

## The Graham Adams Centre – Background Information

Ten years ago Southam Infants School in St James Road closed leaving an empty building which Warwickshire County Council decided to sell. Graham Adams, the then minister of the Congregational Church in Southam, recognised that there was a need in the town for a community building to provide various social groups with a place to meet.

The Congregational Federation based in Nottingham bought, and subsequently leased the building to a group of local people who would establish a charity to manage the Centre.

The centre needed regular income to finance its upkeep and ensure its ongoing viability. Therefore, Beehive Nursery was given a sub-lease at the Centre and Southam Youth Club, (part of Warwickshire County Council Youth Service,) decided to lease the rear part of the Centre to run a new Youth Club. These two sub-leases would provide the Centre with a basic income, and the rest of the Centre could then be let out at reasonable rates to various local groups.

From small beginnings the Centre has expanded. The Centre now provides a home to many varied user groups who meet there regularly: Guides, Brownies, Rainbows, Age Concern, Evergreen Friendship Club, Southam Gymnastics, Judo Club, Dance Academy, Parenting Project, Toddler Groups, St John Ambulance, Southam Twinning Association and more. It also provides a venue for pre-school music/rhythm sessions, slimming groups, belly dancing classes, counselling sessions, soccer coaching, Early Years training, health & safety training and so on. Various local and national organisations hire the rooms on an occasional and regular basis for meetings, training sessions, and social gatherings of all kinds for both adults and children. The main hall is regularly used for children's parties, charity fund raising events and family celebrations.

In 2005, with the aid of grants and the Single Regeneration Project PIE -Promoting Enterprise and Inclusion (PIE) the 'Building Bridges' incentive helped the Centre expand again. The central courtyard was covered in to provide new meeting rooms. The kitchen facilities were modernised and a café area developed. Three smaller consulting / counselling rooms were provided, and a children's Ball Pool was installed within the newly refurbished entrance foyer. The Youth Club gained an improved space, better toilet facilities and a sound-proof music room.

During 2007 the centre will be developing again. It has been chosen to become Southam & District's Children's Centre. Children's Centres are a key part of the government's anti-poverty strategy aiming to provide a good start for all children, whatever their backgrounds or circumstances. Alongside the focus on the needs of children, Children's Centres also provide information and support for the wider family, such as access to training and employment information for parents, with consultation to ensure that the facilities reflect local needs. By becoming a Children's Centre, the Graham Adams Centre will play a part in improving the 'outcomes' for children in the district, as well as maintaining its current services and facilities for local groups.

The small group of Trustees are all unpaid volunteers from various sectors of the community, and they have responsibility for managing a large, high maintenance building. They depend upon successful grant applications to keep the building fully operative with the facilities its many users require. Whilst the Centre recently received some funding from WREN and Warwickshire County Council towards the cost of repairing the roof, it is hoped to further develop the Centre to meet environmental and greater efficiency demands.

If you would like more information on how you can help the Centre develop, please call in for an informal chat. The Graham Adams Centre is in St James Road, Southam CV47 0LY. Office hours are Tuesday and Wednesday mornings until 1.30pm. Telephone 01926 811519 or email [scacp@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:scacp@hotmail.co.uk)  
We look forward to meeting you.