

News Matters

Spring 2024

Independence
Matters

'the life you choose...'



INSIDE:

**Magical pony Tinks melts
customers' hearts on Hub visit**

Welcome to News Matters

Hello everyone and welcome to the Spring edition of News Matters.



What a wonderful season this is, it's one of my favourites as everything is waking up and there is a sense of fresh beginnings, trying new experiences and optimism. We are very lucky to have such amazing seasons and variety.

There is lots of variety within this edition of News Matters, so much happening and a real sense of purpose and energy flowing throughout.

It is such a privilege to do what we do and to be able to share in people's lives and be able to support individuals to feel valued and happy and part of society and communities.

Whether that is at Norfolk Industries, one of our Community Hubs, or being supported at home through Home Support Matters or our Personal Assistant services, there are stories within this edition that show the difference that we can make.

It makes me very proud of all of our customers and colleagues when I read the achievements, the stories and customer feedback. We all need a purpose and a reason to get out of bed in the morning.

We should all have a collective pride in ourselves and what we do each day and have FUN 😊.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Stock'.

Sarah Stock, Managing Director

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News in Brief



Congratulations to Andrea Waring at PAS South for completing her 10 years of service with IM!



On 29 February we said goodbye to an old friend when our rather large and very old Cyrus Price safe was removed from Dereham Hub. We don't know quite how old it is, but we can confirm it is very heavy!

It was taken away by local safe specialists and will free up some much-needed storage space in our Multi-Purpose Room which is currently being refurbished.

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FESTIVAL OF KNOWLEDGE



On 6 & 7 March, Independence Matters attended the Festival of Knowledge, a new skills and careers event organised by Norfolk Chambers of Commerce.

It was a great couple of days spent connecting with local businesses, speaking to potential new candidates and engaging with school students around the wonderful work we do at IM.

Both days were very successful with great conversations and our wonderful pink display proved very popular with the crowd 😊. A big thank you to Natasha Wilson-Gotobed, Alison Pawley and Emily Lloyd for their support!



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Pony magic!

Back in February, customers at our Sproston Community Hub received a magical visit from [Spring Meadows Pony Parties](#).

Adorable party pony Tinkerbelle put a smile on everyone's faces with her sparkly outfit, and customers loved being able to hug her! Big thanks to Tinkerbelle's owner Kirstie for spreading so much joy!



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Easter Parade!

Dereham Hub's Easter bonnet competition was a close-run affair. Former colleague Ali helped with the tricky job of judging so many fabulous entries.

Congratulations go to first placed Michael (hat modelled by Shirley below), runner up Kim (below right) and 3rd placed Leah. A huge well done to everyone, you can view more lovely entries on the following pages.



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An Easter Feast!

Great Yarmouth Community Hub customers celebrated Easter with a raffle, Easter bonnet competition and afternoon tea on 28 March. Wow just look at that spread!!



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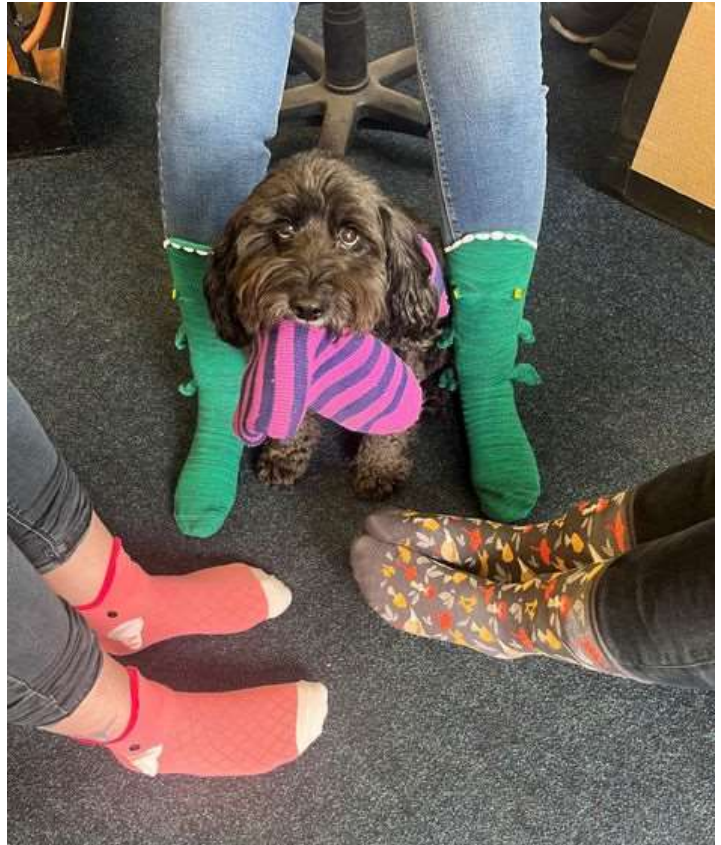
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Lots of Socks!

The team, including Libby, rocked their socks in support of World Down Syndrome Day on 21 March.

Did you know, WDSO takes place on the 21st day of the 3rd month to signify the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome.



Reuse and recycle

As you might expect we're big supporters of recycling here at Norfolk Industries. This salvaged display shelf came from our Ipswich Road Hub just before the doors were closed for the very last time and is now been put to good use displaying our products.

Reducing emissions for a better world

As a supplier to Pets at Home, Norfolk Industries has recently signed up to M2030. This is an online platform that measures, manages, and reduces scope 3 emissions (those produced by a company's suppliers).

Membership of M2030 is a requirement of our contract with Pets at Home and will assist us in reducing our carbon footprint.



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Our 2024 customer survey results

A big thank you to our customers for the fabulous feedback they provided on our 2024 survey!

100%

of respondents said **they'd recommend our products**

100%

of respondents said **the quality of our products was high or very high**

Over 83%

of respondents said they were **VERY likely to buy our products again** (100% said they would buy again)

Over 83%

of respondents said **we didn't need to do anything to improve our service**

100%

of respondents said **they enjoyed doing business with us as a brand**

Over 83%

of respondents said **our products offered above average or excellent value for money**



**NORFOLK INDUSTRIES
FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**

Part of *Independence Matters*

Emma's story

PAS customer Emma has been volunteering at a local museum thanks to lottery funded heritage project, Kick the Dust.

I have a keen interest in history, I'm lucky to live in a history rich county. I love to learn and find interesting facts out about the places I visit. I have been to many historic places in and around Norwich.

I went to Strangers Hall in the summer of 2022 for the first time. I was fascinated by all the changes in the building over the centuries and how you can still see lots of them today. I enjoyed speaking to the volunteers in each of the rooms, they were able to give me detailed information about the building and family that lived there.



I enjoyed my time at Strangers Hall so much I revisited in autumn of 2023, on my second visit I asked if it was possible for me to become a volunteer. As it was coming to the end of the season, I was invited to apply for the Kick the Dust programme.

I was accepted and attended the induction day. All the volunteers were shown how to use the equipment and safely clean and preserve the historic exhibits. The programme ran for four weeks, I could only do the Thursdays. I was able to use the backpack hoover on the windows. Use dry paint brushes on the display fake fruit and the floor hoover with mesh on it to clean the plates.

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I would like to do more Kick the Dust programmes in the other museums next year, and I am still looking for opportunities to do more volunteering at Strangers Hall when it opens to the public again.

Meanwhile, Emma has a recommendation for us all to go out and visit the beautiful historic places we have in Norfolk.

You can find out more and plan your next trip by visiting the [Norfolk Museums website](#).



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Working Together Group

We get our ID badges!

Over the past few months, we have been talking about and designing our new ID badges and lanyards.

We were all involved and had our say about how we wanted them to look.

We were so pleased to be given them and we now wear them with pride!



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In Safe Paws!



Working Together
Coordinator Maria caught her dog Toby taking time out from his nap to protect the WTG's lanyards.

He is proud to be the unofficial WTG Guard Dog and takes his duties very seriously!



Here's Hollyberry the rescue cat wearing their new WTG collar. Could they become the groups unofficial mascot?! Thank you to owner Elly from Holt Hub for sending this in 😊

Just for fun

Does you share your WTG lanyard with your pet? If so, we would love to hear from you! [email Maria Bond](mailto:email@maria-bond.com)



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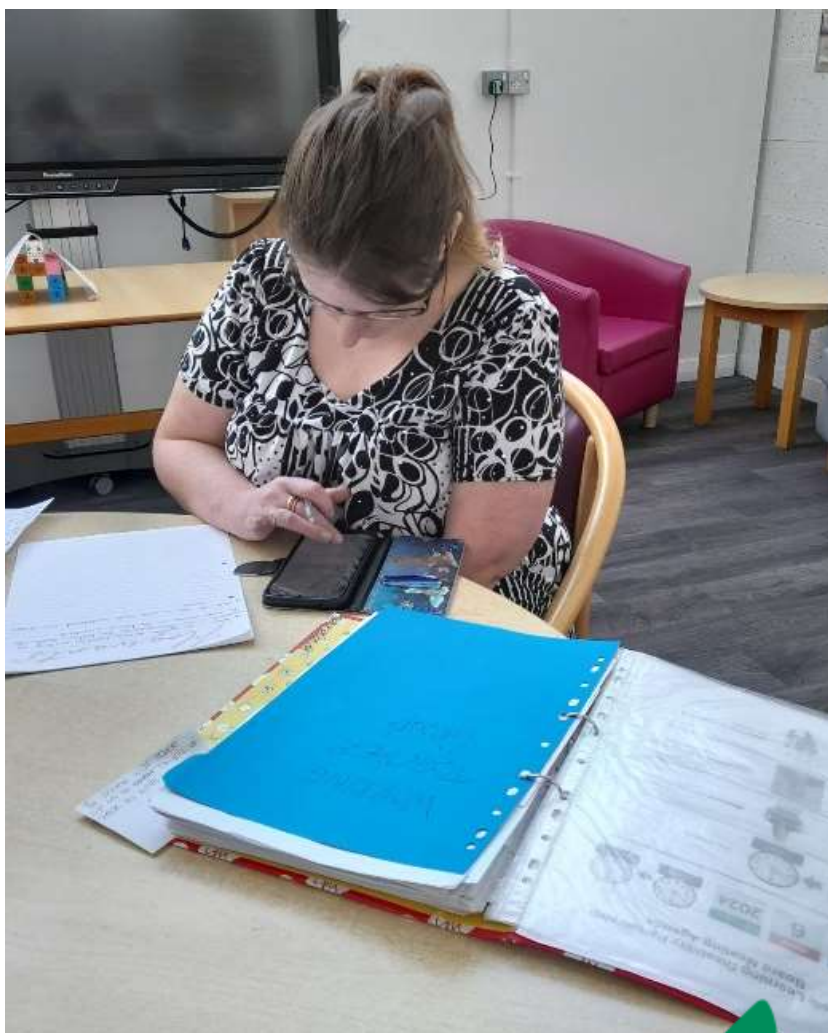
Rachael celebrates a great new achievement!

Working Together Group member Rachael is the Independence Matters Representative on the Norfolk Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Rachael recently applied to be a member of another Norfolk-wide Board. It is called the 'Making It Real' Norfolk Board and it works in the same way as our Working Together Groups.

Rachael applied to become a member because she is passionate about people having their voices heard. She wanted to continue her work and share her skills to support the Board with their co-production (working together) activities.

Rachael and Working Together Coordinator Maria met to work on interview skills and do some preparation before the interview.



Studying hard Interview ready



Maria is very pleased to announce that the hard work paid off, Rachael was successful at the interview and offered a position on the Board!

Exceptional work Rachael, really well done!!

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A bit about the Board...

The Making it Real Board is an independent group made up of people with disabilities and unpaid carers. Their slogan is 'Serious About Co-Production'.

They work with partners, including Norfolk County Council and the local NHS, to support the needs of people with disabilities and help to make services work better for everyone.

Making it **Real** Norfolk



It's all work... and a little bit of fun!

Rachael decides to take a break from our interview skills coaching to 'pose' for the camera by sticking her tongue out.

She thought it was very funny until she was caught in action!!



Working Together Group

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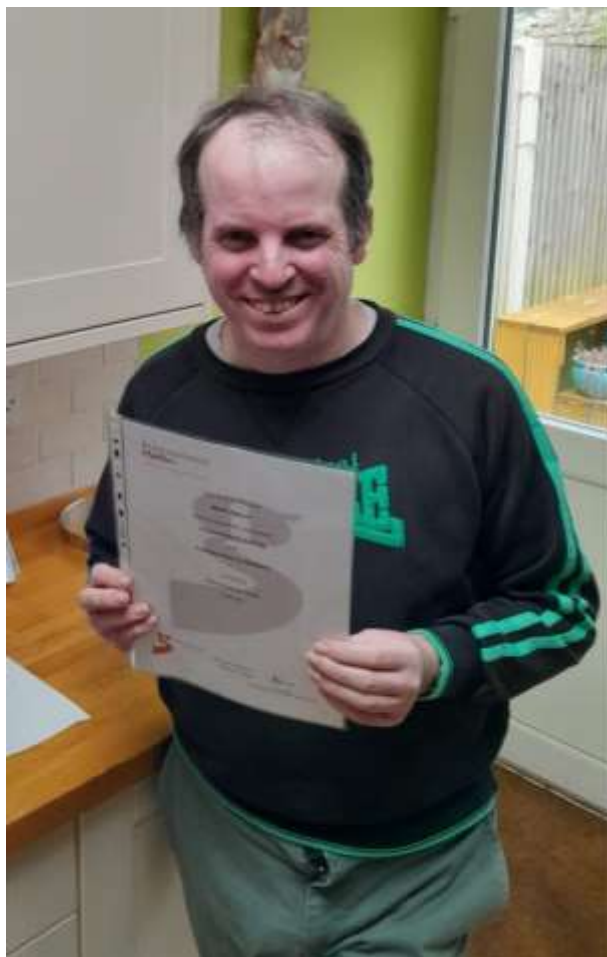
Gateway learning a success for Mark!

Congratulations to PAS East customer, Mark, who has worked with support and encouragement from his support team to complete Gateway Assured Life Skills modules LS3 Practical Maths and LS4 Information Computer Technology.

Your family, support workers and everyone at IM PAS East are proud of the learning you have achieved and the great amount of effort along with hard work you have had to put in.

Through the skills and confidence learnt you are now able to plan and cook the family meal once a week. We will save that story for another newsletter - so watch this space.

Well done Mark!



A special gift for Holt

Holt Hub have received this wonderful homemade gift (left) from a customer and his parents for all of us to enjoy. Such a kind and thoughtful gesture – thank you! It is taking pride of place in our front garden.



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Emma's first ever visit to the salon

Customer Emma has always had her hair cut by her mum at home but would like to become more independent and live on her own, so decided to try something new.

With support I found a kind hairdresser at Headlines in Attleborough. I first visited and was introduced to Mel the hairdresser who showed me round and told me what she would do and what to expect. We talked about the different types of appointments I could book. I choose a dry cut for my first time.

As I arrived at the salon, I was anxious, excited and nervous. The salon was noisy from the hairdryers and the smell from the chemicals from people having their hair dyed was new. Mel was very kind and calm and took her time with me while cutting my hair. I only had a little off the ends. I was pleased I had done it and booked in again for a wash cut and blow-dry next time.



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I was still a little anxious about the process on my second visit but once we got started, I felt a little more at ease.

It felt strange to have someone else wash my hair. I sat well for my hair to be dried and cut and this time I had a bit more cut off.

My hair felt so soft and looked very shiny. I was watching someone have their hair curled with the heating irons. I asked Mel if I could have that done next time, Mel said yes and booked me a longer appointment. I am enjoying trying new things.



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Faro Lodge customers Nigel and Susan took a trip out to Costa Coffee for lunch.

Nigel also helped Faro get ready for Valentine's day and gave colleague Lisa a lovely rose.



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Card design winners!

Stakeholder Director Sylvia took time out in the new year to present prizes to our Christmas and Thank You card winners who we hadn't managed to visit in December.



Lillian at William Day Centre pictured with Sylvia and manager Sherralyn



David well done - we hope you enjoy your new home



Tom - wishing you every success at residential college



Karen at Crossroads



Tabby at Caister

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Daisy's gets 5 stars

Daisy's Café at Dereham Hub recently had an inspection from Breckland Council Environmental Health, resulting in a fantastic 5-star Food Hygiene Rating.

Following its closure during the pandemic, the café is now back to being open three days a week and offers a selection of hot food.

On Tuesdays it serves bacon and fish finger sandwiches, egg 'n' bacon baps and the Hub's own take on the egg 'n' pattie cheese McMuffin. On Thursdays and Fridays, it offers a hot home cooked lunch that varies from delicious hotpots to a selection of pasta meals.

The customers have also introduced freshly made fruit pots which have been going down well. Everybody enjoys working in Daisy's Café and receive a free meal for their hard work.



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Customers contribute to Keeping Safe report

Customers in King's Lynn attended a workshop in the town held by Opening Doors. It was all about keeping safe and what people want from the Police to help them keep safe in their community.

Each question was answered in the form of an activity, for example filling an empty street scene with hazards and suggestions, using stars to pick the three top priorities and emoji stickers to show how they felt about the Police and how confident they would be speaking with them.



The information gathered will be used in a report for Norfolk County Council and the Police Commissioner of Norfolk.

The seven attendees really enjoyed themselves and are looking forward to doing the next workshop on health and wellbeing later in the spring.



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It's a jungle out there!!

Customers at Holt Community Hub have been working on a Jungle Project as part of their Gateway learning, creating animals from different materials to put together a display in the Hub.

The project has brought everyone together with customers happy just to come in and get on with making bits to add to the scene! It has tested their problem-solving skills as they've had to decide what to use to create certain parts of each of the animals, including rubber gloves for crocodile feet and corks for giraffe horns.



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The project has also helped build confidence and improve social skills as everyone helps each other and chats about what they are making, as well as allowing them to spend time doing something they really enjoy.



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Dignity Action Day

nominations

Home Support Matters recognised Dignity Action Day by asking customers to nominate the care/support workers who excel at offering dignity and respect on each care visit.

Our brilliant colleagues nominated by customers

Maria Carvalho

Kerry Smith

Ana De Matos

Angela Harper

Angelo Lopez

Claire Spreadbury

Angela Harper

Michelle Roberts

Louise Ferguson

Natasha Roberts

Grant Thorley

Hazel Jackson

Leigh Combstock

Joanne Selwood

Sandy Peens

Rachel Pocock

Peter Boorman

Carol Bassett

Paula Whiley

Suzanne Mason

Linda Scott

Stephanie Driver

Aisha Fisher

Amber Berry

Marie Ball

Allan Barsby

Tina Stammers

Julie Peacock

Danielle Woods

Angela King

Our care worker is a lovely person. She's hard working and always pleasant and kind.

My mum loves her care workers and doesn't know what she would do without them.

Our care worker is an angel, she is amazing, very supportive.

My care worker is very obliging, nothing is too much trouble, and they deserve this accolade.

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Home Support
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We're here because we care



My husband has advanced Alzheimer's but only recently began receiving care from anyone other than myself, so it is a very new and strange experience for us both. Our two care workers treat my husband with dignity and respect and are professional. We never feel rushed even though I appreciate they are on a tight schedule.

They are always cheerful and chatty, talking to us both whilst providing care. They always remember the little details like my husband's football team and little sayings he repeats. If my husband is confused and a little worried about what is happening the care workers mention 'Millwall' or the boxing and it puts him more at ease.

Both care workers use a tone of voice with my husband that is both calming and reassuring. This continues throughout them assisting him to shower and settling him afterwards. I too enjoy our chats, as sometimes they are the only other people I see in a day. Being a fulltime carer is tiring and lonely at times. I wasn't sure how I would cope handing over my husband's care to someone else but I have no worries or concerns leaving my husband in their capable hands.



I'd like to nominate our care workers for their friendliness, their care and the way they interact with my wife, to bring her contact with women again which she loves. I feel warmth in their job and personal care. Thank you for excellent care.



Our care worker has been wonderful. She always comes in with a smile on her face, makes us feel happy and makes us laugh. She shows great empathy towards us using her personal experience of disability to deliver an excellent experience for us every time she provides care. She goes above and beyond. If she's having a bad day we wouldn't know as she leaves this behind at the front door!



My care worker assists me to maintain a maximum level of independence, she listens to me and offers me good support.



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New Registered Manager joins HSM

In January Home Support Matters welcomed new Registered Manager, Jessica Wilson, who brings over 26 years' experience in the care industry. She told us:

"I starting my career as a Care Worker and have since worked in various roles including coordinating, training, and recruitment before progressing to being a Registered Manager. I feel that this has given me key knowledge to be a supportive and proactive manager. My main experience is in domiciliary care, although also have some experience in housing with care and day care services.

"I have a real passion for quality care delivery and want to raise the profile of care and everything about it. I am excited to undertake the new challenge and learn about how HSM operate. Everyone has been very welcoming and supportive toward me and I am keen to take on new challenges with the HSM team!"



Angela's charity wing walk

Home Support Matters care worker Angela King is taking up a challenge to recognise a milestone birthday. She will be doing a wing walk to raise funds for Suffolk charity, St Elizabeth Hospice.

The Hospice delivers care to those living with a progressive or life-limiting illness and annually cares for over 4,000 patients annually and their families throughout East Suffolk, Great Yarmouth and Waveney.

Angela works for HSM in the Lowestoft area and this is a charity close to her heart.

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Hub's School Visit

As part of Working in Partnership, Dereham Hub's Studio Gang spent an afternoon with pupils at the Fred Nicholson School. The session provided insight into how post-18 learning could be continued through the Hub using our Gateway Accredited Learning Programme.

Pupils were shown the Gateway learning video and customers explaining a little about what they enjoyed about Gateway. After this there was an opportunity to mix in groups and take part in an activity aimed at getting to know each other.

The Gang enjoyed teaming up with the pupils and the session was very successful. Everyone involved has agreed to keep the Partnership going, with plans for the next visit to be at the Hub and do some planting together.

Feedback from the school has also been positive, they said everyone who attended enjoyed talking to our customers and would like to do it again!



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Valentine's day crafting

These lovely Valentine's creations are all being made with love by customers at Crossroads Community Hub. ❤️



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TAPS wildlife blog

Hello everyone, Wildlife Watchers are back with a new blog. We're starting to see the first signs of spring in the air here at Dereham! Our pairs of blackbirds have had their first brood, we have seen a large fledgling being fed by both parents. We're sure there'll be more.



Some birds such as robins start nest building as early as January, and long tailed tits in early February. Magpies can start November and pigeons can be anytime. But most of our garden\woodland birds start in March\April, including dunnocks, bluetits, great tits, greenfinch, and chaffinch to name a few. We have shared some of Claire's photos so that you can look out for them in your gardens and on woodland walks.



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Insects also started to appear in March. We've seen the odd bumble bee around as well as some butterflies (brimstone, holly blue and a red admiral) and some flies. In late March hedgehogs will have been waking up from their long sleep, and bats will follow early April. Badgers don't hibernate but spend more time underground in the colder months.

We're looking forward to seeing more baby birds, also the return of more butterflies and dragonflies. We will be making a moth trap but don't worry, they don't harm the moths, they fly into the light, then settle in the trap where we can get a closer look before releasing them.



Claire was excited to meet Hamza Yassin at the science festival in Norwich, where he did a very interesting talk about his wildlife photography and film work. He signed a picture for TAPS which now has pride of place on our wall, alongside Chris Packham and Michaela Strachan. He also signed Claire's copy of his book *Be a Birder*, which is a lovely little book about his life and over 50 birds.



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Most people know Hamza from winning Strictly Come Dancing 2022, but we all know and love him for his wonderful wildlife photography \ camera work and Countryfile. Claire said he was a very nice, friendly, lovely, knowledgeable man, and really enjoyed the talk.



We are spending some time at the end of our wildlife sessions reading a book called Wonderland, a Year of Britain's Wildlife, while googling the photos of each day. A nice end to our day!

We have lots of trips out planned this year and went on our first one at the end of March to one of our favourite places: NWT Cley & Salhouse Marshes. While there we were lucky enough to see an exhibition of the work of Robert Gilmore who lived in Cley from 1998 and produced lots of artwork from his time there.



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This brings us to the end of our blog, enjoy the new life and wildlife as we enter our favourite season. We'll leave you with some more of Claire's fabulous photos including these shots of a kingfisher taken at Cley.

Until next time, keep watching wildlife and help where you can. If you've any queries of wildlife in your garden, take a picture and we'll try to identify it for you!

Best wishes, Lucie, Jasmine, Tim, Stephen, Mark, Justin, Helen And Claire



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Independence Matters Dementia Services

Winnie's Story

We would like to introduce you to Winnie. Winnie attends Independence Matters dementia service at Costessey in Norwich and would like you all to know what she enjoys about the service.

Winnie said "It is a lovely friendly place where you can get involved in activities of your choice.

"There are staff to support you and the company of other people who you can make friends with.

"I enjoy doing the quizzes, playing bingo, chatting about what is in the news and having lunch/refreshments with everyone.

"I am looking forward to going into the garden and planting crops and flowers."



Could you or someone you know benefit from our dementia day care service?

Please come and join us, we would love to meet you!

Contact Rachel on 07432 052289.



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