



Charity exchange

Representatives of more than 20 local charities visited the Sandwich site in June to give Pfizer employees the chance to learn more about some of the charities the company supports. "It's a chance for colleagues to chat with local charities, to learn more about what they do in the community and to find out about opportunities to help them, whether through volunteering or fundraising," said Kevin Charles, Sandwich Public Affairs Manager. The broad mix of charities ranged from health to the environment to homelessness and included the Pilgrims Hospice, Demelza House and the Canterbury Oast Trust.

It's good to talk

Pfizer is supporting a community project that is helping new mums combat postnatal depression. Run by the Riverside Children's Centre in Canterbury, mothers who previously suffered postnatal depression (PND) are being trained as peer supporters to help other mums cope with PND.

"When I was a health visitor I had 14 mums with postnatal depression and I realised how beneficial it would be to get them all in the same room talking to one another," said Mary Bullivant, who runs the project. "So, five years ago we started running courses explaining what PND was and ways to manage it, and they were very successful. However, the mums said they needed more, that they were just starting to feel better and the support stopped. In addition, I had several mums come back after they had recovered from PND asking if they could help other women."

The Peer Supporters scheme is a joint initiative between the Riverside Children's Centre, the charity Family



→ The scheme gives women with PND opportunities to share their experiences

Action and the East Kent Primary Care Trust. "Working with Jane Nice from Family Action and Jayne Curran, a mental health specialist, we have trained eight women to be peer supporters and they have already started running sessions for mums with PND. Each volunteer uses their own talents and skills in the sessions, for example one of our supporters is a wonderful artist and will hold art classes while another is a reflexologist. Whatever the theme of the session, the key to success is

that the women have the chance to come together and talk about their feelings, to share their experiences."

The grant of £9,000 from Pfizer has been a big help, said Mary. "The donation has enabled us to train a second group of mums as well as paying for the costs of running the groups, most importantly providing a crèche. Childcare is crucial as it enables the mums to discuss how they are feeling without worrying about their children and the children receive high-quality interaction."

'Green' scheme shows results

As part of the commitment to minimise its impact on the environment, in the first half of the year Pfizer recycled 60 percent of its non-hazardous waste.

In just six months, over 100 tonnes of waste materials were recycled. Top of the list was cardboard, which accounted for 35 tonnes, followed by glass at nearly 27 tonnes and office paper at just over 20 tonnes.

"We are really pleased with these figures because when you have a site as big as this, you generate a lot of non-hazardous



waste, especially paper, plastic and aluminium cans," said Team Leader Jo Scott.

To make sure as much waste is recycled as possible, office areas

have a recycling point with a range of clearly marked bins for different materials. In addition, Pfizer has 59 recycle champions, known as Wastebeaters, who

encourage colleagues to recycle.

"We are always trying to improve and to minimise our waste. For example, as the site also produces a significant amount of food waste we are currently reviewing the possibility of either composting food waste on site or containing it for collection by an external composting facility," said Jo.

Also in the past six months, over two tonnes of empty printer cartridges have been recycled, the profit being donated to local charities.

Jungle fever

Opening this summer, the Secret Jungle is a ground-breaking children's community facility in the heart of Thanet



→ Children of all ages have been enjoying the Secret Jungle since it opened, including children with disabilities

Located in a walled garden inside Northdown Park in Margate, the Secret Jungle provides local children with disabilities with a safe environment in which to play and explore. However, 18 months earlier, the site looked quite different, says Ivan O'Reilly from the Children's Society, one of the organisations behind the project.

"When we arrived here, the walled garden was an overgrown wild place so full of tangled exotic plants you couldn't walk across it," he says. "Now we have a facility that is a beacon for the South East and worthy of national recognition." The project started two years ago after Ivan spoke to local parents of children with disabilities. "I quickly realised they had a common problem with taking their children to public play parks and open spaces – not physical access but the attitudes of the other users." Soon after Ivan came up with the idea of a dedicated play facility for children with disabilities, he received an unexpected phone call. "I had a call from Pfizer to say they were looking for a big volunteering project to get their teeth into so I pitched the idea of the Secret Jungle and they loved the idea. Pfizer plays such an important role here in Thanet and they realised straight away that the project would fill a vitally important gap in the local community."

The Secret Jungle project came at just the right time, says Kevin Charles, Pfizer Public Affairs Manager. "Back in 2008, we were looking for a big project that would help to bring together the many new teams we had here at Pfizer. The Secret Jungle project was exactly what we were looking for – it offered lots of opportunities for team building as well as giving colleagues the chance to help the local community," he says.

With Pfizer onboard, Thanet District Council offered several potential sites. "As soon as we stepped inside the walled garden we knew it was perfect," says Ivan. "The location was right but more importantly, the walled garden was contained and secure. Some of the children are extremely vulnerable and

don't understand about staying in one place, so a major concern was to keep them safe, which also allows their parents to relax. What's more, the overgrown garden sparked our imaginations to create a play facility that would allow the children to explore the natural environment, to dig in the earth and play amongst the bushes and trees."

The biggest hurdle facing the project was the state of the garden, says Kevin. "The garden hadn't been touched for fifteen years so we needed a large group of people to clear the area. As soon as we advertised inside Pfizer, we had people volunteering in large numbers and, in the end, more than 200 Pfizer colleagues volunteered to spend a day or two at the garden, a total of 300 days of hard work." This effort has been calculated to represent a gift-in-kind donation worth £30,000. "The work by the Pfizer volunteers was incredible, they transformed the site," says Ivan. "They also helped with the replanting, creating a sensory walkway around the pagoda."

Once the site was prepared, the team set about buying specialist play equipment. "The Council was able to access £50,000 from the Government's Play Pathfinder scheme and Pfizer invested £20,000 and we were able to buy equipment such as a balancing ascent, a basket swing, a climbing cave and a large springy gorilla," says Ivan.

"Although we have created a facility built around the needs of children with disabilities our ethos is about inclusion and the garden is open to all members of the local community. What's more, we have very ambitious plans for the future of the scheme as we move into Phase two."