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12/24

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Bournefree





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Merry Christmas everyone!

SO here we are and December has arrived – a busy and happy month for many, tough times and not so easy for others.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Traders will certainly be hoping for a busy four weeks. A busy Christmas can often make or break a business's 12-month performance.

It is important to shop local whenever possible, but there is so much choice that I guess people will decide for themselves.

There are plenty of festive pages inside this month's *Bournefree* – which will be shared both online and, of course, in print.

Take a look at the wonderful festive world of our gardening correspondent. Geoff Stonebanks has been on *ITV's This Morning* and made many other media appearances locally, nationally and indeed internationally. His is a lovely story.

It's certainly a challenging time at *Eastbourne Borough Council* as it

attempts to save £3.37 million in 2024/25 in-house.

There is no doubt that the high cost of homelessness does provide exceptional financial challenges. Closing the fun pool at the *Sovereign Centre* has been particularly unpopular as are new measures to cut the cleansing budget by 10 per cent.

A new *Community Toilet Scheme* is being introduced, and indeed it looks like that the majority of public toilets will be retained.

Remember, there is daily coverage on our website bournefreelive.co.uk. Make sure you log on daily..

Eastbourne Youth Radio has come and gone again. It's a tremendous community initiative for our young people, organised by Tim at the *Eastbourne Education Business Partnership*.

I am delighted to say I have been involved from the start, and my small contribution this year was taking part in the Answer Back debate with Josh,

Colin Belsey and Peter, the Head at *Cavendish School*. There really were some great questions from the young people.

Mankind, the Eastbourne mental health charity, was honoured to receive the *King's Award for Voluntary Service*. So too was *Sanctuary Eastbourne*.

I met Paul and Ian again who run *Mankind*, and it's at *St Wilfrid's Hospice* every Wednesday evening if you are male and need to talk about mental health. We often struggle to.

It was also great – while I was chatting to Ian and Paul – to meet Toby Simmons. He ran the *Beachy Head Marathon*, raising £1,500 for *Mankind*, and he had a very personal reason why he was running for this particular charity.

Well done Toby – and indeed Ian, Paul and team.

That's it – it only leaves everyone here at *Bournefree* HQ to wish everyone a very happy, safe and peaceful Christmas time.

Here's to 2025.



Peter Lindsey, Editor.

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Our next edition will be distributed from January 3rd. Make sure you are a part of it.

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Eastbourne residents urged to back fund-raising appeal

A MAJOR new fund-raising appeal will benefit Eastbourne people who urgently need advice and support to help lift them out of poverty.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Eastbourne Foodbank has launched its first ever Christmas Appeal and hopes to raise thousands of pounds to fund the vital debt advice, advocacy and welfare support the charity provides. The “Be the Life Changer” appeal began today and will run throughout December.

Truly life changing

Chief Executive Jess Holliday said: “We are not just about food. The emergency food we distribute can literally be a life saver for people in crisis — but the advice and support we provide is just as important. We work with people who visit our foodbank to address the financial challenges they are facing, lifting them out of poverty. This work is truly life changing.”

With that advice and support, she added, people can be helped so they no longer need to use the foodbank. “Ultimately that’s what we’re about. We are working for future in which foodbanks don’t need to exist, both across the UK and right here in Eastbourne.”

Eastbourne Foodbank has had an advice and debt service for some years, and last year its advisors recouped more than £1million for clients. It also runs a Baby Basics service, providing essential support for struggling young families.

While it employs a small team of advisors and has several volunteers to support these areas of work, it wants to raise funds to help more people.

Long term solutions

Jess said: “The reality is that many people in Eastbourne need this help and support, which can provide the long term solutions that enable people to stop having to rely on charity to put food on the table.

“People often don’t know what support they’re entitled to, or really don’t know how to go about accessing it. And we see people who have never been in this situation before, never imagined they’d be facing such a crisis: people who are terrified by their mounting debt and really struggle to get to grips with it. Last year we helped more than a thousand people in this way — but, as one of the busiest foodbanks in the UK, we want to be able to do more.”

Be the life changer

The “Be the Life Changer” appeal features the story of just one client. It’s based on the experience of real clients, but names and circumstances have been altered to protect confidentiality. It’s the story of Mel and her two young children. Mel is grieving for her mum, while also trying to manage debt and keep bailiffs from the door. When Mel visited the foodbank, she not only got support with emergency food and essential items for her baby and toddler, but was met with kindness and warmth, and supported to manage her overwhelming debts.



“Mel is like so many of the people who come to us in crisis. People’s problems are often very complex and can easily lead to other issues such as poor mental health, difficulties in getting and holding on to work and your confidence at rock bottom. It becomes a sort of spiral of catastrophe, and people feel hopeless. Tackling these things, especially on your own, is incredibly hard.” Jess added.

Magnificent community

And she is confident the people of Eastbourne will get behind the appeal. “Time and time again we have seen the magnificent way our local community responds to the need in the town. Life is hard for many people but still people care about others — and still they give.

This is a fantastic community and it is thanks to the consistent generosity and compassion from so many, that we’re able to do the life changing work we do.”

She invited everyone to get involved in this work to change lives. “All donations, no matter how large or small, will help fund this important work, lifting people out of poverty and out of crisis. Every single penny makes a difference. Together, we can begin to turn the tide on poverty, so people in Eastbourne no longer need to use the foodbank. Together, we can change lives.”

For more information please visit: eastbourne.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/be-the-life-changer-christmas-appeal

'Bringing independent retail back on the High Street'

THAT'S exactly what Sue Clarke is doing with INDIGO at 66 Grove Road, Little Chelsea.

By **Peter Lindsey**

It has so much to offer, including: Delicious, Locally roasted, blended coffee, teas, and other drinks.

Homemade food, from snacks to hearty meals. Mostly gluten-free. Vegans and vegetarians are fully catered for too.

The chance to buy unique gifts, arts and crafts in a wonderful shop with a calming atmosphere.

Owner Sue said: "What I am doing is a change from the norm – it's bringing back retail to the High Street. We have created a collective with arts, crafts and unique gifts on sale.

"It is independent shopping and food. We are a bit different, what we offer is unique, an eclectic – collective in an ambient setting.

"Most food is homemade, cooked by myself, and our customers enjoy hearty, tasty, comforting food at an affordable price."

There are homemade soups and meals such as Cottage Pie, Hearty stews and specials such as Fish Pie on 'Fish Friday,' which is a speciality – A signature dish! Tuesday is Curry Day!

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Perfect place for Sunday lunch

THE Lamb Inn, Wartling is open for Sunday lunches. With four woodburning fires and dogs welcome.

By **Gail McKay**

It's the perfect place for Sunday lunch and is best described by recent review;

"I often drive over the marshes between Pevensey and Windmill Hill and had always wondered what the old pub on the corner was like.

"Last Sunday, my wife and I stepped through the front door into a different world. It was warm and smelt of log fires, at the bar I ordered a pint of fresh *Harveys* and a glass of mulled wine.

"We sat on a velvet sofa by one of the four log fires and ordered from a chalkboard. It had three starters and three mains; roast beef, porchetta with apple sauce and vegetable Wellington. Ten minutes later our table was ready with unexpected stout soda bread and home-made butter. Complimentary, yippee!

"Our roast beef arrived with green chard, bright carrots, crispy roast potatoes and gloriously high Yorkshire

pudding. All with home-made horseradish sauce and great gravy.

"The chef is from Hastings via Nottingham and describes this glorious sauce as 'Northern' gravy. It looked fabulous and tasted better.

"With it we had a two glasses of red Côte du Rhône.

"Feeling deliciously full we ordered one sticky toffee pudding with two spoons. There are no calories in sharing!

"After a coffee and paying the bill, we emerged warm and smiling and took our dog Clive for a glorious walk to see *Herstmonceux Castle*.

"The Lamb Inn, Wartling is a pub of Hollywood films; log fires, dogs, chatter and glorious food."

Lamb Inn, Wartling BN27 1RY.

Open from 12:30pm. The kitchen closes at 3:00pm.

Best to book by email at:

lambinnwartling@gmail.com

Mo opens Bombay Avenue in Grove Road

BOMBAY Avenue has opened at 18 Grove Road.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Mozmil Hussain is the new owner:

"After 27 years of successfully operating a renowned curry house in Eastbourne, we are delighted to announce our relocation to a new and captivating location in the heart of Eastbourne town.

"Our culinary journey draws inspiration from a rich legacy that traces its roots back to my great grandfather, a valiant Indian sailor known as a lascar.

"During his honorable service in the *Royal Navy* during World War II, he showcased his passion for culinary arts by introducing his unique recipes to the Navy's kitchens, spreading comfort and delectable flavors among his fellow sailors.

"Upon the war's conclusion, he made the decision to settle in Liverpool, driven by his unwavering passion for cooking.

"This pivotal decision has led us to where we stand today, with our culinary heritage evolving into a cherished family tradition.

"Each dish we meticulously prepare carries the essence of his recipes and embodies the spirit of the generations who have diligently preserved his culinary legacy.

"Please come and visit us!"

**01323 732330
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Lightning Fibre takes title again

LIGHTNING Fibre has won the highly coveted 'Best Consumer ISP' award for the second consecutive year.

By **Peter Lindsey**

The news was revealed at **The UK Internet Service Providers Association's annual 2024 internet industry and broadband awards.**

The results reflect the outcome of some technical testing by Thinkbroadband across several categories, as well as a judging panel of 11 industry figures.

Lightning Fibre impressed judges with its customer satisfaction scores, and progress in delivering the fastest residential broadband in the region.

Steve Leighton, chair of *The Internet Service Providers' Association*, said: "In a year which has seen our industry surge towards significant fibre rollout targets, a renewed focus on delivering high-quality services

to our customers and the turbulence of a General Election, our sector has been tremendous.

"Our annual awards encapsulates this, showcasing the superb work from across the industry.


"I am proud to play host to the organisations going above and beyond, building the foundations of the nation's digital economy and society."

The award was for the Best Consumer ISP with fewer than 100,000 customers.

Also on the night, the *Internet Hero* award was presented to Malcom Corbett. Malcom Corbett received the Internet Hero award for dedicating his career to improving connectivity in the UK.

Rob Reaks, CCO of *Lightning Fibre*, said: "We congratulate Malcom and give thanks for what he has achieved for our industry over the years, and the changes he has facilitated for Digital Britain."





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Finley competing in Paris 2024.



Finley's Los Angeles dream for 2028

EASTBOURNE'S Finley Jakes made his Paralympic debut at Paris 2024 – and he's already planning for the 2028 event in Los Angeles.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Finley, 25, took part in the Triathlon – swim, cycle and run – and was seeded to finish 11th. That's exactly what he achieved.

He said: "It was, without doubt, the best experience of my life, to represent my country on the world stage.

"It doesn't get much better than this – the centre of Paris is very special and there were just people everywhere."

Finley is a three-time British champion and his Paralympic debut came after an impressive run of podium finishes on the circuit last year.

He uses a running blade on his right leg, having had an operation at the age of one because his foot had not fully formed.

The swim was first, and it was actually delayed for 24 hours because of poor weather.

"We had a plan and for the plan in the swim was perfectly executed, it went how me and my team wanted it to."

Distance: 750m, Time: 12mins.

Next, cycling, and Finley admits 'it was one of the toughest rides I have ever done.'

"Sixty per cent of the course was cobbles and the last couple of laps were particularly tough."

Distance: 20km, Time: 33:28mins

Finley was positioned 12th after both, so finally it was all set for the Run – his strongest of the three. It went well, and a final position of 11th.

Distance: 5km, Time: 18:46mins

"The aim of 2024 was to qualify for Paris, which I achieved, now the target is to be on the winning podium in 2028 at Los Angeles.

"I've only been doing Triathlon for six years, and I was really pleased with my overall performance, very satisfied.

"There were post-game blues – it hit me like a train – but this is what I wanted to do ever since I started athletics in 2012.

"Now, it's more competing until 2028. At the moment, in my category there are five athletes who are out in front. I'm probably in the second group.

"My clear aim in four years time is to be in that top group. I have to be if I want to be on that podium.

"I will probably need to take a couple of seconds off my time in each of the three."

Finley trains seven days a week, having started at *Eastbourne Rovers*, and he says his parents have been amazing with their support.

He started out in athletics having been talent spotted at a *Parasports Day* held by *England Athletics*.

He later added swimming and cycling to his training as he became involved in Para triathlon. His debut season saw him finish third at the British Championships in 2017 before he went one better a year later and won a silver medal.

When Finley made the switch, he had to re-learn how to swim and had to overcome initial fears of falling off the bike to become a medal contender.

In 2021, he was selected for his first major championships at the Europeans in Valencia, where he finished fifth and secured his remarkable maiden win in Alhambra the following month before a top-10 finish at his first World Championships in Abu Dhabi.

Since October 2023, the Eastbourne athlete has secured seven podium finishes in his previous nine events heading into Paris 2024.





MARK Curry is a famous actor and presenter who lives in Eastbourne.

By **Peter Lindsey**

He is now presenting a new podcast series Backstage Curry, featuring behind the scenes conversations with performers, broadcasters and creatives.

They include:

- *Wicked's* current Elphaba, Alexia Khadime
- *Doctor Who* and West End star Bonnie Langford
- *Strictly* star Debbie McGee,
- *Eurovision's* Sonia
- And host of TV's *Most Haunted*, Yvette Fielding.

Mark said: "I am fascinated by how other performers prepare for shows and how shows and events are put together which is something I am excited to discuss with guests on *Backstage Curry*."

"I'm hoping listeners will be interested too and, after listening, will be inspired to donate to, *Acting For Others*, thereby supporting any industry professionals currently facing financial or emotional challenges."

In each episode, Mark delves into the detail of what it takes to create theatre, live shows and events; discussing the process, discipline required, challenges faced and the rewards' gleaned in a career in the arts.

These unique, peering under the bonnet conversations give honest authentic insights to the questions we'd all love to ask our fantasy dinner party guests.

actingforothers.co.uk/donate



Eastbourne Youth Radio celebrates 24th year on-air

YOUNG people from local schools and colleges, together with more than 40 supporting organisations, took to the airwaves last week on *Eastbourne Youth Radio (EYR)* for the 24th annual broadcast.

By **Peter Lindsey**

This 50-hour extravaganza, broadcast on 87.7FM, was organised by the Eastbourne Education Business Partnership in association with East Sussex College. Particular thanks to lead sponsor *Brewers Decorator Centres* and also to *Eastbourne and Lewes Community Safety Partnership* for their additional funding.

Students aged 5–19 from local schools and colleges planned, created and presented an exciting mix of music, live performances, interviews, competitions and features. The programmes were broadcast from the college studios in Eastbourne supported by their creative media students who also delivered their own programmes. You can still 'Listen Back' via www.eyr.org.uk and see images from the broadcast.

As well as the individual student shows, EYR broadcast the 'Answer Back' panel show kindly hosted

by *The Cavendish School* and sponsored by *Recruitment South East*. A guest panel of politicians and prominent community figures debated topical issues of the day. A second panel show, 'Meet the Media', hosted and sponsored by *East Sussex College*, brought together former EYR alumni, now working in TV, journalism, radio and film, who shared their career experiences with the student audience.

A special hospitality tea at the college was attended by The Worshipful the Mayor of Eastbourne, Cllr Candy Vaughan, to recognise the support that local businesses, organisations and dignitaries had given to the project this year.

Tim Sorensen, *Eastbourne EBP* Programme Manager, said: "EYR would not be possible without the generous support and involvement of our schools, colleges, community organisations and businesses. A massive thank you to them for helping



to make EYR such a continuing success. We were treated to a fantastic schedule of programme features and live performances. It was great to see everyone coming away very excited after taking part."

Tim adds: "Planning for a very special 4-day, 25th anniversary, broadcast is already underway for 18th–21st November 2025. In the meantime, *Eastbourne EBP* is counting down to the next employability and skills event, *The BIG Futures Show*, organised in association with *Eastbourne Borough Council* on 29th April next year".

To find out more about *Eastbourne Education Business Partnership* and how you can get involved, please email tim@eastbourneebp.org.uk

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Blue Heart offering free flood resilience surveys

LOCAL businesses are being offered surveys to help protect against rising flood risks.

By **Sarah O'Flaherty**

Local businesses in Eastbourne and Southern Wealden are being offered a unique opportunity to protect their property against future flood damage, thanks to *Blue Heart*, a flood resilience and awareness initiative funded by the government.

Through the project, 40 businesses will receive free Property Flood

Resilience (PFR) Surveys conducted by *JBA Consulting*.

Flooding has become a growing concern for businesses across the region, with the risk of damage and disruption on the rise. Yet, many business owners may not fully understand their specific property's vulnerability or what can be done to reduce it.

Free survey

The *Blue Heart* project aims to bridge this gap by offering free PFR Surveys that provide businesses with:

A Clear Understanding of Their Flood Risk: Each survey offers a detailed assessment of potential flood impacts based on the unique characteristics of the business's property.

Tailored Recommendations for Protection: In addition to identifying risks, the survey gives practical, tailored advice on steps that can be taken to prevent or mitigate flood damage.

"Flood resilience is essential for businesses today," said Sarah O'Flaherty, Communications Coordinator for the *Blue Heart* project. "Our goal is to help businesses get ahead of potential flood risks."

Limited availability

Only 40 free surveys available with funding secured to provide just 40 free PFR Surveys.

Once registered, *JBA Consulting* will schedule the survey and conduct an on-site assessment, providing each business with a custom report detailing their flood risk and resilience options.

Sign up: contact@blueheart.org.uk

Businesses are encouraged to register as soon as possible to avoid missing out on this valuable opportunity.

Loads more Christmas ideas in store!



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Lonely this Christmas

FOR many, Christmas can be an isolating and melancholy period. Beating those festive blues isn't easy, but these techniques can help raise your spirits.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Stay in touch

If you're forced to be physically alone this Christmas Day, you can still connect with others.

A short video of a grandson opening the present you sent, a visit to a neighbour, or a quick drink at the nearest pub will help you ease your loneliness.

Help others

Volunteering is a fantastic way to feel useful and use your time in a positive way. Serving dinner at a homeless shelter, collecting money for a charity, or even making crafts to sell at your local church fete will foster a sense of purpose and remind you that there are many others who also struggle this time of year.

Be thankful

It's easy to become wrapped up in our problems if we have a lot of time alone

to think. This is why it can help to focus on all the wonderful experiences and gifts you have received in your life.

Keeping a gratitude journal, or even just contemplate one thing each day you are thankful for, no matter how small, can help shift your perspective.

Reach out

The holiday season presents so many events and opportunities to meet others. You could volunteer at the homeless shelter, offer your vocal

range at the local choir or theatrical group, or even just watch a carol concert, nativity or pantomime that's playing in your area.

Accept your feelings

Putting on a charade of happiness for others can be exhausting and, in these moments, it is best to just accept how you feel.

So be kind to yourself, eat your favourite food and watch whatever TV you want.



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Looking for a new challenge in the New Year?

WANT to help save lives in your community?

By **Gail McKay**

Come along to Eastbourne Coastguard Team's open morning on Saturday 4th January.

It is taking place from 10am until noon at 86 Wartling Road Eastbourne.

Meet the team, and enjoy a hot drink and a chat.

Helping those in distress

The *Coastguard Rescue Service (CRS)* is made up of volunteers who carry out rescues and help those in distress around our coast.

A spokesman said: "We work to prevent the loss of life on the coast and at sea. We produce legislation

and guidance on maritime matters, and provide certification to seafarers.

"Volunteering with the service is a rewarding role that supports and gives back to your local community.

"As a coastguard rescue officer, you will receive regular training and be part of a team that works together to save lives.

"Our volunteers leave their families, friends, jobs and responsibilities to help those in need. We value what we do and thank all of those involved.

"We aim to continue to help when and where we can, so in any emergency around the coast or the cliffs please dial 999 and ask for the coastguard."

f eastbournecoastguard



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Stu's Marathon effort for St Wilfrid's

EASTBOURNE referee Stuart McKenzie could barely run around Whitley Rec before the pandemic.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Now he has completed the extremely tough challenge he set himself at the start of the year – to run 12 half-marathons and one full marathon in 2024.

In fact, he's done 15 and has raised more than £1,000 for *St Wilfrid's Hospice*, a place very important to Stu.

He said: "This has ignited a flame in me, and I want to thank everyone who has helped me along the way.

"It has been beautiful way of exploring the Sussex and Kent countryside at some of the events.

"I have a challenging job supporting the homeless across East Sussex, and this has been the perfect escape."

This is his impressive list of achievements:

January – an unofficial half-marathon from Lewes Railway Station over Mount Caburn and back to Eastbourne.

February – *Headcorn Half Marathon* in Kent – 'beautiful country lanes and my second half marathon in under two hours.'

March – *Eastbourne Half, Hastings Half* and an unofficial one on the Cuckoo Trail – 'for the *Eastbourne Half*, I fell 200m from the end, my legs gave up, and two strangers picked me up and carried me over the line.'

April – *London Landmarks Half*, around the city of London, and one around the *Rathfinny Half* in Alfriston, it was two laps of the estate.

May – Birmingham Half as part of the Great Run series, and the *UK Ultra half*, from *Rathfinny* to *Helen Gardens* on Eastbourne Seafront 'then I marshalled afterwards on a busy bank Holiday Saturday in Birling Gap to welcome in the 100milers, 50k runners.'

June – *Weald Challenge*, another trail half organised by Uckfield

Runners. plus an unofficial one which included the *Children with Cancer Fund* 10k at Polegate.

July – *Bowl 15 and 5 mile race (Wadhurst Runners)* – 'My sister Fiona also took part and it was very special because this was the first time we had done something like this together.'

August – a rest (well, sort of). Still running on average 40km each week, three runs and two conditioning sessions – 'that's my weekly routine now still.'

September – *Great North Run* – 'it was huge and amazing and my fastest time 1:45:27. My body was used to it by now, what a community

atmosphere and huge crowds.' Also in September the *Bates Green Gallop* which is as many laps of 3.5 miles in six hours as possible at Arlington which was 6 laps equalling 21 miles, and the *Wimbledon Half*.

October – *Beachy Head Marathon* – 'My first marathon. I went too fast for the first two hours but mentally I knew I had to finish, and I did. There was great camaraderie with other runners going through exactly the same experience, I was drained but what a sense of achievement when I crossed the finishing line in 5 hours 28.'

So, what next? "I will continue running different races and non races with the wonderful magenta of *Run Wednesday* including Cross Countries to Marathons. I owe my achievements to everyone at *Run Wednesdays* and of course my partner Julia."



Bestselling book updated

UPDATED new edition of the classic, bestselling book on the suspicious death of the former government weapons expert.

By **Gail McKay**

An unusual politician, Norman Baker kickstarted the campaign to force disclosure of the details of MPs' expenses under the Freedom of Information Act.

He has always been outspoken, and far from the mould of a career politician. He was the first non-conservative MP for Lewes since 1874.

Iraq

The high-profile death of government weapons inspector Dr David Kelly twenty-one years ago, amid the tumult of Britain's controversial invasion of Iraq, plunged the New Labour government into crisis and led to the resignation of the BBC's Director General.

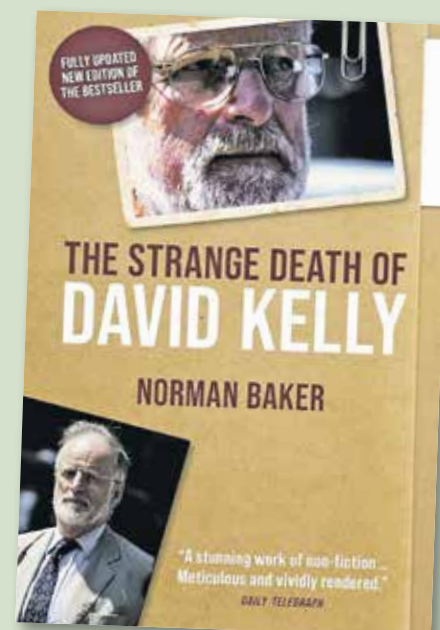
The Strange Death of David Kelly argues that neither the medical evidence nor David Kelly's state of mind and personality supported the verdict of suicide.

Analysing the official process instigated after Kelly's death, putting the entire episode into its political context and scrutinising the actions of the government in launching the Iraq War, this new edition of the instant bestseller is fully updated to include the latest evidence and theories surrounding this most mysterious and political of deaths.

Critical acclaim

The book was Shortlisted for the Channel 4 Political Book Award 2008 and was originally published to wide critical acclaim.

"It may make uncomfortable reading for certain politicians and members of the intelligence community, but it is likely to persuade many that there was far more to the death of David Kelly than has been revealed." *Evening Standard*.



Honest politician

"Norman Baker is an honest politician of unusual integrity. He asks difficult and problematic questions that seem not to have occurred to Lord Hutton. His research is very detailed and his conclusions must be taken seriously." Peter Osborne.

"A superb summation of all the evidence." *Sunday Times*

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Heroic Reg raises £50,000 for charity



Reg Coomber presents the cheque to both charities.

THIS is just incredible...

By **Peter Lindsey**

Reg Coomber has advanced cancer at the base of his skull, and he wanted to organise a sponsored swim to thank St Wilfrid's Hospice and East Sussex Healthcare NHS Charity for their care. His original target was £2,000.

He's raised an amazing £50,000. It took Reg around five months to build up his fitness levels to swim 400 metres of the Hillbrow Centre's pool in Meads, cheered on by family and friends.

He had planned to swim 300 metres but felt well enough to do an extra 100 metres on the day. This equates to 16 lengths of the pool.

Reg said: "I'm shocked to have raised so much money. When I originally planned to come in and present the

cheque to the charities, I was amazed to have reached £30,000.

"Then I had a last-minute donation which took me to £50,000 and it blew me away. I'm very mindful that people are constantly being asked to support charities, so I couldn't believe everyone's generosity."

Colin Twomey, St Wilfrid's CEO, said: "It's been amazing to follow Reg's swimming journey and we're in awe of his determination to complete the swim.

"It's such an achievement, and we are so grateful for the incredible amount he has raised. It costs more than £21,000 per day to provide all of our services in the hospice and out in the community, so this money really will make a difference. Thank you, Reg – you are an inspiration to us all."

To read more about Reg, visit: www.stwhospice.org/blog/award-winning-dancer-turns-top-fundraiser-for-st-wilfrids

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Laying the groundwork

THE Polegate tree planting event was a big success, with five trees replaced and 510 bushes planted.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Polegate Town Council is delighted:

"We're so proud of what we achieved together. Adding new trees and shrubs isn't just about making our area greener – it's also about enhancing local biodiversity.

These new trees will provide critical habitats for birds, insects, and small mammals, while also supporting pollinators like bees and butterflies.

By planting a variety of trees and shrubs, we're helping create a balanced ecosystem that promotes healthy soil, cleaner air, and more resilient wildlife populations.

A huge thank you to *PJ Skips* for their invaluable support, and to The Scouts and Brownies for their energy and enthusiasm.

We were also thrilled to have the councillors join us, planting alongside community members to contribute to a more vibrant, sustainable environment.



Thank you to everyone who joined in to help create a healthier, greener future for our community. Together, we're laying the groundwork for a thriving, biodiverse landscape!"



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Christmas Events

CHRISTMAS in Polegate kicks off with the Festive Market on the High Street at 2pm.

By **Peter Lindsey**

With live entertainment before the grand Christmas lights switch-on at 5pm, tree kindly supplied by PJ Skips. Plus Polegate's very own Pantomime Dame, Adam Rigg.

The much-loved Mayor's Christmas Tea Party, takes place on Tuesday, 3rd December 2pm to 4pm. Special appearance from Father Christmas plus a raffle supporting the Mayor's chosen charity, the Community First Responders.

Civic Carol Concert Monday, 16th December 7pm at St Georges Church. Hosted by Mayor Cllr Dan Dunbar. Tickets for the tea party and Carol Concert available from the Polegate Town Council.

Mayor Dunbar expressed his enthusiasm saying, "I'm thrilled to be hosting these festive celebrations for the enjoyment of our residents. The Christmas lights switch-on promises to be a fantastic event, with an entire afternoon of festive fun planned. I'm especially excited to introduce the *Civic Carol Concert* to Polegate for the first time.

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Thanks 4 the Mammaries Calendar Project 2025

CHARITY calendar sales have exceeded expectations as Eastbourne boudoir photographer Sharon Lawrence looks back over the last few months with warmth a sense of pride.

By **Gail McKay**

As Sharon expressed, "It is so easy, at this time of year, to get wrapped up the chaos and forget the true meaning of Christmas, myself included, but in taking a moment to reflect on this project it makes me thankful for my health, for this journey I have shared with thirteen wonderful women and together with the local community continue to raise funds for such a well-deserved charity."

Sharon's mother, who had suffered with breast cancer, was the inspiration for this project. She wanted to find a way to give back and she knew first-hand how uplifting it could be to experience the pampering and empowering feeling of having intimate portraits taken.

The project was completed solely with volunteers and together with hair stylists and make-up artists each woman was spoilt and photographed, creating images that portrayed their personality.

As Miss July said, "I have never felt good about my body and have been very self-conscious in front of a camera. Since my two surgeries, radiotherapy and chemotherapy, I was less than confident in the look of

my body. I was terrified at the thought of being photographed but putting my reservations to one side I applied to be a part of this project.

Everyone made me feel so good about the way I looked, and Sharon expertly guided me through different poses, she really knows her craft. I felt like a film star and loved every minute of the 'pampering'. I love how professional the final pictures turned out."

Sharon is proud of the final product, and excited to be sharing it with everyone. She said, "In many cases these women were very vulnerable, and this took them out of their comfort zone, and I am proud of every one of them for taking on the challenge. What makes me even more happy is that a few of these woman have decided to be photographed again next year as it was such a positive experience."

Many of the women who featured in the calendar met for the first time in September at the pre-launch event and since have become a support network for each other.

Sharon mentioned that she was overwhelmed. She said, "My project overnight became 'our' project.



These women have been selling calendars, many joining me on *BBC South Today* and *BBC Radio Sussex* for interviews."

If you are looking for that unique Christmas gift, look no further. The calendars continue to be on sale throughout December or until stocks last in various locations in the Eastbourne/Hastings area with 100% of the proceeds going to the charity *Breast Cancer NOW*. Available now at:

In person

Ooh How Lovely in Broad Oak, Rye (check opening hours).

Smooth Skin Beauty in Hastings (evenings and weekends, call first).

ESK, Eastbourne (check opening hours).

Christmas Market – 1st December 11am-3pm at *Manor Barn*, Bexhill.

Tesco, Lottridge Drove, Eastbourne – Friday 6th December – 10am-4pm.

Online

with local pick-up in Eastbourne or delivery (additional fees apply).
www.breastfriendsforever.co.uk

Donations can also be made by using the QR code:



Padel is coming to Eastbourne

THE four courts – three inside, one outdoors – are situated at the new development in *The Saffrons* on Compton Place Road.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Padel is a mix between tennis and squash played on an enclosed court with walls.

It is played by two teams, each of two players, with the aim of hitting the ball over the net and onto the opponent's side of the court, while also trying to prevent the opponent from returning the ball.

Peter Runacres – who has lived locally for 15 years – is the manager of *Padel4all Eastbourne*.

He said: "Our *Founder Membership* for the first 100 people sold out in just 12 hours, so we are confident the interest is there.

"We will be open to anyone who is keen to play. You do not have to be a member but there are monthly and

annual memberships which ensure booking priority.

"Although each game is four people, you can book as an individual and we will then make up 4s."

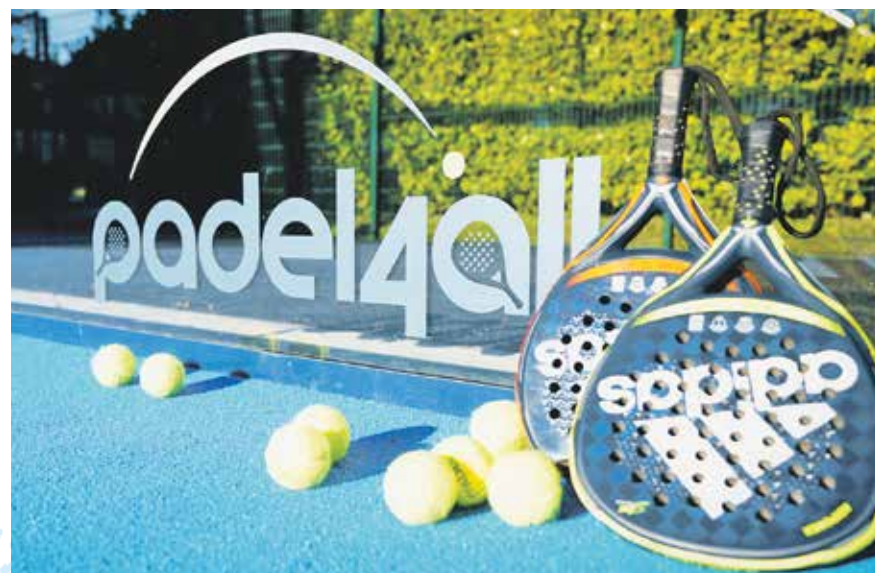
"Bookings can be made for any time after December 16th so you can start signing up from now."

Facilities will include a shop selling equipment and viewing areas.

There will also be an area where you can buy tea, coffee and toasties.

This is the fourth centre for *Padel4all* and it will be open seven days a week.

www.padel4all.com/eastbourne
f Padel4all Eastbourne
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A very special Tree at Christmas time

AT Christmas, *Eastbourne Rotary Clubs* organise a special Christmas Tree located outside the *Congress Theatre*.

By **Melanie Adams**

It is covered in white lights, each one dedicated to the memory of a loved one.

Its importance is the comfort it gives to families and individuals throughout the area. Everyone has been affected at some time by the loss of a relative or friend, and to be able to remember that special person at Christmas is important.

Incredibly this is the 26th year that Rotary has organised the tree which not only gives comfort but supports our local community.

Individuals are invited to sponsor a light and tie a white ribbon to the tree in memory of a loved one, and the money raised benefits a number of local charities.

The tree will be in situ in early December, with a dedication service taking place on Sunday 15th December at 4pm in the foyer of the *Congress Theatre*, to which everyone is welcome.

It will include carols, readings and the chance to then tie a ribbon on the tree.

You can dedicate online at: www.eastbournetreeoflight.co.uk or on the day of the Service, and Rotary will supply the ribbons.

Rotary will also have a presence in the Beacon Shopping Centre on Wednesday 20th November where you will be able to organise your dedication.

The whole event is aimed to be an uplifting and positive message as we come together at a difficult time of year to remember special people who are no longer with us.

Dedications are then entered into a book situated at the Eastbourne Library as well as being visible on the website.

Local businesses have been very generous with sponsorship towards the cost of the tree.



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The Eastbourne Business Awards 2024 Nominees

Community Business Award

Bodiblossom • Children's Respite Trust • Ditzzy Media • Kim Hatcher
Pathfinders Youth • The Grove Theatre

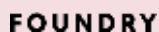
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Outstanding New Business / Start-up Award

Ace Corporate Fitness • Cloud Voice Security • Elite Muscle Welfare • Fame Academy
Festival Events • Hallmark Willingdon Park Manor Luxury Care Home
James Thompson Architecture • Latch On Breast feeding Support • Leanne Rebekah Hair
Mulberry And Cocoa • Silent Soul Support • The Harbour Handy Team

Award Sponsored By: **FOUNDRY**



The Small Business Award (1-9 Employees)

4front Physiotherapy • Babyballet Hailsham & Lewes (eastbourne) • Design Lab
Dust Bunnies Cleaning • Eastbourne Property Shop • Fame Academy • Growth By Design Halo
Hair & Beauty • Hannah Louise Coaching • James Thompson Architecture
Last Horizon Tattoo • Little Lemon Marketing • Mulberry & Cocoa • Pro Touch Beauty
Rebel Rebel Fitness And Treatments • Riggzy Complete Kitchen Solutions
Signtek • The Hair Hive • Uk Growth Coach • Wood Sage Prints

Award Sponsored By: **BREWERS**



SME Business of the Year Award (10 to 49 Employees)

Cadence • Corin Dudley Electrical Services • Cramp And Mullaney Llp
Eastbourne Coach Finishers • Global Wealthmap • Maybugs • The Sussex Sign Company
Trinity Homes (UK) • Westways Vending

Award Sponsored By: **ADVANTA**



Large Business of the Year Award (50+ Employees)

Hallmark Willingdon Park Manor Luxury Care Home • Howden Insurance • Marlow Ropes
Owen Contractors Ltd/Owen Scaffold Contractors • The Grand Hotel • Zoonou

Award Sponsored By: **GARDNERS**



Outstanding Family Business Award

Collier Webb • Corin Dudley Electrical Services Ltd • D B Domestic • Design Lab
Eastbourne Coach Finishers • Taboo (Eastbourne) • Westways Vending

Award Sponsored By: **THE RAINBOW**



Outstanding Young Achiever / Apprentice Award

Harry Roberts of Cramp & Mullaney Solicitors • Ellie Mae Watson of Elite Muscle Welfare
Poppy Ireland of Halo Hair & Beauty • James Thompson of James Thompson Architecture
Lucy Brown of Stevens and Carter
Tristan Miller of The Sussex Sign Company

Award Sponsored By: **EAST SUSSEX COLLEGE**



Outstanding Professional Service Award

Bees Homes Property • Cotential • Dynasty Wills And Estate Planning
ECK Bookkeeping And Accounts • Hannah Louise Coaching
Jack Prosser - Stephen Rimmer LLP • Mini First Aid Sussex • The Harbour Handy Team
Victoria Healthcare Management Ltd

Award Sponsored By: **H R DEPT**



Health and Wellbeing Award

Children's Respite Trust • Inner Sole Reflexology • RMJ Wellbeing
Victoria Healthcare Management

Award Sponsored By: **FIRST CHOICE DENTAL CLINIC**



Outstanding Sustainable / Green Business Award

Cadence • Corin Dudley Electrical Services • Eco Haven • Mulberry & Cocoa
Shell Clad • South East Solar And Storage • Whiffaway Group

Award Sponsored By: **IDENTITY**



Outstanding Tourism / Accommodation Award

David Cook - Travel Counsellor • Ditzzy Media for the Eastbourne Carnival • Hydro Hotel
Saltmarsh Farmhouse • The Grand Hotel • The View Hotel

Award Sponsored By: **LIGHTNING FIBRE**



Outstanding Food & Drink Award

Ancient Grains • Elli Meekings - Ellis Edibles • Journeys Wine Bar And Restaurant
Joy Bar • The Grand Hotel

Award Sponsored By: **POMODORO E MOZZARELLA**



Customer Service Excellence Award

Cotential • Design Lab • Driving Miss Daisy Eastbourne • Fountain Digital
Kiddicity • Mini First Aid Sussex • Prints Regent • Sussex Autos
Taboo (Eastbourne) • The Grand Hotel
The Sussex Sign Company • Westways Vending

Award Sponsored By: **HANDELSBANKEN**



Creative Excellence Award

Bodiblossom • Fame Academy • Lighthouse Gallery • Little Lemon Marketing

Award Sponsored By: **PRG MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS**



Digital Excellence Award

Ansacom • Ditzzy Media • Fountain Digital • Lovemud Dog Lady
Newman Business Solutions • Zoonou

Award Sponsored By: **SOUTHERN IT**



Employer of the Year Award

Kiddicity • Matt Hyne - Sussex Autos • Mina O'Brien - Ditzzy Media
Mini First Aid Sussex • The View Hotel

Award Sponsored By: **LWC DRINKS**



Lifetime Achievement Award

This category will be announced at the awards ceremony

Award Sponsored By: **THE BEACON**



Overall Business of the Year 2024

This category will be chosen from the overall winners
and announced at the awards ceremony

Award Sponsored By: **BRUFORDS (HEADLINE SPONSOR)**



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Mankind receives The King's Award for Voluntary Service

Men's mental health support group Mankind has been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service for 2024. The award is the highest accolade a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE.

Mankind meets up once a week in Eastbourne & Heathfield and was founded in 2020 by Eastbourne-based friends Ian Pickard & Paul Roskilly following the suicide of a close mutual friend.

The group is one of 281 local charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year.

The King's Award for Voluntary Service recognises outstanding work by local volunteer groups to support their communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate Her Majesty The late Queen's Golden Jubilee and, was continued following the accession of His Majesty King Charles. 2024 marks the second year of The King's Award for Voluntary Service.

Recipients are announced annually on 14th November, The King's Birthday. Representatives of Mankind will receive the award crystal and certificate from Andrew Blackman, Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex next summer. In addition, co-founders Ian Pickard & Paul

Roskilly from Mankind will attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace for recipients of the award in the spring.

Ian Pickard said: *"What a great honour it is to receive this award recognising our work over the last five years.*

This award will really help raise our profile in East Sussex which, in turn, will help us grow the group and support we are able to offer men who are struggling."

Paul Roskilly said *"We are so proud of the men who have had the courage to walk through our door and trust*



us. We started as a group which has become a community of men who are a support for each other. It is those men who have enabled us to be recognised with this wonderful award."

To find out more, visit www.victoriahm.co.uk

Visit Santa at KiddiCity This Christmas



Greg Draven returns as Santa for a magical fourth year.

This festive season KiddiCity in Langney will welcome back actor Greg Draven to star as Santa. Known for his warm and friendly approach, Greg returns for the fourth year

and will bring his genuine Santa experience that children and families love.

Located within Langney Shopping Centre, KiddiCity's Santa's Grotto is a magical festive experience where Greg makes each visit feel personal

by creating a comfortable space where children up to eight-years-old can share their Christmas wishes.

As soon as families arrive, they're welcomed into a warm, Christmas-themed space and can take part in a range of Christmas-themed activities, including a North Pole Breakfast, Elf Discos, Breakfasts with Santa, Gingerbread Workshops, and Storytime with Santa. There are also SEN-friendly sessions so that all children can join in the fun.

A Sky News report from last year revealed there were 15% fewer jobs being advertised for Santas, meaning a disappointing decline in the number of Santa experiences. However, KiddiCity is proud to keep up its tradition of providing a

magical festive experience for local families this year.

Santa's Grotto opens on Saturday 7th December and will run each weekend and some weekdays until Tuesday 24th December. Sessions will fill up fast, so parents are encouraged to book in advance.

Each Visit Santa Ticket is £13 and includes admission for one child, a visit with Santa, a special Christmas gift, and an hour of playtime in KiddiCity's play areas for children aged eight and under.

Older siblings can be entertained in the café with festive crafts and refreshments available to purchase.

To book tickets and festive events, visit www.kiddicity.co.uk

New Members for December

Eastbourne Job Centre DWP • Eastbourne News • The Berkeley Hotel • East Sussex Coaching for Improvement • LJB Lee Botting • Jojo Garden Design & Construction • Boudoir with Personality • BarkWeb • Beacon Surveying • Federation of Small Businesses • Sweet Circus CIC • IV Media • Blue Heart

Chamber fundraising lunch is highlight in a year's work for UCEP

The Chamber's Airbourne lunch is a spectacular event that takes place each August at the View Hotel.

As well as taking in the airshow from the hotel's stunning balcony, the three-course lunch raises money each year for a chosen worthy cause which this year, was UCEP.

UCEP provides scholarships to children from disadvantaged families in West Africa. Their work gets children into education and off the streets, where they are threatened by gang violence and crime. UCEP also works to build the infrastructure for schools to sustain themselves – a real challenge in countries where there is no free state-provided schooling.

The Airbourne lunch raised £1750 for UCEP, which founder Charles Uwakemene explained would fund education for dozens of students for a whole year.

Charles, who has just returned from a trip to Nigeria explained a little about his visit: "I had a very eventful trip to Nigeria in October to meet UCEP's scholarship children from four villages, some of their teachers and village Elders. I also met with our team of field staff who deliver mentoring and safeguarding services for the children.

During the visit we held a celebration with some of the children, their parents, village elders, some of the charity's local trustees, and some officials from the Abia State Government.



Charles Uwakemene visiting trustees and school children in Nigeria

I took some time to get some feedback from the field staff, teachers and elders on how the scholarship program was delivering on its mission. Their overall opinions were very positive and encouraging. They said that there were marked improvements in the children's school performances and behaviour outside school.

We gave school materials to the children and distributed some bespoke booklets on UCEP's values. They celebrated with a practiced dance for the guests, ending with photographs, some refreshments and farewell songs.

It was a most valuable and moving experience".

Find out more at
ucepcommunity.org



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Eastbourne unLtd Chamber of Commerce is the largest town based Chamber in the South East, so becoming a member will connect you to a large business network offering support, advice and opportunities for you and your business to grow.

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Christmas Recycling and Rubbish Collection Dates

Usual collection day:

Wednesday	25 Dec
Thursday	26 Dec
Friday	27 Dec
Monday	30 Dec
Tuesday	31 Dec
Wednesday	1 Jan
Thursday	2 Jan
Friday	3 Jan
Monday	6 Jan
Tuesday	7 Jan
Wednesday	8 Jan
Thursday	9 Jan
Friday	10 Jan

Revised collection day:

Friday	27 Dec
Saturday	28 Dec
Monday	30 Dec
Tuesday	31 Dec
Thursday	2 Jan
Friday	3 Jan
Saturday	4 Jan
Monday	6 Jan
Tuesday	7 Jan
Wednesday	8 Jan
Thursday	9 Jan
Friday	10 Jan
Saturday	11 Jan



**Collections resume on your usual collection day,
from Monday 13 January 2025**



Garden Waste collections are suspended from
Wednesday 25 December 2024 and resume on your
usual collection day, from Wednesday 8 January 2025.

- ▶ Please ensure that the bins are put out **at the edge of your property by 7am** on the day of collection. Please take them in as soon as possible after collection.
- ▶ **Extra recycling** can be placed out in non-black plastic bags next to the recycling bin for collection (except for glass which should only be placed into the recycling bin).
- ▶ All your **festive wrapping paper and cards** (except foil/glitter) can be placed in the recycling bin.
- ▶ **Recycle your real tree** in your Garden Waste Bin or take it to your local Household Waste Recycling Site.

Check your collection days online:
www.wealden.gov.uk



Sign up to **Wealden Weekly** and receive
weekly emails about your collections.
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More volunteer drivers needed

CUCKMERE Buses has been operating bus services in the Eastbourne, Hailsham, Cuckmere Valley, Seaford and Lewes area for 48 years.

By **Nick Price**

Now it needs to recruit more volunteers.

Everybody who runs the organisation and drives its buses are volunteers.

It does not compete with the major operators, and operates in areas where such services are not offered.

The company uses 16-seater minibuses which can negotiate some

of the narrow roads and country lanes in the area.

It has recently taken delivery of a new bus (pictured right) which entered service at the beginning of November after having the company's livery applied to the exterior and being fitted out internally.

It receives no government support for the purchase of its buses.



Cuckmere buses

Volunteer Drivers Urgently Required

We are a busy charity operating several 16-seater mini-buses from our base at Berwick. We provide weekly timetabled public services in the Cuckmere Valley area, plus town services in Hailsham and Seaford. And we also provide Private Hire.

We Need You!

Full training and back-up will be given. You may drive as many or as few shifts as you wish in any month; you choose when you want to drive. Weekends are in particular need of drivers.

To find out more about joining the team, call us on **01323 870920** or email volunteer@cuckmerebuses.org.uk

To find out more about us visit:
cuckmerebuses.org.uk



The major source of income is from passenger fares on scheduled services.

In 2024 the company is on target to exceed its pre-COVID number of passengers carried (over 81,000).

In addition to running more than 20 services each week, private hire and special services (such as Eastbourne tennis) are operated.

On scheduled services, passengers can pay using concession cards or using cash or credit cards.

In common with major operators, the company has been offering fare paying passengers the nationally subsidised £2 single fare which is due to increase to £3 on 1st January.

The only qualification for volunteer drivers is to hold a current driving licence with a D1 category.

One recent recruit is Toby Philipson, who has answered a number of questions why he wanted to volunteer and his initial experience driving a bus.

Let's hear from Toby:

"I saw CCB as an opportunity to give something back to the communities served by CCB – to make a difference to those who count upon a regular bus service.

"I had been aware of CCB for many years. A neighbour had volunteered for some time and spoke highly of his experiences.

"My grandfather was proud to serve the community of Eastbourne, having driven for *Eastbourne Bus Corporation* for many years – and so, a combination of factors came together as I reflected upon a recruitment advert I'd seen in a local



newspaper. I made contact by e-mail, received a lovely response back and the rest, as they say, is history.

"I work Monday to Friday, so I'm able to support CCB at weekends and public holidays. Initially, I wondered whether me working full-time would not be the best option for CCB, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

"I can't deny that I wasn't apprehensive when I arrived to meet the trainer, Peter, for the first time, but I needn't have worried. The most important thing for Peter was to settle me into the bus, gauge my competence and, for me, to get a feel for driving the bus.

"With this done, only then, was I introduced to the documentation and process etc, to support the role. This really meant that I was able to make sure that I enjoyed the drive and felt comfortable, before considering the wider aspects of driving for CCB.

I had two drives with Peter, perhaps 60 to 90 minutes each, during which, he was encouraging, complimentary and delivered some sound advice! When he suggested that a stop for coffee was an important part of the run out, I knew I was going to be OK! There was absolutely nothing to knock my early experiences with CCB, that's for sure."

Join us

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver, please contact volunteer@cuckmerebuses.org.uk or call **01323 870920**.



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Oliver's message to Parliament

LAST month we told you the wonderful story of Oliver Davis, 14, from Eastbourne.

By **Peter Lindsey**

He won a *BBC Make a Difference Award for Surrey and Sussex* for his role as a young carer.

Since he was just eight years old, Oliver has cared for his mum Wendy, who lives with significant cardiac issues and the long term effects of a stroke.

But the surprises didn't end there because *The Beacon Shopping Centre* wanted to say well done for his excellent work.

Community Manager Hend Moussa met both Oliver and Wendy and gifted the teenager with a £100 voucher.

Oliver was over the moon and headed straight into *Next*. That's because he had to go to the *Houses of Parliament* the following week for a meeting about *Young Carers Rights*.

He was invited by the *Carers Trust* to attend an All-Party Parliamentary Group meeting and handed in a letter he had co-written with other young carers to the Secretary of State for Education's office.

The vouchers were brilliant for helping him feel presentable for this meeting.

Oliver said: "It was very important for me to attend this meeting in London. I want to get the message across about young carers at national level, so we are hopeful that the Secretary of State for Education has read our letter.

"A very big thank you to *The Beacon*. I am very grateful."





A great coach can change a life...

TIM Brown was named Male Pathway Coach of the Year at the *Sussex County FA Awards* – and it's easy to understand why.

By **Peter Lindsey**

He's transformed youth football in the ten years that he has been at *Eastbourne Borough FC*, including:

Creating a *Goalkeeping Academy* at the club which at its peak attracted around 40 players aged seven to 18

Launched and developed *Eastbourne Borough 'Spirit of Football' Disability*

Football squad which sees players aged five to 22 regularly playing football on a Saturday morning

Took on coaching the *Sports Stars* squad for 3-5 year olds, again on a Saturday, with around 20 children having plenty of fun and enjoyment each week.

Head Coach of the Year 1 Development Squad, where the children learn how to play mini soccer football prior to them moving on to become a new U7 team. Tim

has formed the last seven youth teams at the club in this way, from this year's U7 team up to U14s.

Tim has been a Football Coach for 38 years across Sussex in a variety of roles at different clubs and academies, and he said: "I've heard that a good coach can change a game, while a great coach can change a life, and I definitely believe that to be the case.

"Sport is not only fun and good for our mental and physical health but it can also teach youngsters important life skills such as desire, attitude, teamwork, resilience, determination, handling setbacks and knowing how to win and lose to name just a few.

"I have been lucky enough to receive so many thank you letters from parents over the years, appreciating the effort that goes in to shaping

youngsters for their life ahead and I have kept every one of them. That to me is everything.

"I was shocked beyond belief to learn that I had received seven nominations for this year's award which is incredible. I understand that I'm also now a finalist at the *Sussex Sports Awards* held at *Hove Cricket Ground* in December as well which is equally as exciting."

Tim says that *Disability Football* is constantly growing and breaking new ground, and it is something he is keen to develop further.

He said: "My coaching team currently supports around 100 players every Saturday morning across my four sessions, including over 40 disability children which is very satisfying and great fun to be a part of.

"One of the highlights each season is my summer *World Cup Fun Day*, our all-inclusive *Football Fiesta* with around 1,000 people in the ground. Four teams play – England, Brazil, Spain and Italy – and the players wear the coloured shirt depending which country they are playing for. Everyone plays in a fully inclusive tournament, everyone is together, and national anthems are played before the football on 12 pitches. The winning team wins our World Cup.

"We have a season-long plan every year and we are continually setting and reaching new milestones. The future is very bright here – long may it continue."



My 60 years addicted to Christmas decorations

FOR over 60 years now, *Bournefree's* gardening guru Geoff Stonebanks has been creating Christmas Magic in his homes.

By **Peter Lindsey**

He has a vast collection that started in the late 1950's and at his Seaford home now curates a collection of more than 40 crates of memorabilia. He also has more than 25 assorted artificial Christmas trees of varying heights.

Once Geoff moved away from home in the 70s, he began buying his own decorations and when his parents retired, he inherited those which had decorated the family pub in Oxfordshire.

Fast forward to 2017 and Geoff decided to try and get some publicity for the large collection and created his own Christmas website (www.geoffschristmas.co.uk).

Little did he know that his trees would end up on page 3 of the *Daily Mail* on December 23rd that year. A journalist from the *Mail* contacted Geoff and arranged to come and shoot his collection for a feature. At the time of the shoot, the trees were dressed across four different rooms.

Once the *Mail's* picture editor saw the images, they asked if all the trees could be moved into one room!

Geoff initially declined, as it was a huge undertaking, until they

offered a large amount of money to complete the task! It was done and a great image was created.

Roll on to 2018 and there were features posted online with both *The Daily Express* and *Mail online*.

By 2020, things began to hot up with *Athena Films* (a production company commissioned by *Channel 5*) approaching Geoff to include his collection in an hour-long documentary, along with other collectors, entitled 'Incredible Christmas Trees and How to decorate them.'

Geoff said: "Following the broadcast of the *C5* programme, I was invited to join Holly and Phil, live on *This Morning*, on Wednesday 2nd December.

"Bearing in mind it was Covid year, the coverage was filmed from my iPhone, set up in the house, so sadly not fantastic quality. I gave them a quick tour of the three decorated rooms."

By 2021, *Sussex Life* decided to publish a two-page feature on the growing collection and *C5* repeated the show on December 21st.

Geoff said: "2022 was quite an amazing year too with the German national TV broadcaster, *ZDF* contacting me in late October and seeking to make a film about getting



Geoff hanging the many, many decorations. Photo: Paul Davey, SWNS.



ITV Meridian filming.

the decorations out of store and setting them up around the house.

"They ultimately visited twice, once to film setting the decorations up and again to film the finished rooms. The resulting film aired on their *Mittags Magazine* lunchtime programme in Germany.

"Later in the month, the *Jeremy Vine Show* on *C5* was having a debate about Christmas tinsel and invited me to participate, live from home. The session was filmed again via my iPhone relayed back to the studio.

"The most significant year by far though was last year, 2023, when there was a great deal of interest in talking about my collection. It all began with some great coverage in the *Metro* newspaper quickly followed by a feature online in the *Daily Express* and an interview on *Heart Radio* with JK and Kelly Brook."

"Amazingly, a Norwegian reporter contacted Geoff too and published a great feature in that country's *Dagbladet* newspaper.

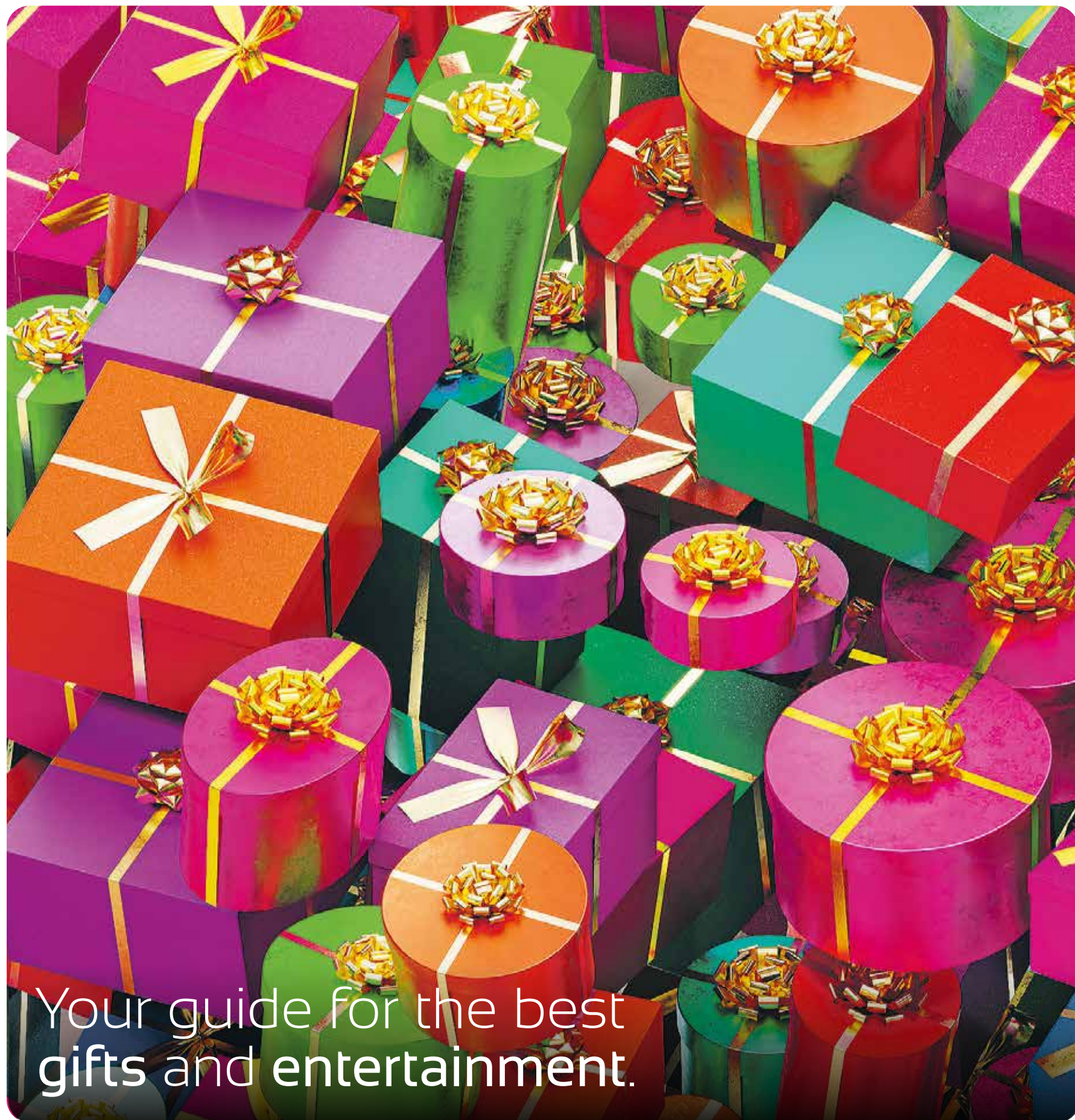
"ITV's *This Morning* made another approach, with a view to sending a cameraman to film live. The hosts were Josie Gibson and Craig Doyle. After being filmed across the three decorated rooms, we ended top in the lounge, when the cameraman presented me with a gift from the programme, live on air, of a "This Morning" silver bauble to add to my collection.

2023 was then topped off with an appearance, live from home, on Christmas morning on *Sky News*.

"All in all quite an amazing backstory for my 60 year addiction to Christmas decorations."

More details and images at www.geoffschristmas.co.uk

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Eastbourne Theatres 23rd Pantomime Spectacular!

**SNOW WHITE – Devonshire Park Theatre,
6th December 2024 – 12th January 2025.**

By **Aimee Pugh**

**Eastbourne's biggest
pantomime is back with its
23rd spectacular, *Snow White*!**

From the *Devonshire Park Theatre* team, famed for giving audiences a true live theatre experience, this tale of the fairest of them all is a

traditional family classic but given a delicious *Eastbourne Theatres* twist – packed with live music from a full band, beautifully designed costumes created especially for the show, lots of enchanting onstage effects and a hugely talented cast, this show is sure to be a colourful feast!

The cast includes Carli Norris (*Eastenders*, *Holby City*, *Hollyoaks*) who returns this year as the



Photo: Pete Gurr.

Wickedest Queen in panto-land and there are laughs guaranteed from Eastbourne favourites Tucker as Herbie the Huntsman with a difference and Martyn Knight, this year playing Dame Dolly!

Ben Tyler (*Book of Mormon*, *West End*) takes the role of Prince Simon with Georgie Hales (*Peter Pan the Arena Spectacular*) as the picture-perfect Snow White.

The young company this year are once again made up of talented local youngsters who were all hand-picked after an intensive audition process which saw an absolute wealth of local talent.

Snow White, 6th December – 12th January, *Devonshire Park Theatre*, Eastbourne, tickets priced from just £13, call **01323 412000** or www.eastbournetheatres.co.uk

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You are also invited to join us at a special Lights of Love remembrance event. Each event is a wonderful inclusive occasion with music, readings and refreshments, and a moment of reflection for those who have held a special place in our hearts.

01323 434221 | stwhospice.org/lights



Recycle your Christmas tree for charity

If you live in BN8, BN20, BN21, BN22, BN23, BN24, BN25, BN26, BN27, TN21, TN22 we can collect your real Christmas tree in return for a donation to St Wilfrid's Hospice.

 stwhospice.org/trees

 01323 434200

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As easy as 1, 2, tree...

1. Visit stwhospice.org/trees
2. Tell us your address and make a donation.
3. Leave your tree on the boundary of your property by midnight on 8th January. We will collect it by midnight on 11th January.

Wonderful Waterfront

ON Friday 6th December between 4pm to 8pm, we'll have the following festive entertainment for you to enjoy at *The Waterfront, Sovereign Harbour*.

By **Taria Williams**

Live choir performances from Langney Primary School and Eastbourne Rock Choir.

- Arrival of Santa and his helpers.
- Meet Santa's real reindeers.
- Children's funfair rides.
- Face painting and glitter tattoos.*
- Christmas artisan market.

The market, children's funfair rides, face painting and glitter tattoos will also be open on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th December from 10am–3pm. There will also be a magician on Sunday 8th December only.

*Face painting £5, glitter tattoo £4.

Plus, from Friday 6th to Sunday 8th December, take part in our festive elf walk around the harbour. Find 11 excited elves hiding on lampposts,



each containing a hidden letter that makes up a secret two-word password. Tell the team at *Dolci's* the password and get a festive treat.

The elf hunt is suitable for children aged 3 to 11 years old and is open 4pm–8pm on Friday and 11am–4pm on Saturday–Sunday.

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11:00 Snow White - Devonshire Park Theatre

14:00 - 16:00 Carvery - Buffet

19:00 - 21:00 Mulled wine, mince pies & piano

21:00 Christmas movie & Ice Cream in the lounge

Christmas Day

£150

8:00 - 10:30 Breakfast with Santa

11:00 Silver Band concert at the Bandstand

14:00 - 16:00 Carvery - Buffet

19:00 - 21:00 Bubbly and snacks with piano

21:00 Christmas movie & Ice Cream in the lounge

Boxing Day

£100

8:00 - 10:30 Breakfast

11:00 Winter Wonderland and ice skating

14:00 - 16:00 Carvery - Buffet

19:00 - 21:00 Mulled wine, mince pies & piano

21:00 Christmas movie & Ice Cream in the lounge



Image by Graham Huntley.

Free Bandstand concerts to continue tradition

CHRISTMAS concerts will return to Eastbourne Bandstand with free events on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

By **Peter Lindsey**

The annual free concerts date back to 1935 and are a long-standing Christmas tradition attracting thousands across all three days, starting with the biggest Christmas Day concert in Britain.

Taking centre stage on Christmas Day, *Eastbourne Silver Band* will once again bring a mix of traditional carols and festive classics from 10:30am – 12pm, as friends, family and visitors celebrate together in a pre-Christmas dinner treat.

The Criminal Records will be making their Boxing Day debut bringing festive party hits guaranteed to get people dancing from 11am – 12:30pm. The band return on New Year's Day from 11am – 12:30pm, this time joined by singer Joel White, for more party hits and celebrations – including the annual Bandstand conga.

All concerts are free with standing room only and no ticket required, although revellers are invited to make donations online to support running costs.

Capacity will be limited in the main arena on the day, however access to the middle balcony will be unrestricted and bars on both levels will be open with hot drinks, mulled wine and more. *Friends of Eastbourne Bandstand* receive a 10% discount at the bar.

Free parking

On street parking charges do not apply on 25th, 26th December and 1st January 2025.

Tickets for 2025 Bandstand concerts will be on sale in December with details to be announced soon. Gift vouchers are also available, making an ideal Christmas gift for music fans.

For more information or to buy gift vouchers or make a donation visit www.EastbourneBandstand.co.uk or telephone **01323 410611**.



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[TheChristmasTreeMen](https://www.facebook.com/TheChristmasTreeMen)

Festive Fun

SHARNFOLD Farm at Stone Cross is gearing up for a bumper Christmas – and everyone is invited to join in.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Festive Fun on the Farm runs from Saturday November 30th until Sunday December 22nd.

Explore the farm and take part in the Reindeer Round-Up by finding hidden wooden reindeers, and stroll through the Christmas-themed Timber Town for some festive magic.

Donna Bull from *The Family Parks Group*, which owns *Sharnfold*, said: "This is a great opportunity for everyone to get in the festive spirit.

"We've added some festive cheer to the farm, perfect for families looking for a fun Christmas outing.

"We have given our woodland village a festive makeover – it looks great and we know that people will love it when they come down."

Tickets start from just £3.45pp when you pre-book. Under 2s go free. Booking fees apply but are included with all memberships. Pre-booked tickets are available until midnight the day before.

Festive Fun on the Farm is open from Wednesday to Friday, from 10am until 2pm, and then Saturday and Sunday, from 10am until 3pm.

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Making a massive difference

IT'S a charity making a massive difference to people across the country – and indeed across the world.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Medi Tech Trust – situated on the Swan Barn Business Centre at Hailsham – donates medical equipment and unused surgical consumables to where it is most needed.

Apart from medicines, it can be almost anything that is in good condition and can be re-used, including:

- Wheelchairs
- Crutches
- Boots
- Catheters
- Syringes
- Wipes
- Baby consumables, bottles, teats
- Incontinence pads
- Sealed Dressings and bandages.

These are then either shipped abroad to countries in need or donated locally to East Sussex Foodbanks.

Bob Lewis – who set up the charity in 2002 with consultant urologist Graham Watson – said: “We are talking about receiving and then distributing over one million items each year.

“We receive items from a variety of sources. It could be hospitals, medical companies, businesses closing down, other manufacturers who have unwanted items, and equally important, individuals wishing to give back surplus medical equipment or to make a donation.

“We transport and deliver to many developing countries across the world, including 15 countries in Africa, Sri Lanka, and war stricken countries such as Ukraine.

“It’s basically giving us medical equipment you no longer need. For example, one donation was of eight Mammogram machines, which we managed to donate to where they would be best used and valued abroad.

“We are a growing charity with five volunteer Trustees, four members of staff, and around twenty volunteers. We value them all greatly. We could do a lot more, but we are stretched to the limits and in desperate need of more volunteers, both in the office and the warehouse. If anyone has a few hours spare on any weekday [Mon–Fri], please call us between 09:00–16:00 on 01323 442211.”



Medi Tech Trust Roadshow.



Go Fund Me ventilators.

Medi Tech Trust also organises Community Projects throughout East Sussex to help others.

One example was a five-year Community Initiative offering GPs their choice of equipment needed that would benefit their patients. This culminated in donating more than 800 items of medical equipment to GP surgeries across East Sussex and Brighton and Hove. Every surgery participated in helping improve services for their patients, which enabled the charity to achieve 100% success. Now some of the surgeries are helping by having recycling bins.

Another initiative is donating first aid kits to various youth sports and social clubs across East Sussex, with ongoing re-fills when needed.

Medi Tech Trust also donated wheelchair ramps to Hailsham Gospel Mission in Station Road and made a significant donation of equipment and consumables worth £50,000 to its mission hospital in Sierra Leone.

Bob said: “There is no doubt the demand is there. What we do is unique

– redistributing surgical consumables to people who need them.

“Our mentoring and training programme is run by Graham Watson and supported by other eminent consultants. This comprises hands on training on site in many African hospitals with online follow up. This programme started in Sri Lanka in 2009. Over the next four years invasive surgery to remove kidney stones was eliminated.

This year’s visit, which was predominantly subsidised by Medi Tech Trust, included the training of ten local doctors and the carrying out of 40 operations that otherwise would not have been possible. Laser equipment has also been donated so that invasive surgery is no longer needed.

“Medi Tech Trust created a saline water tower system that is used in Africa to make operations safer and quicker, so saving patients the cost of buying saline bags. Many more successful operations now take place as costs are less, safety has improved and infection rates lowered.

“In a way we may be punching above our weight, but we absolutely love what we do – making a difference, a real difference, to people who need it most.”

To donate items, or to contact the charity, please call: **01323 442211**

Or email: enquiries@meditechtrust.org



Surgeries.



Claire Johnson, right, presenting cheque to St Wilfrid's.

All about love and desire

BEING diagnosed with breast cancer is, of course, devastating.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Claire Johnson from Eastbourne received the diagnosis two years ago.

Her response was to set up the *Breast Friends Forever* website, a supportive space for everyone affected by breast cancer to come together.

And now Claire, with ten friends of the group, have completed the *100 for 100 Challenge*, raising £3,600 for *St Wilfrid's Hospice*.

Claire said: "The idea for the Challenge came from my friend Sab after her recent experiences with the illness.

"We all walked 100 miles each during October, three and a half miles each day, with the aim of each raising £100.

"It was lovely for me, going back into nature, as I walked mainly around Shinewater Park and parts of Langney, and it was very rewarding for us all to meet at *Perch Princes Park* and donate such a large amount to the hospice."

Since its launch, *Breast Friends Forever* has donated more than £5,000 to *Macmillan Cancer Support*, *Breast Cancer Now* as well as *St Wilfrid's*.

Claire said: "It is about continually giving back, and I am so very proud. Every penny we raise we give back. The group has gone from strength to strength, and that's just fantastic. I feel that we do good and raise money at the same time."

The website provides information and its purpose is to be supportive. There are also blogs, and Claire says it's where you can go to when you need help.

"The charity is very important to me and I want to help as many people as possible. I am now trained in Level 2 Cancer Care so the website can also be seen as a clinic where I can offer support.

"We are planning more charity events moving forward. It has become my world, I am so passionate about it."

The group is hoping to raise money for the new elective hub which will be outside the *DGH* once it is built. There are currently hubs in Brighton and Hastings but not Eastbourne.

Claire says that more men than women actually die of breast cancer, hence her urging people to connect with *Breast Friends Forever*.

"It's all about love and desire – and making a difference."

www.breastfriendsforever.co.uk
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Memories of a summer picnic

AS we pile on our fleeces, waterproofs, hats & gloves in order to face the cold wind or sudden rain of our winter rambles, we can cast our memories back to summer; ah, those halcyon days of suncream, short shorts and long cool drinks.

By **Lindsey Gwynne**

One of those days in particular is a fond memory for the *Polegate Ramblers* when all three groups got together for a delightful walk and a picnic, one of our regular annual social events.

Starting from East Dean car park, appetites were worked up with a gentle 5-miler, up Hobbs Eares to Friston, across to Crowlink and Birling Gap, through Horseshoe Plantation below Belle Tout, across the road and up the concrete driveway to Cornish Farm, across the fields past the old Sheep Centre, and a short distance of road walking back to East Dean Green.

The walking shoes were exchanged for sandals, and picnic chairs, tables and food were extracted from car boots and set up on the green. Several members brought cakes to share – chocolate, carrot, lemon drizzle – and some picnics were washed down with ‘a little something’. Everyone relaxed in the sunshine and chatted with friends, regular and less familiar. In fact we had an unexpected member. She had planned to meet friends at East Dean but had got the wrong day, so joined our walk instead, and stayed for the picnic too.

Overseeing our celebration was the spirit of Sherlock Holmes who, according to a blue plaque on a pretty cottage on the green, retired from his detective duties to become a beekeeper ‘... on his small farm on the Sussex Downs.’

Also, possibly floating around our Victoria Sponges and ham sandwiches may have been the spirit of Beachy Head Woman, discovered nearby and initially thought to be of sub-Saharan origin. But after DNA testing she was found to be from Cyprus, causing the plaque celebrating her as one of the first Black Britons to be removed.

But I digress. Thanks to our social committee; Sarah, Tony & Claire for organising a lovely outing; a memory to warm the cockles on these cold, misty days.

Polegate Ramblers meet every Thursday for a choice of a 2-ish mile, 5-ish mile or 10-ish mile walk. Rambles are led by experienced members in the local area. New walkers can come from any of the nearby towns or villages and are always welcome.

Email: polegateramblers@gmail.com
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Seasonal offers now in store

ACTIVE Days Mobility is now situated at 6 Winston Crescent, Seaside, where there is plenty of free parking.

By **Peter Lindsey**

It sells all types of mobility living aids, including scooters, wheelchairs and walking sticks.

Owner Mark Stewart is clear what the shop has to offer:

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- Time spent discussing exactly what the customer wants so it's the right product for each customer.
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Mark — who also owns a similar business in Western Road, Bexhill, said: “My staff are fully qualified and fully trained.

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“We are the main dealer for all the big manufacturers, and we sell a wide range of products.

“My priority is talking with people so they get what they want, and at the right price.

“We have refurbished the shop and it's getting busier all the time. Of course, free parking does help.





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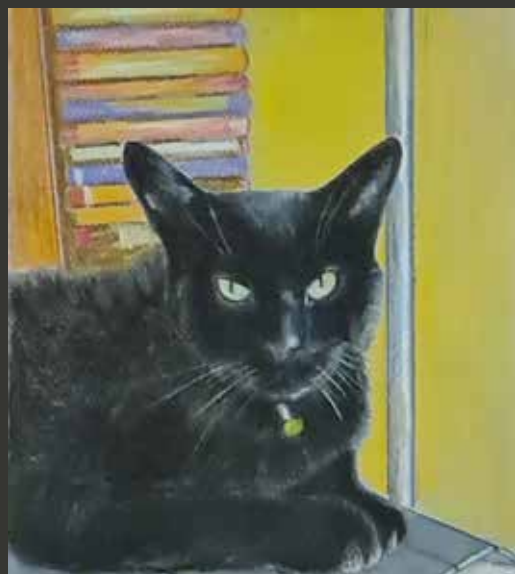
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 @galleryat42 www.galleryat42.co.uk

Gallery@42, South Street, Eastbourne BN214XB

Have you heard of Cicely Sponge?

CICELY is a former flamenco dancer living in a slightly damp two-bedroom maisonette in Polegate with her long-term friend Alfredo (an Italian downhill skier) and a quintet of budgerigars.

By **Harry Farmer**

For over six years, Cicely has been writing to a comedy talk show in Eastbourne and St Leonards called *The Bavard Bar*. Her letters have never made any sense, yet despite that, she has decided to publish them in a book.

For example, in October 2019, Cicely wrote:

*Dear Mr Bar,
People, including Enya, often ask me what my inspiration was for 'Orinoco Flow'. In the mid-1980s, I managed a plumber's merchant in Wimbledon. It wrote itself.
Yours, Cicely Sponge, Polegate*

Then in January 2021, she wrote:

*Dear Mr Bar,
According to my therapist, I 'chose' my parents. I think that's unlikely as if I had, I'd have grown up in Monaco, not Croydon.
Yours, Cicely Sponge, Polegate*

More recently in February 2024, Cicely wrote:

*Dear Mr Bar,
As Chairman of Polegate's foremost Artichoke Appreciation Society, we've updated our motto to 'E pluribus unum artichoke'. Something else that sets us apart from Polegate's other Artichoke Appreciation Societies.
Yours, Cicely Sponge, Polegate*

Christmas Specials

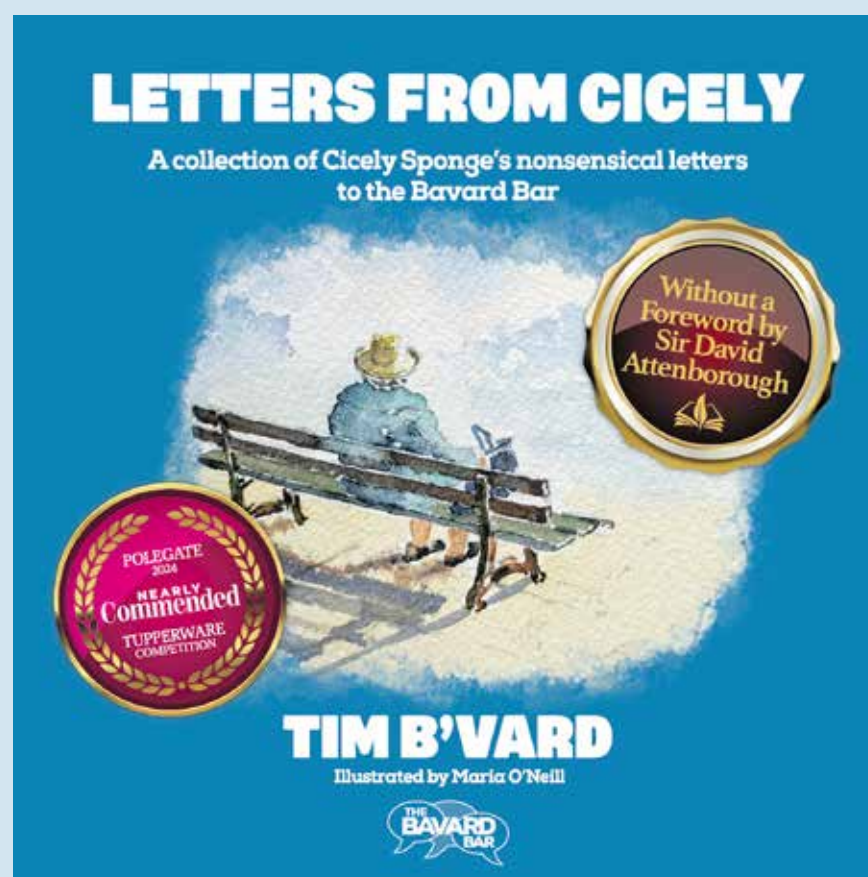
Cicely's book is entitled '*Letters from Cicely*' and contains over 150 of her bizarrely bonkers letters.

Cicely's book should be available to buy at the Christmas Special shows of the *Bavard Bar* on 11th & 13th December at *Towner* in Eastbourne, and 18th & 20th December at *Kino-teatr* in St Leonards. Tickets for the shows on 11th and 20th December have sold out, but some tickets are available for the shows on 13th and 18th December. Top comic Tony Law (*HIGNFY*, *8 Out Of 10 Cats*, etc) is appearing at all the *Bavard Bar* December shows.

Book launch

Cicely will also be having a book launch and signing at *Towner* and *Kino-Teatr* on dates to be announced.

So if you fancy a beautifully illustrated book of nonsense for Christmas, or if you know someone who does, please come to one of the above shows and buy one for just £10. Alternatively, you can contact the *Bavard Bar* and order direct via www.bavardbar.co.uk



“
Letters from Cicely contains over 150 of her bizarrely bonkers letters.”



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Songs of the Solstice

SUSSEX concert guitarist and composer Richard Durrant and band begin their *Songs of the Solstice* tour in their home county with shows close to his former home in Wilmington.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Richard, will be joined by three of his musically gifted children (Rooney Durrant-Davies, Daisy & Django Durrant) as well as singer, songwriter Amy Kakoura and international keyboard virtuoso Howard Beach as they play at St Mary and St Peter's Church in Wilmington, on 14th December (2:30pm and 7:30pm).

Richard says: "This all began in 1994 when I was living at Wilmington Priory next door to the 11th century church of St Mary & St Peters in Wilmington, Sussex. On a quiet midwinter's afternoon, all those years ago, somebody knocked on the priory door asking if I could pop into the church to share some music with a group of toddlers. I happily grabbed a guitar and met the children sat around the Christmas tree. I played a few tunes and we began to sing together and as we sang the winter sun managed to peep over the top of Windover Hill to shine through the church window. The sense of shared magic was complete.

"My family Christmas begins with rehearsals for these shows so my kids have grown up listening to Amy's beautiful voice. Now they get to join



the band, go on tour to help share our deep love of this wonderful music."

This year the band will pick from their collection of original material contributed to by every member of this remarkable six piece band alongside numbers such as Johnny Flynn's *The Burial Blessing*, Fleet Foxes *White Winter Hymnal* and *Ubi Caritas* by Ola Gjello.

Over many years Richard has developed these midwinter shows into warm, inclusive, family, Pagan and Christian friendly happenings laced with early music and English folk vibes.

Tickets: £20, under 18s £5. You can buy on line at: richarddurrant.com

How my love of football led to a new book

DANIEL Ford is a journalist and author who moved to Eastbourne last year.

By **Peter Lindsey**

He went to watch his beloved Aldershot Town play Eastbourne Borough in a pre-season friendly at the start of the 2023-24 season.

And then, after watching a few more matches in the town, he thought: "There's a book in this!" And there was.

One year and 103 Eastbourne football games later, Daniel has published a book called *Fish, Chips & Football*.

He spent a whole season watching non-league matches, all of them involving an Eastbourne team.

Daniel says he loved it: "The first game was the friendly in early July last year — it was sunny and didn't really feel like the football season — and it really took off from there. I think I got a bit obsessed really, watching games involving the *Borough*, *Eastbourne Town* and *Eastbourne United*.

"As the season drifted on, I also took in games featuring lower-ranked Eastbourne teams, including *Eastbourne Rangers*, *Jesters Town*, *Sovereign Saints*, *Eastbourne Athletic*, *Men United* and *Parkfield*.

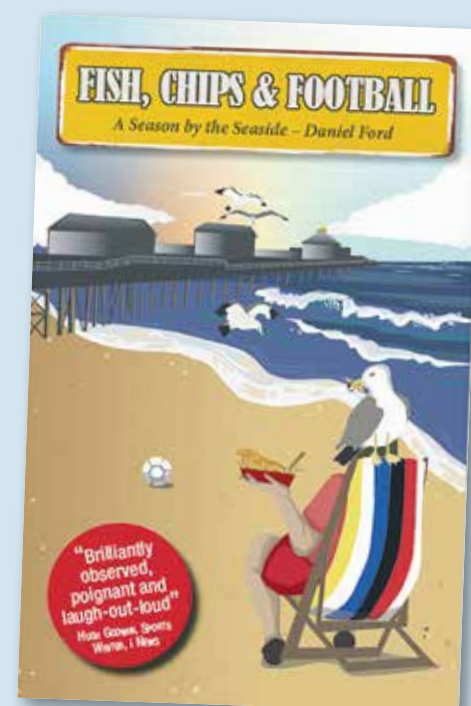
"I travelled as far afield as Dover and Havant and saw matches in many places in-between such as Seaford, Newhaven, and Brighton, but there was always an Eastbourne team involved in the match I watched.

"I love going to football grounds — my first book was called *Football Grounds Then and Now* — but this virtually took over my life. I certainly never thought I would reach 103 matches in a season."

The book is a short story of each game — not just the football, but a lot of observations about the different towns and villages I visited and the characters I met. It goes way beyond what is happening on the pitch: there are anecdotes, stories about people, the history of various clubs I went to. And there is plenty of background information about the sport too.

"Basically, I went wandering around for ten months. And had a lot of fun doing it."

To order your copy please visit: <https://chasemysnail.com>





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Green and pleasant

DECEMBER is generally a quiet month in the garden, but there are probably more things to take care of than you might think. The clocks have now gone back, meaning limited daylight hours and as we fast approach the shortest day of the year, this month's crisp wintery weather can be strikingly beautiful and bitterly cold in equal measure. The Camellia Yuletide in my garden, pictured in the header, still looks good on a frosty morning.

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

This month you will need some hard work to keep warm outside, such as digging or tree pruning. Remember to check your winter protection and if you have a greenhouse make sure the heater is working. Once your gardening tasks are complete, maybe you will have time for some fireside garden planning.

Driftwood By Sea

It's hard to believe it's almost Christmas and we are nearly at the end of another gardening year. What an incredible 12 months it has been for *Driftwood* too! In September we marked 20 years of living on the south coast and saw four separate

television films broadcast about the plot, *BBC Gardeners' World* and *BBC SE Today* in March, *ITV News* in April and local station *Latest TV* in August. Quite remarkable! Then, in late September I was approached by a production company in Bristol to use the garden for some paid location filming for a new programme on *C4* being broadcast early next year. It was hard to get it looking good for filming in mid-October but we were extremely lucky with a beautiful sunny day which really helped. As part of the new programme format, the team planned to visit beautiful and unique gardens where they gather inspiration to incorporate into the chosen garden designs for the homeowners

involved in the project. The team said that through their research they had found *Driftwood* and thought it would be perfect inspiration for a seaside garden that is being designed. Watch this space! There is a 2-page feature on *Driftwood* in the December issue of the national gardening magazine, *Modern Gardens*. It's almost four years now that I have been writing this monthly gardening feature in *Bournfree* too, how time flies.

Christmas is coming

When I think of Christmas and the garden, for me the top two things that come to mind are holly and ivy. They are two of the very traditional and stereotypical decorations for this time of year. So, if you have any growing on your plot, why not gather some and hang around your doorways and window frames to really give your house the traditional Christmas look this year. I remember, way back in my childhood in the 1960's, my parents had a pub in Oxfordshire and I would decorate it for Christmas with sprigs of holly and ivy cut from the garden plus some mistletoe we'd be given. I'd sometimes spray the foliage in gold and silver and use the mix to intertwine around the bar canopy or behind the pictures on the wall. You can also add small glass baubles or other Christmas decorations from them to create a great natural look in the house. They are both perfect for some Christmas inspiration from the garden. I have a few berries on my holly bushes this year and they look so pretty, it almost seems a shame to cut the sprigs off.

You can also cut branches from conifers or fir trees in the garden to create that naturalistic look too. If you have any seed heads or

faded hydrangea flowers from the garden, these too, can be sprayed gold and silver, to add to the more conventional Christmas decorations.

Will we get snow?

I love sculpture in the garden all year around but in the Winter, with a bit of frost or maybe a fall of snow, it can transform the garden into a mini magical kingdom. Most of my pieces are rusty metal which really catch the snow as it falls or a range of wooden wheels, not to mention a few garden gnomes too! Other pieces are metal spheres and cone plant supports which all look equally as impressive. Even if it there's no snow this Christmas, it doesn't need to stop you having your very own snowman. I recently saw one made out of a series of different diameter terracotta plant pots, each turned upside down, one on the other, and then painted white with a cute face and decorated with a scarf. It is also a great way to make use of any excess garden pots. This could be the perfect chance to engage any younger members of the family to enter into the festive spirit and to be creative in the garden.

Wishing a very Happy Christmas to all my readers!

Read more of Geoff's garden at:
www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk

Geoff is a multi-award-winning garden owner, garden writer & broadcaster. *Driftwood* has appeared twice on *BBC2 Gardeners' World* and was a finalist in *Gardeners' World Magazine Best Small Space*. See the amazing 5-star reviews on *TripAdvisor*. Read all about Geoff's work for the community, appointment as a *Coronation Champion* and trips to Buckingham Palace including two *Royal Garden Parties*, in 2018 and 2023. Read the many published features on the garden in national, local and worldwide media, including TV.

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surviving partner requires care, or even remarries, this share of the children's inheritance is protected.

This last point can be of particular interest to couples who have come together but have children from different partners. A PPT can help each person in a relationship ensure that their children inherit their share of the property, while giving their surviving partner the ability to live in the property for the rest of their life.

If the surviving partner wants to move to another property they can still sell the property and the proceeds be used to purchase a new property; the terms of the trust remain over the new property.



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