

Creating opportunities for adults with special needs

The Croft Community





Welcome to The Croft

SINCE 1976, The Croft Community has been supporting adults with learning disabilities, including autism and Down's syndrome, assisting their integration into the life of the town of Malton, North Yorkshire.

By providing a home life where each individual's needs are understood, meaningful work where achievements are recognised, and combining them with an enriching social and cultural life, our Community builds the confidence which allows people of all abilities to take their rightful place in the wider community.

The Croft Community is one of the 11 centres of The Camphill Village Trust, a national

charity dedicated to creating opportunities for adults with learning disabilities, mental health problems and other special needs. In addition, we are part of the wider Camphill Movement, which, since its establishment in Aberdeen in 1940 has grown to include more than 90 Communities in over 20 countries. These Communities assist children, adolescents and adults, enabling them to develop their full potential for a rich and rewarding life.

We particularly recognise each person's individuality, dignity and worth, supporting each one in order that they may make appropriate choices in exercising self-determination in all areas of their lives. Our Community's framework of mutual support and respect ensures there is never any feeling of isolation, with all members of our Community valued equally for what they bring to our lives.



A Community that cares

The Croft Community is part of the wider local community of the busy market town of Malton and neighbouring Norton and Old Malton which straddle the River Derwent in the Vale of Pickering, 18 miles north east of the city of York.

We aim to create opportunities for people with learning disabilities and other special needs for whom opportunities are often limited by their need for extra help and support.

Our Community is based on mutual support, with all those involved contributing in whatever way they can and receiving the support of the Community in expanding horizons and taking new steps to make the most of life's opportunities. Everyone is valued for the way they contribute to our Community life and treated as an individual. Each person's abilities are nourished to grow into achievements.

Our mutually supportive lifestyle integrates home life with work and cultural and social activities. Life-long learning expands horizons, not purely with work or domestic skills, but in social and cultural spheres too.

And knowing that the contribution made to the life of the Community is valued by all, builds the confidence needed to explore new roles and adjust to the wider community in which we live.

Being part of a mutually supportive Community like The Croft demands active participation by all those involved. So the decision to make one's home with us must be taken freely, recognising the implications and responsibilities. Our Camphill Community life balances individual needs with the needs of those with whom we

live and work, so Community members must be willing to have give and take in their lives.

Those with special needs who choose to come to The Croft Community may come from other Camphill Communities or may have been living at home with parents, at other centres for those with special needs or have recently completed their education and are ready to take their first steps in the adult world.

They need not be local residents although a considerable number of those in



our Community originate from the Yorkshire area.

We are an open and welcoming Community and in addition to enquiries from people with special needs, we also like to hear from those who may wish to work with us either for a short period or on a longer term basis, or who may wish to assist us in other ways.

At Home

The Croft Community is home for around 70 people, half of whom have special needs.

Our home life is based on six households in different areas of Malton, Norton and Old Malton, with each house providing our residents with a comfortable and secure home environment as a stable and supportive background for their lives in the wider community.

In five of our households everyone



lives in an extended family environment. Those with responsibility for the house, their family, and those who assist them, share life with those with special needs.

Our sixth house enables residents with greater self reliance to live more independently, with those providing their support living close by and available at all times.

Everyone is involved in the usual aspects of domestic life, participating in the everyday needs of the household such as meal preparation, washing up and keeping the house clean and tidy. Each household eats together, socialises and relaxes together.

While the main rooms of each house are used communally, everyone has their own space, allowing them time on their own when they want it.

Each household has a different character resulting from the different personalities involved. We try to ensure that those who share their homelife are compatible, getting along well together and sharing interests. Our aim is to provide a stable home environment, and a number of those with special needs have been with us since our Community was established.

The Croft, at Highfield Road, Old Malton, is the house from which our Community takes its name and is where our Community was established. It is an extended Georgian house and is home for 8 residents.

In its two-acre grounds is Rowan House, a large purpose-built family house completed in 1994. It offers modern accommodation for 6 residents.

Adjacent to The Croft and Rowan House is Yew Tree Cottage. This is to be used in a different way, making a home for three of our residents who want a more independent lifestyle. They are to be supported by a family living in a new house which we plan to build just across the courtyard from Yew Tree Cottage.

Gawain House, in Welham Road, Norton, is a large Edwardian House in pleasant surroundings close to the edge of the town. Five residents are supported in



an extended family environment.

Greengate House is a Grade II listed Georgian townhouse just two minutes walk from the centre of Malton. It is a comfortable home for 6 of our residents, and its central location allows those who live there to get to the shops and other facilities and activities in the town centre with a minimum of support. Greengate House is the hub of our Community, with many people calling in when in the town centre.

Michael House is an Edwardian house in a quiet leafy area of Malton to the north of the town centre. Bought in 1996, it is home for 6 of our residents.

All of our accommodation has been refurbished or built to high standards to exceed statutory requirements and ensure they provide a pleasant, comfortable and safe home for all. Each of our residents has their own room.

Those with special



needs who are part of The Croft Community span an age range from their early 20s to late 70s. Our facilities are designed to meet the needs of all ages.

Our Community includes a number of former residents who live independently in

the town while retaining strong links with us. They continue to be involved with our work activities and social and cultural life, and know that any support that they may need is always close at hand.





Real work opportunities

Work has a central place in our lives, yet those with learning disabilities and other special needs often find it virtually impossible to obtain employment.

As a Camphill Community, we regard meaningful work as an essential part of everyday life, including those with special needs. It brings dignity and a sense of self worth, allows people to gain new skills and take responsibility, and encourages the development of social skills and integration into the community around us.

The work activities available to those with special needs at The



Croft Community all produce goods or services that are needed by others. We aim for a work programme which involves each person in a number of activities, providing variety in the working week and encouraging a willingness to 'have a go' at anything.

Kingfisher Café, Gift & Bookshop

Situated in Saville Street, in Malton town centre, this modern and stylish café is a place to meet and relax for residents of Malton and visitors to the town. It provides a wide range of drinks, snacks and meals, many of them making use of organic

ingredients whenever possible.

It provides seating for 40 customers on two floors. It is a superb working and training environment for members of our Community, and each week around 25 people are involved - those with special

Meaningful work for all

needs and those who support them. A full time manager is employed and the varied work includes food preparation, baking, waiting on customers, keeping the café and kitchens clean and tidy, washing up, cash handling, banking and shopping. Training is provided in hygiene, food technology and all other aspects of the work.

Kingfisher Café is an important contact point with the general public, encouraging social contact and communication with a wide range of people.

Part of the first floor is devoted to gift-shop and bookshop areas. Gifts include decorative craft items produced in our own craft workshops and from other Camphill centres. The range of books includes many not available elsewhere and books related to Camphill and the philosophies on which our lives are based.

Craft workshops

We have three craft workshops which allow people of all abilities to learn and develop a variety of skills. Our products are then sold to the public through our Camphill shops.

Our weaving workshop at The Croft designs and makes traditional rugs starting with raw wool which is washed, dyed, carded and spun before being woven on hand looms.

The Candelabrium, also at The Croft, operates mainly in the winter months, designing and making decorative art candles, including very large ones.

The gift workshop, situated on the top floor of the Kingfisher Café building, has morning and afternoon workgroups working on a wide range of projects. These include ceramic painting, clock making,

glass painting, picture frame making, woodwork, clay modelling, drawing and painting, papier maché.

Market Gardening

Our two-acre organic market garden and orchard provides varied work growing produce used in our houses and café. The work follows the seasonal rhythms of ground preparation, sowing, planting, weeding and harvesting. Our glasshouses and polytunnels allows work to continue year-round, even when the weather is poor.



Domestic and office work

Home skills are important too, with work in our houses involving food preparation, cleaning, laundry and shopping.

Residents also work in our Community offices which serve the wider Camphill Movement. The varied work includes assisting with filing, photocopying, post, banking, entering accounts on computer and compiling mailing material.

Training & education

Life-long learning is an important feature of all Camphill Communities. Everyone at The Croft, whether with special needs or involved in running our Community, is encouraged to seek new skills and knowledge, to broaden horizons and find new directions.

Training and education can be for personal skills, work or leisure, and can be



carried out informally or by attending formal courses either within our Community or at local colleges and training centres.

Reading, writing and numeracy are important life skills and every assistance is given to those with special needs in making progress. We work closely with local organisations and residents attend local authority classes.

Other personal skills are gained informally, often at home, such as learning to use a washing machine or improving cooking skills.

A great deal of work-related training takes place on-the-job. All of our work places are managed by experienced and skilled people who take care and time assessing each person's abilities. Interest and aptitude for different areas of the work is nurtured and encouraged so that everyone can develop their abilities and skills.

Formal training for work can include training in the work place. All those involved with our café receive food hygiene and food technology training as well as health and safety training.

Our residents and those with responsibility for our Community also have the opportunity to attend courses at local colleges and other centres to gain recognised qualifications. These courses are usually work related, such as a horticultural course for those involved with our market garden, or computer use for those working in our offices.

Those who carry responsibility for our Community are encouraged to build on the qualifications they already have, and keep their training up-to-date, always ensuring that qualifications meet or exceed statutory requirements.

As a town-based Community, many of our residents take advantage of the evening classes offered locally. Painting, photography, foreign languages, music appreciation, keep fit and flower arranging are some of their interests. We also run classes of our own which include activities such as dancing and music.



Social & cultural life

The social and cultural life of The Croft Community includes activities organised within our Community and the wider social life of the town and the local area.

As a Community based on Christian ideals, many of our own activities are linked to our celebration of the Christian festivals which mark our progress through the seasons of the year. Into these festivals we weave songs and plays, music and verse. The Barn at The Croft is the centre of many of these activities, as well as film shows, dancing, choirs and eurythmy. Regular Services are held there too, for those who wish to participate, while other members of our Community attend local

churches and chapels.

Socialising also takes place on an informal level, with a barbecue in the garden, a birthday celebration or just visiting friends.

Everyone is encouraged to involve themselves in the social life of the area. Some enjoy belonging to local clubs and groups, such as the rambles or the amateur operatic society. Others follow interests with their friends, such as regular train excursions or visits by bus or train to York or the coast. There are visits to the cinema, theatre and concerts, and, as well as making use of the shops, pubs and cafés of Malton, there are walks or picnics in the countryside too.

Holidays may be taken with family and friends, and we also organise group holidays in Britain and sometimes abroad, providing an opportunity to relax with friends from our Community in a different setting.





Organisation and economics

As a centre of the Camphill Village Trust, major policy decisions affecting all centres are taken by the Council of the Trust.

However, each centre takes responsibility for its own planning and management through its Local Management Committee. The Croft Community's LMC, which includes interested local people as well as members of our Community, works closely with those in our Community who take responsibility for its day-to-day operation.

We have no management hierarchy and we aim to involve everyone - including those with special needs - in decision making.

The residential and day placement fees paid through DSS benefits

and by local authorities cover the day-to-day living expenses of our Community. Income from our café and workshops goes towards their running costs. All other expenses have to be covered by fundraising activities.

For larger projects, such as building or purchasing houses, or major refurbishment, some of the fundraising is carried out by the Camphill Village Trust's appeals office, and some by The Croft Community itself. In addition to major projects, we also have to raise funds to cover other costs, such as vocational training, work clothing, counselling, maintenance of our social hall,

production of plays and concerts, and tools and equipment for our work places.

Our grateful thanks go to all the grant making trusts, individuals and companies who generously assist us both financially and with their time.



Our Community way

Life at The Croft Community, like all other Camphill Communities, centres on a shared Community life based on Christian ideals and the work of the philosopher Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) which inspired Dr Karl König and his colleagues who founded the Camphill Movement.

The aim of their first Camphill Community and those founded subsequently, including The Croft Community, is to provide a setting in which those with special needs can develop their potential in an atmosphere of mutual care and respect, with each person valued and recognised as an equal.

Camphill's founders chose to do this work not as a job but as a way of life. They followed Rudolf Steiner's belief that communities are stronger when everyone works to help each other rather than for personal reward. This philosophy continues to be followed today, and no-one living in The Croft Community is paid directly for their work. Instead, each person's needs are met from the resources of the Community.

The task of all those who work alongside our residents with special needs is not so much 'care', as our residents can do many things for themselves. Instead they are 'enablers' working to allow those with special needs to achieve much in their lives.

Those who have made a long-term commitment to our Community, living permanently with us and carrying the responsibility for day-to-day operation, do so out of common beliefs and a willingness to share in the Camphill way of life. They treat their work as a vocation and way of

life and receive no salary. Their needs, and those of their families, are met from the Community's resources.

They are assisted by volunteers who normally spend a year with us, sharing in the life and daily work of our Community. These voluntary workers come from all over the world, many of them young people seeking new experiences and wishing to help others. They contribute a great deal, bringing different cultures and youthful enthusiasm with them.

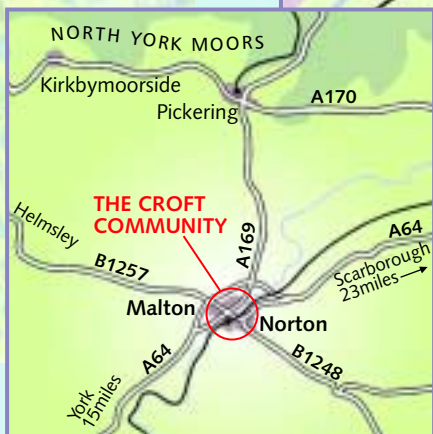
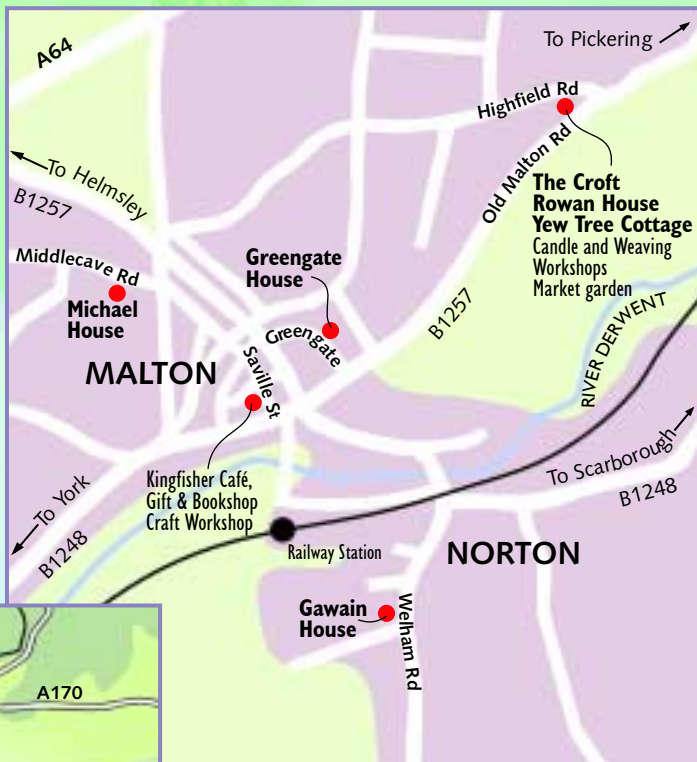
While we base our lives on Christian



principles, we welcome people of any persuasion who respect this aspect of our Community life.

In addition to caring for each other, caring for the land on which we live and the environment around us has always been the Camphill way. So we use organic and biodynamic growing methods, and organic food forms the basis of a healthy diet.

Where to find us



Getting in touch

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