

# News Matters

Summer 2025

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*Celebrating*  
**40** years of Dereham Hub

# Welcome to News Matters



Hello everyone and welcome to the latest News Matters.

Gosh, a summer of celebration and fun just bursts off the pages of this edition – it is an absolute joy to read!

We had parties and events across the county. Dereham celebrated 40 years which is a remarkable achievement and testament to a lot of dedicated people through the years. An 80's Theme which was a sight to behold... definitely brought back memories of an era for me 😊.



Summer events across the hubs that really shouted 'Summer' – Hawaiian themes, rock and roll, 1940s tea dance and a lovely recognition of the 80th anniversary of VE Day, with lots of you dressing up to make all the occasions even more special. A big shout out to all the services and locations... be proud of the joy you generate. I know how much hard work it takes to create these events.

You will see in the update that our colleagues at Norfolk Industries have had a very busy time implementing a major new piece of equipment into the factory and launched a new product line with a major UK retailer. All delivered due to great teamwork!

I have also been struck by all the individual achievements celebrated in this newsletter. From running marathons, achieving diplomas, long service awards and, in HSM, individual contributions recognised through their Colleague of the Month awards. My congratulations to each and every one of you.

The summer saw an emotional farewell to Sarah Stock. I know she would want to thank you all for the lovely sendoffs you gave her. I hope we will see her pop in to visit us in the future.

As I delight and reflect on all these wonderful activities and achievements, I have heard the Care Delivery teams refer to all of this as 'Soul Food'... a great way to sum it up. We now head into autumn and chillier days will put pay to Hawaiian alohas. However, I comfort myself with the knowledge that fireworks and twinkling lights are on the horizon.

Thank you for the joy!

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Zaliha". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small flourish at the end.

Zaliha Williamson, Managing Director



# Dereham Hub celebrates 40 fabulous years!

Dereham Community Hub celebrated its 40th anniversary on 7th August.

The anniversary event was officially opened by the Mayor of Dereham, Councillor Ray O'Callaghan. Ray cut the ribbon alongside Managing Director Zaliha Williamson, Service Manager Charlie Collier, and special guest Peter Crate, who was the very first manager when the Hub opened in 1985.



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Many past colleagues were welcomed back for the event, including Sarah Stock, Sylvia Barrett-Jones, Julia Harvey and Jos Pot. Very sadly, customer Justin was unable to be there. He is the only customer to have attended the Hub since it first opened all those years ago.

The 'Back to the 80s' theme encouraged lots of neon costumes, leg warmers, big hair, dancing to the tunes from Fame, and the Hub's very own version of Madonna. Luckily, we had a photographer on site to capture the whole event.

Needless to say, an 'epic' time was had by all, and huge thanks go to all the amazing colleagues who made the event such a success. Here's to the next 40 years!



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“Celebrating 40 years of the Hub was a truly special moment, together customers, colleagues, families, and the wider community, in a joyful and inclusive celebration.

It was also a chance to reflect on the incredible contributions of past managers and colleagues who helped shape the Hub into the welcoming and vibrant place it is today. We’re proud of our history and excited for the future.”

Charlie Collier, Service Manager, Dereham Community Hub



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# Services say *farewell*

Before she left at the end of June, Sarah Stock visited services to give colleagues and customers an opportunity to say goodbye. Lots of our customers have known Sarah for many years and have said how much they will miss her. She received a great send off from everyone and we would all like to wish her the very best in her retirement.



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## Congratulations to...

PAS South colleague **Sharon Scoulding** on achieving her 10<sup>th</sup> work anniversary reward with Independence Matters.

We love to recognise and celebrate colleague achievements, so if you know someone who deserves a mention, just let us know! ☺



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## Fabulous fields of flowers

Hi it's Trudie here from King's Lynn Supported Living.

I thought I would share these pictures with you. I am at the tulip fields near King's Lynn; I am with my niece Olivia.

My brother and his wife grow these tulips each year. They have open days to raise money for the local hospice. The fields were also in the film Wicked.

I love this time of year visiting the fields and looking out for my brother on the television. This year he was on Countryfile and the local news.



## Rock & roll party gets everyone moving!

We love a party at Rosewood, so what better than a rock & roll / country theme to get everyone singing and dancing. The talented singer Karla Bare helped us out with the vocals, and Sheila and Emma cooked the hot dogs and burgers. It was a great, fun day for everyone and we all had the best time!



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# “Oh, we do like to be beside the seaside”

As the sunny days continue, Attleborough Community Hub customers Mark and Thomas, and their support workers Helen and David, donned themselves with bucket and spade, the obligatory football, and of course, plenty of sun cream, and had a lovely day out at Gorleston beach. As you can see, much fun was had with all the usual seaside activities taking place and a well-deserved ice cream to round off the day.



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# HSM Colleagues of the Month



Each month at HSM we send out a 'Colleague of the Month' survey to all our employees, asking them to nominate their fellow colleagues for going above and beyond, making a positive impact, or consistently exemplifying our team values.

Each month, Care Delivery Director Su Carver picks three 'Colleague of the Month' winners out of all the nominations.

Angela (top left) was nominated for April for 'Compassionate Care' and also celebrated 5 years at Home Support Matters.

Rebecca (top centre), one of our care coordinators, was awarded as Colleague of the Month for April, she was nominated for 'Compassionate Care'.

Kerry (top right) was nominated for March for 'Dignity and Respect'.

Sandy (right) was nominated for 'Excellent Care' for the month of May.

Well done to all at Home Support Matters who always go the extra mile in order to achieve the best possible results for those they care and support.



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# Wishing Yvonne a happy retirement

After 16 years of dedicated service, one of our beloved HSM colleagues Yvonne has hung up their badge, mop, heart, and magnifying glass!

In her own words:

"There aren't many jobs in the world where you get to be a care worker, a cleaner, a therapist and a detective!"

That line alone sums up the heart and soul it takes to do what Yvonne has done day in and day out with compassion, humour, and unwavering commitment.

Yvonne leaves behind a legacy of care, kindness, and a spirit that lifted both the people she looked after and the colleagues she worked alongside.

"Thank you sincerely for the laughs, the support and the privilege of looking after some of the loveliest people in the country. It's been an honour."

To our dear colleague: it's we who are honoured. You've made a difference that can't be measured.

As Yvonne said so beautifully:

"To all my colleagues, keep doing what you are doing. I will miss you all."

We all wish you a joyful, peaceful retirement, you've earned every moment.



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# NDCH News

Norwich Dementia Community Hub would like to thank Janet, who is the mum of colleague Suzanne, for very kindly holding a yard sale raising £125. The Hub was able to purchase a robotic cat with the money, which customers love. It meows, licks its paws and rolls over!



NDCH colleague Allison volunteers at Old Buckenham airfield, and supported Dementia Awareness Week, by making forget-me-not sponges and cupcakes to sell in their Station144 Bistro.

There were lots of buyers and all the delicious cakes were sold. Alzheimer's Awareness stickers were also given out and Hub service leaflets were on display (they are there all the time). Allison is pictured with Matt who runs the Bistro.



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# Sprowston *summer fete*

Sprowston was blessed with fabulous weather for their summer fete. Chris got rather wet in the stocks (we know he loves it ☺) and there was live music from both the Squeegees and the Lee Vasey band.

Everyone fell in love with the Spring Meadows party ponies and Iain's partner Tracey was kept busy face painting and did some amazing work. We are grateful to her for donating all her takings to the Hub.

A fabulous selection of cakes were for sale provided gifted baker Dawn, again with all donations passed onto the Hub.

Thanks to Attleborough Hub for coming over and supporting the event and to everyone that helped set up or took part on the day. A total of £280 was raised which will go into the customers amenities fund.



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## All aboard the Wellness bus

The Wellness on Wheels bus dropped by Great Yarmouth Community Hub in August and customers enjoyed having a health check done onboard.

The bus was developed in partnership with Norfolk Integrated Care System and Voluntary Norfolk and supported COVID-19 vaccinations in 2021. It now delivers a health, support and wellbeing services across Norfolk and Waveney. We hope everyone was given a clean bill of health!



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# Teamwork makes the dream work

Customers at Rosewood have been revisiting their trade skills with the support of colleague Harry to erect this fabulous gazebo.

Perfect for enjoying the outside space and lovely weather we've been having this summer - along with a cup of tea!



## Congratulations to...

**Katie Bell** support worker at PAS South, for passing her Care certificate.

We love to recognise and celebrate colleague achievements, so if you know someone who deserves a mention, just let us know! ☺



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## New equipment a big investment for the future

Norfolk Industries has purchased two new pieces of equipment that will improve efficiency and increase the safety of our pet bedding products.

The new compressed baler is much quicker than the old machine and will considerably speed up production of our flaked paper bales. It works in combination with a new metal detector which ensures all product on this manufacturing line is safe and contamination free.



The equipment supports a contract with a large UK retailer, and we see it as a big win-win.

As the new set-up generates product faster to meet customer demand, we now have three people working on this line - which means more paid hours to people with disabilities.

The increased production is good for business and could potentially lead to further paid employment opportunities for disabled people, which is central to our purpose. It also takes us another step closer to green goals of reducing waste and plastic packaging on our loose fill products.



## New packing work for local entrepreneur

We are delighted to welcome a new packing customer Alan Wright, a local entrepreneur, inventor, and Dragon's Den reject! Alan now has his own successful product range, and we will be processing, picking, packing and despatching order for him.

Alan is like minded in supporting work opportunities for people with disabilities, and we both hope that in time this will build to becoming a part time paid job for someone. A work placement started in July to carry out this work and allow us to see how it progresses.

Alan is already keen to send us additional work which includes some easy assembly, so it's really exciting to see where this might go! He said: "We are very pleased to have Norfolk Industries take on packing and posting for a varied range of eco-friendly products: both new products and products we have been selling for 12 years.

[ShowerPowerBoosters](#), [WrightChoice Shower Heads](#), [Garden Boosters](#), [Dog Showers](#), and a newly patented heat store device. We look forward to a long and productive future with you guys."



## New factory recruits

Earlier in the year we said an official goodbye to one of our employees who retired after a staggering 44 years in employment here at Norfolk Industries.

Our recruitment process for a new Factory Operative resulted in us finding two candidates who it was very hard to choose between.

Following a recruitment process we were delighted to welcome Gio to the role of Factory Operative and are pleased to report he has settled in well and is finding his place in the team.

We also identified someone who we felt might be a good candidate for our Bank Worker system. After discussions with them, they are now going through the on-boarding process so that we can call them in for paid hours as the business needs.

Although zero hours contracts are generally frowned upon, they give people choice and there are times when they are really helpful, for example to anyone unable to commit to a specific number of hours every week due to physical or mental health conditions.

## And finally...

We recently found a novel use for our cloth bedding when Dereham Community Hub requested a large bag.

Turns out it was to be used for the lucky dip at their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary fete. Who knows, maybe that's an entirely new product right there... 😊



# Aloha from Attleborough!

Attleborough Community Hub held a Hawaiian summer fayre in August.

With a BBQ, raffle, art and crafts, games, and the band Stardust Duo playing, everyone had lots of fun. It was lovely to welcome customers and colleagues from Sprowston Hub, PAS (South) and LSSL.

Thanking you from all at ACH for your support. Together we raised over £600!



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# Rachel's *marathon* challenge

*We love sharing colleagues' stories and here, our Group Data Protection Officer, Rachel, tells us about an epic challenge she set for herself.*

In the autumn of 2024, I found myself in the fortunate position of securing a place in the 2025 Boston (USA) and London Marathons. The problem being that these both take place in April and are just 6 days apart!

I've been a runner since I was 15, and been lucky to run the London Marathon in 2014, 2023 and 2024 but never attempted two so close together. I love a challenge, especially after turning 50 last August, and so in January 2025 training began.

## **Boston Marathon: 21st April 2025**

The Boston Marathon is the oldest marathon in the world, with this being its 129th year. It is very popular and therefore difficult to get a place, with most trying to get their 'BQ' (Boston Qualifying) which means that you need to run a certain time for your age group.

The day of the race you convene on Boston Common to get a bus – the American yellow school buses, which we've seen in so many films - out to the start line in a little American town called Hopkinton. The bus takes an hour and the atmosphere is palpable, filled with nerves and lots of excitement!

The course is almost a straight line into Boston. It is undulating from the start, and then you hit the main hills from 17 – 22 miles! The support, encouragement and wall of noise for 26.2 miles still brings tears to my eyes. It was the hardest thing I've ever done but the most amazing too. Boston holds a very special place in my heart anyway, which has only been amplified by this amazing experience.





## London Marathon: 27th April 2025

I reluctantly wrenched myself out of my beloved Boston and caught a night flight back to London, arriving on the Wednesday morning, which was just enough time to pop to Excel and collect my running number. I then had two days at home to recover from jet lag, have a massage, re-pack and get back down to London!

The London Marathon is a very special race to me too – and for my family. My parents were marathon runners and, when we were little, my sister and I used to watch them go to London and run the marathon. We always dreamed of following in their footsteps. I first did in 2014 and sis in 2015. Dad passed away in December 2023, so every marathon I run now, I'm partly running for him.

This year was a hot one! I knew as I was waiting to start that I would need to adjust my race plan and expectations. I just wanted to finish in one piece. My legs were heavy and sore, but I didn't care – I loved every single step, even the hardest ones.

The supporters in London are very special. Just thinking about it makes me cry. All the way round people are literally yelling your name at the top of their voices (having your name on your running top is a must!) and strangers become your friends for a few seconds. The noise takes your breath away.

I needed a short walk at 24 miles to have some Lucozade, but then it was back to it. Once you see Big Ben, you're one mile from home, then it's Birdcage Walk and The Mall. Crossing that finish line was emotional. There were tears! This challenge, which I'd thought about for so long, trained so hard for, was finally complete! I collected my medal, stumbled to get my bag and somehow found my way back to my hotel to recover.

I still can't believe it. Would I do it again? Of course I would!



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## RAF Mildenhall *special sports day*

Earlier this summer customers and colleagues at Dereham Hub were invited to take part in the Joan Mann Special Sports Day, an annual event held at RAF Mildenhall U.S. Air Force base.

Everyone had a wonderful day, taking part in various sports and being treated to BBQ food and American treats.

As you'd expect, the event was incredibly well organised, each group was assigned an officer who did a great job looking after us.

The TAPS group was assigned Dillon from Ohio who showed us the planes and told us all about his job.



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Everyone made us feel very welcome and nothing was too much trouble, everyone received a free t-shirt and goody bag.

Some of you may have spotted Chloe being interviewed on ITV news which also featured lots of shots of other Dereham customers, which was excellent.

Medals were won by Stephen and Simon who got to stand on the podium. Justin enjoyed chatting with a female officer who was from Memphis, so he was very impressed that she came from the same place as Elvis!

The event has been running for 42 years, and we'd all love to go again next time. Big thanks to all at Mildenhall for their hospitality.



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# This way to the beach!

Great Yarmouth Community Hub brought the beach to Suffolk Road in August with a fabulous Hawaiian-themed party, complete with its own mocktail bar. As these lovely pictures show, everyone had a fabulous time.



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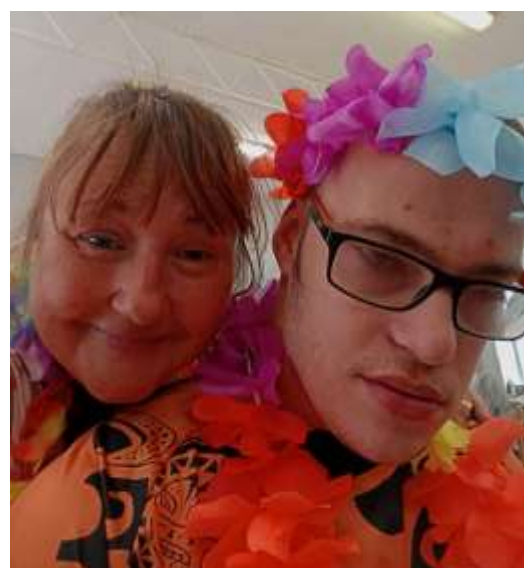




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## Attleborough Hub's Market stall

Attleborough Community Hub has a stall at the local market, located in the picturesque Queen's Square in the centre of town.

Colleagues and customers are there every week come rain or shine selling handmade items and pre-loved clothes. Their Hub-made garden ornaments are particularly popular, especially the moon gazing hares. Pop along and see us if you're in town on a Thursday between 8.30am and 1pm.



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# Working together in equal partnership



On 10th July we joined the Co-Production Event at the Forum hosted by 'Making It Real Board'.

We worked alongside other support services and the day was a real success with lots of people attending! The energy, passion and enthusiasm from everyone was incredible as we all celebrated the importance of working together in equal partnership.

We had two stalls, customers and colleagues from Holt Hub, Dereham Hub and Long Stratton Supported Living handed out the merchandise we made in the Working Together Groups, keyrings, badges and vinyl car stickers, and talked to the public about what we do.

Customer representative Rachael displayed a superb PowerPoint presentation which got a lot of attention, she had worked incredibly hard putting it together over the past few months. It showed all the great things that we are doing, the things people enjoy about their service and displayed pictures of people working together.

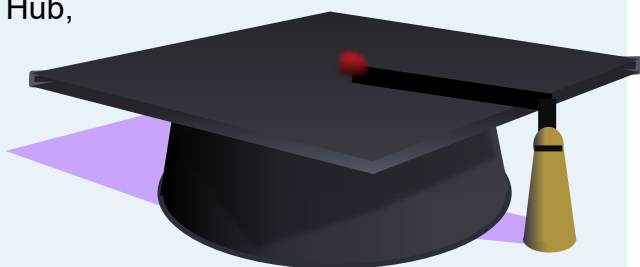
Really well done and thank you to everyone who came along to support the event.

## Diploma successes

**Jacqui O'Donovan**, support worker at Dereham Hub, has passed her Level 3 Lead Adult Care Worker Diploma with a Merit.

**Louise Burton**, Team Manager at Sprowston Hub, has passed her Level 4 Lead Practitioner in Adult Care.

Huge congratulations to you both!



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## Mayor opens the 'Market Place'

A Our PAS East team would like to thank the Mayor, Councillor Carl Annison, for his support in opening a new shop for customers at our Great Yarmouth Community Hub.

The 'Market Place' will be run by customers for customers and provide opportunities for learning and improving communication skills. Money raised through the shop will be used to fund a monthly movie club for the benefit of all customers at the Hub.

The shop is currently being stocked and donations of clothes, shoes, toiletries, craft materials etc (in useable condition) would be gratefully received. Give the team a call on 01493 650504 if you'd like to donate.

## Farewell to Robin

After six years as Service Manager at Dereham Community Hub, we said goodbye to Robin Ward on 6th June.

Robin received a fantastic assortment of gifts, including a striking 80's retro wig, quirky glasses, and a classic moustache—all of which suited him perfectly. Colleagues and customers joined together, signing and singing a heartfelt 'So Long, Farewell.'

Robin brought a great deal of experience to the Hub and, over time, gained just as much through his role, along with a real sense of accomplishment as manager. Robin: The IT Guy, The Man, The Myth, The Legend





# Rosewood's VE Day celebrations

A fabulous atmosphere and an amazing spread to celebrate the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day at Rosewood Community Hub.



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# Dereham's VE Day celebrations

Another fabulous 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary VE Day celebration took place at Dereham Community Hub. Everyone enjoyed a cream tea, followed by wartime music and a good old-fashioned singalong led by Claire and TAPS!

There was a pause at 3pm for everyone to listen to Winston Churchill's VE Day speech - at exactly the same time as 80 years ago. Wartime dress was optional but lots chose to dress up and made the day more authentic.



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# Attleborough's '40s tea dance

Attleborough was another Hub embracing the 1940s theme, this time with a tea dance. Customers and colleagues dressed up and enjoyed dancing to some band music of the period and, of course, partook of tea and cake!



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# Bank Holiday celebrations at *Waterden Close*

On a very sunny bank holiday afternoon Waterden Close held an open house. The housemates all invited their families, and we were delighted that everyone had someone who was able to come. Janet, in the hat, was particularly pleased to see her nephew Timmy who she didn't know was coming.

The housemates spent the morning getting their garden organised with tables and chairs and then waited for their guests to arrive. An afternoon of eating drinking and chatting followed, with many burgers, sausages and creamy deserts being eaten in the beautiful gardens. We received many compliments from families on a great afternoon.



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## Get in touch

We'd like to say a massive thank you to all the colleagues and customers who contributed to this edition of News Matters.

We love hearing from you, so if you've got a story to share, please get in touch.

Email [isabel.timms@independencematters.org.uk](mailto:isabel.timms@independencematters.org.uk)



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