

News Matters

Summer 2021

Independence Matters *'the life you choose...'*

Celebrating summer!



Welcome to News Matters



It was a pleasure to read this packed edition as there is so much to celebrate this summer; a stark contrast to 12 months ago. It is lovely to see such activity and energy throughout. Pine Lodge's makeover looks amazing and shows what teamwork can achieve!

There is definitely a theme of nature running throughout and being much more in tune with what is around us. Lots of growing of vegetables and maximising of outdoor spaces. Celebrating our bootiful county on Norfolk Day ☺

Although there are still challenges, the world does feel brighter and reading all the brilliant articles and seeing people together again makes me realise how much we have to be thankful for and how far we have all come together.

Everyone has adapted so well and been really creative in ensuring our support and services evolve. We have a lot of talented colleagues and customers; loving Brian's paintings, the amazing scarecrow video and Eyebrow Arts sessions. Technology continues to play an important part in keeping us all connected.

A massive well done to Richard for securing his cleaning job at Norfolk Industries, we are all proud of you! Congratulations also to all colleagues who have achieved new qualifications and our HSM Carers of the Month colleagues.

Great article on our colleague Felix from Home Support Matters and I will leave you with his words and hope you enjoy the rest of the summer; "Thank you guys; working with our customers is a privilege and an honour."

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

Sarah Stock, Managing Director, Independence Matters

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The making of Worzel

Our cover star, Worzel, was made by Dereham Hub's Studio Gang. Everybody in the group took part in the project putting their crafting skills to the test and recycling materials to great effect. Worzel was put in place by the vegetable patch and dressed with clothes kindly donated by the TAPS drama group.

Scary or not? Well, the pigeons don't seem too worried, but the veg is looking great so he must be doing a good job!

The Gang took a brilliant video showing how Worzel was made from start to finish and how everyone worked together to contribute to the project. You can view it here:

<https://vimeo.com/564689989/0b96d4f38a>

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Customers grow their own

Our Hubs have all been busy in the garden this summer, and customers in the Studio Gang are no exception. The group loves spending time outdoors tending to their vegetable plot and 'bionic' greenhouse, all under the watchful eye of our cover star, scarecrow Worzel.

They have lots of different plants and vegetables on the go, including sunflowers, onions, broad beans, strawberries, courgettes, cucumbers, tomatoes, runner beans – and their speciality 'wonky' carrots!



As well as learning about horticulture the group is also developing their culinary skills making use of their produce in the Hub's kitchen, creating everything from lemon balm tea to wonky carrot soup.

Later in the summer, they plan to try their hands at making chutney using their tomatoes, courgettes and onions, with the addition of apples from the Hub's orchard.

Healthy eating and the principles of a balanced diet are also a focus for the Gang, and they have created their own learning game that matches up food items with their food group, which is helping them to make healthier choices at mealtimes.



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Congratulations!

Well done to our latest group of newly qualified colleagues

Ludmila Agurjanova - Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Customer Service

Courtney Ward - Level 2 Certificate in Awareness of Mental Health Problems

Lisa Lambert - Level 2 Certificate in Awareness of Mental Health Problems

Sabrina Di Pasquale - Award in the Awareness of Dementia

Lynn Stephenson – Level 2 Certificate in LGBT Inclusion in the Workplace

Lena-Marie Armstrong – Level 3 Lead Adult Care Worker

Shirley Watton - Level 4 Certificate in Empowering and Aspiring Future Managers in Adult Care

Catherine Evans - Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management in Adult Care

Robin Ward - Level 5 Diploma in Adult Health and Social Care



Harford Hill customer is prolific painter

We just love this photo of new customer Brian, who brought in a collection of his watercolour paintings.

Team manager Rachel said: "We are all very impressed by his talent! We plan to support Brian to continue with his artwork while at Harford Hill."



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Job success for Richard

The team at Norfolk Industries is delighted that their long-term volunteer, Richard, has secured paid employment with local cleaning contractor Norse. They're equally pleased that he will be staying with them, as his new part time cleaning role is based at the Norfolk Industries factory in Norwich.

It's another step on the road to greater independence for Richard, who started his work placement with Norfolk Industries in September 2013. Over the years he's become a valued member of the team and made some good friends, he's also developed the confidence to live more independently and moved out of the house he shared with his parents.

Colleagues describe him as dedicated, happy and a pleasure to work alongside. And while his work placement role of Factory Operative covered a wide range of tasks, sweeping the factory floors was always a particular strength and one he was proud of, saying: "You could even eat your dinner off these floors!". So when the Norse cleaning role was advertised, he was keen to apply.



**NORFOLK INDUSTRIES
FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**
Part of *Independence Matters*



The team assisted him with his application and following a successful interview, Richard was offered the position. He started his paid employment on 4th May and is enjoying the opportunity to earn himself some money. Having been volunteering at the factory for almost eight years, he is "finding the job second nature".

Having paid employment is also a great confidence boost as he now says: "I feel like I have a purpose in life and I feel like a man." The team at Norfolk Industries echoed this saying he does a really good job and is extremely thorough.

General Manager, Sharon Tooke, said: "We supported Richard through the recruitment process and provided a glowing reference which he fully deserved. We cannot wait to see him develop in his new position for Norse, whilst he also continues to volunteer at Norfolk Industries."

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Home Support
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We're here because we care

A day in the life of support worker, Felix

I have worked for Home Support Matters for five and a half years supporting people with learning disabilities in their own homes. I live and work in Norwich, so it's a short drive to our customers' homes. I would rather cycle to work, but we always have trips to supermarkets, doctor's surgeries, leisure centres, and other activities on a daily basis, so having a car is essential.

I know our customers really well as I've been supporting the same people for five years, so I always know what their routine is on any particular day. It's reassuring for me to know exactly what to expect from my work day, as I'm sure it's also reassuring for our customers to know what to expect from their support worker. However, this offers no guarantee that every day is going to be free of surprises as you will see!

One such day, I arrived at the home of John and Matthew (not their real names) at 9am. John came running downstairs with watery eyes and, without even saying hello, he cried "Felix, we've had no electricity since you left last night!" Matthew also came down and said "My shower wasn't working. I had to take a strip wash!"

We look at the circuit box and restored the electricity, but one of the switches kept tripping, so I had to keep pushing it till it started working again.



Eventually, we were able to get an electrician who looked at the issue and found a problem with the circuit box.

Also in the morning, there was medicine administration for both gentlemen. I noticed that Matthew's fungal infection wasn't improving, so we called his doctor, who asked me to send pictures of the affected area. The doctor called back and advised him to extend his treatment for an additional seven days.

Next, I had to support Matthew to sort his weekly money into the different accounts: personal, housekeeping, bills, and holiday money. I also had to make an online payment on John's behalf.

Matthew had lost a ticket to an event that he was attending, so he asked me to call the organisers on his behalf, who told me that they would let him in without a ticket. Matthew was very happy to learn this. I then helped Matthew to make a practice telephone call from his mobile phone, but this didn't go too well as he is not very motivated to have a mobile. I also made a call to the leisure centre to book Matthew a swimming session for the next day.

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But enough talk about all the things that went wrong. In fact, John and Matthew do most things by themselves, sometimes with a bit of prompting and reminding. They take care of their own personal hygiene, they do the housework, cooking, laundry, gardening, and shopping.

When it comes to going out, I support them with booking activities and driving there, but they are able to choose what they want to do and they engage in it fully and independently. Apart from going to shops and restaurants, we practise lots of sports, such as football, basketball, tennis, swimming, bowling, crazy golf and hiking. I love to participate in all the activities with them, so sometimes I end up feeling quite exhausted after a week of sports!

I also have situations where I need to support our customers with their mental health issues and this is really important. Or comfort them after they've had a bad experience such as losing a loved one. Anything can happen and we need to be ready to respond in a professional way, always putting the customer first and liaising with their relatives, doctors, and the Home Support Matters office, as appropriate, so everyone involved in their care is kept in the loop.

This is certainly the most rewarding and healthy job I've ever had. Sometimes, when I'm walking my children to school, I tell them "I'm going on a bicycle ride today. And then, I'm playing tennis. And then, basketball. And then, we are having a big curry. And I'm getting paid for it! Aren't I lucky?"

Indeed, I am lucky to have a job that involves making people happy, safe and independent. But our customers also help me. They help me to understand some important things about human nature: I've learned that people can be happy in spite of complex disabilities and challenges; and I've learned that some people in the world, the people we support, are perfect in a very special way: they have a pure heart. They laugh with contagious laughter; they really love the people in their lives; and they look forward to tomorrow. So thank you, guys, working with you is a privilege and an honour.



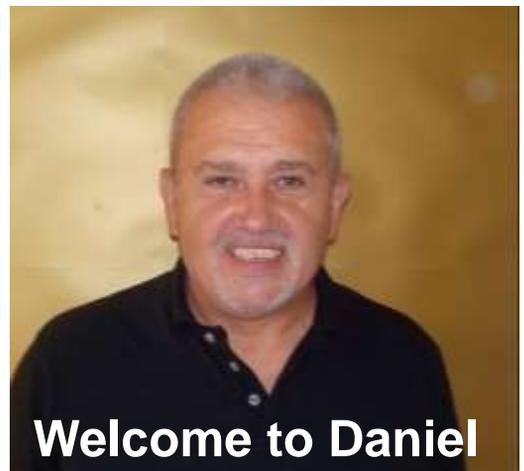
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Forza Italia!

It may not have been the result most of us were hoping for, but customer Massimo was very excited that Italy won the Euros. He is pictured celebrating at the Hub.



Welcome to Daniel

A warm welcome to our new Ipswich Road Caretaker Daniel Strainger. Daniel joins us following the departure of Roy, who recently retired after many years' service with us.



We 

EYEBROW ARTS

Over the course of the pandemic, Eyebrow Arts have been delivering specially commissioned creative sessions to our customers via Zoom.

Although a new experience to begin with, Zoom has become part of our everyday lives and it's great to see so many for our customers actively engaging in the sessions. Our Hub customers attend in their bubble groups and enjoy the interactivity and getting to know presenters Dot and Sorrel.

The latest run ended in July with a session exploring the power of imagination. Everyone was asked to imagine different things inside their mug or cup – starting with a storm (in a teacup) – and react in the way it would make them feel.



Jacob found treasure inside his, which made him feel happy and excited. Paul had someone singing in his cup and Tom had a dog. Everyone was asked to find a different animal, and Jacob found a crocodile which he described as being scary and could bite you. The session concluded with a drawing exercise using the cups, these were then turned into aerial garden plans which everyone shared via the screen.

The Zooms have been a great way for customers to connect with each other while social distancing remains in place and have brought groups together in a fun and interactive way. We are delighted that Eyebrow Arts will be back with more sessions in the autumn and look forward to starting with them again on 10th September.



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Pine Lodge gets a makeover

A newly completed makeover has transformed Pine Lodge respite/replacement care making it a more welcoming environment for customers during their stay with us. Improvements include a new kitchen, replacement flooring and redecoration in all the bedrooms with every wall and door in the building repainted.

Acting Registered Manager, Hannah Clark said: "We are all really proud of the outcome and how much brighter, fresher, cleaner and more modern it is. All colleagues involved worked so incredibly hard over the two weeks to achieve this. We were covered in paint every day but we put on some music, got on and did it and we are so proud!

"We also had colleagues up to their knees in dirt getting stuck into the garden digging up weeds, making borders to plant flowers, designing a 'woodland trail', painting fences and just giving it a general tidy up.

"No-one shied away from the work and we had fun as well as a few stressful moments getting this done! It has brightened it up for customers and colleagues and given a new feel to the place."



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WELCOME TO
NORFOLK
 A FINE COUNTY

Eastern Daily Press

NORFOLK DAY

27 July 2021

To celebrate #NorfolkDay we asked colleagues and customers to send us their shots of our bootiful county.

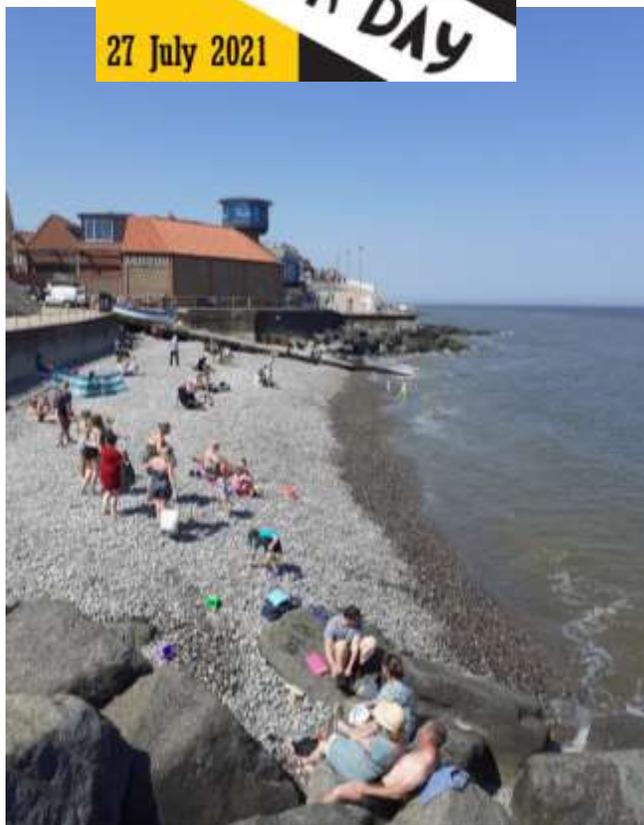
Clockwise from right: a family day out at the Dinosaur Park by Rachel Boyce, an atmospheric shot of hay bales in a field near Foulsham by customer Mark, Cley windmill by our MD Sarah Stock



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Clockwise from right: sunset over Sheringham by Gary Wheeler, James Voysey paddle boarding with his daughter on the Norfolk Broads at Coltishall, a view over the estate at Holkham Hall by Claire Millman and a shot of the beach at Sheringham by customer, Jason.



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Stakeholders celebrate Norfolk Day in the park

Customers, family carers and colleagues celebrated Norfolk Day with a get together in Chapelfield Gardens, Norwich, organised by Stakeholder Director, Sylvia Barrett-Jones.

Customers brought along some items they'd made to decorate the table and benches, and everyone shared their Norfolk stories while enjoying a picnic – complete with cupcakes and Norfolk shortcake biscuits which were enjoyed by all.



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March Shorifa Ali and Alison Gregory

Shorifa has, for a number of years, worked with a customer who has complex physical needs and has always done so with professionalism and courteousness.

Alison was nominated for her commitment, care and ability to adapt to the changes that have been presented to her, and for her commitment to new business opportunities and challenges she has taken on.

April Laura Field

Laura has a great way of working with her customers and understanding their needs. She always works with a person-centred approach and her nature is very considerate and professional.

May Isaac Peck and Aimee Carr

Isaac is proactive in reporting concerns to the office for all his customers ensuring his communications are followed up with the necessary support and action. He has a caring and sympathetic nature and this shines through in his working relationships with his colleagues and customers.

We've received lots of good feedback about Aimee (right) saying she goes above and beyond for her customers.

She demonstrates excellent listening skills and puts customers at ease explaining everything she does.



June Harriet Burke and Nicola Bush

Harriet was nominated for consistently prioritising customers needs and developing positive relationships with her customers.

Nicola always puts customers first and is always happy to help out in an emergency. She is extremely compassionate and treats all customers with dignity and respect.

July Ian Rigg

Ian (right) was nominated for consistently going above and beyond to support his customers. He has built some excellent relationships and broken boundaries by delivering care successfully to customers who previously had not accepted care from male care workers.



You have shown good leadership skills, mentoring new care workers and taking them under your wing.

You are an experienced and much valued, hard working member of the team and an asset to HSM. We are lucky to have you on our team.

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New product to pack at Norfolk Industries

Workers at Norfolk Industries are excited to have a new product to pack for Orchard Toys Limited. The 'Jungle Heads and Tails' is an educational game that can be used for people with disabilities as well as children to develop matching, memory and observational skills.

And now it's joined our Norfolk Industries product packing line, it will also be supporting people with disabilities by helping them to develop skills in the workplace.



Home Support Matters colleague to star in new TV show

HSM Care Worker Robert Gibbs is set to take part in a new Channel 5 programme fronted by Nick Knowles. We don't have a date for when 'Your Life On Your Lawn' will be screened, but filming started on 30th July, so watch this space!

<https://www.tvzoneuk.com/post/channel5-yourlifeonyourlawn>

Biffy is back!

We were delighted to hear from team manager Rachel, that her dog Biffy is back on duty, making visits to Harford Hill Community Hub. Rachel told us: "She has a new risk assessment and we are ensuring that her visits are Covid secure. Everyone is really pleased to see her again and she is a very happy pup!"

Biffy is pictured (right) with customer Darren, who is trying (not very successfully!) to persuade her to do a high five.



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Mental Health Awareness Week

The theme of this year's Mental Health Awareness week (10 – 16 May) was nature and customers at Crossroads Community Hub got busy planting, stone painting and card making with flower petals.

It was also an opportunity to reflect on individual wellbeing, team manager Marie Howard said; We have had chats about what we do when we are finding things difficult and who we have around us that can help, as well as all the things that make us happy. It was a fun few days and allowed some valuable topics to be discussed."



The 30 Days Wild Challenge

Hub customers in the Studio Gang have been taking inspiration from the Wildlife Trust's #30dayswild, a month-long nature challenge which encourages daily 'wild' activities from walking barefoot to spotting colours in nature. You can follow their suggestions or make up your own.

The group's first activity was to save tree saplings that had seeded in the lawn, digging them up and moving to a safer spot before the lawnmower got put into action.



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Wildlife watching with the TAPS

Hub customers Helen, Justin, Tim and Mark have become avid wildlife watchers since their TAPS bubble was formed last year. They monitor the birds, animals and insects that visit the Hub grounds, photographing, identifying and recording what they see.

They have a bird feeding station positioned directly outside their window, which is looked after by Helen who keeps it topped up so there is a plentiful supply of visitors to watch.



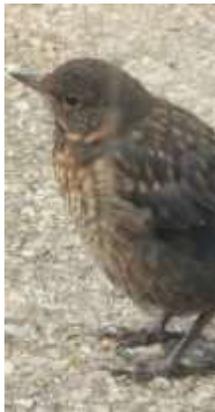
The group did the Big Garden Birdwatch in January and have continued using this approach to monitor visitors to their feeding station, doing a count each Friday and adding these up to give monthly totals. Their top bird for March was the Robin, for April it was the Blackbird and May the Great Tit.



Although visitors to the feeding station reduced in July, once fledglings had flown the nest, the arrival of Oyster Catchers (above), a surprising visitor to the Hub's grounds, proved there is always something to reward you if you keep wildlife watching!

A mix of digital cameras and phones are used to take the photographs, along with an outdoor wildlife 'spy' camera (can you spot it in our picture above?) which is left on all night and the footage viewed on a TV screen in the morning. It is moved regularly and provides an insight into what visits the Hub out of hours.

As well as capturing some great images it's also been able to prove that it was a muntjack deer (and not the rabbits) who were eating Gary's rhubarb!



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The group is very fond of hedgehogs and hope to attract more to the Hub's grounds. They've been spotted on the spy camera, but although a hedgehog box has been placed in a suitable spot, there's no evidence so far that it's being used.

They previously rescued a female hedgehog that was found in the Hub's garden in autumn 2019.



As it was a cold day and it looked poorly, they put it indoors by the radiator and phoned PACT animal sanctuary near Hingham, who run a wildlife hospital.

PACT checked her over and confirmed that it was a healthy female, but too young to survive on her own so they took her in for the winter. The group named her TAPS Tiggywinkle and kept in touch to find out how she was doing. She was released back into the wild in spring 2020 and everyone wonders where she is now and how she is doing.



As big fans of Chris Packham, the group wrote to BBC Springwatch saying how much they were enjoying the latest series and telling them all about what they've been up to.

They were really excited to receive a card signed by Chris and co-host Michaela Strachan which we're sure will take pride of place on their wildlife wall and encourage them all to follow Michaela's words and 'stay wild'!



A new hobby for Mark

Wildlife watching at the Hub has encouraged customer Mark to take up photography; he now has a camera and night vision binoculars and goes out at weekends as well as watching in his garden at home.

He's also been taking pictures on his weekly bike rides and took a beautiful hare (left) and roe deer (right).



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Kizzy's a fantastic fundraiser

Each year, PAS East team manager, Kizzy Wheeler, fundraises for a local person in need. This year, supported by colleague Chantel Stone, she raised money for a little girl called Emmy-J, a 5 year old with a condition called Smiths Lemli Opitz Syndrome.

Chantel said: "We both gave our time to raise money in the Great Yarmouth bank Santander, who were very supportive and helped us raise £310.

We then went on to have a gin high tea, hosted and accommodated by the lovely Kizzy in her own garden where Emmy made an appearance and more raffle tickets were purchased.

Kizzy always goes above and beyond to help those in need and out done herself this year with a grand total of £849 raise in total for little Emmy. The love and support Kizzy gives to her community is outstanding."



Emergency crews take over Hub's car park

Emergency services took over the car park at Attleborough Community Hub on 4th August when five fire crews, police and a host of ambulances attended a chemical incident at the factory opposite.

Thankfully, there was no danger to anyone at the Hub and everyone remained safe and well on site while the incident was brought under control.



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Customers enjoy time in the Hub's garden

Holt Community Hub's sensory garden has had some fabulous new equipment fitted and is looking lovely after some hard work by customers and colleagues.

Customer blogger, Jason (pictured right with support worker Carol) tells us more.

"Last week I went to Holt Hub and helped weed in the sensory garden. We weeded the herb garden, they have basil, mint, oregano, coriander, thyme, chives, rosemary and flat leaf parsley. I then had a play on the new sensory instruments. I enjoyed that! The longer the tube the deeper the note, same with the drums.

"There are plants that give a lovely smell, like jasmine and honeysuckle, there's also pretty flowers dotted about like fuchsia and agapanthus, gaillardia – definitely one for my garden. The bees love the purple and yellow flowers. I really enjoyed the sensory garden and I'm sure other customers will too."



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It's not just the sensory garden that's been getting attention at Holt Hub. There's been lots of activity in the vegetable garden, sunflowers are being grown and the potting shed is being given a bold new look in blue and yellow.

Planning for a new polytunnel is also underway and customers have chosen to give it a rainforest theme. They plan to fill it with exotic plants and play music that sounds like water to create a truly sensory experience.

Jason is a keen collector of Norfolk Rocks (hand painted stones that are left in public places for people to discover) and will be 'hiding' some of his collection in the rainforest garden for others to find.



Norfolk Day fun!



Crossroads Community Hub celebrated a smorgasbord of all things Norfolk on 27 July. Team manager Marie Howard told us: "Samphire is a must in this part of the world and it seems it's a love it or hate thing with the majority loving it. It provoked conversation amongst local folks about time spent picking and enjoying it with their families.

The Norfolk dialect caused some laughter, and surprisingly some not so familiar ones did fox us, although on the whole we did well and showed great understanding of the sayings used in our parts.

Given our coast is home to a large seal colony it seems appropriate that they also feature in our theme celebrating the Norfolk area.



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Big Butterfly Count 2021

With the annual Big Butterfly Count (16 July to 8 Aug) underway, there's been lots of butterfly inspired activities going on across our Hubs.

Our wildlife bloggers took their cameras out into the grounds to do a bit of serious spotting and reported a host of different species along with a beautiful banded demoiselle damselfly.



Stephen's big butterfly project

Customer Stephen (pictured left) has been busy working on a project to learn more about butterflies as part of his [Gateway learning](#). He has made up a fact file, doing his own research on the internet using the Hub's ipads, and created a pack to evidence his learning. He was able to test out his knowledge by accompanying service manager, Robin, on a butterfly hunt.

Butterfly artwork at Crossroads

Customers at Crossroads got involved with the Big Butterfly Count by making this lovely banner (pictured below). The artwork is a combined effort with customers contributing throughout the week. They were also able to get out into the garden and do a bit of butterfly spotting too.



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Recycling for local charity schemes

Everyone is keen to be green and our Hubs are no exception. Studio Gang customers are supporting recycling schemes for the East Anglian Air Ambulance and Hallswood Animal Sanctuary.

Both schemes are very specific in what they will and won't take, one recycles crisp packets only, the other takes a variety of items from blister packs to pet food pouches and toothpaste tubes. It's a lot of work to check, sort and separately bag all the donated material before it can be taken to the drop off point, so a big well done to everyone involved and keep up the good work!



Welcome to Marnie!



Many congratulations to Home Support Matters care worker Danielle Laws and her family.

Danielle, who works primarily with Continuing Health Care customers in the Norwich area, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Marnie, weighing 5lb 11oz on Friday 23rd July.

Technology Matters!

It's great to see our Hubs investing in new tech like these big screens. They help make group Zoom sessions a better and more enjoyable experience for our customers.



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We're going wild to support bees

Our Hubs are going wild this summer as part of a nationwide campaign to help our declining bee population. The 'Pardon the weeds, we're feeding the bees' campaign has been adopted by a number of local councils and we are proud to be supporting #BeesLoveBreckland and giving a helping hand to our buzzy friends.

To see if the initiative was working, we asked the TAPS Wildlife Group's Helen, Justin, Mark and Tim to do a spot of bee spotting for us. They found five different types of bumble bee as well as the honey bee, saying they we were really pleased to see so many different species.



Dementia Action Week 2021



Customers and colleagues enjoyed a tea party to recognise Dementia Action Week in May. Everyone had a lovely time and really enjoyed it.

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Customers are busy bees

In addition to setting aside an area of the garden for bees to collect pollen, customers at Holt Community Hub have been working on a fun and creative project to learn all about bees and the things they can do to help them.

The Hub has been decorated, inside and out, with paintings of bees and a project board detailing facts about bees has been put on display in the foyer.

Team manager, Clare, is proud of their collaborate effort saying "They have all worked alongside each other to create this."



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Summer sporting fun

Customers and colleagues at Crossroads have been enjoyed sporting theme to their events this summer.

Team manager Marie said; We got into the spirit of the Olympic games with our version of some of the sports such as javelin, shot put and discus (pictured right). Medals awarded to our shining stars and of course plenty of fun was had all round.

We also enjoyed specially themed treats in celebration of Wimbledon and the Euros - celebrating with our tummies is always a winner!



And finally...

It's been a long time coming for customer Malcolm, but he has at last been presented with his prize for writing the winning verse in our 2020 Christmas competition!

He was presented with a voucher and a certificate by Stakeholder Director, Sylvia, who visited Malcolm at his home. He is so excited to have won and is going to frame the certificate. Well done Malcolm!

I *Matter*, Choice *Matters*,
Carers *Matter*, Colleagues *Matter*,
Excellent Support
Matters

Independence *Matters*
'the life you choose...'