

Special project to get extra funding

A PROJECT working with marginalised people has been given thousands of pounds in funding.

Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project will get £56,000 from the Government.

The centre works with a range of people including the homeless, minority race groups and those living with mental health problems.

It encourages them to get involved with volunteer work at the centre in Tilbury Place, Brighton, and the cash will go towards this.

Lisa Marshall, fund-raiser for the centre, said the grant would help fund work with Brighton University, which was following about 30 people who use the centre and recording how they go on to volunteer.

She said: "It is brilliant to get this grant and a fantastic opportunity for us to be working with Brighton University and get feedback on what we are doing from them."

The centre encourages the marginalised groups it works with to get involved with the running of the self-help projects such as serving meals, working with children and manning receptions.

Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Centre was given £180,000 towards its volunteer recruitment programme before.

It proved such a success that this additional grant was made by Goldstar – the Government's flagship programme from the Office of the Third Sector.

Goldstar aims to help recruit and retain volunteers from hard-to-reach groups.

Ed Miliband, Minister of the Third Sector, said: "Voluntary organisations have the ideas and skills to help overcome social exclusion and can enable people who might otherwise have been left on the margins to use their experiences to empower others."

The money will be available to the centre from January.

Boy, four, is critical after crash

A 40-YEAR-OLD woman died in a motorway smash.

Sasha Spinelli, from Lewes, was killed when her Nissan Micra collided with a lorry on the coastbound carriageway of the M2 between Sittingbourne and Faversham, Kent, last Thursday.

Mr Stephen Beck, deputy coroner for Mid Kent and Medway, opened an inquest into her death yesterday.

Her four-year-old son was taken to King's College Hospital in London. His condition was still being described as critical yesterday.

A 54-year-old man from Belgium appeared at Mid Kent Magistrates Court on Saturday.

Yvan Vandermeulen was remanded in custody facing a charge of causing death by dangerous driving.

He is due appear at Maidstone Crown Court on September 25.

Appeal to help launch FM station

AN APPEAL to help fund Brighton and Hove's first community-owned FM radio station has been launched.

RadioReverb, which currently broadcasts on the internet, was granted a licence by Ofcom to broadcast on FM frequencies earlier this year. It needs £30,000 to buy a transmitter and other equipment.

It is asking individuals, community groups and businesses to pledge £500 each to become founders of the station and hopes to be on air

in January. Fund-raising manager Simon Hopkins said: "Becoming a founder is a lifelong opportunity to shape media in the city, supporting Brighton and Hove's most exciting and innovative new radio station."

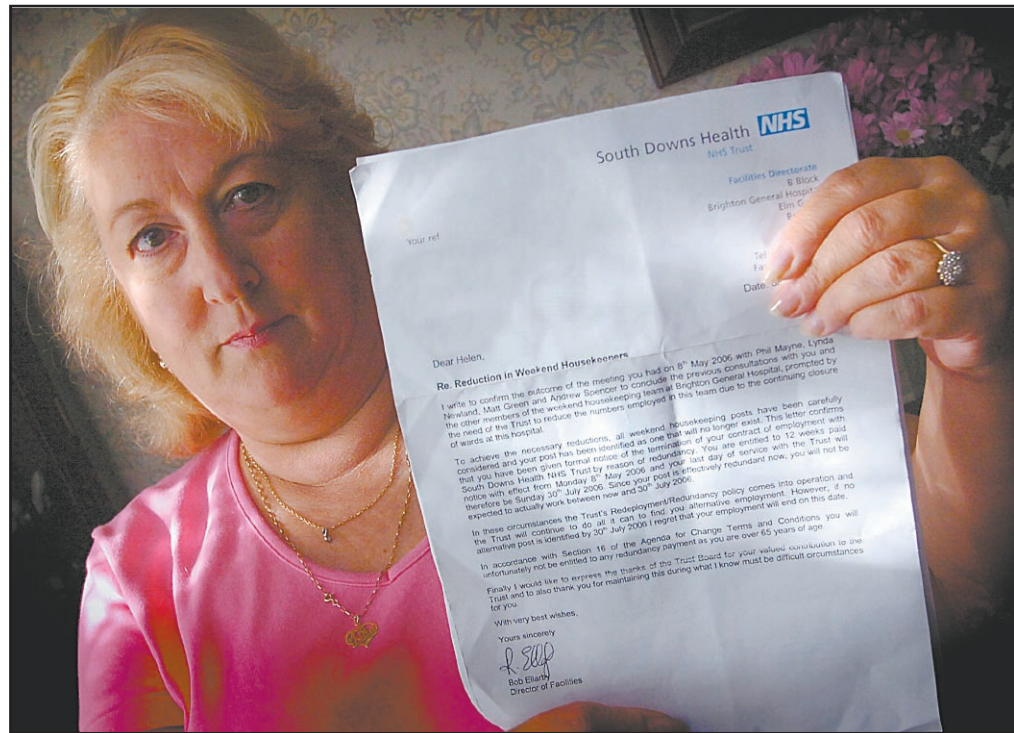
"Founders will be able to work with the station to create programming which reflects the interests of Brighton and Hove, via the Founders' Forum."

For more details, call Simon Watkins on 01273 323040 or email office@radioreverb.com.

NHS worker was devoted to her job

PICTURE: TERRY APPLIN

TA8906-E1



FRUSTRATED: Helen Harmes was entitled to only 12 weeks' pay as she was over retirement age

Sacked after thirty years

A WOMAN who worked on the same hospital ward for 30 years claims she was unfairly made redundant.

Helen Harmes was devoted to her housekeeping job on a geriatric ward at Brighton General Hospital and was devastated when managers told her she would lose her job.

Ms Harmes, of Stephens Road, Hollingdean, Brighton, worked throughout the week at Sainsbury's and then woke at the crack of dawn to start work at 7.30pm every Saturday and Sunday morning for the past three decades.

She said she enjoyed the financial independence her tough work ethic gave her but also drew great pleasure from the job.

She said: "The ward was my little kingdom. I used to love working with the old people."

"Some of them didn't get any

by RACHEL WAREING

visitors and I would talk to them, do their hair and fetch their shopping for them.

"They were things anyone would do but I was really proud of my work."

Her sadness at losing her job turned to fury when she learned that another member of the housekeeping department was doing the same duties on the ward.

She said: "How can it be that I was made redundant when the job still exists?"

"I always worked hard. One Christmas I even walked through the snow to get to work because my taxi couldn't get through."

The 66-year-old is also frustrated because she was eligible for only 12 weeks of redundancy pay as she was over the age of retirement.

But under the Age Discrimination Act, which comes into force on October 1, she would have been entitled to 45 weeks of pay – the same rate as younger colleagues.

A spokeswoman for Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust denied there had been any wrongdoing.

She said Ms Harmes was contracted to work as a housekeeper across the hospital, rather than on a specific ward and it was on that basis she had been made redundant.

She said: "We have a policy of redeployment and re-employment and we followed it to the letter."

"Ms Harmes was offered alternative hours during the week but was not able to take them up because she has another job."

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Abandoned kittens found in box

SIX kittens were saved after being abandoned in a sealed cardboard box next to bins.

The black and white animals are only eight weeks old and were dumped alongside rubbish at Ditchling Court, Ditchling Road, Brighton. Their container was taped-up with holes punched into it.

The RSPCA was called and the four females and one male were taken to a vet who found

them to be healthy. RSPCA inspector Jodie Moss said: "It is an offence to dump animals like this. It is lucky they were found or they could have died. We would like to hear from anyone who knows who may have dumped them."

The kittens are now at the RSPCA Patcham animal centre and are looking for new homes. Call 0870 5555 999 for more information.

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