



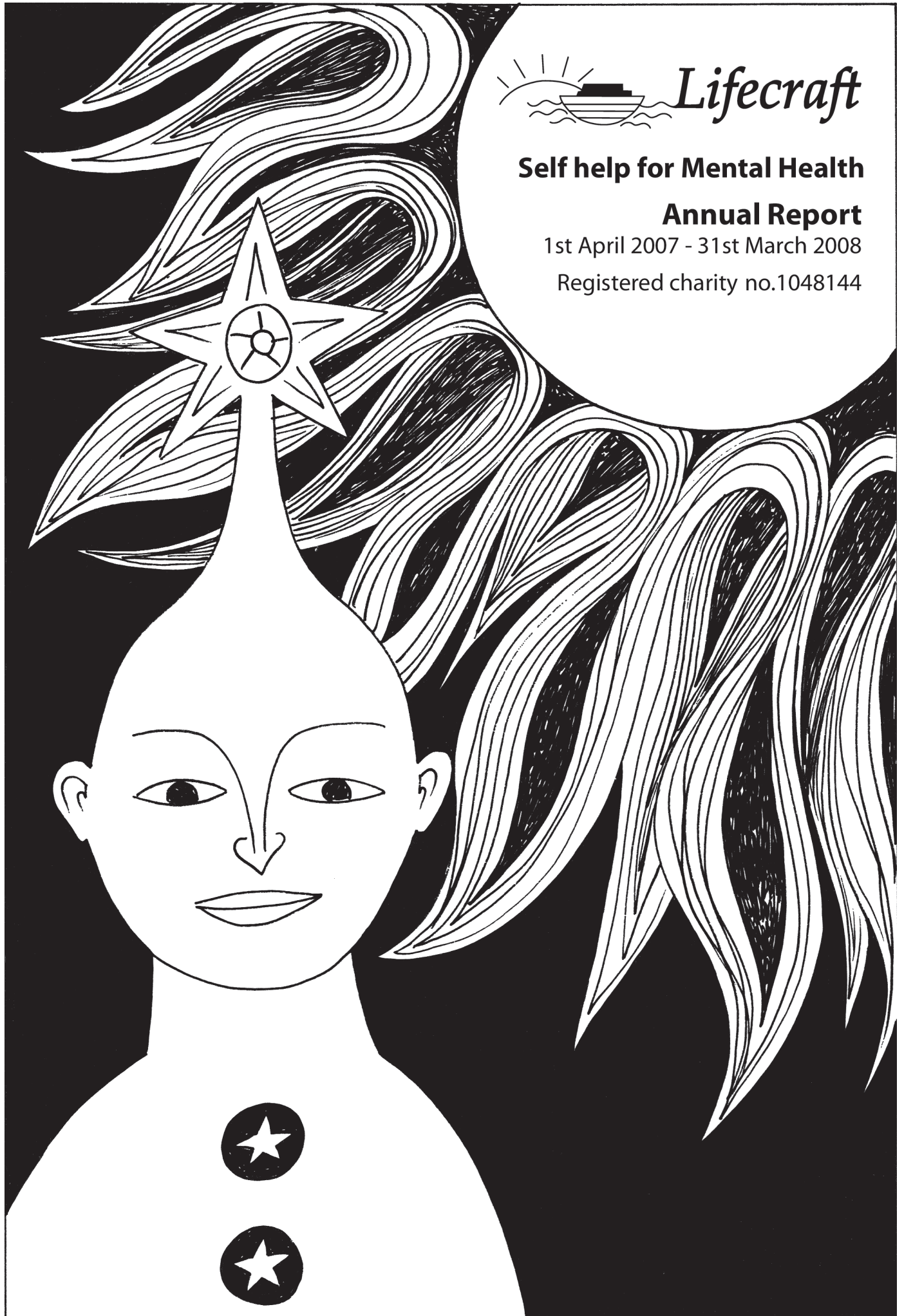
*Lifecraft*

**Self help for Mental Health**

**Annual Report**

1st April 2007 - 31st March 2008

Registered charity no.1048144



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Lifecraft is a user led organisation for adults with mental health needs. We believe that opportunities for self help are vital in restoring and maintaining a sense of well being and we work hard to overcome the stigma associated with mental health.

For members Lifecraft provides weekly activity groups, counselling, social club, meals, arts events, and opportunities for volunteering and employment.

For members and the wider community Lifecraft provides an Information centre, website, telephone helpline and Mental Health handbook. Lifecraft supports user involvement in service development and campaigns for greater awareness of issues relating to mental health.

Lifecraft is a registered charity no.1048144. The registered address of Lifecraft is:  
The Bath House, Gwydir Street, Cambridge, CB1 2BW



## Bev Sedley Chair of Lifecraft trustees

2007-2008 has been the most difficult in Lifecraft's history. At the beginning of the year, because of the financial situation, it was not clear that we would be able to keep our services going to the end of the year, but through the efforts of a large number of people and the generosity of our funders, both local and national, we reached the end of the financial year with a small surplus. It has been difficult for everyone and I would like to pay tribute to our members, our trustees and our committed staff team who have kept Lifecraft afloat through these turbulent waters. In particular I would like to thank Liz Stannard, who came on board as part-time co-ordinator in June and has worked well over the call of duty to ensure that Lifecraft is now strong, with clear, up-to-date policies and guidelines and well-trained staff and volunteers and a renewed focus on strengthening user-involvement. We were very lucky indeed to recruit her and she has managed to fit a much larger job into her meagre 20 hours than we could have hoped for.

Looking at our Future Plan, as laid out in the previous Annual Report, I see that, in spite of the problems, we have almost succeeded in meeting all the priorities we listed there, although the funding for our new Saturday opening did not come until 2008-2009. The IT suite is up and running, the new mental health handbook published, the three-year plan available on our website, we celebrated an exciting Arts Festival and the publication of our music CD and poetry anthology, and the Big 1-in-4 Bus Project, our biggest ever campaign, took place all over Cambridgeshire. We are in the process of negotiating a long-term solution for the funding of Lifeline, our telephone helpline, which had originally been due to close in May 2007, due to lack of funds. These are all causes for celebration and congratulations to all concerned.

For me the year felt like one long fundraising effort (helped by a very comprehensive spreadsheet of potential funders from Charity Fundraising, consultants paid for by Comic Relief)! I would like to thank most warmly all our funders, whether they are large national charitable trusts, such as the Tudor Trust, who came to the rescue for a further two years, Comic Relief, who continued their funding for the campaigning work that we do, and the Lankelly Chase Foundation, who are generously funding our substantial arts programme for three years, or smaller local charities, colleges, churches, businesses and individuals, from whom we raised the amazing total of £20,000. Several local organisations held fundraising events for us and we are very grateful to them. They include Arco Iris Samba band, Talking in Tune, with its Sing for Life concert, the Cambridge Concert Orchestra, Fusae Takahashi and Little St Mary's Church for a piano recital, Matoke band for a wonderful dance and the Cambridge Korean Church, but there were many others. Special thanks are also due to the Cambridge Community Foundation, the Albert Hunt Trust, the Pye Foundation and the Sobell Foundation. Last but not least thanks are due to our statutory funders, Cambridgeshire Social Services, Cambridgeshire PCT, the Mental Health Trust and Cambridge City Council.

I would also like to thank most sincerely Caroline Wilson, one of our trustees, who has become the Secretary of the Friends of Lifecraft and has used her connection with Emmanuel College to hold several delightful events there, including the highly successful launch of the Friends last October, with a sell-out lunch and lecture entitled *Methods in my Madness* by Phil Alsop, who has long supported Lifecraft and gave a most enjoyable and moving talk on this occasion. If you are not a Friend already, please consider becoming one and supporting us in our very worthwhile work.

After a year like the last one, I feel renewed in my sense that we are part of something very special and worthwhile here at Lifecraft. Talking to members and reading what Lifecraft means to us and how it has made such a difference to our lives is very moving and makes all the effort worthwhile.

Liz Stannard, Coordinator

The year we are reporting on was a tough one. By April 2007 our weekend service had closed, we had made our full time Coordinator redundant and the future of Lifeline was uncertain. This caused great anxiety and uncertainty for our members.

A year later and the picture was very different – with a superb fundraising effort, led by our excellent Chair Bev Sedley, we had strengthened and developed so many of our services and achieved the priorities that we set out in last year's report....

- With generous funding from the Mental Health Trust, Cambridgeshire Social Services and an anonymous donor, Lifeline continued to run every evening offering support to callers in distress when other services were closed. Our team of highly trained volunteers and supervisors show an incredible level of dedication and commitment to the delivery of this service and are supported consistently and professionally by our Lifeline manager and Deputy Coordinator, Carole Morgan
- The counselling service prospered with the support of Kathleen Reeves and our fantastic team of volunteer counsellors. This unique service continues to offer long term sensitive and individual support to people who may otherwise be unable to access counselling
- The information service ably led by James Lewis saw a steady demand for services from members and people in the wider community seeking information. As the year ended we received the good news of funding for the publication of a new updated Mental Health Handbook and this has now been published with 10,000 copies available to support users, their carers, friends and other professionals. Members were also glad of the support of our Social Work student Tara Harris in helping them to work through more complex issues
- Without our groups and club worker, developing group activities was more difficult but the Music group continued to flourish under Cate Williams and the Women's group under the care and guidance of Vicky McWilliams with support from Thea Harrison and our lovely volunteer Betty
- We were also able to expand our Arts activities and members published the highly acclaimed poetry anthology "The Craft of Life" and the equally respected CD by our musicians and singers "Lifesongs" as well as organising two arts festivals. Lifecraft is particularly grateful to Penny Lutoslawska, Sue Parlbay, Alan Rogerson and Tom Sheerin for all the support and encouragement they generously give to members
- The Social Club had more mixed reviews with sudden closures and some difficult incidents meaning less people getting involved. We worked hard together on what we expected from the club and each other and slowly things started to improve, especially with the development of the keyholder programme. Our members who are employed as keyholders all worked exceptionally hard to look at what could be changed and we are seeing the benefits of their work as they take on more independent running of the club.
- Members events included a BBQ, disco, Christmas party, New Year celebrations and quiz nights as well as regular Friday meals. All of these occasions relied on the cooperation and hard work of lots of members and staff and we are grateful to everyone for pulling together
- The campaigns and awareness raising work coordinated by Amanda Price reached new heights with the "Big 1 in 4 Bus" travelling to venues throughout Cambridgeshire and ending with a day in Cambridge City Centre. This was one of the biggest projects ever undertaken by Lifecraft with over 40 agencies involved and Amanda's enthusiasm and hard work made it happen with support from a great number of members and volunteers including special thanks to Esther. We also continued to get out in the community as much

as we could with stalls at the Big Day Out, Well Being days and the Mill Road Winter Fair

- To raise awareness and support for Lifecraft in the community, our ever helpful trustee Caro Wilson managed the launch of Friends of Lifecraft with support from friends including in particular Phil Alsop and Anthony Davis

As well as all this front line activity, hard work was taking place in the "Back office" with Malcolm working on the finances and all the team pulling together to review our operating polices. I was also able to join the team in June 2007 with the funding for a part time Coordinator being made available through the Tudor Trust who have been an excellent support and encouragement for Lifecraft over a number of years

By the start of 2008 we were feeling much more confident about the way ahead and pulled together our ideas for the future into the plan through to 2011. This plan gives a firm basis for the future and will help us apply for funding and ensure that we involve more people in the development of our services.

We all owe thanks to so many people for making these things happen – not least our trustees. They meet regularly to look at our plans and money and make sure we are driving the service forward in the way that best meets what members need and want. All this work takes place in the background but without their superb commitment there would be no Lifecraft – so special thanks to Bev Sedley, Peter Downhill, Elna Bruning, Bill Cruse, Caroline Nicolson, Caroline Wilson, Jonathan Crone, Marjorie Abbott, Jenny Thapa and Glen Hutchinson.

Our overall aim is to find ways to enable people to get involved, connect with others and help themselves and thereby support their own well being. Here is what some members recently told us about the importance of Lifecraft and our work.....

*"Lifecraft has been very helpful. Good to know other people who have had problems."*

*"When Lifecraft is shut I feel lost. It gave me a second family to rely on and understanding of my condition. Originally it gave me back a sense of self worth and continues to do this through my art work."*

*"It has helped tremendously because of my extreme anxiety state. I welcome its calming effect."*

*"I have a lot more confidence and feel more able to cope when I have ups and downs."*

*"It has helped me a lot because I can talk to people on my wave length and in my situation. It has also brought me friendship and I don't feel isolated and alone anymore."*

*"It has helped me a lot and in many ways. It is a cool place to come."*

*"Lifecraft has been a life saver at times and helped me meet people...my own use (of Lifecraft) depends on my own state of mental well being. It can be a difficult place at times and I have sometimes been upset by events at Lifecraft (but it is a good place from which to learn about myself and my own illness and other peoples). It is a really big part of my life and almost feels as if I have 'family' here. I would otherwise be in isolation."*

To find out more about plans for the coming year please look ahead to the final section of this report and take a look at our business plan available via our website at [www.lifecraft.org.uk](http://www.lifecraft.org.uk)

# 3

# Service Reports

for the year ending 31 March 2008

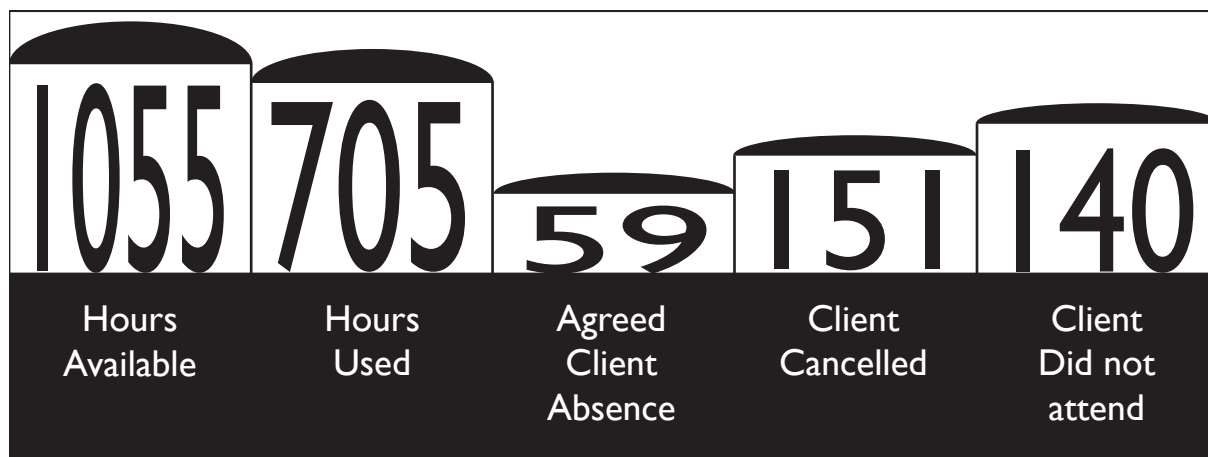
## 3.1

## Counselling

Kathleen Reeves, Counselling Co-ordinator

During the year ending April 2008 the counselling team provided a much valued and well utilised service to those Lifecraft members requesting therapy. Lifecraft provides free, long-term one-to-one counselling to members; we are unaware of any other local organisation offering similar provision.

Our team of ten voluntary counsellors offered a total of 1055 sessions, 705 of which were utilised. Each counsellor is asked to commit to three sessions per week. We ask that counsellors joining the team undertake to remain with us for a minimum of twelve months in order to provide consistency of relationship to our clients, most of whom seek long-term therapeutic support. The majority of clients will ask to go back on to the waiting list if their counsellor leaves the organisation. Several of our counsellors have been with us for in excess of four years. Most already have a recognised counselling qualification; the remainder are in the final year/s of their training.



The degree of absenteeism reflects the challenging lifestyle of many of our client group; the fact that most either ring in to cancel or notify their counsellor in advance of their intended absence is indicative of their level of engagement with the therapeutic process. Another reason for irregular attendance is that several of those members receiving counselling support have felt able to return to full or part time employment and, as a consequence, are having to fit their counselling around this commitment. As with all life-changing events, starting a new job can be a daunting prospect; the continuance of an established therapeutic relationship can enhance the likelihood of a successful transition. Similarly, in-house research indicates that those clients who are also undertaking short-term CBT (provided by the statutory sector), find it helpful to continue concurrently with their long-term therapy at Lifecraft.

The clients range in age from late twenties to sixty plus, the majority being aged between thirty and forty five years. All present with complex issues, including suicidal ideation, self-harm, childhood sexual abuse, bereavement, relationship difficulties; all are also coping with a recognised mental health diagnosis.

Within the counselling team we have debated the merits of introducing outcome evaluations. The general consensus has been that, with our specific client group, this would not be compatible with the requirement for beneficence as stated in the BACP ethical framework for good practice in counselling and psychotherapy. We believe there are benefits, beyond those to the individual, of enhancing the emotional and psychological wellbeing of our client group. For example, real savings are made in terms of statutory service provision for those clients who are less frequent users of hospital or GP services. Similarly, fewer demands maybe placed on family members or carers; this is particularly important in the case of one-parent families.

Male	13		1	1			
Female	23	1	1		1	1	1
White British							
White Irish							
Any other white background							
Mixed white and black Caribbean							
Black African							
Other Asian							
Any other ethnic group							

This table shows the gender and ethnic background of the client group.

During the year we appointed three counsellors; Lucy Manning joined the team in June, Yvonne Sumter in July and Christopher Baines in December. Sadly, Stuart Muscroft, our life coach, left us in March as he was moving abroad and Christine Rose, our integrative arts based therapist, is currently working toward ending her placement with us in June 2008. Both have made an invaluable contribution to the service.

The current counselling team of nine females and one male, work from various theoretical orientations, including humanistic, person-centred, integrative and psychodynamic. As part of their continuing professional development the counsellors undertake additional training in areas of particular interest to them, for example, Parks Inner Child Therapy, Motivational Interviewing. The counsellors range in age from early thirties to sixty plus. All receive regular supervision, work to our comprehensive in-house policies, procedures and guidelines and in accordance with the BACP framework for ethical practice in counselling and psychotherapy. We continue to receive placement requests from both qualified counsellors and counsellors in training. We will be appointing two new volunteers in the near future.

A number of people seeking Lifecraft membership do so specifically to access the Counselling Service; we generally have 6 – 8 members on our waiting list; we do not foresee any diminishing in the demand for this service.





Carole Morgan, Lifeline Coordinator

Lifeline, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Helpline continues to operate 365 days of the year from 7.00pm-11.00pm, supporting callers to the line.








The Line had been due to close at the beginning of May 2007 but we were fortunate to secure funding at the last minute to keep it open. Thanks go to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust and Cambridgeshire Social Services for their continued support of the line. Due to the imminent closure of the line many volunteers had already left the organisation. Later in the year we lost two very long-term supervisors. Many thanks go to Lyn Wrenn and Stuart Muscroft for their time and commitment to the line and its callers.

The Line operates a freephone number which is available to landlines and mobile networks to enable ease of access. With a reduction in the number of people volunteering and supervising it has at times been a struggle to keep the line open. But due to the dedication of the team this has been achieved. During the year the line took 3517 calls of which 65% were repeat callers. This was an increase in calls on last year by 12.6%. The volunteers are asked to collect as much data as possible when a caller rings, without being intrusive. Detailed monitoring data has been collected on approximately half of all calls which is analysed below.

The calls by area suggest that although the line is advertised as a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough helpline it is in demand in other areas of East Anglia and the Country. In the next year we are planning to identify new callers phoning out of area and advise them of alternative helplines within the Mental Health Helplines Partnership so that we focus our resources on the callers needing support in our area.

Cambridge		36%
Fenland		13%
Huntingdon		6%
Peterborough		10%
Essex		7%
Norfolk		6%
Other		21%

In terms of the age of callers, we do not accept calls from people aged under 17 and they are referred on to Get Connected where they can be transferred free of charge to a helpline specifically for a young person. We are not set up to take calls from people under the age of 17years.

Under 17		1%
20's		12%
30's		36%
40's		39%
50's		8%
60's		3%
70's		1%

On average 62% of callers to the line are female. This is an increase of 132 calls from male callers. In terms of diversity, 78% of callers are of White British origin, 2% of callers are Asian origin and 17% callers are of Afro-Caribbean origin.

## Membership of mhhp

The Mental Health Helplines Partnership exists to benefit users and carers by supporting helplines to develop capacity, access, choice and quality and governance. Membership is open to organisations providing a helpline for the purpose of enabling everyone to enjoy the best possible mental health. Lifeline is accredited to their quality standard.

## Support to callers

Lifeline is available 365 days of the year offering support and information to callers. Experiencing mental distress is often a very isolating experience for people, leading people to cut off from friends and family as they do not want to be a burden to those around them. Callers often experience stigma, discrimination and rejection in their everyday lives. Feedback received from callers tells us that they feel accepted and supported by the volunteers at Lifeline.

## Lifeline volunteers

In order for the volunteers to support callers to the Line it is important that they are themselves well trained and supported. Two volunteers work together in the office, supported by a supervisor available on the telephone. A survey was carried out amongst the volunteers to obtain feedback on their experience of working on Lifeline, training, supervision and support:

*"I have found some of the calls very difficult but have really appreciated all the help, support and advice from the supervisors."*

*"Always made to feel supported, know there's always someone (supervisor) available if needed; listened to."*

*"Everybody has an opportunity to contribute to group supervision. There appears to be genuine respect amongst all – volunteers and supervisors alike. Feel able to voice concerns and difficulties experienced and share these while also agreeing a consistent approach which I think is essential to the service."*

*"I felt the subject matter and techniques made available to us (in training) allowed me to be more confident in my approach to listening."*

*"(The training was) an excellent preparation for becoming a volunteer. Plenty of time was taken and it was sensitive to the needs of the trainees. In the event I proved to be well prepared for helping with most types of calls and callers."*

## The future for Lifeline

Following a significant publicity drive supported by our new literature (thanks to the Cambridge Community Foundation for their help with this) we have seen a continued growth in call volumes into 2008. Details of the line are also published in all the new CPA folders raising awareness of the support the line can offer across the whole of the county.

We very much hope to negotiate longer term funding for the line over a three year period so that we can continue to offer this much needed and much valued service.

We will also continue to encourage and support our volunteers and build our volunteer team so that we are able to meet increasing demand.

James Lewis

The information office supports current members and members of the public and professionals in accessing mental health related information and signposts them to relevant services. The information office is open between 12 and 4 pm, Monday to Friday. Appointments are not necessary although for particularly complex enquiries we try to agree a set time.

We continue to maintain and update our information resources with the most recent publications possible. To cut down on our costs we have been sourcing much of our information from the internet in the form of downloadable files from reputable websites.

Our quarterly magazine "Frontline News" continues to be well-received, combining stunning poetry and prose from members with information about campaigns and events, and updates about our services. Alan Rogerson's work on pulling together the whole publication continues to be superb and we were particularly grateful to the Swan Mountain Trust and the Cambridge Community Foundation (The Deloitte Cambridge Fund) for their support in the publication costs.

The service also supports all new member applications and we were delighted to have 79 new members joining us in the year. We also carried out a full review of our current membership database to ensure the information was up to data. By the end of the year we had 220+ active members.

This year the Information Office conducted a review of the membership database and an evaluation of our services. The evaluation of our services by members was very positive with a 30.6% response rate.

## Future plans for the Information Office

We plan to develop our service by recruiting more members to support the running of the service. This training will cover typical office activities such as answering the phone and recording enquiries, using the photocopier and computer system, and sign-posting clients to the appropriate member of staff or to external agencies. There will, in addition, be training in people-orientated skills of open listening and dealing with difficult situations. We hope that this will increase the employability of members wishing to return to work.

We also hope to continue to build our links with other providers of information in the community.

Below is a summary of the statistical information about people accessing the information office:

## Statistical information

During this period 07-08 we had a total of 2339 logged enquiries from 2305 enquirers, which are summarised below.

Proportion %	40	3	9	48
Total Number	948	75	199	1117
Enquiries	Lifecraft membership and group activities	Lifeline	Counselling	Information on local services

**The enquirers can be looked at in terms of gender, type, location and ethnicity.**

**Gender:** Male: 985 (42.7%) Female: 1320 (57.3%)

**Type:** we recognise four types of caller – service user, carer, voluntary organization, and professional and statutory services.

Enquiries %	68.3	2	7.9	21.7	4.5
No. of enquiries	1468	45	182	506	104
Type	Service user	Carer	Voluntary organisation	Professional	Statutory services

**Location:** we recognise two locations for the purpose of our statistics – based within Cambridge city and based outside Cambridge city.

Based within Cambridge city: 1962 (85.1%) Based outside: 343 (14.9%)

**Ethnicity:** we use the same ethnicity categories as the 2001 Census.

Ethnicity categories		Enquiries: No.	Enquiries: %	2001 Census: %
White	British	1917	83.1	78.5
	Irish	68	2.9	1.6
	Any other white background	178	7.7	9.4
Mixed	White and Black Caribbean	2	0.1	0.4
	White and Black African	1	<0.1	0.2
	White and Asian	1	<0.1	0.7
	Any other mixed background	3	0.1	0.7
Asian or Asian British	Indian	58	2.5	1.8
	Pakistani	0	-	0.5
	Bangladeshi	0	-	0.9
	Any other Asian background	3	0.1	0.6
Black or Black British	Caribbean	14	0.6	0.5
	African	6	0.2	0.7
	Any other Black background	23	1.0	0.1
Chinese or Not Stated	Chinese	7	0.3	2.1
	Any other ethnic category	4	0.1	1.4
	Not stated	40	1.7	-

**Daily Attendance Figures 1st Apr 07 – 31st Mar 08**

Daily Average	19.76	20.27	18.50	17.68	14.35	20.05	19.83	21.86	19.00	21.77	19.48	19.00	20.53
No. of working days	21	22	20	22	23	20	23	22	19	22	21	21	256
Total Attendance	415	446	370	389	330	401	571	481	456	589	409	399	5256
Month	April 07	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 08	Feb	Mar	Annual Totals

Daily attendance figures do not include staff, both salaried and voluntary and those working under permitted earnings for therapeutic work, nor group facilitators. The numbers make no distinction between those attending i.e. for social club, groups, counselling, and information office or for other reasons.

## Singing group

Bev Sedley

*"Singing is a lifetime craft – I even do it in the bath!"* (Lifecraft Singer 23/7/08)

The great news this year is that the Lifecraft Singers cut their first CD, Lifesongs. (Well, actually we had had one track on a previous CD "Out of the Asylum", but this time we sang three-quarters of the tracks.) The money for the recording was from Awards for All, Cambridge City Council and the Lankelly Chase Foundation and Rowena Whitehead of Talking in Tune directed us and organised everything. We are very pleased with the result and you can buy a copy for only £3!

22 Lifecraft members participated in the singing during the year, although of course not everybody every week. The average member attendance was eight per session, with a range of three to 11, and sometimes we were joined by singing friends, which on occasion brought our numbers up to 15. We performed in 10 gigs during the year, including a fundraising coffee-morning for Cam-mind, the launch of the Friends of Lifecraft at Emmanuel College, the Lifecraft Arts Festival and the opening of Mill Road Winter Fair.

There is evidence to show that singing actually improves mood and boosts your immune system, and certainly we find that singing regularly makes us feel better! Here are some recent quotes from participants:

*"I enjoy singing with other people. I like the songs from all over the world."*

*"Singing is fun, uplifting and sometimes a laugh."*

*"Enjoyable and relaxed atmosphere."*

The singing was led by various people during the year, particularly Sue Parlby, Penny Lutoslawska and I, but also Rowena Whitehead, Kay Barrett and Salli Hipkiss. I would like to thank them, Talking in Tune and all our funders (mentioned above), without whom this singing venture would not be possible.

## Mens Group

For a number of years this group has also been open to women...

The group focuses on a combination of activities including intellectually stimulating discussions on philosophy, history, science, politics and medicine as well as creative activities and trips.

Ideas for the next year include plans to encourage more men to join and try out new activities and more outings. Ideas include fitness and health related activities. The group is also seeking a regular leader from the membership to take the work forward and ensure that information is properly circulated to all members.

# Creative Writing Group

Tom Sheerin

This has been another great year. The first Lifecraft anthology of poetry and art, "The Craft of Life", has been well received from the moment of its launch at our Arts Festival with powerful readings from everyone concerned. Congratulations all round. It was an evening to remember. Following this there were two remarkable radio broadcasts on Radio 209 with invitations for further performances featuring Cate, Glen and Tom, with others lined up.

We also have three individual members' collections about to be launched, with two CD's in the pipeline. Many Lifecraft poets featured in a remarkable series of "Free Tibet" music and poetry evenings organised by Glen Hutchinson and friends, and supported by prominent local musicians and groups such as Tom Ling and Hector's Heroes. Prominent DJ's gave their services free and there was great support from local radio and Cambridge poetry venues. Lifecraft members performed with distinction at these events, alongside established professionals.

Lifecraft poets also performed brilliantly at several local poetry venues as many professionals commented. There is a planned "Poets for the Earth" series of events over the coming year in which Lifecraft poets will play a prominent part.

## **Feedback from group members continues to be very positive:**

*"Creative writing continues to inspire. Poetry of the Masters – ancient and modern helps with my own writing giving fresh and new ideas whenever I run dry."*

*"Hearing others read and discuss, is a continual inspiration. Tom's laughter more than anything helps me write. And even laugh at myself. He listens to everyone and encourages them."*

*"Wednesday afternoon is not just a class but a workshop allowing me to try out new songs and poems before a sympathetic audience."*

*"I'm psychotic and writing helps me more than any therapy I have received. The group allows me to see we are not defined solely by our illnesses. We are not just users. We are creative human beings growing through our conflicts, gaining dignity, self esteem and some measure of control."*

*"Meditation beforehand really helps. Hearing others' writings remind us we are not alone."*

*"After attending the group I gained the confidence to renegotiate reduction in my medication through my consultant."*

*"The writing has been my own unique process of re-integration after the explosion alongside all the medical treatment and counselling I have needed so ...I think I have come through and it's great to be alive."*

# Women's group

Margaret Garnett

The Women's group at Lifecraft is very active and widely attended. Participants of this group indulge in a diverse range of activities ranging from cooking, artwork, crochet, watching films to excursions to places like the Botanical Gardens. Some of the ladies also attended the official opening of The Grand Arcade Shopping Centre

It is also a forum for women to discuss issues of general interest to them and as a platform for mutual support.

## **Feedback from the group members is very positive:**

*"It's nice to do a variety of different things and just to be with other people"*

*"I enjoy the time I spend with the Women's group – they make me feel welcome and my self esteem has increased..."*

*"Particularly enjoyed silk painting – enjoy being stretched!"*

The Lifecraft Women's group is for all women who have either suffered from or continue to suffer mental distress. We therefore continue to believe that it remains important that our female members can meet as a separate group at an allocated time.

# Music group

Cate Williams

The Music group at Lifecraft offers unique therapeutic sessions for its members. Participants are involved and encouraged to sing together and harmonize together as a group.

A wide variety of music is used ranging from folk music to contemporary tracks.

The overall feedback is very positive and ideas for the future include beginner's classes in specific instruments, e.g. the guitar. We are also looking forward to learning more about percussion with the help of a professional teacher and investing in a wider range of percussion instruments. This exciting extension to our work has been made possible with help from the Cambridge City Council.

## **Feedback included:**

*"Cate allows me to explore harmonies and is very flexible"*

*".. very satisfied. I have started singing again"*

# Art group

Alan Rogerson

A place for artists of all levels to come and work in a friendly, relaxed and encouraging environment that aims to support the artist in their own individual creative adventures.

Following the exhibition at the Lifecraft Arts Festival we plan to have many more exhibitions that showcase the wide ranging creative wonderfulness of the artists at Lifecraft.

## **Members speak very highly of this group..**

*"Enjoy it enormously...Alan doesn't "teach" as such. He stimulates and helps only when requested which is very empowering"*

*"it's nice to have an art group to go to and it's good that they provide equipment and paper for you..."*

The arts are growing all the time at Lifecraft so to keep up with what's going on we now have an arts blog on the website [www.lifecraft.org.uk/arts](http://www.lifecraft.org.uk/arts)

# Social Club

# 3.5

The Social Club has been the heart of Lifecraft for many years providing a space where members can relax, chat, listen to music or just spend some time having a cup of tea quietly but in the company of others. We also try to have a hot meal at least once a week and organise a range of events including quiz night, BBQ, disco and Christmas party. We have opened on every public holiday which has been appreciated by many.

This space is seen as vital by members and there has been great frustration that we have not been able to keep the longer opening hours every day, including weekends due to our staff shortages and reduced budgets. This has been talked about at our monthly members meetings and we also held a special consultation event in December to find out more about the concerns, hopes and ideas. We also talked about how we behave towards each other in the club and agreed a set of "expectations" which we felt we could all work to.

From this talking we agreed a plan to invest more time into the training of members as keyholders so that they could run the club independently with less project staff support. This training had commenced by the year end and great progress is being made with everyone pulling together and working hard to identify honestly the issues and problems.

Our plan is to open on at least one night a week with member employees from August and to expand this to other nights as more keyholders are recruited.

## 3.6 Campaigning and Events

Amanda Price, Campaigns Officer and SCUF facilitator

### 'The Big 1 in 4 Bus' project

This project was developed to celebrate World Mental Health Day, highlight the fact that 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem during the course of a year and raise awareness about mental health and local services. We worked with 47 local agencies to deliver this project and take information into the community.

The bus travelled throughout Cambridgeshire in between 8-12 October 2007 stopping at Sawston, Fulbourn, March, Ely, Huntingdon, St Neots, Cambourne, Bar Hill and Cambridge, in public places such as market squares, supermarkets and high streets with the aim of making contact with all types of people in the community. We had information leaflets and CD's of contacts to give away as well as an awareness raising exhibition and plenty of representatives and volunteers for people to talk to and find out more.

We were interviewed by four different radio stations just before and during the event. The event was also publicised in local newspapers and newsletters as well as via email networks and a mass mail-out to community centres, GP surgeries, churches and local businesses. David Howarth MP also met the bus in Cambridge.

All visitors were invited to complete a feedback form to help evaluate the project and there were sixty-nine respondents. 86% said that they had found the information they were looking for, with only 14% saying that they had only partly found what they were looking for. When asked how they rated 'The Big 1 in 4 Bus', 67% rated it as excellent and 32% as good. Other feedback included:

*"It was all very helpful, a wonderful idea, well done"*

*"I was particularly pleased with the mental health information, which I have found difficult to acquire"*

*"I wish there was one in every area!"*

An evaluation meeting was held in November so that all the agencies involved could give their feedback. All said that they had found the project worthwhile in terms of raising awareness and having the opportunity to network with other organisations. It was considered such a success that plans are already in place to deliver the project again in 2008 with support from even more organisations.

Lifecraft is very grateful for all the support that it has from the partner agencies involved that enabled this project to be so successful. It would also like to thank all the members that worked so hard to help run the Bus for the five days that it was on the road.

### Making Mental Notes

the mental health community radio project

This very exciting project began at the end of Summer 2007. Its objective is to enable people who have experienced mental health difficulties to produce a one hour mental health community radio programme at the 209 Community Radio station once a month, initially for one year.

Lifecraft, the Manic Depression Fellowship (MDF), Rethink, Cam-mind, Arts and Minds,

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust and Friends of Fulbourn Hospital have all pooled resources together to fund this project. It has also received funding from the Community Champions Fund.

In March 2008 the members of the Core Production Team undertook all the necessary technical training, which was provided in-house at 209 Community Radio and included broadcast engineering, digital audio editing and programme production, etc.

Lifecraft's role is to help coordinate the projects day-to-day running. The programmes themselves will be run entirely by the six members of the Core Production Team (four being Lifecraft members) and their content will include material such as mental health information bulletins, interviews, phone-ins and live singing/poetry/musical performances. There will therefore be lots and lots of opportunity for service users to get involved, enabling people to have enjoyable and rewarding social contact as well gain new skills and confidence. The first programme will be broadcast live at 4pm on Tuesday 17th June on 105FM.

We are very excited about this project because it will be a great way for the mental health community to share information, raise awareness and reach out to those who might not normally be involved in what's going on. There is also huge opportunity for individuals to gain new skills and confidence and get their voice heard.

## Lifecraft exhibitions and events

We have exhibition material that we display at various events throughout the year. This is ongoing campaign work in the community to help break down break down mental health stigma and discrimination. Our exhibition material raises awareness about mental health issues and statistics and profiles celebrities throughout history who have experienced mental distress. Members often get involved in this work, exhibiting their art and poetry as well as talking to visitors.

This display was so highly regarded by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Trust that it formed part of their travelling display in the county.

### **Events during the year included...**

#### **The Big Day Out,**

Parkers Piece, July 7th 2007.

At this event we held an information stall (which included parts of our exhibition), a face painting stall and coconut shy. We were able to raise awareness about our services and mental health issues in general as well as show our presence within the local community.

#### **Lifecraft Arts Festival,**

13th & 14th July 2007.

This event was organised to celebrate the work created by our poets, artists, singers and musicians as a result of an arts grant from the Lottery's Awards for All. The festival consisted of an art exhibition and live poetry, singing and musical performances. A separate exhibition also raised awareness about our services as well as the links between creativity and mental health issues. The event was advertised locally and attracted members of the public.

## Recovery Wellbeing Sports Day,

Parkers Piece, 18th July 2007.

Lifecraft worked in partnership with the Trust, Cam-mind and Cambridge City Council to organise this event for local service users and their carers. There was a football tournament, sports taster sessions as well as other fun games and activities. We held our information stall and set up our exhibition and we also raised a lot of awareness through our active involvement in the organisation and publicity for the day. Lots of local service users attended this event and it proved to be a great social occasion.

## Lifecraft's Cambridge City Street Collection,

21st July 2007.

This event was held to raise awareness about Lifecraft and mental health as well as to help us raise funds. Our members commented on how much they enjoyed representing Lifecraft and mental health amongst the public as well as helping to raise funds for the services they use.

# SCUF

## South Cambridgeshire Users' Forum

Enabling service users to get involved in consultation and campaign work to improve services is one of SCUF's main objectives and Lifecraft has continued to be the facilitator for this forum.

### Examples of campaigns carried out

In June 2007 SCUF conducted a questionnaire to identify whether or not people under CPA were receiving their Care Plans and if they were being reviewed regularly. The results, which were presented to the service managers at the local Mental Health Trust, clearly showed that a large percentage of those under CPA were not receiving the care planning they should be. As a direct result the Trust made it an urgent priority to address these issues.

In January and February 2008 SCUF carried out research into the local Mental Health Trust's service user payment policy and wrote to the Trust to demand that it review its existing policy through consultation with local user and carer groups.

## SCUF developments

Early in 2008 we set up a website for SCUF. This will enable SCUF to update its members with relevant information much more readily and easily. It will also enable SCUF to consult with a wider audience via the use of on-line questionnaires and thus be able to carry out more effective and efficient campaign work. The on-line forum will also enable issues to be voiced by a much larger number of people. Visit [www.scuf.org.uk](http://www.scuf.org.uk).

October 2007 saw the final launch of the IT suite (thanks to the generous help of the Abbey Charitable Trust). Although it was a long wait it was quickly taken up by members as an opportunity to learn and we were delighted when Cambridge Online agreed to offer free lessons on Friday afternoons to anyone interested in either starting from scratch or learning more advanced skills, e.g. website design and programming.

We hope to extend this facility in the coming year and look forward to the continuing support of Cambridge Online.

## Financial Review

## 4

Peter Downhill (Treasurer) and Malcolm Mitchell (Office Manager)

As a result of the hard work of several individuals, Lifecraft's finances are in much better shape than we reported in last year's review. Survival during the year was achieved through the immense work of Bev Sedley, our Chair, who took on the role of chief fundraiser for the organisation. This resulted in several grants from such organisations as the Tudor Trust, Clothworkers Foundation, the Sobell Foundation, the Pye Foundation, and all of these helped in developing our projects and keeping our core services running.

During the year we also launched the Friends of Lifecraft under the direction of Lady Caro Wilson, one of our Trustees. Her numerous contacts within the Cambridge area have allowed us to build up a membership of over 50 Friends, each agreeing to subscribe at least £12 per year to our charity.

Various fundraising events apart from the Friends helped us – these include the Mill Road Winter Fair, a street collection in the city centre, music and arts events and other organisations doing fundraising for us, such as numerous churches and music groups. Without the help of our very many friends in Cambridge, life would have been much more difficult.

These magnificent fundraising contributions meant that we continued to diversify our income:

<b>56%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>
Statutory funding	Restricted grants	Other grants	Appeal	Other

Of course the actual income figures do not include the massive contribution of "in-kind" support that Lifecraft receives through the support of our many volunteers and supporters.

A gradual switch to a 'full cost recovery' style of budgeting has meant that each individual project aims to cover its own costs, as well as contributing to the central or core costs of running Lifecraft. This has given us a much better understanding of the relative costs of our services and helped us to budget more realistically.

Operating costs were reduced over the last year to ensure that we were able to reverse the previous years deficit resulting in an unrestricted surplus of £8171. This was a significant achievement and the trustees plan for the longer term (5-7 years) is to slowly continue to build this reserve so that the charity is afforded better protection in the future and services are less vulnerable to cut backs.

At the start of 2008 Lifecraft completed work on its plan through to 2011. This document can be downloaded from our website and sets out our main priorities:

- Creating more opportunities for member employment to build on our ethos of self help and support members in developing skills and confidence in relation to the workplace. We will do this by working together to create new opportunities for members to work in reception as well as developing the role of member keyholders to lead on the running of the social club.
- Securing longer term funding for Lifeline through contracts to ensure this essential service continues to provide out of hours support to people across the county
- Develop our Arts programme with more opportunities for self publishing, enterprise, events in the community and stronger links with other organisations, including joint work
- Support user involvement in new and innovative projects – in particular focusing on the opportunities for media work and community events
- Spend more time supporting our groups to encourage more people to come along and to get more ideas and feedback on new activities that we could develop – including work that we could do with other groups in the community who share our aims and interests
- Reopen services at the weekend – we recently received the good news that the Evelyn Trust would support us with a 12 month pilot for a new Saturday service and work is already underway with members to start to plan how this service will be delivered
- Continue our campaigning and awareness raising activities including collaborative work with other providers, including building on the successful “Big 1 in 4 Bus” campaign of last year
- Focus our fundraising on fewer and larger projects so that we better concentrate our resources and longer term sustainability
- Develop a stronger training programme for members and staff which focuses on key skills, e.g. food hygiene training, personal safety, drugs awareness, emergency first aid. We have been fortunate in securing funding from the Economic policy unit at Cambridge City Council to take this forward
- Finally but most importantly to look at how we can all get involved in the future of Lifecraft and make sure that member involvement and leadership is at the heart of all we do



## About Lifecraft

Lifecraft is an innovative self help organisation for people with mental health needs.

Lifecraft was established in 1993 in response to a need identified by mental health service users for a place where people could go to get help and support without the need for a professional referral. It has continued to grow and develop in response to its users' needs.

### **Lifecraft currently provides a range of services including**

#### **Lifeline**

telephone helpline available from 7.00pm – 11.00pm, 365 days a year

#### **Counselling**

Free counselling to members

#### **Social Club**

Open 4.00pm – 7.00pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

#### **Kitchen**

Members meals and food hygiene training

#### **Activity groups**

Art, Creative Writing, Music, Singing, Women's Group, Men's Group

#### **Information Centre**

Open Monday – Friday 1.00 – 4.00pm

#### **IT suite**

Including free internet access available, open during the same hours as the Social Club

Lifecraft Members meet monthly at the Bath House to discuss ideas, share concerns and develop proposals to go to the Executive Committee.

Lifecraft is run by an Executive Committee of trustees, elected by the members, with a majority of the trustees always being mental health service users.

Membership of Lifecraft is free. If you would like to know more about becoming a member or supporting our work in any way, please contact us at:

Lifecraft  
The Bath House  
Gwydir Street  
Cambridge  
CB1 2LW

01223 566957  
info@lifecraft.org.uk  
www.lifecraft.org.uk

If you would like to find out more on how you can support our work by becoming a 'Friend of Lifecraft' please contact us at the address above.

**LIFELINE**

**Cambridgeshire Mental Health Helpline**

7.00pm-11.00pm 365 days a year

**FREEPHONE 0808 808 2121**

We're here to listen