

Welcome to our Christmas edition

Note to self; get a new photo for the next 2022 edition! 😊



It's been another strange 12 months, challenging and exhausting for all of us with COVID-19 reaching its peak during the months of January to June, living through the various lockdowns, before the vaccination programme worked its magic.

Each of us has had to be incredibly resilient and resourceful as we live alongside Covid and all that it brings. Its like the gift that just won't stop giving... but not in a joyous way! Unlike, this festive edition of News Matters which we hope will bring you joy and hope; its packed full of lovely articles and pictures from across the Group.

We have lots to be thankful of and optimistic for and our wonderful customers and families keep us all focused on what is really important in life and that is each other and relationships.

Christmas can be a difficult time and the best gift you can give anyone is a call to check in with them, to see how they are. It doesn't cost anything, only a few minutes of kindness.

I do hope that each of you will be spending time with your loved ones this year and on behalf of all of us at Independence Matters and Home Support Matters, we wish you a healthy and hope filled New Year.

Sarah Stock, Managing Director
Independence Matters Group

Cheers to Adnams for supporting our beer

The Brewery at our Ipswich Road Community Hub has been successfully selling its Festive Ale in the run up to Christmas.

In addition to selling direct from the Hub, sales had a welcome boost when Brewery founder, Bill, made a visit to the Camel pub in London's Bethnal Green. The pub is known for its beer - and when its owner tried a bottle of the Festive Ale she promptly put in an order. The difficulty came in getting two boxes of bottled beer delivered to London at a sensible price.

With courier charges quoted at £265, Bill approached Adnams, who supply the pub and offered to help straight away. Adnams were able to deliver the Festive Ale to the Camel on 8th December where it's now being enjoyed by their customers.

Sadie from Adnams said: "We were really pleased to be able to help in a very small way to support the great work Equal Brewery are doing".



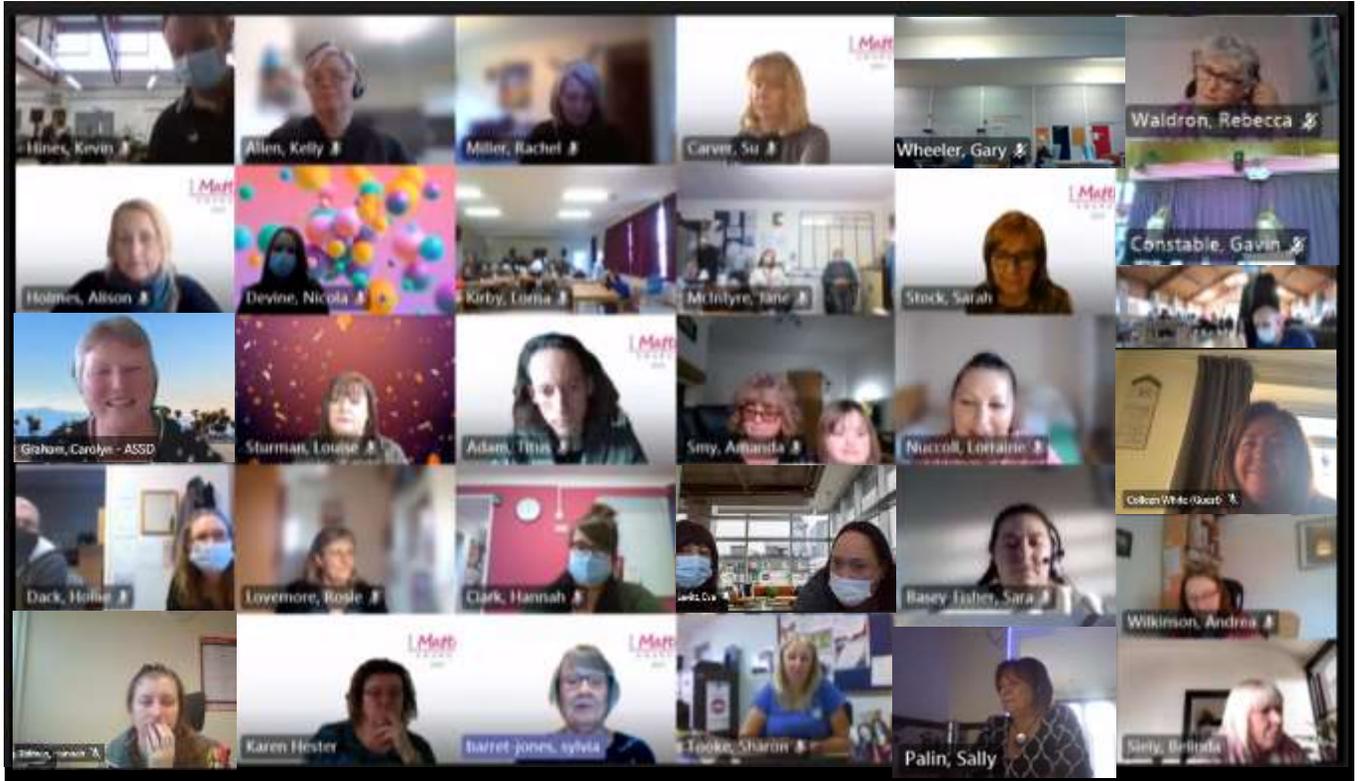
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2021

I Matter

AWARDS



After a year's absence due to the pandemic, our I Matter Awards made a welcome return in 2021.

The Awards recognise the skill, knowledge and dedication of colleagues and teams across the Independence Matters Group.

We received some amazing nominations across three categories and, for the first time, the shortlisted entries were judged by Board members Karen Hester, Titus Adam and Sylvia Barrett-Jones.

Our Awards Ceremony on 18th November took place via Teams, with over 50 individuals and groups joining the call to hear the winners announced.

This was a brilliant turnout and, whilst it was not what we would have wished, holding the event online definitely enabled more people to be 'present in the room'.

Congratulations go to our winners and a massive 'well done' to everyone who was shortlisted – thank you for your contribution, you are all superstars.

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2021

I Matter

A W A R D S

2021 winners

Chair's Choice Award

Colleen White, Care Worker, Home Support Matters - nominated for stepping in at the height of the pandemic to provide cover at a reablement unit in north Norfolk after the patients, staff and cleaning crew tested positive for Covid. She put other's needs and safety before her own, caring for some very ill Covid positive patients.

Support Service Awards

Sally Palin, HSM Quality Manager - nominated for responding to customer concerns by creating a new feedback system for people using the Norwich Night Rapid Response service.

IM Learning & Development Team - nominated for their extensive combined knowledge, professionalism, resilience in the face of change, adaptability, willingness to seek and respond to feedback, and for putting colleagues at the heart of everything they do.

Frontline Care Team Award

Floating Support City - nominated for their professionalism, dedication and continuing to deliver support to customers through the worst of the pandemic.

Frontline Care Individual Awards

Lynn Stephenson, Service Manager Hub Services West - nominated for supporting the wellbeing of colleagues and customers during the pandemic, providing emotional and physical support that held the teams together during an exceptionally challenging time.

Suesette Smith, Support Worker Ipswich Road Community Hub - nominated for her positive upbeat approach and determination to ensure her customers get the very best service. She is a great listener and communicator who inspires trust and confidence in the people she supports.

Tina Connor-Saunders & Shirley Watton, Team Managers, Dereham Community Hub - nominated for being reliable, committed, capable and resilient, and for working tirelessly, during exceptionally difficult circumstances, to keep their teams work effectively and flexibly, and the Hub growing and developing, during the pandemic.

We look forward to our winners receiving their trophies in the new year, when we hope to be able to present them in person.

A huge thank you to everyone who nominated a colleague or colleagues.
[Follow this link to see a full list of the nominees in all the categories.](#)

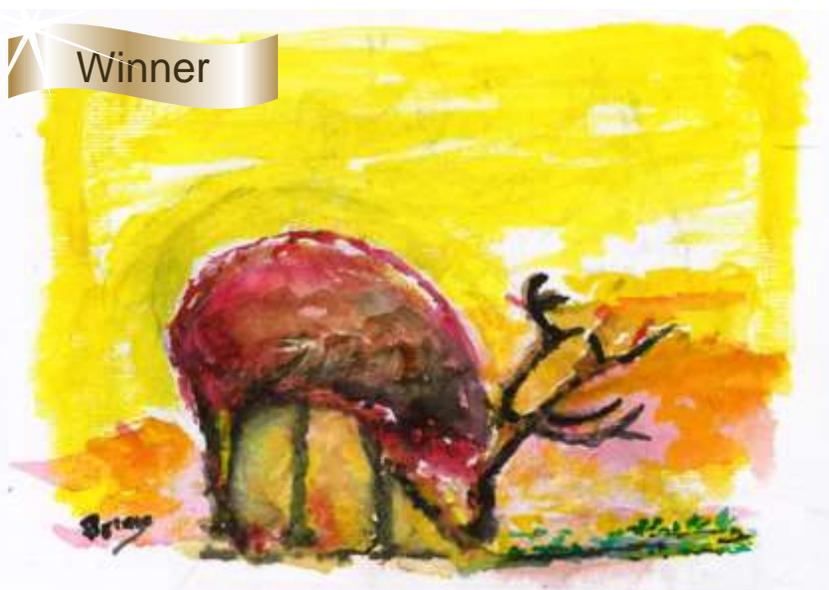
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Our 2021 Christmas Card Competition

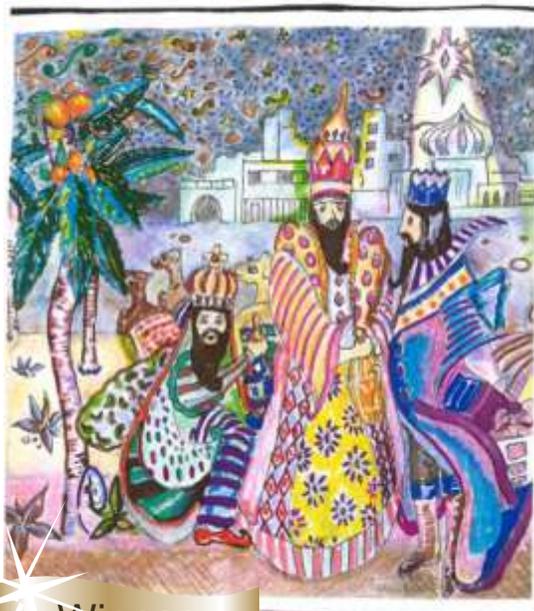
Thank you to all the customers across our services who entered our 2021 Christmas card competition. We had lots of terrific entries and loved looking through them all.

Customers from Holt Hub and our Stakeholder Board judged the entries and selected the winners. They had a really difficult job but agreed on three winners who each receive a £50 prize and feature on our company Christmas cards.



Brian Beales at Harford Hill painted this reindeer which everyone loved and was used on our Independence Matters card.

Dereham Hub customers Tracy, Leslie, Duncan, Elizabeth, Paul and Deborah from Dereham Hub from Merle Boddy House created this fabulous collage tree which features on our cover and was used for our Stakeholder Christmas card.



This lovely artwork from Home Support Matters winner Glenn John Hazell which featured on their card. Glenn is pictured receiving his prize from Care Delivery Director, Su Carver.



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Countdown to Christmas

With so many lovely entries we once again published our popular advent calendar on [our Facebook page](#).

Our 24 'Countdown to Christmas' images are also published here – congratulations to everyone whose artwork was chosen to be featured.



1 Melissa, Dereham Community Hub

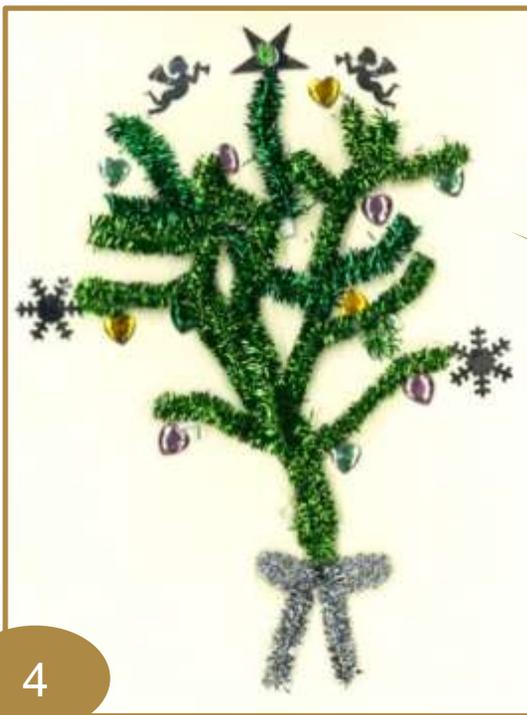


2 Paul, Ipswich Road Community Hub



3

Lauren,
Ipswich Road
Community
Hub



4

Barbara, William Day Centre

5

Ben, Ipswich Road Community Hub



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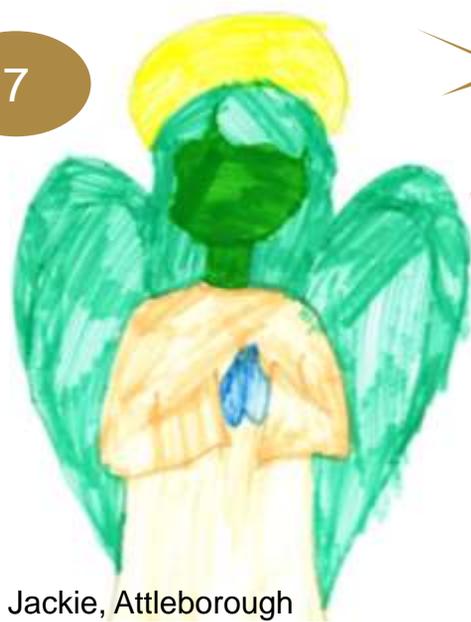
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6



Dorothy, Rosewood Community Hub

7



Jackie, Attleborough Community Hub

8



Lyndsey, Ipswich Road Community Hub

9



Shirley, Dereham Community Hub

10



Sandra, Harford Hill Community Hub

11



Lewis, Dereham Community Hub

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Bonnie, Sprowston Community Hub

13



14

William, Rosewood Community Hub



12

Jane, Ipswich Road Community Hub



Kim, Dereham Community Hub

15



16

Vicky, Dereham Community Hub



Pamela, William Day Centre

17



18

Lesley, Great Yarmouth Community Hub

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19

Jackie, Rosewood
Community Hub

20

Jonathan, Holt
Community Hub



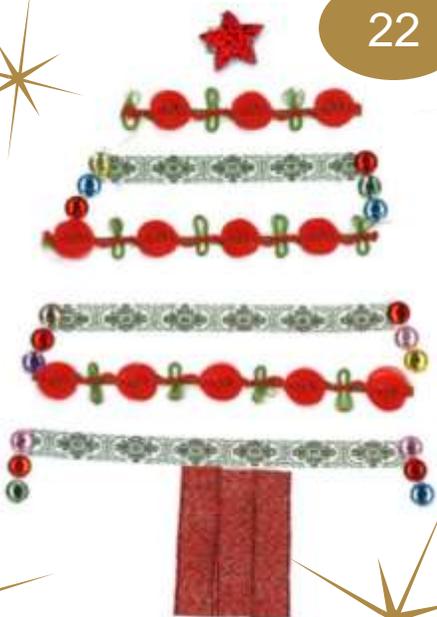
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Darren,
Harford Hill
Community
Hub



22

Edith, William
Day Centre



23

Stephen,
Dereham
Community Hub



24

John, Sprowston
Community Hub



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Getting in the Christmas spirit

Clockwise from right: some fabulous Christmas craftwork done by our colleague Dawn Gowthorpe.

Dereham colleague Ali busy transforming her office into it's annual Christmas grotto.

The decorated entrance to Crossroads Hub complete with customer artwork. The stage display at Holt Community Hub complete with the seven dwarfs – can you recognise anyone?!



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Our 12 Days of Christmas to sing and sign with Eyebrow Arts

Join Dot to sing and sign along to the 12 Days of Christmas with words by the Studio Gang at Dereham Hub.

[Click here to view the video on Vimeo](#)

12



Christmas trains

11



Jingling bells

10



Bobble hats

9



People laughing

8



Films on telly

7



People drinking

6



Christmas jumpers

5



Christmas trees

4



People eating

3



Heavy bags

2



Christmas beards

1



And the snow falling down on me

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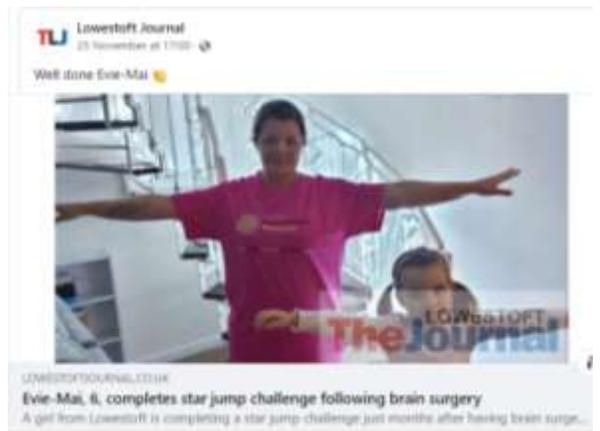
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Chloe's Star Jump Challenge

Field Care Supervisor Chloe Smith and her daughter Evie-Mai featured in the Lowestoft Journal, taking part in a challenge to complete 100 star jumps daily in aid of Brain Tumour Research.

The charity is close to their hearts as Evie-Mai has been receiving treatment for a brain tumour diagnosed earlier in the year. The past months have been challenging and worrying times for them both and everyone at Home Support Matters is incredibly proud of them.



Baby joy for HSM couple

We'd like to thank Sarah Jervis and Andrew Thurtle for sharing this lovely photo of their newborn baby boy, Braiden Thurtle. Perfect timing for our Christmas edition!

Braiden arrived on 11th November at 3.14am and both parents are HSM employees. Andrew is HSM's System & Data Manager and Sarah is a Care Worker in Lowestoft.

We'd like to send the whole the family, including Braiden's five siblings, our best wishes for the most fabulous first Christmas together.

Happy 3rd Anniversary HSM

Colleagues celebrated HSM's third anniversary in December, sending a bouquet of flowers to Care Delivery Director, Su Carver (right), in appreciation for her leadership and support.



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Engagement Roadshows get colleagues talking

Home Support Matters held informal drop in sessions for employees during November and December, with events at Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Beccles. Colleagues were invited to meet the management team for an informal chat over tea and cake.

Hosted by Care Delivery Director Su Carver, Registered Branch Manager Kelly Allen, Assistant Manager Claire Pilkington, Quality Manager Sally Palin, and Human Resources Advisor Sara Basey-Fisher, the sessions gave everyone an opportunity to reflect on the past 18 months and how HSM has responded to the changing guidelines and business challenges created by the pandemic.

Colleagues were also encouraged to share their successes and best practice with the team. Paul from the Enhanced Home Support Service, who attended the Norwich session, had recently completed a level 2 Mental Health Awareness course and his colleague a level 1 in Mental Health Awareness.



Along with other members of the EHSS team, they are now looking to complete a Mental Health First Aid course. It was also encouraging to receive positive feedback regarding the training and coaching team, Hannah Twaite and Fiona Sinclair, with Care Workers stating how supportive the coaching element of the role has been for new starters. This is fantastic to hear and shows that the recent review of the induction process is making a difference.

Feedback from the sessions has been really positive and the management team appreciated being able to hear first-hand from Care Worker colleagues, listen to their concerns and take action where appropriate.

Well done to Care Worker Adam

HSM Care Worker Adam Edwards dreamt of playing football for Norwich City when he was growing up, but says he now does 'the next best thing'.

Adam recently completed his TQUK Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of the Mental Health Worker (RQF) and says; "It's provided me with a better understanding of the mental health issues that some of our clients may be trying to cope with, and has given me advice on resources to access that can support those who are dealing with mental health issues."



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A big thank you to Clare's mum

Colleague Clare at Holt Community Hub wrote to us with this lovely story about her amazing mum, Jan.



My lovely mum Jan Bates from Gorleston handmade hundreds of cards for local charities throughout the entire lockdown. Apart from keeping herself busy she wanted to help key workers at the local hospital, who were working hard to keep us safe and care for those who sadly contracted Covid-19.

Mum asked her neighbours via Facebook to kindly donate non-perishable food items to send to A&E and after a few days a large delivery was made. This refuelled her love for helping others and Mum then asked me if our customers required anything at our Hub. After a short discussion she decided to buy some personal care items. A lovely kind gesture for sure.

One of our lovely customers handmade a card which was sent back thanking her for the kind donation. This inspired Mum to handmade 150 cards for us to sell in our shop when we are ready to open it again. That was not the end of it, she also provided us with a large bundle of shop bought cards for us to use for customer birthdays. If that wasn't enough she has now decided to continue making beautiful cards for us to sell throughout the year."



And thank you to Jason

We'd also like to say a big thank you to Holt customer and blogger, Jason, for keeping us entertained with regular blog updates over the last 12 months. We're looking forward to joining him for more adventures in 2022.



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A winter holiday for Horace

Earlier in December, colleagues at Church Green Lodge spotted a hedgehog wandering in the garden. He looked too small to be out and about so they put him safely in a box and called Hallswood Animal Sanctuary for advice. They recommended he was fed scrambled egg (which he very much enjoyed) and customer Vincent, who was staying at the lodge, named him Horace Hogglesworth.

Vincent accompanied Horace on his journey to Hallswood, holding him on his lap to keep him safe. The sanctuary will keep Horace safe and warm through the winter and feed him up, so that in April he can be released back home at Church Green Lodge. Happy hibernation Horace, we look forward to seeing you again in the spring!



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A festive report from our TAPS wildlife watchers



Hello everyone, it's the TAPS wildlife team here. We hope you're all ready for the festive season and thought we'd share some info about the UK's favourite bird and a true Christmas icon - the robin.

Easily recognisable with their distinctive colouring, males and females look the same, but young robins are spotted with golden brown, getting their redbreast as they mature.

Despite their cute appearance they're very territorial and quick to drive away other birds on their patch. They can also become very tame and we're lucky to have regulars at our table who will come and look in the door if the feeders are low.

We now have a weekly sightings board which we change according to our visitors. Our most common are; bluetits, great tits, robins and dunnocks.

Last week we made some suet cakes to help them through the winter. Big thanks go to Adam (right) who made us another feeding table to attract more birds.



The robin is a favourite with everyone in the group who have done some wonderful artwork of them along with their favourite birds and why. Team member Jasmine is making her own illustrated book of birds and wildlife where she will be adding information on each species.

We also made our own version of the 12 days of Christmas, changing it to birds, which was fun and included the group's favourites.

Robins are a common garden bird, there are approx. 6,700,000 of them in the UK. Their numbers increase during winter when robins from Scandinavia, Russia and Europe migrate to join our resident birds.

Robins are the only garden bird to sing throughout winter. They will also sing at night-time next to streetlights.

Robins feature on Christmas cards because in the Victorian era posties wore red uniforms and were nicknamed 'robins'.

Robins are said to be the spirit of a loved one, hence the saying; "When robins appear, loved ones are near".

We've not caught much wildlife on our camera recently, but members have been spotting some in their daily lives. Mark and Claire have seen roe deer and we also have our grey squirrels at the Hub. So until next time, have a lovely Christmas and keep watching wildlife and help where you can

Jasmine, Helen, Tim, Lucie, Craig, Stephen, Justin, Mark and Claire XX

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Our favourite birds

Clockwise from left:

Stephen drew these two **robins** and likes them because they remind him of Christmas. **Mark** loves **eagles** because they're very big and have huge wings. **Helen** likes **robins** because they're bossy and funny. **Justin's** favourites are **snowy owls** because they remind him of Harry Potter. **Craig** drew this **bluetit** feeding on the bird table and likes them because they're cute. **Jasmine** loves **spectacled owls** and would like to meet and hold one.



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The two lovely drawings are by TAPS team member Jasmine and are from an illustrated book of birds and wildlife that she is making. blackbird pages.



Our 12 birds of Christmas

On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love sent to me 12 woodpeckers pecking, 11 wrens a singing, ten barn owls hooting, nine bluetits pipping, eight eagles flying, seven osprey fishing, six magpies chatting, five greenfinch, four great tits, three blackbirds, two collared doves and a robin in a fir tree.



How to make our suet bird cake

What you'll need

- Suet or lard
- Bird seeds, nuts and sunflower hearts
- Mixing bowl and spoon
- Yogurt or dessert pots
- String
- Ice cube tray

How to make

- Make a hole in the yogurt/dessert pot, thread the string through the hole and tie a knot.
- Soften/melt the suet gently in a jug or bowl.
- Add the seeds and mix together, when mixed put inside the pots or ice cube tray for smaller treats.
- Put in the fridge for a couple of hours to set.
- Remove from the pots/ice cube tray and hang out for the birds to enjoy.



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Hub gives wildlife a helping hand

A project started in the autumn to provide wildlife habitats in the grounds of one of our Hubs has already proved a success.

The Studio Gang started work in early November building three purpose made houses with the aim of attracting hedgehogs into the area for feeding, shelter, and hopefully, re-population.

The homes were installed in the grounds on 9th November, Prickleback Lodge is near the summerhouse under Birdbox Tree with Red Shade Hotel located further into the field away from the building.

The third house, Tiggywinkle Towers, has been given to the TAPS group as a thank you for their help and knowledge in the studying of wildlife.

Cat food, water and a bed of straw were put inside each of the houses and the food quickly began disappearing – but who was eating it? The Hub's spy camera was called in to capture the action at Prickleback Lodge. Check out the next page to see who has been visiting!



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Everyone welcome at Prickleback Lodge!

The spy camera at Prickleback Lodge and has taken some brilliant photos which reveal exactly who has been visiting!

The good news is that Lodge has proved extremely popular and the target audience has been reached - although it's impossible to tell if the hedgehog is the same one or if there are several visiting at different times.

Meanwhile though, several other cheeky visitors have been checking out the facilities and helping themselves to the food, including an inquisitive muntjac, a squirrel and a local cat. We love the look on the muntjac's face (does he realise he's caught on camera? 😊)



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Wishing you all a Merry Christmas



Great news for Norfolk Industries

Norfolk Industries has secured two new packing contracts in the run up to Christmas. The first is with Haypigs! Who specialise in guinea pig specific products. We will be packing their Piggy Nom Noms for Amazon, initially doing around 200-300 per week, with a view to increasing this in 2022 when new flavours are released.

The second contract is with Pets Up, we will be packing their dog chew products and putting barcode stickers on them, and with an anticipated 30,000 units per month to complete that is guaranteed to keep us busy!

These are both contacts made through our trade show visits and we are delighted to be working with them.



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Report tells the story of our year 2020-21

Our latest Annual Report is available to read online and highlights what a tough year it was for us all.

We were challenged in many ways on both a professional and personal level, but as the report shows, the strength and resilience of our colleagues and customers shone through. The Independence Matters Board would like to say a HUGE THANK YOU to everyone for their collective effort.

Annual Report 2020-21



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[Click here to read our 2020-21 Annual Report](#)

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