



Looking Ahead:

Revival staff members have worked incredibly hard over the last two years, always remaining positive and believing in the value of partnership and collaboration and genuinely knowing that we are stronger together, both in our internal and external relationships. Despite the stress and challenges imposed during this time the staff were supported by each other and the wider Mind in Bexley and East Kent team and genuinely relied on the positive agreements and understandings that initially led Mind in Bexley and East Kent to agree to move to the Horsebridge in the expectation of the security which a signed 10-year lease would provide. When so many charities and businesses have faced closure or have been forced to permanently close during the pandemic, we never for one minute thought, having fought so hard to remain viable and to continue to support the community in the best way we could, that we would be impacted so severely by the decisions of another charity.

It has become evident that Revival can no longer keep fighting to remain at the Horsebridge. Valuable resources have had to be spent initially dealing with what has been acknowledged by the Horsebridge to be an invalid notice and subsequently in attempting to promote meaningful discussion; resources which would normally have been used to prepare Revival for re-opening and planning and implementing funding opportunities, service development and post-lockdown survival strategies.

The invaluable support of the community has kept the staff going, which serves as a positive reminder that Revival exists because of the community we serve. The petition set up by a local Whitstable resident has reached nearly 4000 signatures, which is incredibly significant. Both local Councillors and our local MP have supported the vital work Revival undertakes as part of a network of local support and have stated their desire to ensure these services remain protected. We hope their words will now be turned into actions as Mind in Bexley and East Kent are forced to look for a new home that remains in a central location to ensure both visibility, accessibility and viability. We would love the community to be part of our next journey, we hope that there can be a positive outcome for Revival, one that can now provide greater opportunities to develop the Revival vision of a creative wellbeing hub that will be there for everyone in the community when needed whilst raising awareness and challenging the stigma around mental health and what should or should not be 'mental health space'.

Mind in Bexley and East Kent Response to the Horsebridge Statement 17th March 2020.

Mind in Bexley and East Kent/Revival are very disappointed by the actions of the Horsebridge both in serving and pursuing a termination notice seeking to remove a Mental Health Charity in the middle of a pandemic and at a time when both charities have been closed more than they have been open and all contact and communication between the two charities and their staff has inevitably been at a minimum throughout 2020/21.

Despite receiving the eviction notice Mind in Bexley and East Kent have remained committed to a professionally mediated process and have not at any time withdrawn from mediation.

The Horsebridge's claim to have been acting in the 'interests of both parties', fails to recognise their decision to serve an invalid termination notice which would have obliged Revival to vacate by 12th March. This also ignores their failure to honour the 10-year signed lease, which would have provided security to at least October 2022 at the break clause. Their subsequent actions have forced us to conclude that the present and continuing uncertainty is evidently not in the best interests of Revival or the members of the local community that rely on the vital services which we provide.

The Horsebridge Board of Trustees have refused to engage or cooperate with a Mind Network HR organisation and have not provided any evidence to substantiate any of their claims about staff or stressful working or explained any policies and procedures they have followed to address concerns. Mind in Bexley and East Kent continues to have full confidence in the Revival staff and Management Team and is proud of the way they have adapted and embraced the move to the Horsebridge and have continued throughout to work together in the building, under extremely challenging circumstances.

Revival staff have experienced the stress caused by the Horsebridge's own Management practices coupled with high-level involvement of the Horsebridge Board of Trustees in day-to-day decision making. It is disappointing that the Horsebridge Board rejected an offer (as part of the Feb 2020 Proposal – see below) of free Nationally recognised Mind Mental Health training in the workplace to support their staff.

Revival staff have continued to receive regular mental health training, supervision and support throughout this extremely difficult and indeed unprecedented period. Mindful of these pressures and in light of the evident difficulties the Horsebridge appeared to be having in adapting to an autonomous charity in the building, Revival contacted Canterbury City Council in October 2020 to arrange for a facilitated discussion meeting. This was eventually planned to take place on the 23rd February 2021, but was then overridden by the service of a first eviction notice on the 8th February without any prior discussion.

Revival/Mind in Bexley and East Kent Conduct: Truth and Integrity.

Revival has worked collaboratively and adapted its services on numerous occasions, staff have never 'expected' to use empty rooms for free: Evidenced in an email exchange with the Centre Director:

22nd January 2020

From: David Palmer CEO Mind in Bexley and East Kent

"Morning hope well. Any possibility of a small room from 1-3 today. Aware I will need to pay."

The Directors response:

"From: Horsebridge Centre Director

Will check – you don't need to pay for small rooms if they are free and we are open – it's the opening out of hours that we need to sort."

A proposal was made in February 2020 by Mind in Bexley and East Kent: which included a compromise on out-of-hours use of the building despite paying full rent for the café space:

Mind in Bexley and East Kent propose a package to include: £500 yearly contribution to electricity/utilities for out of hours events (approx. 10-12 a year), MIND Mental Health First aid training, rental of an additional under-used room in the building (loss of income from under-used rooms was cited as a concern in their own

annual reports 2019/20 and 2020/21), and a Mind in Bexley and East Kent fundraiser employee to work with the Horsebridge on joint initiatives. **This was rejected by the Horsebridge.**

No warning eviction:

The Horsebridge Board has never made any direct contact with the Mind in Bexley and East Kent Board to request a meeting to discuss any issues or concerns that might have explained their decision to serve a notice of termination.

The Mental Health question:

Revival is a social enterprise café with mental health and wellbeing at the heart of everything we do, woven throughout all of our services. Revival has worked tirelessly within what was considered to be the remit of the Service Level Agreement to provide the Revival café service which the Horsebridge required. Issues with regard to Mental Health related signage at the premises together with other elements of our café service appeared, from communications received to be at odds with their intentions.

16th October 2020:

“At this point we feel it is important to be clear that we will not be approving any external signage that relates to anything other than the café provision you are under agreement to provide...We are not a mental health service space”.

Investment in the Horsebridge:

Any suggestion that Mind in Bexley and East Kent has somehow misrepresented the substantial investment which has been made in the premises is completely without foundation. In terms of the existing equipment in the café we inherited a toaster, microwave and sink. The sum of £30,000 was spent on the significant renovations (with the intention that this was to be realised over a 10-year lease term) as detailed in Mind in Bexley and East Kent audited accounts.

10-year lease: Canterbury City Council (CCC) Property Solicitor confirms all of their lease requirements were sent to the Horsebridge via their solicitors in October 2019. According to CCC they have not at any point delayed the lease as claimed by the Horsebridge, the Horsebridge failed to adhere to due process and complete the lease for 15 months: we believe this breaches conduct and expectations for Charities and raises serious questions that have not been addressed to date.

How you can continue to support Revival:

Thank you for taking the time to read our comments. This has been an experience which we need to move on from. Whilst we do not underestimate the challenges Revival faces under the most difficult of prevailing circumstances, we remain hopeful and optimistic that with the continued support of the local community we can ensure the realisation of Revival’s mental health and wellbeing vision and services. Mental health and wellbeing has never been more of a priority and continued support is vital; COVID19 has affected us all, but together we really will be stronger. Our future plans will be announced on our social media, please do keep an eye out for how you can be part of the Revival story.