalf of all who have walked through Seaview's door, or been met on the street, we say THANK YOU.

*Rachel Lowden*

I am going to tell you a little about Seaview, how I got involved and how important this wonderful charity is.

When I reached the age of 60 and was thinking of semi-retirement I saw an advert for a job as a support worker at Seaview. And whilst not really grasping the full implications of what the role would entail, it seemed like a worthwhile thing to do, so I applied. So, that's how I got the best job I've ever had. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made. To mis-quote Sir Alex Ferguson "Seaview, bloody hell!" What an absolutely amazing place to work and it's been such a privilege.

All of the people that work there are brilliant but there are two in particular that I want to mention this evening as they are the heart and soul of the Wellbeing Centre which offers so much to so many. They are the two best workmates I have had in over 50 years. They are of course Maggie Hawthorne and Sam Fuller. Thank you so much for being so terrific to work with and for doing such a great job.

I think everybody here recognises how vital a charity Seaview is. But of course that doesn't make it immune to cuts in spending for commissioned services.

So what I would ask all of you to do is when politicians like myself come knocking on your door asking for your vote, do make sure to make it clear how much you believe in making sure Seaview is properly funded in order to support the most vulnerable in the town.

**We should all be advocates for Seaview.**

Thank You

*Cllr. John Cannan*





# THE SEAVIEW CHOIR

Pete Stiles

Hi everyone, my name's Pete and I've been with Seaview for 10 months as the Senior Administrator. I've loved getting to know Seaview, its staff, volunteers and service users, and recently I had the chance to join the Seaview Choir in their preparation for the Carol Concert. Outside of work I am an avid guitarist, so this was a great opportunity to play along with the group.

In this article I wanted to describe my experience with the choir and what we got up to.

Firstly, if you aren't aware, Jenny and Lucy (from Barefoot Opera) founded the Seaview choir which is peer led every Friday between 11am - 12pm. Barefoot Opera, a charity based in the South East, have been supporting us since 2012 and come in to rehearse when we have events on the horizon. It was immediately apparent that Jenny and Lucy have been able to create a very welcoming atmosphere here at Seaview. The choir is formed of regular members including service users, volunteers and staff. All were singing, laughing and supporting one another as I opened the door. The commotion was later heard by those in the Wellbeing Centre and two further service users came to join and were again welcomed with open arms.



We were preparing three songs for the Carol Concert: a jazzy version of "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year", "Silent Night" and "Happy Birthday" (the Stevie Wonder version).

For Silent Night the choir decided to hum the tune, whilst John Cannan read out a passage about homelessness in the community. I'm sure that those who were present at the Carol Concert would agree this was an incredibly atmospheric, moving and powerful passage. Please look out for our rendition on YouTube channel and social media pages.

The brilliant Liane Carroll, a world-renowned jazz musician and local Hastings legend, joined us for our set, performing an immense solo during "Happy Birthday" which prompted the congregation to join us in the final chorus.

Alongside the Carol Concert we had great fun filming and recording two of our songs at St John's church a few days before the concert (see photo). Simon Thorpe kindly recorded the sound, while local videographer James Perkins filmed the set.

I'd encourage anyone to join the choir, hopefully you can see how fun and social it is, just from my short experience. I'll certainly continue to attend and look forward to seeing more people joining soon!



# WREATH MAKING

Nadia Florence-Marshall

This year, Seaview volunteers from Awareness for Action (A4A) took on the festive challenge of creating Christmas Wreaths.

Last year, I organised a group session with both staff and service users, and together we produced some truly impressive wreaths. We spent the morning in a hive of activity that was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone involved.

Building on this positive experience, A4A identified the potential for wreath-making to become an effective fundraising event, as the quality of the wreaths made them suitable for sale!

Before starting the wreath-making process, it was essential to collect enough foliage to decorate at least ten to twelve wreaths. Living in the countryside is a real advantage, as it allowed me to gather greenery free of charge. In addition, generous friends allowed access to their gardens, which made it easy to collect all the necessary materials. Once we had gathered enough foliage, the team met at Seaview and took over the gym for the day's activities.

The enthusiasm from the A4A group was immediately apparent, with everyone eager and excited to get started.

When it comes to constructing a wreath, there are many options to consider. Although moss is a common material used, I find it less appealing. It must be purchased, can be messy to use, and it tends to result in a much heavier wreath. I consistently favour using flexible conifer branches for the base as this approach is both practical and effective, this way, the wreaths can also last well into January! The true key to an attractive wreath is variety: I use holly (the variegated variety if available) along with different types of conifers, berried ivy, eucalyptus, pittosporum, and Christmas tree foliage. The array of branches and leaves creates the most sensational aroma, it certainly put us in the Christmas spirit!

The day was long and required considerable effort, but the support from Beth, her sister Bronwen, Imogen, Ann, Valerie, Elaine, service user Kim, and my friend Katie was invaluable.

Together, we managed to create a beautiful collection of wreaths. These wreaths were then sold at two separate events as Christmas approached. Having the company of the A4A team made this task especially enjoyable, as I usually work on my own. A big thank you to everyone involved, and congratulations on raising £400. We all agreed that the effort was well worth it.



# HALF MAN HALF BURGER

## A kind Christmas treat

On Tuesday the 23rd of December, our wellbeing centre team and service users were once again welcomed into Half Man Half Burger on Marine Court for a delicious, festive lunch.

This year is the fourth year that Rory, Matt and the team have extended the invitation for our clients to enjoy a sit down meal in their restaurant and we are so grateful to be able to provide this opportunity. For many of our clients, this is an experience they do not get to have in their day to day lives, for a number of different reasons. This lunch is something our clients have come to look forward to, as it has become an eagerly anticipated tradition.

As always, the food was delicious, the atmosphere cozy and the company absolutely divine. Laughter, chatter and the aroma of mouth-watering food filled the air, it was truly a very special way for us to come together and celebrate the festive time of year. We had Alfie and Charlie cooking up a storm and Eli being the host of all hosts in the front of house.

We wouldn't be able to deliver such important services, supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our town, without the support of our local community. We are so honoured that the team at Half Man Half Burger continues to partner with us year after year, demonstrating unwavering generosity and community spirit. Their commitment



to making a difference to the lives of others is truly inspiring.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the team at Half Man Half Burger for making this incredible experience possible, from all of us here at Seaview.

# CHRISTMAS DINNER

## A Festive Celebration

This year's annual Christmas dinner at Seaview was quite an event. Our talented chef, Lynton, had been engrossed all week preparing hundreds of sprouts, potatoes and parsnips, so the day itself would run smoothly. Of course, alongside this he was busy making the free nutritional lunches that Seaview provide daily.

A small army of volunteers arrived to assist with all extra touches that make Christmas lunch so amazing. Without them, the day would be a real struggle, and we would not be able to provide such a feast. Staff arrived early and as if by magic, the Wellbeing Centre was transformed into a festive wonderland. Tables were adorned with crackers and sweets; a free raffle was on display for all. The raffle prizes were all donated. It was delightful to see the faces of our clients light up when they received a wonderful treat to take away with them.

Then came time for lunch. We're incredibly lucky to have turkey crowns donated so there was no shortage of food. The plates were overflowing but people still managed to keep a little space back for mince pies and fresh cream.

There was enough food to feed all the staff as well. Our CEO Dave Perry And UOK Partnership Lead, Stuart Reid, joined all the clients to get into the true spirit of Christmas.



Christmas dinner day is always a memorable event on the Seaview Calendar. We would like to give a special thank you to all the volunteers and donors that helped make the day fabulous. Obviously, the hero of the day was Lynton, who worked tirelessly to pull off another spectacular feast, as he does on a daily basis.



# BAKING KINDNESS

## A 40 for 40 Challenge

We were overjoyed to have some of our youngest supporters take part in their own 40 for 40 challenges this year, raising crucial funds and awareness of Seaview's mission.

Our young supporters baked deliciously tempting cakes and sold them to their friends, family and neighbours for 40p each. There was chocolate, icing, marshmallows and more...unsurprisingly, they sold out in a flash!

It is truly fantastic to see children at such a young age, supporting our cause while having compassion and a desire to help others.



# FINDING COMMON GROUND

## Hastings College

As part of our 40th anniversary celebrations, students from Hastings College took time to create artwork in line with service user experiences.

The title of the collected works is 'Finding Common Ground', and in response to that theme the students asked the service users a series of questions about their lives, experiences and interests. These responses were used to discover what common ground was shared with the service users. From this a series of collages and zines were created that recorded these insights.

Andy Willard, Tutor at Hastings College.



# MYTHOLOGY RELIQUARY

## Stephanie Chamberlin

Hello, my name is Stephanie and I facilitate the monthly 'Story Well' session at Barnaby's Lounge, in Robertson Street, where I read out one of my ethereal folkish tales and then invite the open-hearted audience to share whatever has come up for them as they listened; whether that be memories, ideas, drawings, or writing. I am thrilled to have been asked to tell you about a couple of fundraisers that I have done, in order to contribute to the Seaview Project's '40 for 40' funding goal of £40,000 in their 40th year of running their amazing charity.

### 'Mythology Reliquary':

As an extension to 'Mythology Reimagined' - an exhibition at Barnaby's Lounge and curated by artist Louise Whitham - alongside Susie Warren's very fitting ceramics within the upstairs fireplace and chimney breast, I installed a display called 'Mythology Reliquary', which had the main 'reliquary' for sale in aid of the Seaview Project's funds.

### What is a 'Mythology Reliquary'?

It is a vessel that I made using found items, both natural and man-made, for the ashes of story notes - creative details of the archetypal characters and scenarios universally understood within the body and psyche - that have never been used in any of my stories, and which I printed out and burned, only to then destroy the original file so that there is no other record of them! These ashes were placed in the 'Mythology Reliquary', where people were invited to mindfully smudge themselves with a small dab of the ashes, and maybe find themselves blessed with some mythology to write or rewrite or perhaps be enriched by the enchanting details of life, or any other blessing that they set an intention for.

### Another Seaview Project fundraiser:

The making of this reliquary also informed 'The Moth Man' tale, which I read out at 'Drawn from the Well' beside the fireplace exhibition, on Saturday 13th December in Barnaby's Lounge. All donations for this story session were in aid of the Seaview Project.

An enthusiastic gathering of curious minds and open hearts came along with their art and writing



Barnaby's Lounge,  
46 Robertson Street, Hastings TN34 1HL

materials, and, while listening to this intriguing and highly visual tale of mine, they each responded in the moment with their art. Afterwards, there was the option to talk about what came up for people, and to wander around the space and see the responses of those who chose to share on the day. It was a dynamic, thoughtful, and insightful process for all, and we are looking forward to the next one.

I very much hope that through community support, by way of art projects like mine or any other goodwill activities, a good amount of money is raised for such a worthy cause!

# HELP MAKE A HOUSE A HOME

## A vital stepping stone for those experiencing homelessness

Seaview has supported people experiencing homelessness for 40 years, and feels passionately that we should all have a place to call home, never more present in our mind than days like today, scraping the ice off the car and wondering how people are making it through the night. However moving away from homelessness is fraught with challenges, including availability of accommodation and capacity to meet people's needs.

We have been fortunate to receive support from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local government, Housing Justice and Hastings Borough council to purchase High Banks, a property that once renovated will provide a first step away from street homelessness for up to 9 people at a time on short term licence, where they will be supported to seek onward housing.

Our vision is that this is a safe, stable, dignified and supportive home, providing a vital stepping stone for those experiencing homelessness. Within High Banks Seaview will provide a core tenancy sustainment team with a robust and inclusive operating model, and dedicated support staff to support individuals seek onward housing. In addition we will utilise our other Seaview services, volunteers and partner agencies to ensure a holistic wrap around support system.

In order to deliver this Seaview will be committed to meet the regulatory frameworks and best practise to achieve the highest possible standards for occupants, and will do this with consideration to the following key principles:

- Respond to emergency need
- Promote wellbeing
- Keep people safe and secure
- Support people to move on
- Work together



We are now ready to start the renovations having completed the required planning processes and have appointed a local firm, Dale Saunders Ltd, to complete the works.

We are delighted to continue to receive support from a charity called Crash who are providing invaluable support, linking Seaview with construction companies and local firms to provide experience, expertise and donations where possible to help us transform the property to deliver our vision. Crash have already facilitated generous support from firms such as High and Mighty Scaffolding, Kilnbridge surveyors and Bauder flat roofing experts, in addition to a range of others in the pipeline.

We have received overwhelming support from friends of Seaview and other local businesses this year who have expressed excitement for the upcoming project and the benefits to the community. However we do understand that for those closest there remains some anxiety about the impact it might have for the immediate community. We have produced a community commitment that outlines the principles that will underpin our operations to mitigate any negative impact while remaining true to our aim of improving the outcomes for some of the most disadvantaged people in our community.

In 2026 we will be calling upon our community once more with a crowdfunder to ensure that High Banks fulfils its purpose in supporting people to leave the street. Please follow our socials and keep an eye on our website for more news about how to get involved.



## Everyone deserves a place to call HOME.

### Did you know?

Over 300 people sleep on the streets of Hastings and St Leonards each year, vulnerable to extreme weather, abuse and exploitation.

Seaview has bought a property to develop into a home for up to 9 people experiencing homelessness at a time whilst they look for somewhere permanent. This project offers safe and secure housing fully supported by trained Seaview staff and volunteers.

### Be part of the solution.

Help us provide safe, supportive accommodation and a pathway to a permanent home.  
Support our campaign Help Make a House a Home, today.

Scan the QR code to donate and support our community appeal.  
Together we can help turn this house into a home, *one brick at a time.*



For individuals For businesses





# MAKU / BIRD & BLEND

## Womens Group

At Seaview we are so fortunate to have a large and kind community of like-minded people supporting the work that we do.

In December, we received wonderful donations of tea and slippers from Bird & Blend Tea Co. and MAKU UK. These donations enabled us to host an afternoon slipper and tea party as a special treat for our womens group.

MAKU is a local company which creates beautiful slippers and more, from leather industry discards - for their range of designs visit maku.uk

Bird & Blend Tea Co. is an independent, award-winning tea company on a mission to spread happiness & reimagine tea!

# MAKÜ



The group enjoyed cups of delicious Earl Grey Crème and the Great British Cuppa, a classic English Breakfast tea. Everyone was delighted to be gifted a warm pair of MAKU slippers in time for the colder weather.

We host our women-only space in our wellbeing centre on a Wednesday afternoon from 2.30pm until 4pm. It is an opportunity for women to come together in a safe space for crafts, support, socialising and more.

We look forward to welcoming you next time.

# PAINTED PIANO PROJECT

## Hastings International Piano Competition, Toni



I volunteer on Friday mornings, loosely facilitating what I call our Arty Farty Crafty group, which comprises of only a small handful of die-hards!



Because of the unpredictable nature of addiction, mental health challenges and life-changing events, our community cannot often commit to long-term projects. So I never apply any pressure around the sessions. We have

a sort of 'have a go if you want to' attitude to the mornings. If I start something new like say, weaving for instance, after a couple of weeks some interest is shown and then I can demo it for them.

Michele asked me if I would be interested in the Painted Piano Project and so initially she popped flyers about it on all the tables in the hub, which is how we let our community know about important news, updates and events. With many off sick and the winter blues upon us, as expected, there wasn't much enthusiasm except from myself who thought it was an amazingly mad idea!

Sophie and Rosa came and firstly we made up some bright collages, which was fun and playful! I talked to Sophie about what the hub and Seaview offer to our community, and what it means to them. Sophie and Rosa's visit coincided with a recent survey I had completed with our visitors, regarding food and what Seaview provides with notes on any needs not met, suggested changes etc. My involvement in this highlighted diverse reasons and barriers that exist to cooking healthy, fresh food at home, with Seaview therefore providing vital services for them.

I can relate to many of our community, having personal experience of addiction and mental health challenges myself.

On Sophie and Rosa's second visit, we experimented with colour mixing (whilst others sanded down the piano, ready for the primer) which was again good fun and revealed some repetitive colours and shapes that have now been used for the final design. The overall concept was built on the ideas that often at the start of a crisis, everything feels 'rocky, rough, dark and oppressive'. But with support such as Seaview, the load begins to lighten. It's simple but very honest.

Fortunately, the primer dried quickly and we were able to start to lay down the colours we had mixed, in shapes representing rocks, pebbles and boulders to the lower areas of the piano using acrylics and incorporating 'Seaview blue'.

General interest slowly gathered pace as they could see the piano develop and take shape. There was help at the moving, sanding and priming stages. Then more involvement during the painting stages.

On our third week of the Project, the piano really started to come together! And some positivity with it. It has become not only a talking point, but an icebreaker for conversations around peoples skills, talents, interests and much more!

I've really enjoyed the project and can't wait to continue painting!



Our painted piano was displayed in Hastings Station for 2 weeks in March, open to all to play.





# AT THE HEART OF HOPE

## Behind the Seaview Project

At the Seaview Project, change doesn't begin with labels, targets, or tick boxes. It begins with PEOPLE.

People who have been battling addiction for years. People sleeping on the cold street floors or moving between sofas and temporary accommodation. People stuck in cycles of poor mental health, housing insecurity, or alcohol use who feel forgotten, judged or out of options.

And it continues with a team who believe - deeply and unwaveringly - that everyone deserves dignity, understanding, and the chance to move forward at their own pace.

The strength of the Seaview Project lies not just in the services it provides, but in the people who deliver them. A dedicated, compassionate team works every day to meet individuals where they are, not where systems expect them to be.

Whether someone arrives through crisis, curiosity, or sheer exhaustion, they are met with open doors and open minds. Seaview supports people facing addiction in all its forms, from long-standing substance use to those who feel stuck in a rut with alcohol but are not sure where to turn. It supports individuals experiencing street homelessness and those navigating complex housing challenges.

We support people living with mental health difficulties, often alongside trauma, loss and exclusion. Many of the people who come through Seaview's door carry more than one of these challenges- and that complexity is never treated as a problem, but a reality to be understood.

A cornerstone of the Seaview Project's work is a trauma informed, client led approach. The team recognises that many past experiences such as abuse, loss, instability and stigma - shape how people engage with services today. Instead of us asking "what's wrong with you" the question becomes "what's happened to you?" This shifts the perspective, changing everything. It creates a space for trust to grow, for conversations to happen without fear of judgement, and for progress to look different for every individual.

Nowhere is this more visible than the Wednesday Town Centre Seaview Hub. Once a week, the project brings together multiple agencies under one roof, creating a welcoming, accessible space where people can access support without being sent from service to service. For those already overwhelmed by red tape, appointments, or past rejection, this model is transformational.

At the hub people can speak with professionals from housing, mental health, drug and alcohol services and wider support services - all in one place, working collaboratively.

The result is not just efficiency, but dignity.

People don't have to re-tell their story again and again. They don't have to choose which need is most urgent. Instead, support wraps around them in a way that feels joined up, respectful and human.

For many, Seaview is the first place clients have felt listened to. Seaview is not just a service - it is a community.

# AN UPDATE ON SORS

## Seaview's Specialist Outreach Recovery Service

SORS has continued to support those who are struggling to get into drug treatment and continues to work in a client centred way.

We specialise our support to be tailored to the person who is using Class A drugs and is in need of structured treatment and/or harm reduction and sign posting to other support services. We have seen an increase in people self-referring to our service and we also accept referrals from local agencies.

We would like to welcome our newest team member Taff, who has joined the SORS team with Hollie, Jennie, Debbie and Billy.



Our "Hub" is going from strength to strength, we are lucky to have the support of Lee Humphries (SASS) who supports people on a no appointment needed basis, with benefit and housing advice. We also have the wonderful CGL

staff who get to meet up with some of their most hard to reach clients and offer BBV testing and Urine screening on the spot. CGL also provide the hub with sexual health support and a nurse if needed, RSI CGL are also present weekly.

Also, HBC attends for further housing advice. Rob continues to offer digital support for people who need a helping hand with IT. Hand Massages are back by popular demand as this was highlighted by our service users, whilst completing service user feedback. The book library is also very popular.

Feedback gained:

**"It's so great not having to wait for an appointment."**

**"We always know you are there."**

**"Some people will wait and only use the hub for support."**

We are very excited to say that 40 people came to visit us for our Christmas party and were all given a card, present and a full English breakfast (which was asked for by the service users). We provided a gift for people's pets also. The table was set so all could eat together and enjoy the festive activities and environment.



We have received so much positive heartfelt feedback from people who came on this day:



**"You have made us feel so special"**

**"This is the only Christmas I will get."**

**"You people have gone above and beyond for us."**



From SORS and all other agencies we would like to thank everyone for their efforts and support and mainly for those who choose to seek support from us...we are the lucky ones.

Wednesdays 10am-2pm  
Wellington Square  
Baptist Church  
Wellington Square  
Hastings TN34 1PN

# EARLY MORNING ROUGH SLEEPER OUTREACH

## Coffee and Conversation

*Having seen the Seaview Rough Sleeper Outreach contract come to an end last April, Seaview has committed to fund the early morning rough sleeper outreach sessions from its reserves. This is testament to how Seaview values this vital service. Here, Mick Hillier, Lead Rough Sleeper Worker gives an insight into the early morning, rough sleeper verification outreach sessions that take place twice a week at 5am.*



Waking up at 03.30am-ish and tiptoeing downstairs so you don't wake up anyone else in the house, peering out of the window to see what the weather is for the morning, so we know what to wear and grabbing the de-icer on the winter mornings. Once the flask of coffee is made, we begin the start of our outreach session.

We have key locations that we follow up on most mornings, this entails covering a large area of Hastings & St Leonards. Information is received on a daily basis from a website called Street Link that the general public can access here [thestreetlink.org.uk/start](http://thestreetlink.org.uk/start), from staff at Seaview and from our service users. If agreed by the individual who is sleeping rough we ask for a name and a number, if they have one; so we can carry on the support outside of the early morning verification sessions.

Whether we are walking down on the lower Promenade or trudging through a wooded copse, a hot cup of coffee is a great icebreaker for conversation when finding any rough sleepers. This enables us to check on their well-being, their safety and provide information on where essential services are available.

One of the individuals we met had been sleeping rough for several weeks making his way along the east coast, he had left his accommodation through ill health which in turn had affected his mental health. We introduced him to the Wellbeing Centre where he was able to engage with staff. We provided him with a mobile phone due to him losing his several weeks before. This gave him the opportunity to contact family and friends from his local area, which gave him the confidence to re-engage with his local authority who encouraged him to return to his accommodation. After a lot of thought and conversations he decided that would be the best option for him as he did not have a local connection with Hastings.

There are countless reasons for rough sleeping, for example: life choice, mental health problems, addiction, or it could be someone is leaving care, hospital or the military services and don't know how to access or maintain a tenancy. There are many reasons and various life circumstances which can lead to homelessness and rough sleeping.

However, we believe outreach sessions are and always will be the first step in helping people move away from rough sleeping by building trust and offering consistent support in their journey, so they feel seen and listened to.



*If you'd like a more in-depth understanding of the work please visit the Hastings In Focus podcast (Back from the brink - how Seaview helps people turn their lives around at [www.seaviewproject.co.uk/news](http://www.seaviewproject.co.uk/news)) where Mick and rough sleepers are interviewed on the street and in the Seaview Wellbeing Centre.*

# CONNECT LIVED EXPERIENCE

## Drug and Alcohol Awareness Training

Seaview's partnership with Brighton University around the Connect Lived Experience training has grown over the past 2 years and the trainers themselves are now a seasoned group, having trained as trainers and delivered six face to face training days, 'Working with substance using service users'.

Rob, Welly, Taff and Toni have been meeting weekly with Dr Daren Britt, Principle Lecturer in Criminology and Substance Misuse, Dave Perry, Chief Officer, Jenny Gibson, Team Lead for our specialist outreach service and Mark Williams, until recently, Community Development Officer for the council's substance misuse team.

Those that have been trained by the Connect Lived Experience trainers have responded in a unanimously positive way! Comments from feedback forms include, "it was extremely interesting!" and "it was really good to hear the examples of lived experience first hand".

The team have recently delivered bespoke training to East Sussex County Council and to Sussex Police. These sessions have been invaluable and it's been possible to adapt the training content to the specific needs of the audience.

We are delighted that the police have booked several chargeable training sessions which will help to ensure our team feel valued and to support the sustainability of the project.

There will soon be another round of train the trainer sessions and we would like to invite anyone with lived experience of drugs and alcohol issues to apply.



If you are interested in attending the training please contact us and we will send the dates and how to book. Please email [admin@seaviewproject.org.uk](mailto:admin@seaviewproject.org.uk)



# MY EXPERIENCE AT SEAVIEW

## Archie and Dunya, T-Level Students

My time so far here at Seaview has been enlightening for me. I came to Seaview back in July 2025 as a trainee admin as part of my college course of T-Level Business Management & Administration. I came into Seaview not knowing what to expect from the realities of administration or how it would shape me for the future.

Over my time here I have picked up keys skills from this role which has transformed my wider skillset as well as setting myself up for great success come my exams, being able to implement this real-world knowledge and experience into fictional scenarios. In addition to this, these skills will aid me as I progress through the future, giving me the confidence I need to work successfully within a team, to talk to new individuals, and to speak up during meetings.

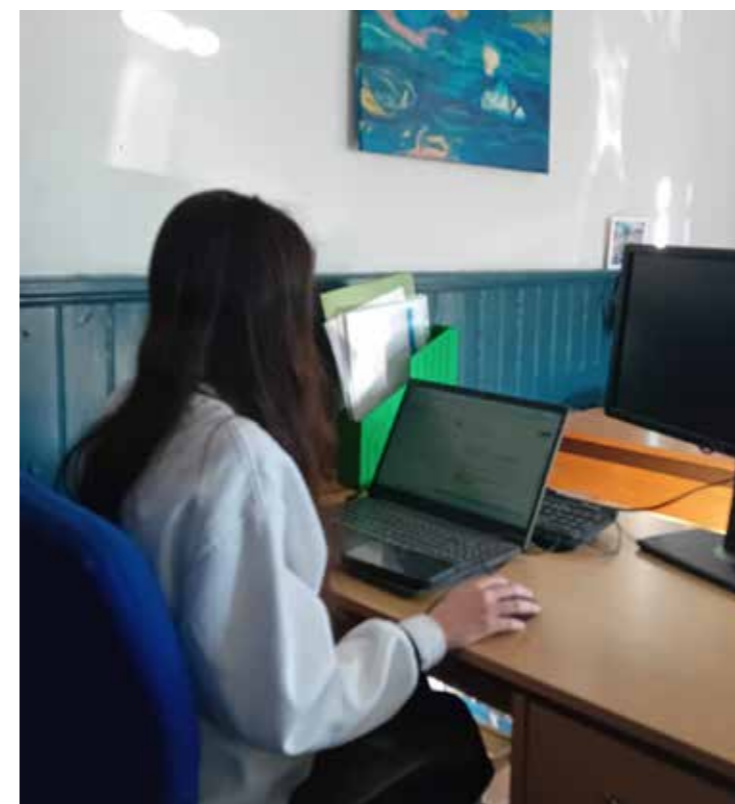
Working at Seaview has provided me with great opportunities from exciting activities to getting stuck in with our service users. I have enjoyed every moment here so far and would love to thank everyone at Seaview for their support, and the friendly and great atmosphere they present. I look forward to seeing what the next few months have in store!



I began work experience as a finance trainee for Seaview back in July 2025 in order to complete the 315 hours required for to pass my college course on T-Level Accounting.

Over the span of the last few months, I've gradually gotten to know the wonderful team here, as well as pick up on a handful of important skills and knowledge relating to my course. Some of these skills include, but are not limited to: processing invoices, understanding and using accounting software such as Xero, handling bank reconciliation, and posting manual journals for fixed asset depreciation. These will not only benefit me education-wise, but in real world settings too.

Working here has not only taught me a lot, but has also made me feel both comfortable in a work environment and confident in my studies. It has been an honour taking on my placement with Seaview and I am grateful for the time I've already worked and the time I have left to complete.





Seaview choir at the Christmas Carol Concert, 2025

# HOW MUSIC HAS ENHANCED SEAVIEW

Celebrating creativity, connection and wellbeing through sound

From the gentle strum of a guitar in the Seaview Wellbeing Centre, to the accented notes from the piano in the gym area, to the bold voices of Barefoot Opera and Seaview Choir, through to the Seaview bands Dusty Lilacs and Monsat Inc creating original compositions; Seaview has always been a vibrant hub where music connects and inspires.

Over the last 40 years, Seaview has seen music take centre stage at many of our events. From Time to Shine leading 12 weeks of rehearsals culminating in a moving and uplifting performance at the St Leonards on Sea Masonic Hall. To the Seaview Choir participating in performances with Barefoot Opera at various community opera performances at St Marys in the Castle, St John the Evangelist Church; performing at Seaview Projects Seaview's Got Talent through to headlining the Seaview annual Carol Concert. Not forgetting the Seaview bands Dusty Lilacs expressing their stories through songwriting and opening for the Sidley Festival. Now, excitingly, we have a new band practicing at Seaview called Monsat Inc. While Monsat Inc are a relatively new peer led band, they opened at the Big Sleep LIVE this year and will also be seen performing at Seaview's Got Talent on the 22nd April.



Time To Shine Pilot Scheme



Time To Shine Pilot Scheme



Music group, 2014

Not least can we forget the music and songwriting sessions with local musician Chris Elam in the early noughties, which culminated in the production of two Seaview Project CD's, showcasing the talents of individual musicians alongside an inclusive group of Seaview service users writing and singing passionately about their beloved Seaview in the anthem called Acceptance:

*So you're on the street again  
The ground has left your feet again  
Cannot see the light ahead us  
Darkness saturates your head  
All you need is a warm safe bed  
Someone you can call a friend*

*But the world is cold  
It sold itself, it sold its soul  
The world is dark  
It's turned soft, its skin so hard*

*It's Seaview, it's Seaview*

*It's 9am in the morning again  
Seaview's opened her doors again  
There's light, between her four walls  
Welcoming you priceless folks  
We always reap just what we sow  
Like dead fish swimming against the flow  
No need to express out thanks  
Cos the world has made us walk the plank  
For the world is cold  
It sold itself it sold its soul  
The world is dark  
It's turned soft its skin so hard  
It's so hard*

*It's Seaview, it's Seaview*

*We can see through you  
We don't judge*



Dusty Lilacs at Sidley Festival, 2024

Alongside introducing and enhancing new musical skills, encouraging belief in self and confidence, music at Seaview



Seaview choir at SGT, 2025

isn't just about playing or performing. Music at Seaview is about wellbeing and connection. It is well documented listening, creating and participating in music, has powerful wellbeing benefits. Music can reduce stress and anxiety, enhance mood and positivity, and at Seaview we see how music can build a sense of belonging and community. Whether someone has never touched an instrument, lives with a disability, struggles with communication, or is simply curious; every voice matters, and every contribution is welcomed.



Seaview band at SGT, 2025

If you'd like to get involved with music at Seaview, Monsat Inc practices every Thursday at 10am-3pm and the choir is open to new members for practice Fridays at 11am; all sessions take place in the Seaview gym.

Take a peek at the pilot scheme Seaview Project did with Time to Shine back in 2016 here!



# CREATIVE WRITING

## A journey through the years

Creative writing has long been an important part of life at Seaview, offering service users a supportive space to explore ideas, express themselves, and build confidence through words. Over the years, facilitators such as the local punk poet in the 90's, the service user group leading the creative inspiration and 'rants' in the noughties, to mindful journaling and more recently, published children's author Imogen White facilitating sessions for A Town Explore's a Book, Now You See Me and RADAR (former Seaview peer led service). All have offered creative writing outlets, generously sharing their time, skills and creativity to unlock the potential in all who have participated.

From poetry and personal reflection, storytelling, songwriting to imaginative self-discovery exercises; inclusion has been a focus, ensuring a scribe is on hand to include all who wish to participate. The focus has been on experimenting and finding a voice that feels authentic to all who join in.

Over time, creative writing at Seaview has become more than words on a page, it has supported wellbeing, strengthened connections between service users, and offered moments of reflection, laughter and achievement.

Here are some examples throughout the years of those who have enjoyed and discovered the joys of creative writing.



Photographs from Now You See Me, 2022



### Happy Poets Day

Today is Happy Poets Day  
At the Seaview Centre  
The place without a view in sight  
But where you might find your mentor.  
Your mentor, or a wholesome meal  
With dessert- you make those choices.  
But whatever you decide to have  
You're surrounded by kindly voices.  
A kindly voice will help digest  
And will ease unwelcome stresses  
To help you cope when the pennies are short  
They provide you with new dresses.  
New dresses and well, so much more  
Which is stored in a magical room  
And when the time is right, they will just  
make a wish  
Which can free you from you gloom.  
The sight of a new bag or new shoes  
Will brighten up anyone's day  
Especially when the pennies are short  
And our sunshine makes no hay.

- Susan

### At Seaview

Sam works at Seaview,  
she is very nice.  
She works with Maggie,  
and always checks things twice.  
All the staff are very good,  
and helpful too.  
Always ready to help,  
if you do not know what to do.  
All the food at Seaview,  
it is very nice.  
It is handmade in the kitchen,  
and only a small price.  
When we arrive we have a drink,  
it is always very good.  
It's very refreshing,  
and makes you feel you should.

-Evelyn

### The Raindrop

An odd raindrop dropped upon my cheek -  
Pretending to be a tear  
But as I prepared to wipe it away -  
He spoke to me loud and clear.  
"I'm the last drop of water in this world  
And I don't know where else to go.  
Please let me remain here, where I rest -  
I'm so lonely and wobbly with woe."  
Well, I had heard a rumour about this earth -  
Something about it being arid  
But I hadn't found time to research the truth -  
Too busy with my plans to be married.

Now I treasure the teardrop here on my face,  
Yes, of course I allowed him to stay.  
Others might believe that I cry like a fool  
But inside I'm as happy as day.

- Susan



### Sweet Freedom

Sweet Freedom is a faithful friend  
We met some months ago.  
She led me from a cold stone room,  
To a place with warmth and glow.  
Sweet Freedom does not act alone,  
So she chose essential flowers-  
My son and daughter, roses both,  
And a pinch of Seaview powers.  
They came together as a team,  
Each as loyal as a brother-  
My quartet song their lullaby,  
Like a new-born's loving mother.  
Sweet freedom's guidance paved the way,  
And I was waiting when she beckoned.  
Who would have thought she'd dance with me?  
I still relish every second.

- Susan



Photographs from A Town Explores a Book, 2023 and 2024

## Seaview

In the early grey of morning  
Before St Leonard's has stretched its arms awake,  
Seaview is already there,  
Not with answers shouted loud,  
But with hands held out-  
A sleeping bag rolled like a promise, warm  
coffee steaming against the cold,  
A name remembered.

It meets people where the pavement is hardest,  
where the nights are longer than hope,  
Where loneliness clings, tighter than the chill.  
It does not ask why you are here, It asks, are you  
hungry? Are you safe?  
There are showers that rinse away more than dirt,  
Clean clothes that whisper "you matter"!  
Small moments of dignity that stitch each broken  
day back together  
For those caught in the ache of opioids, for those  
numbing pain with street corner drink:

Seaview does not turn away.  
It stands steady in the mess, believing that care  
should never be conditional:  
It listens when the stories are spilled out crooked,  
when grief slurs its words, when silence says  
more than speech.  
It understands that healing is not a straight road-  
only a human one.

Seaview is the warmth that returns every day,  
even when progress is slow. Even when the world  
looks away,  
Its patience brewed strong: in the kindness that  
refused to give up.

- Hollie

## Suspicion

A joker stole my words today,  
And took them to the city.  
He spent them all on plastic poo.  
For him, I have no pity.  
Perhaps I have been misinformed,  
Perhaps he is no prankster.  
Suspicion tells me he is just,  
One big, fat merchant banker.

- Susan

## My Lady Heroine

My Lady Heroine,  
I obey, want and need you

My lady heroine,  
You give me strength, worth and truth.

My lady heroine,  
You always help me through.

My lady heroine,  
You are my internal tattoo.

My lady heroine,  
You take, give and you borrow.

My lady heroine,  
If you're not around me I feel sorrow.

My lady heroine,  
You help me feel alive.

My lady heroine,  
You are always by my side.

Buy my lady heroine,  
I need us to part ways,  
Or I will never see better days.

My lady heroine,  
I have a son, a brother and a future,  
If I don't break away you will always be the  
intruder.

My lady heroine,  
I try to let you go,  
But the power you have over me is taking its toll.

So my lady heroine,  
I'm going away, to a place where you cannot  
get to me,  
A place of peace, and forever after, a place of  
healing, recovery and laughter.  
A place I can go and feel truly myself,  
Without you giving me false feelings of wealth.

Goodbye lady heroine,  
It's taken time,  
But now I can say you are no longer mine.

Goodbye lady heroine,  
I can't say I'll miss you.

- Paul

## A poem for Seaview

At Seaview when the world still yawns,  
Mick and Linda great the early dawns,  
Verifying quiet, street by street, that the sleepers  
are safe, tucked in and neat.  
A kindness before the hot coffee is poured-  
That's how the day gets properly scored.

Meanwhile, Maggie and Sam in the wellbeing  
centre reign,  
Calming the chaos, soothing the strain,  
Fixing problems with kindness, humour and tea,  
Basically, emotional ninja's, but kinder obviously.

Beth and Pete in admin, master of the plan  
Making magic happen, with spreadsheets and scan,  
Forms, calls and shredding-no fuss, no fare-  
Just brilliant work that shows they care.

From the kitchen erupts a heroic smell  
Lintons cooking again - and it's working too well-  
Hot food daily, no matter the weather,  
If kindness had seasoning, he's mastered it forever.

Sues out there raising the funds with flair  
So, Seaview can do what others dare,  
Turning belief into boots on the ground  
That's how real magic is found.

Hannah keeps staffs' wellbeing firmly in line,  
Making sure we don't combust before  
quarter past 9.  
Leading the way, setting standards sky high  
While quietly managing the contractor guy.

Michelle works wonders with volunteers too,  
Matching hearts to actions,  
Supporting all that they do.

IC24 Kaz in calm and cool  
Doing leg care like its wizardry school,  
Helping clients in all ill health, steady and kind,  
Fixing bodies while we all lose our minds.

Dave Perry, our CEO, steering the ship  
Cool, calm, collected  
Never losing the grip  
Led with purpose, heart firmly intact  
Proof that good leadership  
Isn't myth - it's fact!



Then Hollie's team steps into the maze-  
Supporting opioid battles day after day  
With Jenny leading strong, holding it tight -  
And Debbie, Billy and Taff, bringing courage to fight.

Let's not forget Lorna, calmed and precise  
Behind the scenes alongside Abi-so nice.  
Doing wages with skills and grace-  
Making sure payday arrives in its place.  
No drama, no panic, no "Is this right?"  
Just payslips landing perfectly tight.

And then the plot twists  
We break into song-  
because yes, the choir sings and boy they sing  
strong,  
From soulful notes to 'is this harmony' debates,  
Nothing says healing like singing out of key, as the  
building vibrates.

Add bingo to the mix-  
Eyes down, tension high  
Shouting bingo like its life or death (No lie)

So here to the Seaview, amazing indeed  
A place built on action, compassion and need  
Helping homeless people  
With heart, soul and grit  
Not just doing work - but meaning every bit!

- Hollie

# STUART BAILLIE

## An interview with the founder of Hastings In Focus and host and producer of Seaview's recent podcasts

### Can you tell us about yourself?

I'm 64, married for 40 years, three kids, three grandchildren, and a boarder terrier. When I left school, I had ambitions to go into agriculture, which, looking back now, seems very foolish. My brothers had both gone into journalism and my father had been an author; writing and putting words together and being curious about things was in the family, so I decided I would go into newspapers.

I eventually landed a job with a newspaper called the Galloway Gazette in southwest Scotland, which was based in an area called Wigtown, which is where my mother's family came from, so I knew it well. I stayed there for three and a half years, and then I was head-hunted to a biweekly newspaper called the Dumfries and Galloway Standard.

So I spent four years at the standards of senior reporter, I then got my first management job as marketing manager for four years and left that, to set up my own public relations agency, which I did for about nine years. Then in 2001, we came down here to East Sussex.

I worked initially with my brother-in-law. He had a business here and I came and did some specific projects with a view to getting back to publishing. I retired in 2007 which is when we set up Hastings in Focus. At that time, I had never been particularly involved in Hastings, because I worked in Ashford up until that point.

When I set up Hastings in Focus, it was kind of going back to being a reporter again and finding out about what was happening in the town. That's how I found out about Seaview, and I actually dropped in one day.



### Can you explain a bit more about Hastings in Focus?

Hastingsinfocus.co.uk is a local news website. The industry now calls them hyper local news websites.

It's trying to do what the local newspaper used to do. Everybody used to turn to the local newspaper. I remember in my early days we would have people queuing up on a Friday morning when the paper was being printed.

It was the only way you got local news. Things like the local football teams who'd play on a Saturday, for many people, it was the first time they would find out the result. It seems amazing to think that, now we have social media and online news.

I'm just hugely frustrated by how bad local media is and it frightens me. There are implications that there's a huge potential impact in local democracy because without local newspapers or some kind of meaningful local media, how do we know how local councils are spending our money? How do we know how they're making decisions?

And without the journalists turning up to report meetings, all you do is get the press release from the council. Which is the version of the story by the political group. Whereas when I used to write local newspaper stories, you got balance and you understood how the council reached their decision.

### You progressed Hastings in Focus and changed the format into podcasts.

#### Can you tell us about that?

Yes, and that comes, again, back to my time as a journalist. I love meeting people, and I love

talking to people. And I love finding out those stories. I had the equipment to make podcasts, and thought, why not?

#### How did you find out about Seaview?

I got a press release from, Amber Rudd (the MP at the time) and Seaview won a national award at the same time, so I was intrigued.

I came down to Seaview, I can't remember whether I phoned or whether I just dropped in one day and met you [Sue Burgess] and Annie. Then we started speaking and I just became staggered by what you did and by the demand for what you did.

Because I've always said I didn't meet my first divorced person till I was 20 years old, you know, I sort of had quite a middle-class upbringing and I suppose that continued into my adult life as well. So yeah, I remember listening to both of you talking and you were starting to promote that year's Big Sleep (Seaview's mass sponsored sleep out). So, I went away and I wrote quite a number of stories. I did a couple of history pieces about former Chief Officer, John Evans and how Seaview started up.

I'd spoken to you about the Rough Sleeper Outreach programme and I thought it would be really insightful if I went with Mick (Lead Rough Sleeper Worker) to see firsthand what Mick and his colleagues do. That must have been in 2018, and, that morning, was amazing. There was a young lad rough sleeping who had just spent his first night in Hastings and Mick told him he could go to Seaview and get a breakfast and he said, 'but I don't have any money' and then Mick said, 'but it's free'. There was a look on that young lad's face, that I can't describe, but to me, it kind of summed up what you do. It was a sense of, I don't know, I can't explain, but I just remember looking at him and saw the relief that there was somewhere he could go and get fed and warm.

Hastings In Focus started as a bit of fun trying to focus on the positives in the town. However, it soon became very difficult working on the positives because when I started looking closely at what the council was doing and how it was spending its money, I could see it wasn't all positive. Eventually in about 2021, I kind of slowed down because it was taking over my life.

### What interests you about Seaview, why did you want to feature us?

The impact. In one of the Hastings in Focus articles I did in the run up to the Big Sleep 2018, I spoke to two or three people and on the night, I did a few interviews. There were and are people who say Seaview has saved my life, and they're not saying that to exaggerate. They mean it.

One of the times I came here, I cycled, and I was trying to find somewhere to chain my bike up near the station. Somebody came past and said, "You don't want to chain your bike there, there's a bunch of drug addicts in there". And I thought that was a misunderstanding. Which is why, I then thought I wanted to write stuff and publicise what you do, because I hoped in some small way, the things that I was doing, could perhaps change that perception of what goes on at Seaview.

And I think if anybody comes in here and sees what you do, they'll just fall in love with it. It's the fact you quite literally save people's lives.

### Can you tell us about the recent Seaview podcasts themed around celebrating our 40th anniversary?

So, I initially interviewed you where you spoke about Seaview's services and the plans for the Big Sleep. Then I revisited the Rough Sleepers Outreach and went out with Mick in the morning and recorded a second podcast. The audio quality is a bit rougher than I would like it to be, but it works because we were out in the early hours of the morning.

I came on the night of Big Sleep and didn't see much of the event because I spent most of the time talking to people. I had a chat with Dave Hinton, the guy that came up with the idea of the Big Sleep, and had a chat with a couple of people who'd been service users in the past. Then I came in and spoke to just a couple of the regular service users and spoke with Seaview Housing Support Worker Lee about the challenges of getting people into accommodation and keeping them in that accommodation.

I'm now working on a bigger podcast which includes some discussion with Hastings Voluntary Action. It's also chatting with Seaview Chair of the Trustees, Anna and the first Seaview Manager, Sarah; finding out about how Seaview started 40 years ago and how it was established. This should come out soon, just as you reach the end of your 40th celebrations.

[www.seaviewproject.co.uk/news](http://www.seaviewproject.co.uk/news)



# VOLUNTEERING AT SEAVIEW

## Michele Laurens

You may already recognise me from around Seaview – whether that’s from the Wellbeing Centre on Fridays, or from my work over the years across various projects here. I’ve been part of the Seaview team for five years now, during which time I’ve had the privilege of coordinating the Navigation service and the Harm Reduction programme, both valuable areas I feel very strongly about.

Two months ago I stepped into the role of Volunteer Coordinator, and I can honestly say it’s a position I’m very genuinely excited about. Volunteers are at the heart of so much of what we do here, and having the opportunity to support, connect and grow that community feels really special.

Outside of Seaview, I also work as a counsellor; supporting people through difficult times is very much at the centre of everything I do professionally and personally, and it’s work I’m incredibly passionate about. Whether you’re a long-standing volunteer, someone thinking about getting involved, or simply a familiar face from a Friday at the wellbeing centre, I’d love to connect. Please don’t hesitate to say hello!



If you’ve ever thought about volunteering with us, now is a great time to get in touch. We have lots of exciting roles coming up and would love to hear from you. Volunteering with Seaview is a fantastic opportunity to make a real difference in your community, so please do reach out! I’d be delighted to have a chat and find the right role for you.

### Why Volunteering Matters

Our volunteers are the heart of what we do at Seaview. Without the generous support of people who give their time, we simply couldn’t provide the range of services and support we offer. Volunteers bring fresh perspectives, diverse skills, and most importantly, they bring hope and connection to the people we support.

Volunteering isn’t just about what you can do for Seaview – it’s also about what it can do for you. Many of our volunteers tell us that giving their time has helped them meet new people, learn new skills, gain confidence, and find a sense of purpose and belonging.

### A Different Approach

I work in a person-centred way. Rather than having a list of roles to fill, I prefer to meet with people interested in volunteering to learn what they can offer Seaview. Every volunteer comes with different qualities, skills and experiences, and I find this is the best way to really match what we need with what makes each person unique.

You might have practical skills like cooking, gardening or DIY. Perhaps you’re good with computers or admin. Maybe you just enjoy chatting with people over a cup of tea. Or you might have lived experience that helps you understand what our clients are going through. Whatever you can offer, there’s a place for it here.

Whether you have lots of time or just a little, specific skills or simply a willingness to help, there’s a place for you here.

### To Find Out More

To find out more about how you can get involved volunteering at Seaview, please visit our website at [www.seaviewproject.co.uk/volunteering](http://www.seaviewproject.co.uk/volunteering) or email us at [admin@seaviewproject.org.uk](mailto:admin@seaviewproject.org.uk)

If you are ready to start your volunteering journey, please fill in the application form on our website and we will get in touch.

We look forward to welcoming many new faces to our fantastic volunteer team.





**NEW YEAR  
NEW HOURS**

# WHAT'S ON AT SEAVIEW?

WEEKLY ACTIVITY TIMETABLE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>Walk-in IC-24 Nurse Clinic</b> 10:00-15:00	<b>Qi Gong Gentle Exercises</b> 11:00-12:00	<b>Seaview's Recovery Hub</b> Baptist Church, Wellington Square 10:00-13:00	<b>Rough Sleeper Breakfast</b> 08:00-09:00	<b>Art Group</b> 10:00-12:30
<b>Solution Focused Conversations</b> 11:00-13:00		<b>Sexual Health Clinic</b> ALTERNATE WEEKS 11:00-13:00	<b>Band Practice</b> 10:00- 3:00	<b>Choir</b> 11:00-12:00
<b>Citizens Advice Bureau</b> 11:00-14:00		<b>Women Only Space</b> 14:30-16:00	<b>Walk-in IC-24 Nurse Clinic</b> 10:00-15:00	<b>Swap to Stop</b> 11:00-12:00
<b>Walk-in GP Clinic</b> 13:00-15:00			<b>BINGO!</b> ALTERNATE WEEKS 11:45-12:15	<b>SMART Recovery Group</b> 11:30-12:30

**SERVICE USER MEETINGS**  
Held on the third Monday of each month  
10:00-11:00

AT SEAVIEW PROJECT

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

## SEAVIEW'S GOT TALENT

**22nd April 14:30**  
Seaview Wellbeing Centre, TN37 6LB

We are excited to announce that Seaview's Got Talent is back! Showcasing the remarkable talents of our service users, staff and volunteers through music, comedy, poetry, and more. At this event we celebrate the resilience and creativity of those we support, offering everyone a platform to shine. Entry to Seaview Got Talent is free and open to everyone over the age of 16, refreshments will be available for a small charge.



## SEAVIEW'S AGM

**18th November 15:00**  
Seaview Wellbeing Centre, TN37 6LB

You are warmly invited to join us for our Annual General Meeting. In addition to our guest speaker, who will be announced at a later date, we will also welcome service users to speak about their experiences and reflect on their time at Seaview. We look forward to seeing you there.



## SEAVIEW'S CAROLS

**5th December 17:00**  
St John's Church, TN38 0RD

Our carol concert is always a huge hit with our wonderful community, an event open to everyone to encourage the festive spirit. Our carol concert is free to attend and there will be refreshments available for a small charge. We would love to see you there so save the date - Saturday 5th December at 5pm.



# HOW CAN I SUPPORT SEAVIEW?

There are so many ways that you can support the work we do here at Seaview. Every contribution, little or large, goes an enormous way in ensuring we can provide the very best service and support to our clients.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- You can make a one-off donation to provide immediate support where it's needed most.
- You can set up a monthly donation to help us plan and sustain our services long-term.
- You can choose to leave a legacy gift to Seaview in your will.
- You can contribute spare change in donation boxes displayed in local businesses in St Leonards, turning small amounts into a big impact.
- You can take part in fundraising activities or organise your own event to raise vital funds for Seaview.

## DONATE BY TEXT

Text SEAVIEW followed by your donation amount to 70560 to give that amount.

Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message, and you'll be opting into hearing more from us.

If you would like to donate but don't wish to hear more from us, please text SEAVIEWNOINFO followed by your donation amount instead.

## VISIT OUR AMAZON WISHLIST HERE:



<https://amzn.eu/0hcWbK6V>

## DONATE GOODS

- You can purchase essential items directly through our Amazon Wish List to support our day-to-day work.
- You can donate wearable clothes or shoes to help those in need stay warm and comfortable.
- You can provide long-life food items to support individuals facing food insecurity.
- You can donate unopened toiletries to help maintain dignity and wellbeing.

## GIVE YOUR TIME

- You can volunteer with Seaview and play a hands-on role in supporting our community.
- You can advocate for Seaview by representing us at local events and fundraising activities.

## SPREAD AWARENESS

- You can share our mission with your family and friends to help us reach more people.
- You can share our posts on social media to spread awareness of our work.
- You can leave a positive Google review to help others learn about the difference we make.

## CORPORATE SUPPORT

- You can nominate Seaview Project as your organisation's Charity of the Year and help us build impactful partnerships.

# Become a FRIEND of Seaview!

The easiest way to become a friend of Seaview is by setting up a regular monthly or annual donation via our website.

You can scan the QR code to go directly to the sign-up form, or if you would prefer us to email you a link, please tick the box next to "I wish to set up a direct debit with Seaview", and complete your details including email address below.



- I wish to become a Friend of Seaview
- I enclose my annual subscription of £ \_\_\_\_\_
- I wish to set up a direct debit with Seaview (we will be in touch)
- I am a UK taxpayer and would like to claim Gift Aid on my donation
- I wish to receive correspondence from Seaview

Name	
Address	
	Postcode
	Telephone
Email	
Signature	Date

Please return this completed form to the address overleaf.  
We will be happy to provide more details and answer any questions you may have on becoming a Friend of Seaview.

## YOUR DONATION MATTERS!

 Essentials such as toiletries £5	 5 service user laundry washes £10	 Kitchen essentials when moving into a new home £30	 A wellbeing activity in the centre (art, yoga, support) £35	 Rough sleeper kit (sleeping bag/ rucksack/ flask) £50	 White goods when moving into a new home £100	 Wellbeing course for up to 9 people £150
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WE ARE PROUD TO BE

**Gaby Hardwicke** SOLICITORS

CHARITY OF THE YEAR 2026!

Seaview is delighted and proud to be chosen as Gaby Hardwicke's Charity of the Year. This partnership is a wonderful opportunity to work closely together to support some of the most vulnerable in our community.

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

## CONTACT US:



[admin@seaviewproject.org.uk](mailto:admin@seaviewproject.org.uk)



01424 717981

## STAY IN THE LOOP:



[seaview.project](https://www.instagram.com/seaview.project)



[Seaview Project](https://www.facebook.com/SeaviewProject)



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

## VISIT US:

Seaview Project  
Hatherley Road  
St Leonards on Sea  
East Sussex  
TN37 6LB

## OPENING TIMES:

Monday: 9:00-3:00 (all)

Tuesday: 8:30-9am (Rough Sleeper Breakfast), 9:00-3:00 (all)

Wednesday: 9:00-14:00 (all), 14:30-16:00 (Women Only Space)

Thursday: 8:30-9am (Rough Sleeper Breakfast), 9:00-3:00 (all)

Friday: 9:00-15:00 (all)