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THIS SPRING

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FESTIVAL 2026

There's a lot going on
at our beloved Bandstand.

Art, ideas, debate, family fun,
comedy and creative workshops.

04/26

Issue 070
April 2026

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Bournefree

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**Our next edition will be
 distributed from May 1st.
 Make sure you are a part of it.**

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 DESIGN MARKETING PRINT

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 PR & Engagement

Time for Toploader

SPRING has arrived and Eastbourne is looking attractive and welcoming as ever now the tourist season has started.

By **Peter Lindsey**

It was great to hear that Eastbourne Bandstand is reopening on May 1st with a packed schedule, including the amazing Toploader on May 25th.

Wonderful to hear Dan Hipgrave, lead guitarist from *Toploader*: "Eastbourne has always been a special place for us and it's where we first started building a real following. Coming back to play the bandstand feels like a proper homecoming and we can't wait to perform by the sea again."

It's bound to be a sellout.

Community Awards

We reported last month that we are organising the first *Eastbourne Community Awards* on Thursday June 18th, from 7pm at *Glass House* on Eastbourne Seafront.

We – that's *Bournefree* and *Coda Pharmacy* – have all our sponsors

sorted, and remember that every penny will be going to our chosen charities, *SASBAH* and *St Wilfrid's Hospice*.

Now we have our final list of categories and sponsors, voting will start very soon. See page 29 and also follow our regular updates online.

We are VERY excited!

Local elections

Most of you will be aware that local elections take place in May – that's for *East Sussex County Council*, not *Eastbourne Borough Council*.

I always say if you don't vote then you can't moan – so do make the most of your vote.

It will be very interesting to see if Reform and the Greens make an impact in Eastbourne, as they have nationally.

We will see.

Eastbourne Carnival

Words of praise too for Mina and her team who are staging *Eastbourne Carnival* next month. It's a fantastic event for our town – great for locals and tourists alike. Mina is doing a great job.

We Love Eastbourne

And finally, just to say that May's *Bournefree* will include a *We Love Eastbourne* pullout.

If you want to be featured, then contact myself, Gail or Harry – all our details are on this page.

Yes, people moan but deep down everyone knows that Eastbourne remains a lovely town, and May seems an appropriate time to celebrate just that.

Happy April!



Toploader.

Bournefree

Bournefree is becoming more and more popular each month, and we want to make it easier for you to promote your business or organisation.

Gail and Harry are here to help you with your marketing and to raise awareness of what you do.



gail@bournefreemag.co.uk
 01323 430303



harry@bournefreemag.co.uk
 07809 443027

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And the fun begins!



Axe throwing.

Have a smashing Easter

IT is smashing, it is extraordinary – and it’s massively popular.

By **Peter Lindsey**

And you can go there this Easter Holidays and take advantage of the special offer on this page.

We are talking about *Rage X-Treme* on the *Chaucer Industrial Park* in Polegate.

Ben and Amy have taken over the franchise, and it’s going incredibly well.

Incredibly different

Here’s Amy: “This really is something incredibly different, and people are absolutely loving it.

“Come and give us a try over the Easter Holidays. You are guaranteed a warm welcome, safety talk – and well, then it’s over to you.”

There are four Smash Rooms, Room dependant the numbers can be 1-3 people or 4-10 people, and three axe throwing lanes – a maximum of five people per lane.”

“Each rage room session is for 30 minutes and prices start from £17.50 per person.

Axe throwing is for an hour per session and prices start from £15 per person.

The more people you have in your group the cheaper per person the price is.

What’s there to smash?

Anything from a mobile phone and trays of crockery to wine bottles, TVs

and glass to a washing machine, cups and pottery.

You wear PPE, helmet, gloves and goggles, and be dressed appropriately.

Anyone is welcome from the age of eight – if you are under 18, obviously you have to be with a parent/guardian.

Safety is paramount

Ben said: “There are strict rules so that safety is paramount – for example, you can’t throw items at each other.

“Each session is for a minimum of 30 minutes and prices start from £17.50 per person.

“This is the perfect opportunity to release your emotion – some people may go the gym, some come to us.

“You may feel clogged up, emotional, and just need to get rid of some of the anger and frustration. That’s why we are here.”

Amy says it’s also perfect for young people: “Many youngsters struggle with their emotions at school, or at home, this is perfect for them. It can be a great bonding experience.

It’s best to book online – go to www.ragex-treme.co.uk or call **01323 912990**



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Image: Marie-Louise Tibbles Photography.

The BIG Futures Show 2026

EXCITEMENT is building as *The BIG Futures Show* returns to *Eastbourne Sports Park* on **Tuesday 28th April 2026** from **9:30am – 3:00pm**.

By **Mina O'Brien**

The show is the largest employability, skills and jobs event in the area and is aimed at students (aged 14+) from across East Sussex as well as parents, carers and anyone looking for work or training.

The Show is organised by *Eastbourne Education Business Partnership*, a registered charity, in association with *Eastbourne Borough Council*.

Over 60 businesses and organisations will be providing interactive exhibits and guidance aimed at inspiring tomorrow's workforce.

Visitors will receive a comprehensive Show Guide to help them make the most of their visit. Schools were provided with suggested lesson plans to help prepare their students.

Parents and carers play a significant role and influence in a young person's choice of future career and are welcome to attend throughout the day.

Exhibitors will be looking for new talent and explaining what qualifications they require, and what training and apprenticeships they offer in the workplace. Colleges, universities and other training providers will be on hand to promote their offer and where it fits

with an employer's requirements and what they are seeking from students who apply.

A wide range of employment sectors and individual organisations will be represented at the show again this year – covering a vast range of sectors: Construction, Manufacturing, Education & Training, Finance & Business, Public Services, Health and Care, Retail & Enterprise, Creative & Digital, Science, Engineering & Tech, Environment, Transport & Logistics, Leisure & Tourism and Volunteering.

The organisers are grateful for sponsorship from *Eastbourne Borough Council*, *Bexhill 6th Form College*, *Edwards Vacuum*, *National Federation of Roofing Contractors*, *East Sussex College* and *Recruitment South East* plus support from *Wave Active*, *CloudConnX*, *CCLI*, and *Posturite*.

A dedicated job-seekers area, staffed by *Recruitment South East*, will be promoting current job and training opportunities on behalf of the show exhibitors for those seeking a more immediate choice. Support will be available to help job-seekers with CV's and their social media coverage plus sign-posting to appropriate stands.

Entry on the day (individual or family) is £3 or free for job-seekers.

hello@bigfuturesshow.org.uk | **07958 559600**

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Preparations hot up for this year's Carnival

AS we get ready for 'Lights, Camera, Action!'

By **Mina O'Brien**



Eastbourne Carnival is now less than two months' away so preparations are hotting up for this year's big parade!

Local organisations, bands and community groups have already been busy signing up to take part – so this could be our biggest parade in recent years!

We are delighted to share that members of *Dortmund Carnival* will be back again this year.

Carnival Organisers have this year successfully been awarded funding from the *Arts Council England*, alongside continued support from *Lightning Fibre*, *Eastbourne Sightseeing*, *The Best of Eastbourne*, *Seahaven FM*, *Media Attention*, *Your Eastbourne BID*, *Eastbourne News*, *Bournefree & Custard Design*, *The View Hotel*, *Mativus*, and *Elite Medical*, as well as other sponsors – please see our website for the full list.

Our programme of Carnival workshops is in up and running with more support than ever for local bands and community groups to get ready for Carnival.

Emma Pearce, Head of Marketing at *Lightning Fibre*, commented, "We're happy to provide funding for these workshops, and this marks our fifth consecutive year as a major sponsor of the carnival. It's great to see how it's grown over the years into arguably one of the best carnivals in the country."

The first workshops took place in March and covered costume making with *Hampden Park Shed*.

The *Lightning Fibre Creative Workshops* which are coming up in April and May include:

- **11th April – Prop Making** – Eastbourne Shed, Finmere Road.
- **12th April – Costume Making** – Printers Playhouse.
- **16th April – Prop Making** – DC Learn, Seaside.
- **18th April – Costume Making** – Willingdon Trees Community Centre.
- **19th April – Dance & Performance** – Bodi Blossom Studio, Maple Road.
- **25th April – Costume Making** – Langney Community Centre.
- **26th April – Dance & Performance** – Eastbourne Blind Society, Longstone Road.
- **2nd & 3rd May – Costume Making** – Drop in at Gather, The Beacon.
- **9th May – Prop Making** – DC Learn, Seaside.

There is also the opportunity to request an outreach workshop for groups that cannot make the workshops. To find out about these please contact the Carnival organisers by email or the contact form on the website.

There's still time to get involved!

Entrants have until 9th May to sign up to take part in Carnival.

We need volunteers to Marshal or do Bucket Collections on the day.

Find out more on our website: www.eastboundecarnival.com

Understanding ADHD is the first adjustment



ONE of the biggest misconceptions about ADHD is that the solution is simply better organisation.

By **Nic Gray**

More planners. More reminders. More willpower.

But ADHD isn't a motivation problem, it's a difference in how the brain regulates attention, energy and executive function. That means the strategies that work for some people often don't work for others.

Understanding this is where real support begins.

For many adults, diagnosis can be a turning point. Not because it magically fixes everything, but because it finally provides context. Things that once felt like personal failings; struggling to start tasks, losing track of time, feeling overwhelmed by everyday demands, begin to make sense.

From there, reasonable adjustments and practical strategies can make a real difference.

In workplaces, this might mean clearer deadlines, written instructions rather

than verbal ones, or flexibility around how tasks are structured. In daily life, it could be breaking tasks into smaller steps, using visual reminders, or building routines that work with the brain rather than against it.

None of these adjustments are about giving someone an advantage. They are about creating conditions where people can actually use their strengths.

Because when ADHD is misunderstood, people often spend years trying harder and blaming themselves when things don't work.

But when ADHD is understood, the focus shifts from "What's wrong with me?" to "What support would help here?"

And that shift can change everything.

Understanding your brain is often the first step towards working with it, not against it.

Nic Gray
Certified ADHD Advanced
Coach & ADHD UK Ambassador
www.nicgray.co.uk
nic@nicgray.co.uk

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Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) registration fee, when applicable, is not included in these prices.



Wealden Works: Bridging the gap between education and employment

THE transition from education to employment can be particularly challenging for young people.

By **Lisa Crozier**

Limited access to professional networks, fewer local opportunities, and a lack of confidence can leave many feeling disconnected from the working world. Wealden Works exists to change that reality. As a rural employability programme operating across the Wealden area, it bridges the gap between education and employment by providing young people aged 16–24 with the skills, confidence, and connections they need to take a meaningful step forward in their lives.

Vital local charity

Now in its tenth year, *Wealden Works* has established itself as a vital local charity with a proven model of impact. The programme runs four times a year, delivering an intensive six-week course to groups of 10–12 young people. These participants are often those who do not benefit from existing business contacts or support networks yet have

the potential and motivation to succeed when given the right guidance.

The structure of the programme is both practical and inspiring. Students take part in employability workshops, receive professional CV development support, attend business tours, and complete work trials that provide real-world experience. Guest speakers from a wide range of industries share their journeys and insights, helping participants see what is possible and envision a future they may not have previously considered. For many, this exposure alone is transformative.

Personal development

Crucially, *Wealden Works* is not simply about getting young people into jobs. It is about positioning them

for **long-term, sustainable success**. Alongside accredited training, interview coaching, and workplace preparation, the programme places a strong emphasis on self-belief and personal development. The organisation recognises that barriers to employment are rarely just about skills; they are often rooted in confidence, identity, and mental wellbeing. By addressing the whole person, *Wealden Works* empowers participants to move forward with resilience and purpose.

Success stories

The outcomes speak for themselves. Success stories are plentiful, with former participants progressing into apprenticeships, further education, or careers they once believed were beyond their reach. These individual successes have a wider impact, strengthening families, supporting local businesses, and contributing to the social and economic fabric of the

Wealden district. Each young person supported represents a positive ripple effect throughout the community. We are proud that we have an 81% success rate of placing young people into Employment, Apprenticeships, volunteering or Further Education.

Exciting chapter

2025 marked an especially exciting chapter for *Wealden Works*. The charity welcomed former England rugby international Joe Marler as an ambassador, bringing increased visibility and support to its mission. The organisation also moved into its own bespoke premises on Heathfield High Street, significantly improving accessibility for students. In addition, a *National Lottery* grant enabled *Wealden Works* to extend its much-needed services into Polegate, reaching even more young people who require support at a crucial stage of their lives. With expansion into Polegate we are looking to make business connections with local employers, in Hailsham, Polegate and surrounding areas. Local employers have a vital role to play in shaping the future workforce. We are inviting businesses across the area to partner with the new youth employability service by offering work experience placements and short work trials that give young people the opportunity to build real-world skills and confidence. In return, the service provides a free recruitment pathway for local employers—matching motivated, work-ready young people with roles that suit their skills and ambitions. By working together, businesses can help nurture the next generation of talent while also gaining access to a pipeline of capable candidates ready to contribute to the local economy.

Fitting recognition

To cap off a landmark year, *Wealden Works* was proudly named **Ashdown Radio's Charity of the Year**, a fitting recognition of its growing impact and community value.

There is no other service quite like *Wealden Works* in the area. Its combination of practical employability training, personal development, and genuine community connection makes it not just a programme, but a lifeline — one that continues to change lives by bridging the gap between education and work.



www.wealdenworks.co.uk

Music weekend of the year – PierFest 26

THIS September, join us for a celebration of live music at one of Eastbourne's most iconic landmarks.

By **Andy Thomas**

With a diverse range of acts to suit every musical taste, it's the event of the season I managed to sit down with event organiser Simon Cosham, who is orchestrating this amazing event, to find out more.

Two days of music

"It will be a two-day music festival on Friday 4th and Saturday 5th September 2026 at *The Drop in The Ocean* on Eastbourne Pier raising funds for *Children With Cancer Fund*."

"Already confirmed to play, are *Large 90's*, *Sound of the Crowd*, *Venn5* and *The Pat Butchers*, with more bands to be announced."



Large 90's.

Would you like to play at PierFest26?

If you, or your band would like the chance to join the acts already confirmed, then please contact Simon at underthecosham@outlook.com

Sponsor a band

We are seeking a partner to sponsor each of the bands playing on the main stage.




During their performance, the stage will become the 'Your Company Stage' with prominent logo placement on

and around the stage. There will also be event signs, banners, promotional printing, advertising and digital promotions, with 'YourCompany' being mentioned throughout as the bands stage sponsors.

For further information on Stage Sponsorship, to volunteer at the event or to apply to play contact Simon at underthecosham@outlook.com

To book for 'PierFest 26', please go to www.seetickets.com where you can buy Friday and/or Saturday tickets.

Join #TeamRaystede and take on 50 Miles in May

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-  Why not walk as a team or choose to walk in memory of a loved one or pet.
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Antiques by the Seaside: A New Monthly Market Comes to Victoria Place



Treasure hunters, vintage lovers and collectors take note – a brand-new Antiques and Collectables Market is coming to Eastbourne this spring.

Launching on 18th and 19th April 2026, “Antiques by the Seaside” will take place on the third weekend of every month through to September, bringing a curated mix of antiques, vintage finds and unique collectables to Victoria Place.

The new event is being delivered by Your Eastbourne BID in partnership with Barley Sugar, Eastbourne Borough Market and Edeal. The market will make full use of the newly pedestrianised Victoria Place precinct, just moments from Eastbourne’s iconic seafront.

Building on the success of the town’s popular Farmers Market – which already features a range of brocante and artisan traders – the new antiques market aims to add another dimension to Eastbourne’s growing programme of town centre events. From vintage jewellery and decorative homeware to retro curiosities and timeless collectables, visitors can expect a carefully selected line-up of quality traders.

Trade pitch applications are now open. Traders can apply by emailing Luke@youreastbournebid.com or by scanning the event QR code.



Loving Local: Business Highlights

Gallery @42

Gallery@42 has finally moved past a nightmare scenario while waiting for Southern Water to address a collapsed sewer and the resulting toxic fumes.

Such a crisis could break any small business, making this ‘gentle slip into Spring’ a hard-won victory for gallery owner Pennie Radcliffe (artist Pennie Cunliffe-Lister) and Eastbourne’s creative community. The restoration of these walls signifies the return of a local landmark, replacing the uncertainty of 2025 with the vibrant energy of 2026.

As a tireless advocate for the arts, Pennie has transformed Gallery@42 into a welcoming sanctuary. Pennie is also known for her Pennie’s Pet Portraits, where she works predominantly in watercolour, oil pastels, and charcoal.

Her style focuses on the ‘spark of life’ in a subject’s eyes, moving beyond simple likeness to capture the pet’s personality.

The Spring Show: 18th March to 19th April 2026 features: Maxine Monaghan: Award-winning landscape photography with a dreamlike perspective. Lindy Dunbar: Energetic and vibrant figurative work. Colin Knapp: Whimsical structural tissue collages. Jane Hicks: Colourful pastels and delicate watercolour bird paintings. Sue Branch: Artistic interpretations of the Four Seasons of the Downs. Ed Gouldstone: Intricate architectural drawings and kinetic mobiles.

Open: Thursday to Sunday, 12–6pm.
Invitation Launch: Friday 20th March, 6–9pm.
Contact: galleryat42@gmail.com

Loving Local: Business Highlights

Home Sweet Home Estate Agents

Home Sweet Home Estate Agents have been nicely located in South Street, Little Chelsea for over 20 years now. They are locally owned and therefore an independent estate agent solely dedicated to Eastbourne and priding themselves on a very friendly and personal service.

They specialise in Residential Sales And Lettings covering the Eastbourne area including out to Polegate, Hailsham and Pevensey Bay. One need only to check out their Google Reviews to see that

they remain a popular choice amongst a wide range of customers.

Competitive fees are available for sellers and landlords with various tailor-made lettings packages available to suit all needs.

To arrange a free valuation with no obligation, why not pop in to see them or call Eastbourne 748874.



Cali Fusion

Have you eaten at Cali Fusion yet? If not, then you don’t know what you’re missing.

This independent, bold and diverse dining experience, based at 53 South Street, brings together the culinary styles of modern-day California. We’re talking the finest selection of Mexican dishes in Eastbourne, a wide range of pizzas, burgers and so much more, all washed down with amazing cocktails! There’s even a hidden bar downstairs, so get yourself down there today.



Driven by business, funded by business

Your Eastbourne BID is independently funded by town centre businesses to support and promote our area. We’ve organised events like the Little Chelsea Festive Fun and Fireworks, funded Christmas lights and installed CCTV and planters. Decisions are made by a voluntary team of Directors who represent local businesses, dedicated to creating a thriving, vibrant town centre for everyone to enjoy.

Don’t forget, the BID has launched a monthly newsletter that promises exclusive updates, hidden gems and early access to special offers. It’s an exciting way for residents and visitors alike to stay connected to everything happening in town, so please do sign up by scanning the QR code.





Home Instead Eastbourne & Hailsham Team Achieves 'Outstanding' CQC Rating.



Building Friendships That Last – Care Professional, Lissa, and client, Ann.



Supporting Independence and Hobbies at Home – Care Professional James cooking with client, Martin.

More awards for Home Instead Eastbourne & Hailsham

HOME Instead Eastbourne & Hailsham have been rated 'Outstanding' again by the CQC and named a 5-Star employer.

By **Peter Lindsey**

The local care provider setting the standard for the whole sector.

Home Instead Eastbourne and Hailsham has joined a very small and elite group of care providers in England after being rated Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for the second time, with an improved score on its previous inspection.

Following their latest inspection, the local home care provider increased its rating from three Outstanding areas to four. It is a result that carries particular weight given that the organisation was last inspected in 2017, making this the first opportunity in eight years to demonstrate just how far the service has come.

The CQC awarded Home Instead Outstanding ratings across four of its five categories – Caring, Safe,

Responsive and Well-Led – with a Good rating for Effective. Inspectors praised the compassionate approach taken by the team and the strong leadership that underpins the service, highlighting the organisation's commitment to supporting not only clients but also their families.

Ian Cottrell, Owner of Home Instead Eastbourne and Hailsham, said: "To go from three Outstanding ratings to four is something the whole team should be incredibly proud of. These results are a reflection of the care and dedication that our Care Professionals bring to their work every single day."

For many families across Eastbourne, Hailsham and the surrounding areas, Home Instead has become a trusted partner in supporting older people to live safely and independently at home.

Alongside the CQC result, the organisation has also been recognised as a 5-Star Employer by WorkBuzz, an independent

employee engagement and research organisation. This accolade is awarded to employers who actively listen to their teams and create workplaces where people can thrive. The results of the staff survey are striking: 97% of Care Professionals said they are proud to work for Home Instead, while 100% said they feel motivated to do their best work and would recommend the service to others.

Soraya, Co-Owner and Director of Care, said: "Our Care Professionals are at the heart of everything we do, and these results tell us that they feel valued, supported and motivated.

That means everything to us. When your team is happy, your clients feel it, and I think that comes through clearly in the CQC findings too."

The organisation has also recently introduced new salaried contracts with guaranteed hours, a significant step in an industry that has long relied on zero-hours arrangements. Contracts are available from 10 to 35 hours per week, giving Care Professionals a reliable monthly income and the stability to plan their lives with confidence.

For more information about Home Instead's home care services, or to enquire about joining the team as a Care Professional, contact the team on **01323 916901**, email **info@homeinsteadeastbourne.co.uk** or visit **www.homeinstead.co.uk/eastbourne-hailsham**



Home Instead Eastbourne & Hailsham Team Earns 5-Star Employer Award.

Polegate Fish Bar – April offer – Free chips with any fish when ordering on our app

THIS offer is for *Polegate Fish Bar* – 31 High Street, Polegate BN26 5AB.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Includes Medium cod, Large cod, Haddock, Huss and Scampi. Subject to availability.

Just order on the *Swift* order app or at www.polegatefishbar.co.uk

01323 483157

Polegate Fish Bar is a very popular family-run business, that sells traditional fish and chips.

Here's a typical online review: Stephen Sellings: "Outstanding take away from *Polegate Fish Bar* tonight, delivered within 30 minutes, food piping hot. Easily the best chippy around. Highly recommended."



Follow us on Facebook.



Swift Order



A Grand evening for Cancer Research UK

THE Eastbourne Committee for *Cancer Research UK* is organising an evening of entertainment, dining, and fundraising at a Charity Ball being held at the *Grand Hotel* on November 14th.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Guests will be welcomed with a drinks reception, followed by a three-course meal, live music, and dancing.

The evening will also feature a raffle with fantastic prizes and a live auction hosted by Eastbourne's very own local comedian, Tucker.

All funds raised will go directly to *Cancer Research UK*, supporting the vital and life-saving work they do every day.

This special event is a wonderful opportunity for friends, family, and colleagues to enjoy a fantastic night out while making a meaningful difference.

There are a variety of sponsorship opportunities available for those wishing to show additional support.

All sponsors will be featured in the Charity Ball booklet displayed on tables throughout the evening, as well as on promotional materials.

The committee is also very grateful for any donations towards raffle prizes or live auction items.

Tickets are now on sale and priced at £75 per person or take advantage of a discount and book a table of 10 for £700.

To book tickets, discuss sponsorship opportunities, or donate a prize, please contact: eastbourne.crukcommittee@outlook.com or scan the QR code for more details.



Lightning Fibre At the heart of the community

Lightning Fibre was delighted to sponsor the welcome drinks reception at the Mayor's Charity Ball at the Winter Garden.

By **Peter Lindsey**

With 175 guests and a programme of entertainment, a silent auction and a raffle, all the proceeds on the night went to Forward Facing and Eastbourne Street Pastors.

Lightning Fibre sponsored the sparkling drinks reception and Head of Marketing Emma Pearce said: "It's wonderful to be involved in helping our Mayor, Councillor Margaret Bannister, raise funds for her two



Mayor, Councillor Margaret Bannister (centre) with Emma Pearce and Emmaline Pollard from Lightning Fibre.

local charities, which both make such a difference to lives in Eastbourne."

Lightning Fibre also sponsored the Hailsham Lions Fire & Lego Walk at the Hailsham Cattle Market on Saturday March 28th.

The event was organised by Hailsham Lions, a long-established volunteer group that supports charities and community projects in the Hailsham area.

They were joined by UK Firewalk, a national provider of charity firewalk

and LEGO walk events with around 20 years of experience running events across the UK.




"A huge well done to everyone who was brave enough to take on the fire or Lego challenge and support the great work of the Hailsham Lions."

 **Lightning Fibre**
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Blue Heart's Community Conversation

LAST month we took over the whole of *Sovereign Harbour Community Centre* for our *Blue Heart Community Conversation*.

By **Eleanor Lanyon**

Thirty representatives come along from community groups and organisations supported by our *Community Fund*, and others we've worked with (or hope to).

Thanks to everyone for joining us in a day of inspiring conversations, good food and great energy. Watch this space for what come's next!

www.blueheart.org.uk

The aim was to celebrate everyone's achievements, discuss what *Blue Heart* should prioritise for our final year, and ask how we can support local groups to build community resilience.



We're especially grateful to projects who brought displays of their work, and students from *West Rise Junior School* who came to share their project, *Nature in Our Hands*.

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A top quality Mediterranean restaurant

WITH an Italian flair – that’s *La Dolce Vita* at 8 Grove Road.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Owner Lorenzo Cinalli says: “I’m proud of what I do and what I serve. I’ve been doing this for 43 years, and I do this for pleasure and love.”

Nelly is part-owner and ‘she is part of the strength that I have.’

He is also very clear why *La Dolce Vita* has such a first class reputation.

He says: “We do not rush, everything is homemade and cooked to order. Absolutely nothing is pre-cooked.

“The food and the drinks are the very best you can get. We have more than 120 bottles of wine, plus a full restaurant menu.

“Our specials include –

- Lobster Ravioli in a Seafood Medley.
- La Dolce Vita Prawn Cocktail.
- Oven Roasted Wild Sea Bass.
- Stuffed Veal Chop in a Port Wine Sauce.
- Fried Lobster with Mix Seafood.
- Seabream.
- Stuffed and Rolled Chicken in a Marsala Sauce.
- Special Monk Fish Stew.
- Veal Ossobuco.
- Stuffed Port Belly over Roasted Bell Peppers.

“On a Saturday night, we have live music, the atmosphere is lovely. Everything we cook is the very best.

“And we do not try to overload the restaurant with customers. If we are full, then we do have to turn people away. Every customer must

leave here having had a quality and enjoyable experience.”

When you talk to Lorenzo, you soon realise why he runs such a popular and fantastic Town Centre restaurant.

His background is second to none.

As a young man, he worked for quality establishments including *Trust Houses Forte*, and then for *Whitbread* in Lancashire at a time when ‘food wasn’t served in pubs’.

Next was the *Imperial Hotel* at Blackpool, *P&O Cruises*, and 16 years working in restaurants and hotels in America.

Lorenzo returned to England in 2010 – to Stamford Bridge, the home of Chelsea for five years, before arriving in Eastbourne ‘because I missed the sea.’

In May 2016, he opened *Rostick* in *Victoria Place*, *Terminus Road*. In 2018, it was voted *Restaurant of the Year* in an *Eastbourne Herald* competition.



Lorenzo Cinalli, Nelly Pricop and Julio Calderon outside La Dolce Vita.

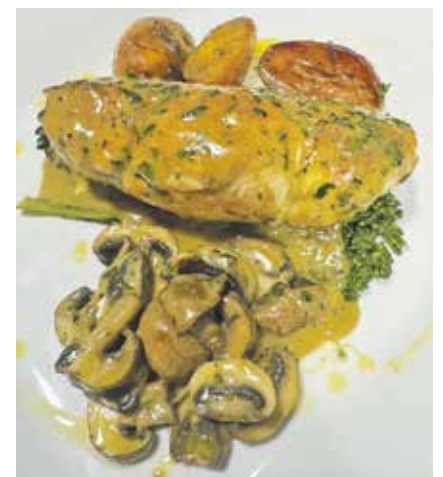


That gave Lorenzo a valuable uplift, along with an outstanding review by Tom Parker Bowles – Restaurant Critic of *The Daily Mail*. Suddenly there were people coming in regularly from London, and he had to open the downstairs as well to cope with the demand.

Despite all of it’s successes, a slower and easier way of life was now wanted and Lorenzo and Nelly decided to sell *Rostick* – because keeping two floors open was a challenge and too much for them both.

In October 2023, he decided to open *Signor Panio* at 8 Grove Road. The name changed to *La Dolce Vita* last December.

In June, the restaurant will host a VIP dinner with Tina Moore, late wife of Bobby, for the World Cup.



La Dolce Vita is open Tuesday-Saturday from noon until 3pm and then 5:30pm onwards. The venue remains open for drinks between 3pm and 5:30pm. It’s closed Sunday and Monday.

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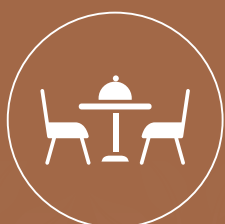
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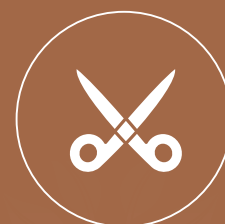
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New kitchen for Community Centre



LANGNEY Community Centre has been gifted a new kitchen thanks to the generosity of both *Mears* and *Howdens*.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Howdens donated the kitchen which was fitted by *Mears* staff. Kitchen appliances were funded by the *Mears Foundation*.

An opening ceremony was held to celebrate the opening, and Centre Manager Emma Fielding is thrilled. She said: "The support and

commitment from both companies to our community have been truly outstanding, and we are incredibly grateful for this investment.

"This new kitchen will make a significant difference to the many groups and residents who use our Centre each week.

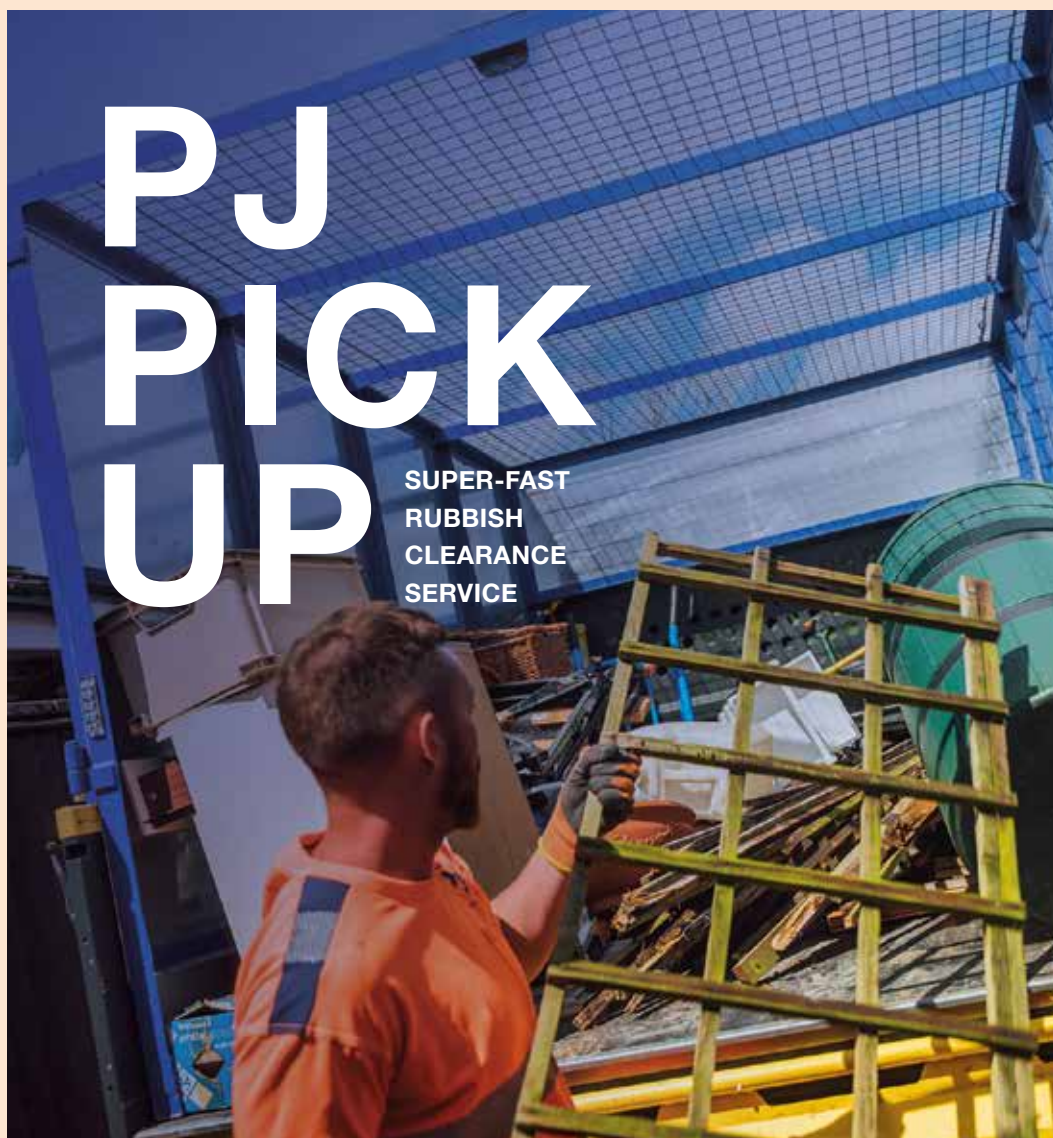
"It will support our *Community Fridge & Café*, *Friendship Café*, *Under 5s Soft Play*, and *Youth Group* sessions.

"It will enable us to introduce new opportunities which we are very excited about."

The previous kitchen was old and in poor condition. *Mears* workers were volunteering, tidying up the front here in Etchingam Road, and Emma joked that the centre needed a new kitchen.

"Little did I realise the joke would turn into reality," said Emma. "It's a really nice addition to a great centre – it's clean, it's fresh and we absolutely love it."

Emma said: "The project was overseen by *Mears* staff members Lisa Balsdon and Ross Wilson, who coordinated the works and supported the successful completion of the refit."



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SASBAH charity dinner

A CHARITY which has made a real impact since moving into Eastbourne 15 months ago is staging a Dinner for friends and supporters at *The View Hotel*.

By **Peter Lindsey**

SASBAH – The Sussex Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus – has always enjoyed a strong presence locally.

It supports around 1,000 people across Sussex with disabilities, and at Christmas 2024 it moved from Gun Hill to *The JPK Centre* in Old Town.

Now SASBAH is staging a Charity Dinner on Saturday May 16th from 7pm – and tickets are on sale.

There is a three-course dinner, entertainment, disco and charity raffle. We are pleased to announce that this year the wonderful Helen Ward-Jackson will be performing on the evening.

Chief Executive Rom Sanglaji said: “We are very much a charity covering the whole of Sussex, and we have staff in both West and East.

“We have made Eastbourne our home, and we are thriving being based in Church Street.

“It is the perfect premises for us and allows us to do so much more than we were previously able to.



“We hold a Charity Dinner each year, as much for awareness as raising money, which of course we always need to.

“It is also a chance to thank everyone involved in SASBAH for making our charity so special, and our people are truly very special.

“We would like to see as many people as possible at the Dinner, and we invite people to book tickets for what will be a relaxed and very friendly evening.”

The dress code is smart/casual, and tickets are £40 per head or £360 for a table of 10.

For more details, please email rom@sasbah.org.uk or call Rom on **07779 038542**



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Screening of an award-winning short film 'Touching colours'

WRITTEN and Directed by Linda M James, *Touching Colours* is showing at Towner Arts Centre, Eastbourne on Saturday April 18th, 2026 at 11:30am.

By **Gail McKay**

Join us for an exciting screening of this multi-award-winning film.

'Touching Colours' is based on a true story of a young artist who goes blind within three days, but

miraculously over time, she regains her sight in the most incredible way.

Leona Clarke is a multi-award-winning actress who plays the part of Lucy, the artist. The story is a roller coaster

of emotions and Leona is superb in her role. She is partnered by the talented actor Felix Johnson who trained at the *New York Conservatory of Dramatic Arts*. He shows all the empathy of a young man determined to support the woman he loves. The chemistry between the actors is amazing.

The event is also an opportunity to see some great cinematography shot in and around Eastbourne.

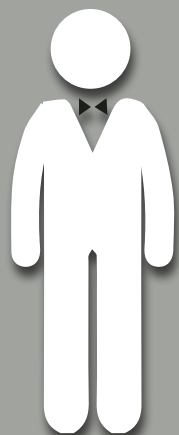
This will be followed by an interesting Q&A with the writer/director and the two lead actors to explore how the film was made and what it was like to act in it.

Tickets cost £10 and 50% of ticket sales will be donated to the *Eastbourne Blind Society*.



Please scan the QR code to visit the *Eventbrite* page for tickets.

Don't miss this inspiring event!



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New Chairman for Radio DGH



KEVIN Turner is the new Chairman of *Radio DGH Eastbourne*.

By **Peter Lindsey**

There is also an Open Day on April 12th between 10am and 3pm. Meet the team at the Radio DGH studios, everyone is welcome.

Volunteers are also needed – presenters, engineers, technicians, production assistants, ward visitors and request collectors.

Back to Kevin: “I was delighted to have been proposed and equally as delighted to have accepted the position of becoming chairman, especially in the year that will see *Radio DGH* celebrate two milestone anniversaries during 2026.

“Our first will be to celebrate our 75th Anniversary since being founded in 1951 at our original site at *St Mary’s Hospital* prior to relocating to the then brand new *Eastbourne District General Hospital* in 1976.

“This year we plan to participate in *The Eastbourne Carnival*, along with hosting open days at our studios at the *Eastbourne DGH*.

“We will also be celebrating in *The Beacon Centre* and at *The Langney Shopping Centre* later this year, so there is still plenty of work to be done.

“In another year of change and challenges, I wish to express my sincere thanks to the volunteers, both past and present, for their tireless

work in keeping *Radio DGH* on air for an incredible 75 years.

“I also wish to extend my sincere thanks to the kindness and generosity of our sponsors and partners who actively seek to give back to our local community by supporting *Radio DGH* through sponsorship or Big Prize Giveaways.”

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Eastbourne LitFest launches popular monthly Book Quiz

EASTBOURNE LitFest has struck a lively chord with locals after launching a monthly book quiz that is fast becoming one of the town's most sought-after socials.

By **Harry Farmer**

Held at The Frontier Bar on Grove Road and hosted by local couple Jane and Henry Branson, The Big Book Quiz launched in January, and exceeded all expectations, attracting more teams than the venue could seat.

The *Big Book Quiz* takes place on the third Tuesday of every month, so the next one is on 21st April. To book a place for your team of 2–6, please email Jane Branson at jane.branson@eastbournelitfest.org

About Eastbourne Literary Festival

Eastbourne LitFest is a new annual celebration of books, writers and storytelling, launching 25th–27th September 2026. The festival aims to bring nationally recognised authors and local voices together through talks, workshops and community events across the town.

Contact

Russ Miles, Festival Director
russ@eastbournelitfest.org
Jane Branson, Education Director
jane.branson@eastbournelitfest.org
www.eastbournelitfest.org
[@eastbourneliteraryfestival](https://www.instagram.com/eastbourneliteraryfestival)

Quizzers tested their knowledge of authors, characters and classic plots, with plenty of laughter alongside competitive debate. As well as a prize for the winning team, another is to the team with the wittiest, lewdest literary name – far too rude to write here!

Festival Director Russ Miles says the quiz is designed not only to bring readers together, but also to support the new *Eastbourne Literary Festival*. "All entry fees and donations go directly into the *LitFest* fund, helping build momentum toward the launch weekend on 25th–27th September."

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50 years of service

CUCKMERE Buses is proud to be celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

By **Nick Price**

Commercial bus services to the area had been withdrawn and local pressure persuaded the authorities to try a new volunteer run service.

Services started in October 1976 with two routes between villages in the Cuckmere Valley to Hailsham or Seaford. The initial services ran four days a week which continued until 1997 when further services

were introduced. Now, over 20 scheduled services are operated every week. Further new services are planned for 2026.

The first services used a second-hand bus loaned by *East Sussex County Council*. It now operates a fleet of eight modern 16-seater minibuses. In 2025, the company carried more than 88,000 passengers and recorded a surplus of nearly £10,000 which will be ploughed back into its fleet and services. The company has taken delivery of a new bus which started operating on 1st March.



It is understood that the company is the oldest community bus service operating in England. All drivers and officials of the company have always been and continue to be volunteers.

Managing Director Philip Ayers, who has been involved with the company since the beginning said "We are extremely proud to have provided our bus service for the last 50 years and very grateful to all those who have given their time to provide a service both to local residents and

to visitors to the area. We also are very appreciative of those working in the background who help keep the operation running smoothly. We thank all our passengers and local authorities for their support over the years."

www.cuckmerebuses.org.uk

Cuckmere buses



Volunteers Required

Cuckmere Buses is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year providing regular bus services in the Cuckmere Valley and in Hailsham and Seaford.

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Hydro Hotel team take on the Mighty Hike!

FOUR staff from the *Hydro Hotel* will be lacing up their walking boots to take part in the *Macmillan Mighty Hike* along the stunning Jurassic Coast.

By **Peter Lindsey**

It's happening on July 4th – and there's a very special reason why the four are taking part.

Taking on the challenge are:

James Penn – Head Chef.
Amanda and cockapoo Pluto.

Hanka Smith Jelinkova – Senior Assistant Manager.
Andrew Gouldstone – Night Porter.

They'll be walking to raise vital funds for *Macmillan Cancer Support*, a cause that is very close to many of our hearts.

Hannah Francis, Senior Assistant Manager at the *Hydro* said: "Our Head Chef James is in remission from



tonsil and lymph node cancer of the neck, and he, wife Amanda, and his family were so touched by everything that the *Macmillan* team did for them during a very worrying time.

"We are lucky as a hotel to be able to support this amazing charity with various events throughout the year.

"This event is something personal that James, Amanada and friends

would like to do to try and repay the *Macmillan* nurses for the kindness they showed them."

Every donation – big or small – will help make every step count and support people living with cancer.

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A new interior design business is bringing fresh inspiration to homes and businesses across Eastbourne and East Sussex.

Priscilla, an interior designer with 18 years' experience, who has lived in Eastbourne for over 20 years, is turning her long-standing passion for beautiful homes into a growing business rooted in the community. Inspired by Eastbourne's unique blend of elegant period properties and contemporary coastal architecture, she creates interiors that combine timeless design with modern trends. The sea and the stunning South Downs countryside

provide constant creative inspiration for her work.

Priscilla believes great design should be both functional and uplifting. *"A thoughtfully designed space doesn't just look beautiful,"* she says. *"It brings joy and reflects the personality and lifestyle of the people who live there."*

Working with properties of all sizes — domestic and commercial — and a range of budgets, she is committed to making great design accessible.

To help clients explore their ideas, Priscilla offers a free initial consultation in their own home.

During this relaxed, in-depth conversation, she discusses how clients use their space throughout the day, how they would like it to feel, their preferred colours and styles, and practical considerations such as budgets and timescales.

The business has been supported by Edeal, whose start-up guidance has helped turn experience and creativity into a thriving local venture.



Priscilla Stringer of Priscilla Stringer Interiors

For Eastbourne residents looking to refresh, redesign or completely transform their space, local expertise is now right on their doorstep.

For more information, please visit www.priscillastringerinteriors.co.uk

Why wellness therapy is no longer a luxury, but a necessity!



Reeta Minhas-Judd of RMJ Wellbeing

As awareness of mental health continues to grow, more people are recognising the importance of caring for their emotional wellbeing, not just in times of crisis, but as part of everyday life. Wellness therapy focuses on

prevention, self-awareness, and resilience, helping individuals manage life's challenges before they become overwhelming.

Wellness therapy provides a confidential, supportive space to explore thoughts, emotions, and past experiences. It can help with anxiety, low mood, stress, grief, trauma, low confidence, and a general sense of unhappiness or lack of fulfilment. Unlike crisis-led support, wellness therapy is proactive, encouraging people to understand themselves better and make positive, lasting changes.

"Many individuals live on autopilot, repeating patterns shaped by earlier experiences," says wellbeing therapist and founder of RMJ

Wellbeing Reeta Minhas-Judd. *"Therapy helps people recognise these patterns and develop healthier ways of thinking, feeling, and responding."*

Reeta continued, *"A key benefit of wellness therapy is the development of emotional resilience. In an increasingly fast-paced world, people face constant pressures from work, relationships, and daily responsibilities. Therapy offers practical tools to manage stress, regulate emotions, and build stronger boundaries, leading to improved confidence and wellbeing."*

Recognising all of the above, Reeta set up RMJ Wellbeing in 2019 which is now a multi award winning



company that offers a range of health and wellbeing services in Eastbourne and London, these include Therapy and Coaching with a FREE 90 Minute Introductory session which can be delivered in person, walk and talk, online and over the telephone. For larger groups and businesses, group sessions are available including Wellbeing Within The Workplace talks.

For more information visit www.rmjwellbeing.com

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New national association launched to strengthen children's respite services

A new national body, the Association of Children's Respite Providers, was formally launched at the Houses of Parliament on the 12th Feb, bringing together twelve independent charities providing vital respite services for children with disabilities and their families.

The launch is being hosted with the support of Mims Davies MP.

The Association has been established to enable collaboration across the children's respite sector, allowing member charities to share information and resources, benchmark standards, promote best practice, explore national fundraising opportunities, and

strengthen their collective voice to influence policy.

Children's respite services play a critical role in supporting families, offering short breaks that benefit both children and their parents or carers. With demand rising and funding pressures increasing, the Association aims to strengthen the sustainability and visibility of this essential sector.

MEMBER CHARITIES:

Children's Respite Trust (Uckfield) · Y Bont (Bridgend) · Lily's Place (Poole) · BrighterDayz (Wigan) · The Yard – Geeza Break (Parkhead) · Little Miracles (Peterborough) · Kangaroos (Wivelsfield) · We



Are Beams (Hextable) · BOSP (Basildon) · Marches Family Network (Hereford) · Swings & Smiles (Thatcham) · Grace House (Sunderland)

Gavin Fisher of the Children's Respite Trust said of the Association:

"By working together nationally while remaining rooted in local



communities, we can strengthen standards, share learning and ensure the importance of children's respite services is better recognised and supported."

Eastbourne's first antique & collectables market comes to Victoria Place

Join us on the 18th and 19th of April at Victoria Place in Terminus Road for the very first Antique & Collectables Market.

Discover a street lined with unique treasures, vintage finds, and one-of-a-kind pieces just waiting to be uncovered. Whether you're a serious collector, a casual browser, or simply love the charm of antiques, there'll be something special for everyone.

The market will return on the third weekend of every month until September, so if you can't make the first one, there are plenty more opportunities to join us!

Spend the day soaking up the friendly atmosphere, meeting our happy traders, and then relax with something delicious from the many cafés and restaurants along the street. It's the perfect way to enjoy a weekend in Eastbourne.

Bring your friends, bring your family, and come treasure hunting with us!




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Trinity Homecare



Image: @bethwildphotography.

Eastbourne coach champions neurodiversity

EASTBOURNE-based coach Zoé Carroll has taken on the role of Neurodiversity and Inclusion Ambassador for *The Big Swim 2026*, a major wild swimming event celebrating *International Women’s Day*.

By **Gail McKay**

The event took place on the 14th March across two locations, Brighton and Sandbanks in Dorset.

Zoé, a neurodiversity coach who supports women experiencing anxiety and late-diagnosed

neurodivergence, said, “Cold water swimming has been incredibly powerful for many of the neurodivergent women I work with.”

“It helps regulate the nervous system, quieten racing thoughts and reconnect people to their bodies. But just as important is the sense of belonging – being part of a supportive community where you can be completely yourself.”

Zoé is the founder of *The Exceptional Minds Society*, a community designed to support women who often feel different, overwhelmed, or misunderstood.

“Many of the women I work with have spent years feeling like they’re ‘too sensitive’, ‘too intense’, or simply struggling to cope with life.”

The Big Swim took place in celebration of *International Women’s Day*.

Participants were encouraged to take one action to support and elevate women in their communities, from supporting female-owned businesses to volunteering with organisations that help women and girls.

The Big Swim was organised by Nicky Chisholm, also known as *PinkNicky*, with swims hosted by *Land and Wave* in Dorset and *Sea Lanes* in Brighton.

More information about Zoé Carroll’s work supporting neurodivergent and anxious women can be found at: www.zoecarroll.com

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Coda and Bournefree Community Awards team.

Eastbourne Community Awards

THE date and venue has been confirmed for the *Eastbourne Community Awards* – it's Thursday June 18th from 7pm at *Glass House*.

By **Peter Lindsey**

A sponsors' breakfast has taken place at *Hallmark Willingdon Park Manor Luxury Care Home*.

These are the categories and sponsors:

Heart of the Community
Sponsored by *Eastbourne Coaches*.

Bravery and Resilience
Sponsored by *Stagecoach*.

Volunteer of the Year
Sponsored by *Madeira Windows*.

Outstanding Contribution to the Community
Sponsored by *Hallmark Willingdon Park Manor Luxury Care Home*.

Above and Beyond
Sponsored by *Beatty Dental*.

Community Champion
Sponsored by *Eastbourne Health Alliance Network*, incorporating *Sussex Footcare* and *Sussex Audiology Centre*.

Youth Champion
Sponsored by *East Sussex College*.

Green Sparks of Change
Sponsored by *PJ Skips*.

Arts and Culture
Sponsored by *Glass House*.

Heart of Gold
Sponsored by *Bluebird Care*.

Young Rising Star
Sponsored by *PJL Global*.

Carer of the Year
Sponsored by *Walfinch Care*.

Rotary Excellence
Sponsored by *Eastbourne Rotary Club* and *Rotary Club of Eastbourne AM*.

The evening will be compered by Ryan Millns from *Ashdown Radio*, and every penny raised will go to *St Wilfrid's Hospice* and *SASBAH*.

You can vote from 9am on April 12th.

www.sussexaudiologycentre.co.uk/eastbourne-community-awards

Please follow the *Bournefree* socials for regular features and updates.
@bournfreemagazine



Sponsors' breakfast.



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We're doing this because St Wilfrid's Hospice cares

"WE are doing this simply because we know that *St Wilfrid's Hospice* is struggling – and we want to help."

By **Peter Lindsey**

The words of Sharon Miller, who along with three friends is taking part in a sponsored walk. But not just any sponsored walk – this is walking 75 miles in five days abroad.

Sharon will be joined by sisters Julie Humphreys and Debbie Marchant, and Wendy Stanley – all from Eastbourne – in the hospice's *Camino De Santiago Trek 2027* next April.

It's a group event organised by *St Wilfrid's* – and everyone taking part will walk the final 100km of the French Way, from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela, following the centuries old paths of pilgrims.

An amazing walk

It's an amazing walk, passing through villages and the beautiful landscape of Galicia, and this five-day walk passes numerous points of cultural and historical interest along the way.

Sharon said: "We'd love to raise as much as we can, as the Hospice has obviously been in the news recently.

I have a friend who volunteers at *St Wilfrid's* and I thought to myself that if I could do something to help, then I would. I mentioned it to Julie and Debbie and they said they would like to join me. Wendy spotted the challenge when I mentioned it on *Facebook* at choir. And so we became a training group.

Such a good cause

"I've raised money for charities before and the hospice is such a good cause, it looks after so many people locally. It's there for us when we need it.



"We have until next April to raise as much as we can and three of us are arranging all different events up until then.

Sponsorship

"Any local businesses that would like to sponsor us can have their business logo on a t-shirt that we can wear on training sessions and promote their companies on our socials. We have been approaching companies for raffle prizes of any sort as well. So if any companies can help us, please get in touch."

First, the walk itself – and it won't be easy.

Sharon said: "It will be a real challenge walking 75 miles in five

days. It's been many years since I have walked more than five miles at any one time and I work from home as well, so my job is very sedentary.

"I know that I'll need to do a lot of training for the walk. I bought a *Garmin* watch and have been logging my progress so far on the sponsorship site. We've been doing training walks most weekends from 10th January in all weathers. I'm also going to the Gym twice a week too."

"We hope to promote *St Wilfrid's* that little bit more by running these events."

Each participant has to raise a minimum of £2,800.

Fundraising events

These are the events planned so far by three of us:

Wednesday 15th April – Quiz and Raffle at the *Fisherman's Club* in Eastbourne – 7pm for 7:30pm start (Please advise shazza47@sky.com of attendees.) £5 per person. Teams of six or less.

Friday 10th July – The Crumbles Murders – A talk by Kevin Gordon at *Wannock Village Hall* in Wannock – 7pm until 9pm – £10 per person to include refreshments. To book call or text Julie on **07811 229420** or Debbie on **07512 840111**.

Friday 25th September – Bingo and huge Raffle and Auction at the *Red Lion Pub* at Stone Cross – 7pm eyes down at 7:30pm – £10 per person. To book call or text Julie on **07811 229420** or Debbie on **07512 840111**.

Future events are Pottery painting and Wreathmaking in November.

St Wilfrid's is working with *Different Travel*, a company that the hospice team has worked with since 2007 and who consistently deliver exceptional experiences to participants with an ethos of responsible and ethical tourism.



St Wilfrid's Hospice



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Pizza Wednesdays

Choose from: Margherita, Spicy Meaty, Honey BBQ Chicken, Capriano or Pepperoni.

All served with chips.



Curry Thursdays

Choose from: Chicken Tikka Masala or Thai Red Vegetable Curry.

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Fish & Chip Fridays

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MAY 28th – 31st 2026 | Birley Centre, Eastbourne BN21 4EF



By **Christopher Dixon**, Founder and Director of EBISC

Come to hear some of the world's best opera singers and classical solo singers!

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Professional singers will be heading to Eastbourne from all over the world to participate in this year's event. 25 different nationalities will be represented.

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Or Handel's 'Messiah'?

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Would you like to hear beautiful songs in Italian, Spanish, German, Russian, Cantonese and many other languages?

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We will have world-class piano accompanists on stage. Enjoy the amazing sounds that they create on the *Birley's* outstanding Steinway Grand piano.

Experience the beautiful acoustic and wonderful intimacy of the *Birley Centre's* auditorium, where in every seat you feel very close to the performers.

Tickets are available at www.ebisc.co.uk and on the door.

If it's tickets for the Competition Final that you are looking for, please be quick as these are selling fast!

Please do help to keep this unique event in Eastbourne by coming along to give it a try. I am confident that you will be amazed at the wonderful music and talent on display.

If you like classical singing, or you know someone who does, please don't miss this opportunity to see the rising stars of the Opera and Concert worlds, right here in our home-town of Eastbourne!



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Something for everyone at charity concert

A SHIMMERING, dazzling fundraising event is coming to *Eastbourne Town Hall* on April 10th from 7pm until 10pm.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Doors open at 6:45pm, and you can expect plenty of floor-filling music from some of the finest local musical talent.

There will be genres to suit most tastes from days gone by to more modern offerings.

You will hear Rock, Jazz, Motown, Pop, and headline act *Rockin' Mike* will be

delivering some classic Rock 'n' Roll taking you back to all the excitement of the 50s and 60s.

You'll also hear some heavenly ballads and all manner of songs in between – there really will be something for everyone to enjoy.

Organiser Nicki Watts, pictured, said: "Come along and celebrate the end

of a long, cold winter by stepping into spring in style.

"Our performers will be puttin' on the ritz with as much sparkles as we can get our hands on and we invite you to do the same.

"There will be a quality tombola with attractive prizes up for grabs. Tickets will be £8 in advance online via *WeGotTickets* or £10 on the door, proudly raising vital funds for *Beachy Head Chaplaincy* and *St Wilfrid's Hospice*."

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Nicki Watts.

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Easter artists open house

A UNIQUE opportunity to step inside working studios and galleries, meet local artists and buy original pieces.

By **Atlas Geering**

Taking place over the Easter weekend, 3/4 and 5/6 April 2026. It is the perfect way for to explore the town and support original creatives.

Patterson Gallery

Permanently based at the Lansdowne hotel, the *Patterson Gallery* showcases the works of talented local artists. This includes the work

of environmentalist painter John Ball, whose oil and watercolour pieces promote the powerful message of preserving the countryside.

The Lansdowne Hotel, King Edwards Parade BN21 4EE
10am–5pm on all four days.

The Lighthouse Gallery

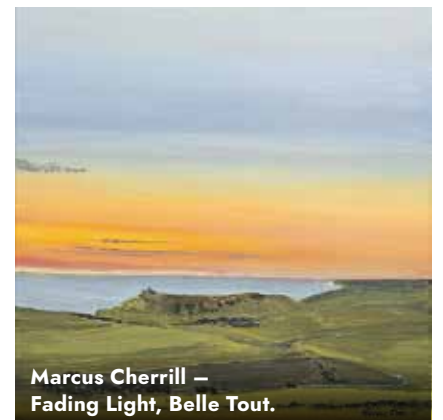
A lively hub for artists and art lovers alike, representing 25 local artists, this space is perfect for discovering new and unique pieces, ranging from jewellery to ceramics. It's also a great



John Ball – Weasel.



Jacinta Dalley – Pendant.



Marcus Cherrill – Fading Light, Belle Tout.

spot for enjoying a coffee and a cake in their café.

19 Cornfield Terrace BN21 4NS
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Marcus Cherrill

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There are 17 venues, across the town.

Pick up a brochure or download it here for a full list of artists and opening times.

www.eastbourneartists.com/open-houses

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Eastbourne Bandstand – Toploader, and so much more

THE *Toploader* concert may be the headline act – but there’s a lot going on at our beloved *Eastbourne Bandstand*.

By **Peter Lindsey**

There was concern that it would not reopen this spring, but it is and it all sounds incredibly positive.

- First, the amazing *Toploader*:
- Monday 25th May.
 - Homecoming show.
 - 1:30pm–5:00pm.
 - Supported by *DJ Fergus*.
 - Festival sound system.

Dan Hipgrave, lead guitarist from *Toploader* said: “Eastbourne has always been a special place for us and it’s where we first started building a real following. Coming back to play the *Bandstand* feels like a proper homecoming and we can’t wait to perform by the sea again.”

Councillor Jenny Williams, Cabinet Member for Tourism and Place at *Eastbourne Borough Council*, said: “We’re delighted to welcome *Toploader* back to the *Bandstand* for a special Bank Holiday performance. Their feel-good hits are perfect for a seafront crowd and their return to

Eastbourne, where it all began for them on the south coast, makes this an especially exciting homecoming. With *DJ Fergus* kicking things off, it promises to be a fantastic afternoon of music for residents and visitors alike.”

But it’s not just *Toploader*...

From May 1st, there are a wide range of events. Visit the website for information. www.eastbournebandstand.co.uk

LARGE 90s – *Fireworks special*

May 1st sees *Ultimate 90s* with **LARGE 90s**

Doors and Bar open from 7pm.

Advance Tickets: £14.00
 On the Night: £16.50
 Advance (Child): £12.00
 On the Night (Child): £14.50

Price listed includes 5% booking fee
 Children’s tickets are for those aged 3–16 years old (inclusive).

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ready to rave like never before as we transport you to the heyday of 90s music with a fresh, exhilarating twist.

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The bluebells will be out...

IT'S April meaning it's time for the annual *Arlington Bluebell Walk* – and the Bluebells will be out (at some stage).

By **Peter Lindsey**

It is open daily from Friday April 3rd until Sunday May 10th at *Bates Green Farm* in Arlington.

Entry prices are £9 per adult, children aged 3–16 £4.50, and a family ticket for two adults and up to four children is £23.

Remember, this is also a charity event, and this year 25 charities will benefit by providing the refreshments each day.

Owner John McCutchan has been doing this for 53 years – so if you have a question or query John will personally answer the telephone



throughout the six weeks. **01323 485151** is the number to call.

For 2026, individual classic car clubs will be displaying in the car park on the six Sundays. These are *BMW* on April 5th, followed by *MG*, *Alfa Romeo*, *Morris*, *Porsche* and *Rolls Royce*, and finally *Jaguar* on May 10th.

For the first time, a two-person mobility scooter will be available to

hire, costing £5 for two hour slots at 10am, noon, 2pm and 4pm. These must be pre-booked by emailing: info@bluebellwalk.co.uk

For groups of 16 people and over, please go to: www.bluebellwalk.co.uk/groups

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Supporting the Langney Shed

A HAILSHAM company has donated a wide selection of essential fastenings — including nuts, bolts, screws and washers — to support the *Langney Shed*.

By **Peter Lindsey**

CBL Fastenings Sales Manager Alan Downer paid a special visit to the Langney Shed in Eastbourne, where he saw first-hand the inspiring work taking place within this thriving community space.

Donations included nuts, bolts, screws and washers — to support the Shed's wide range of hands-on projects.

The donation will help ensure members have the materials they need to continue their popular "make and mend" activities, from practical repairs to creative builds that benefit both members and the wider local community.

The *Langney Shed* provides a welcoming and inclusive space, primarily for older men, to come together, socialise and work on meaningful projects.

More than just a workshop, it offers companionship, conversation and the chance to share skills and stories in a relaxed and supportive environment.

Andy Fisher, Co-ordinator at The *Langney Shed*, said: "A huge thank you to Alan from CBL Fastenings for a super generous donation of nuts, bolts and screws. We are constantly surprised and always grateful for the generosity of our local businesses."

Visitors to the *Shed* can expect more than sawdust and spanners.

It's a place where friendships are formed, experience is shared and members can "put the world to rights" while working side by side. Projects range from personal builds to practical items created for local groups and charities — all driven by the skills and enthusiasm of its members.

The *Langney Shed* is based at the *Langney Priory* site on Etchingham Road and is open every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am to 4pm. New members and visitors are always welcome to pop in for a chat, see what's underway and find out how to get involved.

www.facebook.com/langneysthed

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Springle brings live performances

FREE events in Hailsham and Uckfield will fill town centres and green spaces with illuminated street theatre, music, storytelling and creative activities for families.

By **Peter Lindsey**

On Saturday 18th April at 7:30pm, Springle Hailsham transforms Hailsham High Street into an outdoor spectacle.

Audiences will experience 'Lampadophores' by French street theatre company *Picto Facto*, as illuminated inflatable puppets, live music and acrobatic performers fill the street with movement and light.

The high street becomes a stage for the evening, drawing families and visitors into a memorable shared experience.

Springle has been commissioned by *Wealden District Council* and is produced by *18 Hours*.

Dr Mandy Curtis, Director of *18 Hours*, said: "*Springle* is about creating shared experiences in the public spaces people use every day.

Working in partnership with *Wealden District Council* allows us to bring high-quality live performance directly into the heart of local communities.

We are delighted to see Hailsham High Street transformed into a place where families can gather, take part and experience something memorable together."

www.explorewealden.co.uk/springle



Picto Facto 'Lampadophores'.

Photo: Ian Georgeson Photography.

Hailsham High Street Saturday 18th April 7:30pm

Springle Hailsham

FREE

At Springle Hailsham experience a Spectacular outdoor procession by French street theatre company *Picto Facto*, bringing giant inflatable puppets, live music and acrobatic performance to transform Hailsham High Street into a playful, immersive celebration for all ages

For more information, please visit www.explorewealden.co.uk/springle

Logos: Explore Wealden, Otaline, Wealden, Hailsham Town Council, Hailsham District Council, Wealden District Council, 18 Hours

Luxford Field Saturday 25th April 11.30am-3pm

Springle Uckfield

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Circó Rum Ba Ba
Anusha Subramanyam
Mahogany Carnival Arts
The Flying Buttresses
UK African Aerobats
Richard Storyheard
Dan the Hat

Springle Uckfield is a free, family-friendly daytime festival featuring walkabout performance, storytelling and hands-on creative activities, inviting everyone to join a joyful craft-making workshop and community parade

For more information, please visit www.explorewealden.co.uk/springle

Logos: Explore Wealden, Otaline, Wealden, Hailsham Town Council, Hailsham District Council, Wealden District Council, 18 Hours



Get Involved with Hailsham Chamber of Commerce

By **Ryley Warwick**, Hailsham Chamber of Commerce

Charity Golf Day

The Hailsham Chamber of Commerce is looking forward to welcoming the local business community to its upcoming Charity Golf Day.

Friday 15th May at Wellshurst Golf & Country Club.

There are now just five team spaces remaining, and businesses are encouraged to secure their place quickly to avoid missing out. A huge thank you goes to our headline sponsor, **Eastbourne Audi**.

The Chamber would also like to thank to all of the hole sponsors for their valued support:
MB Web, RTJ of Sussex, Barwells Solicitors, Studio W Media, Lightning Fibre, Diplocks Café, Archer & Partners, Sussex Footcare, Double Media, Dental Barn, ACE Corporate Fitness, Choice Vehicle Rentals, Birchwood Ford, CCM Interiors Ltd.

To book one of the remaining team places or find out more, please visit the *Hailsham Chamber of Commerce* website or contact the Chamber directly.

Don't miss your chance to be part of this fantastic event.

The Hailsham Community Run is back for its 4th year and registration is OPEN!

This brilliant local event has sold out for the past two years, with spaces limited to just 1,200 runners; so don't delay, secure your spot today!

We're proud to be supporting this event, alongside an amazing line-up of other fabulous local businesses:
Hallmark Glazed Extensions Ltd – 10k Race
The Royal Indian – 5k Race
Diplocks cafe & restaurant – 3k Race
The Alinker UK – 1k Race

Plus:
Lightning Fibre, Roland Dunn Sales & Lettings, Miss Walls Bakery, Stevens & Carter Sales & Lettings Agents, Colston Ltd, King's Head Cacklebury, Inner Sole Reflexology, White Hart Public House Horsebridge, Hailsham Town Council, Ross Newark.

Hailsham News – Community Newspaper / Race Day Coverage

Event Date:
Sunday, 17th May 2026

Register now:
www.hailshamcommunityrun.co.uk

We can't wait to see you on the start line.

Join us for our next Big Business Breakfast!

Start your morning the right way with great company, fresh ideas, and local connections at our upcoming networking event.

We're delighted to welcome guest speakers from *Hailsham Chiropractic Clinic* and *Children's Respite Trust*, who will be sharing insights into their work and impact within our community.

Thursday 7th May, 7:30am Wellshurst Golf & Country Club.

Secure your place by visiting our website. We look forward to seeing you there.

Charity Spotlight: Children's Respite Trust

This month, the *Hailsham Chamber* is proud to highlight the *Children's Respite Trust* – an incredible local charity doing vital work for families across East Sussex, Kent, West Sussex, Brighton & Hove, and beyond.

The Trust provides much-needed short breaks for families caring for children with profound physical or learning disabilities, many of whom require round-the-clock care.

Their support includes: home-based support from trained carers, regular activities, and access to their dedicated Respite Centre in Uckfield.

They also run a *Siblings Club* giving siblings of disabled children a chance to connect, have fun and feel supported, through activities like sports, creative arts, drama, and wellbeing sessions.

Caring for a disabled child can mean unremitting demands on families. The *Children's Respite Trust* offers vital support to help families avoid burnout, reduce stress, and give children and siblings a chance to thrive in a safe, nurturing environment.

How you can help

You can help with donations, as a company, or individually and by volunteering for support roles or event-volunteering. Spread the word, tell local friends and businesses, and help others learn about CRT's work.

We believe strong communities are built not just through business but by caring for one another. By spotlighting *Children's Respite*.

Trust, we hope to help ensure families caring for disabled children feel supported, understood, and valued.

If you'd like to get involved, donate or volunteer with the *Children's Respite Trust*, visit their website at www.crtcharity.org or contact them on **01825 817417**.



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Open Day

Come and join us for our **Open Day** at
Marlborough Court, Eastbourne
on **Wednesday 15th April**

Independent Retirement Living...

- Join us on **Wednesday 15th April** between **2:30pm** and **4:30pm** for drinks and nibbles
- Meet some of our lovely Owners who can share their experience of day to day life living at the Court
- Have an opportunity to view the spacious one and two bedroom apartments currently for sale
- Meet our friendly staff who can talk you through all the essential help you need when it comes to downsizing and selling your property

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resales@retirementsecurity.co.uk
www.retirementsecurity.co.uk

**Southfields Road,
Eastbourne, BN21 1BT**



Retirement
SECURITY

Transform your 2026 with Coda Pharmacy

AT Coda Pharmacy, patient care has always been at the heart of everything we do.

By **Molly Graff**

Many patients told us they had struggled with inconsistent supplies and limited guidance from other providers.

In response, we are proud to now offer structured support for patients

using clinically approved weight loss pens, ensuring they have access to safe treatment and a pharmacy team they can trust throughout their journey to feeling like themselves again.

Community is at the heart of everything we do. That's why we created our *Facebook* group, *Coda Transform Club* – a safe and supportive space where people using



weight management medication can connect, share experiences, and receive advice. Members also benefit from weekly motivation and expert nutrition guidance from our team.

Alongside weight management support, at *Coda Pharmacy* we also provide treatment options for hair loss and sexual health, including discreet and professional support for erectile dysfunction.

While we remain deeply connected to our local community, our services are available nationwide, including free delivery of *NHS* prescriptions to patients across the UK.

We recently hosted our third free *Community Health and Wellness Event* alongside an incredible team of local healthcare professionals, bringing people together to focus on wellbeing and preventative health. As we continue to grow, we are also excited about the upcoming launch of our new warehouse, which will help us expand our services and support even more patients across the country.



Support for people living with dementia

WHEN dementia support groups were forced to close, many people in the local community were left without the vital support and social connection they had come to rely on.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Sarah Savill – who had been working as a co-ordinator for Know Dementia – was made redundant at the time of the closures.

Seeing the impact this would have on the people who depended on the groups, Sarah decided to take action to ensure this important community

support was not lost – and *Connections CAFE Sussex* was born.

It runs three groups – Eastbourne, Bexhill and Crowborough.

Sarah said: “I was determined that the groups should continue, and worked tirelessly to reopen them so that people living with dementia and their carers would still have a place to go for support, connection, and companionship.



“What started as a commitment to help the community has grown into thriving groups that now bring people together every week.

“Today, the groups provide a warm and welcoming space where people affected by dementia can enjoy uplifting activities, entertainment, and interactive games designed to stimulate the mind, encourage gentle movement, and promote wellbeing.

“The sessions also offer an opportunity for carers to talk with others who understand the challenges they face, helping to reduce feelings of stress and isolation.”



As the groups approach their two-year anniversary, they continue to go from strength to strength, providing a safe and supportive environment where people living with dementia and their carers can feel valued, understood, and connected.

If anyone would like to sponsor or donate please contact Sarah on **07783 693522** connections.cafe.cic@gmail.com

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NHS HEALTH CHECK
COULD HELP TO PREVENT



DIABETES



HEART
DISEASE



KIDNEY
DISEASE



STROKE &
DEMENTIA

WEALDEN ROADSHOW:

Crowborough: Wed 22nd April & Tues 12th May

Uckfield: Tues 21st April & Wed 13th May

Hailsham: Wed 15th April & Tues 5th May

Heathfield: Tue 14th April & Wed 6th May

Polegate: Wed 29th April & Tues 19th May

Pevensey: Tues 28th April & Wed 20th May

BOOK YOURSELF A HEALTH CHECK BY CONTACTING US VIA

01323 404600 / HELLO@ONEYOUEASTSUSSEX.ORG.UK / SCAN QR HERE:



Eligibility criteria: You must be aged 40 to 74 and a resident of East Sussex. You must NOT previously have been diagnosed with cardiovascular disease or diabetes, NOT be taking medication for high blood pressure or cholesterol, and NOT have had a stroke, heart attack, or TIA. Plus you must NOT have had an NHS Health Check in last 5 years

Josh visits Sussex Footcare to support community healthcare

LOCAL MP Josh Babarinde paid a visit to *Sussex Footcare's* clinic on Crown Street this month, as part of his ongoing efforts to support local businesses and community health services.

By **Peter Lindsey**

During his visit to the Eastbourne clinic, Josh met with the team to learn more about the vital role podiatry services play in supporting both individual patients and the wider healthcare system. Discussions focused on how preventative footcare can help ease pressure on the NHS by reducing the need for more serious medical interventions.

Clinic owner Andrew stated “We are getting more and more patients using us as a first point of contact, rather than contacting their GP or going to A&E. Just this week we had 24 new patients book an initial assessment with ourselves. We feel privileged to be able to help with any foot condition whether it be an ingrowing toenail, Infection or possible wound. We have a fantastic team with varying experience and interests within the field of podiatry, so we have a multidisciplinary approach”.

Professional and welcoming environment

The *Sussex Footcare* team put on a spread of cakes for Josh and welcomed him into the clinic. The team demonstrated the work they do on a daily basis, highlighting their commitment to early intervention and patient education. Josh was given a tour of the premises, including the clinics two treatment rooms, where he was able to see first-hand how patients are cared for in a professional and welcoming environment.

A key highlight of the visit was the opportunity for the MP to try out the clinic’s *Footscan* technology, gaining insight into how advanced assessments can support diagnoses and treatment planning.

Preventing admissions

Josh also took time to meet all the team, discussing their experience working within the local healthcare



landscapes and any challenges faced by small, independent providers. Some of the team discussed the work we do in the community within care homes again providing regular treatment to prevent any hospital admissions and therefore easing the burden on the NHS.

The visit underlined the importance of community-based healthcare services such as *Sussex Footcare* in helping to keep patients healthy, mobile and independent – while contributing to the broader goal of reducing the strain on NHS services.

Andrew went on to say, “Josh’s visit to *Sussex Footcare* shows his interest in the local community and the impact small businesses have here in Eastbourne”.



Treatments on offer include:

- Clinic Treatments
- Callus & Corn removal
- 3D Footscan gait analysis
- Phits 3D printed orthotics
- SWIFT Micro-embliation therapy for warts and verrucas
- Fungal nail treatment
- Nail Surgery
- Diabetic foot assessments
- Home Visits
- Care & Nursing home specialists
- Sports injuries



01323 396338
07830 417007
andrewalbon@yahoo.co.uk
www.sussexfootcare.co.uk
f Sussex Footcare

See it for Yourself

There is a promise of positive things happening in Spring. Step into the season with us, pop in & discover what life is like in our home.



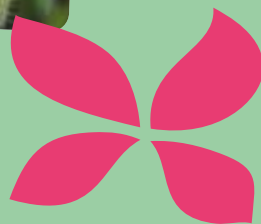
Sit back, relax and observe in comfort



Nibble on tasty treats as you take in the surroundings



Take a look around and get a taste of life in our home



HALLMARK

WILLINGDON PARK MANOR
LUXURY CARE HOME

Join our Spring Taster Day

Saturday 25th April, 11am - 1pm

Hallmark Willingdon Park Manor, Eastbourne, BN22 0AB

RSVP to Emma Jennings, Customer Relationship Manager

Scan here to find out more:



Countryside and Companionship

WALKING on your own in the countryside has many pleasures; the beautiful scenery, the fresh air, the exercise, and being able to switch off from everyday concerns.

By **Alan Jones**

So why walk with a group of about twenty other people? The answer is simple, companionship. The simple joy of making new friends and sharing experiences.

Initially for a new member, conversation may be limited to polite enquiry and perhaps even a bit of apprehension, but it does not

take long to strike up meaningful relationships with others and to be looking forward to the next walk to chat about all kinds of things. There are no cliques and hills, gates and stiles mean that the group mix is always changing. Twenty people form a most interesting variety of personality, background and experience; and all happy to share



this with others. Where else would you get meaningful recommendations for builders, plumbers, decorators etc? The mental stimulation from these varied conversations is as important as the physical stimulation one enjoys from the walk itself. I find this experience very therapeutic.

Of course, for some or all of the walk, you may wish to walk in silence, concentrating on the beautiful vistas and your own thoughts, only mixing with others at coffee or lunch breaks.

But it doesn't take long before you feel you are walking with real friends and not just rambling colleagues.

Polegate Ramblers walk every Thursday with walks to suit all abilities.

Check out their website: www.polegateramblers.org.uk or email polegateramblers@gmail.com for more details.

Take control of your wellbeing with free app

A PSYCHOTHERAPIST from Eastbourne is helping people take control of their mental and emotional wellbeing, completely free of charge.

By **Peter Lindsey**

Emma Disney has created My Life Me, a free web-based emotional wellbeing app designed to help people manage stress, regulate emotions and build resilience.

Unlike many platforms, *My Life Me* requires no downloads and no subscriptions. Because it is entirely web-based, it can be accessed instantly

from any phone, tablet or computer by anyone with internet access.

Emma – a psychotherapist and hypnotherapist with over 20 years of experience – said: “There are no barriers. You don't need storage space on your phone or special software. You simply open it and start.”

The platform includes guided audios, grounding exercises, journaling prompts, nervous system regulation tools, worksheets and fact sheets – all created by therapists

and designed to support everyday emotional fitness.

Emma says the idea behind *My Life Me* is simple: to give people practical tools they can use in real life, not just in moments of crisis.

She said: “Emotional wellbeing is something we all need to learn and practise. Small, consistent tools can make a big difference to how we cope with pressure, stress and uncertainty.”

Created locally in Eastbourne, the app is now available to anyone who can access the internet.

Emma is also offering free visits to local schools, organisations and



community groups across East Sussex to demonstrate how the platform works.

Her ethos is clear: wellbeing support should always be accessible.

My Life Me is available now and will always remain free.

www.mylifeme.co.uk



Join us for
our next
event

**Bowes House care home,
Hailsham**

**Dementia networking
lunch**

**Monday 18th May 2026,
12.30pm - 1.30pm**

Join us for the chance to meet a range of service providers supporting those living in the community with dementia, and their families. Enjoy a complimentary buffet lunch and the opportunity to meet our friendly team.

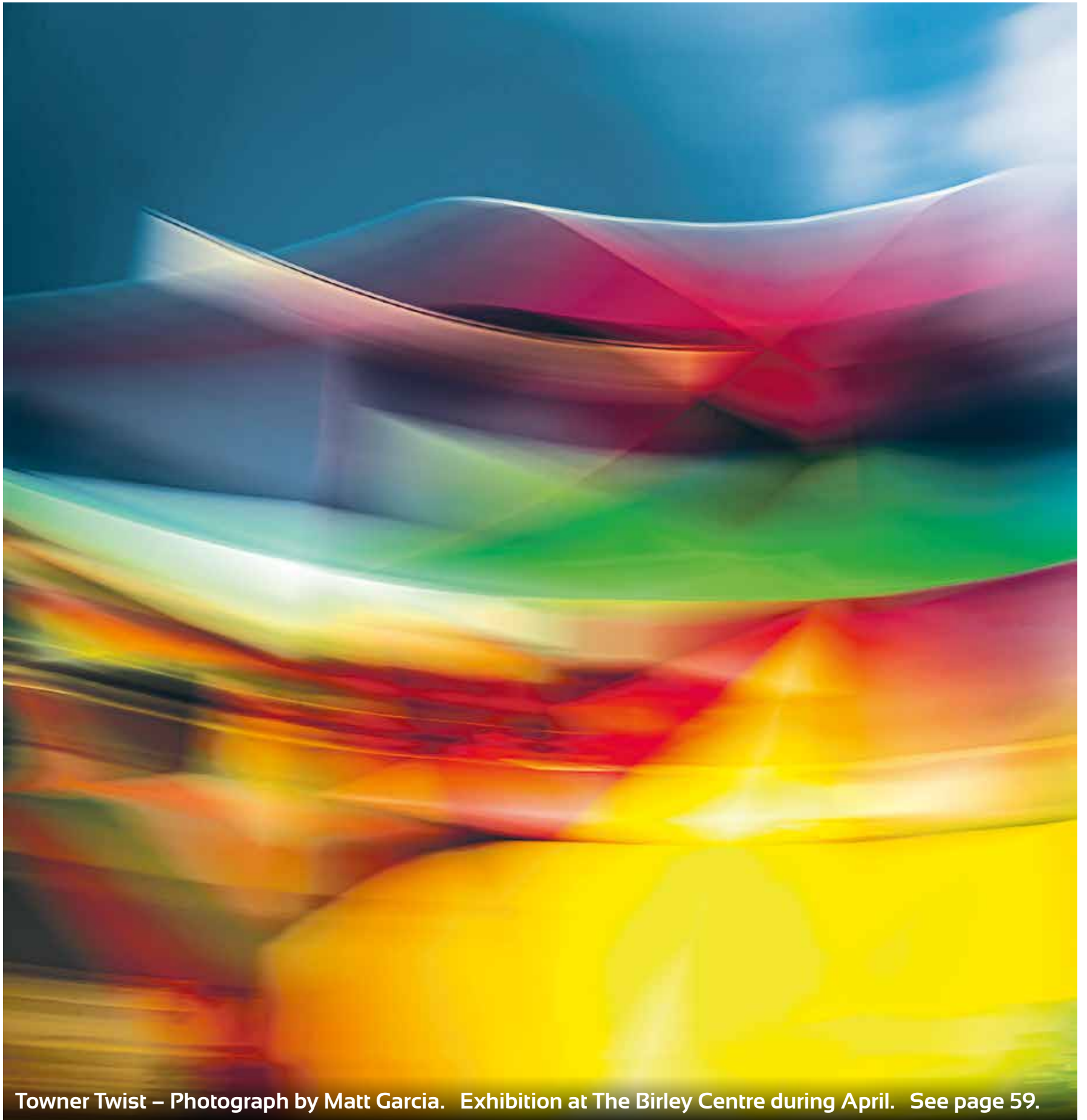
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lisa.phillips@careuk.com



TheArts



Towner Twist – Photograph by Matt Garcia. Exhibition at The Birley Centre during April. See page 59.

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Discover the Magic of Cinema

THIS May at the 10th Eastbourne International Film Festival.

By **Associate Founder and Director**

“10 days, 90+ films, endless stories—Eastbourne’s biggest celebration of cinema is coming this May!”

More than just a screen

Cinema is more than just a screen—it’s a window into new worlds, untold stories, and emotions that stay with us long after the credits roll. This May, Eastbourne celebrates a decade of cinematic exploration with the *Eastbourne International Film Festival*, running from 2nd–9th May 2026 at venues including the *Cavendish Hotel* and *Hailsham Pavilion Cinema*. With over 90 films from across the globe, the festival promises a vibrant week of creativity, discovery, and dialogue for film lovers of all ages.

“With the festival just weeks away, now is the time to discover new voices, bold stories, and the magic of cinema right here in Eastbourne.”

Expansive programme

The programme spans narrative, documentary, animation, and experimental work, bringing together internationally recognised filmmakers and emerging local talent. Opening the festival is *Once Upon a Time in Gaza*, directed by Tarzan and Arab Nasser, winner of Best Director at Cannes. Closing the celebrations is *A Sad and Beautiful World* by Cyril Aris, an award-winning Lebanese drama recognised at Venice. Other highlights include the award-winning environmental documentary *The Forest of the Fish Women* and the inventive animated short *The Dog in the Long Grass* by Seb Cox.

Local filmmakers are central to the festival, with productions such as *Charlie Shaw’s Revenge*, written and directed by John Langridge and produced with Renato Pires

and Justin Hayward, filmed across East Sussex. Short film programmes showcase a rich mix of styles—from visually striking pieces to bold, unconventional storytelling.

Young at heart

Young people are at the heart of the festival’s vision. Workshops, student-led screenings, and creative projects offer hands-on experience in filmmaking, animation, and event programming. Students can screen their own films, gain feedback, and work towards accreditation awards supported by *Talent Accelerator*—recognising skills, participation, and creativity.

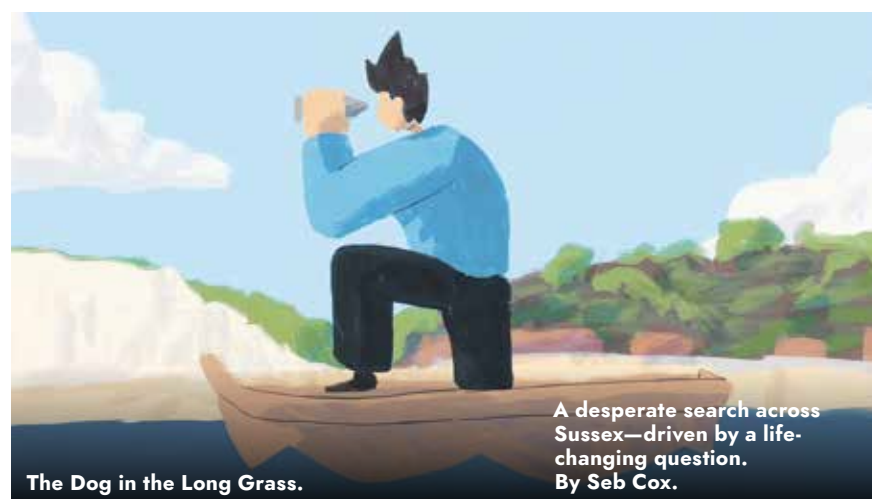
Highlights include animation workshops at the *Cavendish Hotel* and a student-led mini film festival on 6th May, alongside a hands-on session at *Hailsham Pavilion* where students pitch their own festival ideas and explore programming, audience engagement, and event design.

Dynamic cultural event

The festival thrives on collaboration with local partners and a dedicated volunteer team, offering opportunities to gain experience, meet filmmakers, and be part of a dynamic cultural event.

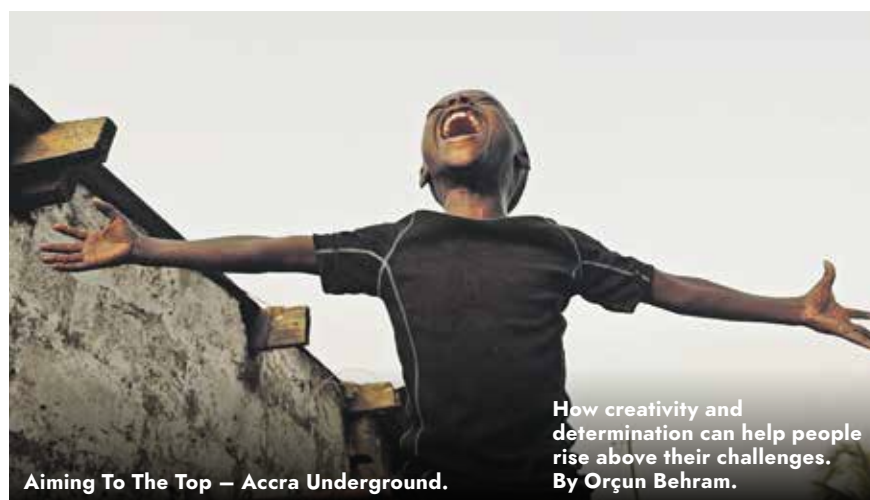
Celebrating its tenth edition, the festival remains committed to new voices and bold ideas. With award-winning films, local productions, and inspiring opportunities for young creatives, the *Eastbourne International Film Festival* is a true celebration of storytelling.

Scan the QR code to explore the full programme, book tickets, and discover how to get involved—don’t miss Eastbourne’s most exciting cultural event this May.



The Dog in the Long Grass.

A desperate search across Sussex—driven by a life-changing question.
By Seb Cox.



Aiming To The Top – Accra Underground.

How creativity and determination can help people rise above their challenges.
By Orçun Behram.



Hani.

A child’s path shaped by desperation and irreversible choices.
By Dasheng Hou.



The Forest of the Fish Women.

A film about stories, language, and culture crossing borders—keeping spirit and traditions alive, resilient, and resisting.
By Aldira Akay, Beka Munduruku, Rilcélia Akay.



Charleston Festival 2026

THIS spring, art, ideas, debate, family fun, comedy and creative workshops come together at *Charleston Festival 2026*.

By **Harry Farmer**

From 13th–25th May, the packed programme will include more than 60 talks and performances, all set in the idyllic grounds of *Charleston in Firle*, once home of the *Bloomsbury group* and a historic meeting place for some of the 20th century’s most radical artists, writers and thinkers.

Whether it’s thrilling conversations, hard-hitting debates or electric performances, the festival has something for everyone. This year’s line-up includes Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, Michael Heseltine, Sandi Toksvig, Kae Tempest, Jennifer Saunders, Olly Alexander, Philippa Perry, Sheku Kanneh-Mason,



Elizabeth Day, Irvine Welsh, Ocean Vuong and many more!

Charleston in Firle is just 20 minutes from Eastbourne by car.

There are 1,000 under 30s tickets on offer this year for just £10.

To find out more visit www.charleston.org.uk

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Artwork from our acrylic workshop tutor, artist Claire Piper
maker-studio.co.uk | Visit us : 52 Ocklynge Rd, Eastbourne, BN21 1PR



Charleston Festival 13–25 May

CHA RLE STON FEST

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe
Sandi Toksvig
Reni Eddo-Lodge
Olly Alexander
Susanna Clarke
Rose Wylie
Ocean Vuong
Sheku Kanneh-Mason
Kae Tempest
Michael Heseltine
and many more...

charleston.org.uk

Photography: Lewis Ronald.



Abstract Photography Art Exhibition

DISCOVER the unique abstract photographic artistry captured & created by Matt Garcia using Intentional Camera Movement (ICM): *'ABSTRACT UNIVERSE'*

By **Gail McKay**

Matt transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary with a single exposure, making the unseen seen – capturing unrepeatable moments where motion becomes meditation, inviting personal contemplation rather than literal interpretation.

Colour and form transcend their origins, offering viewers a window into a notional, artistic and abstract parallel universe. Pure in-camera artistry – with no digital manipulation and no AI.

Matt's photos represent a deliberate departure from photography's historical pursuit of perfect clarity. Instead, they embrace the creative potential of motion, using the camera as a brush and light as paint. During each exposure, lasting anywhere from a fraction of a second to several heartbeats, the camera moves in carefully choreographed patterns – perhaps tracing the vertical lines of forest trees, following the sweep of a

coastline, or dancing with city lights as they pierce the darkness.

What makes ICM particularly interesting is how it transforms ordinary scenes into abstract interpretations that often evoke emotional responses through colour, line, and form rather than literal representation.

I urge you to try it if you're interested.

For more information visit: www.seeneri.com

Open to the public every weekend during April (inc bank holiday) commencing 4th.

Times: **11am to 4pm**
Venue: **The Birley Centre
4 Carlisle Road
Eastbourne BN21 4EF**
(opposite *The Towner Art Gallery*).

Patterson Gallery

The **Patterson Gallery** in the **Alfriston Room**
(Lower ground floor, take the second lift from Reception, opposite the Lawns Room)

at

The Lansdowne Hotel

Over Easter we will feature Eastbourne Open House
3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th April.

Featuring the following artists:

**Michael Wynn-Jones, Hazel Baker,
Peter M McNally, Alan D Pearce,
Annalyne Cooke, Nick Bowering,
Andrew Murdoch, Samantha Tuffnell**

The exhibition will continue throughout April.

Tel: 07970 549873 | peter@pattersongallery.co.uk

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APR 4

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£15



APRIL 19

DOODLE MASTERCLASS
WITH BECKIE BEANS
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
£25



MAY 3

SPRING FUN FOR KIDS
11:00 AM - 3:00 PM
£15



MAY 24

PAINT & SIP WITH C'EST ELLE
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
£25



JUNE 20

FATHER'S DAY CRAFTS
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
£15



JUNE 28

ILLUSTRATION WORKSHOP
WITH LISA PARKER
11:00am - 2:00pm
£25



DISCOVER AND PURCHASE ART FROM LOCAL ARTISTS
THUR 2 FRI 3 SAT 4 MON 6 APRIL 11-4 ENTERPRISE CENTRE

Taking place over four days at the Enterprise Centre, the event offers a chance to browse and buy original artwork across a range of styles and mediums.

Bringing together painters, printmakers, mixed media artists and more, the Open House highlights the strength and variety of creative practice in the town.



More artists to be announced, for more information follow us at instagram



@creative_eastbourne

ENTERPRISE SHOPPING CENTRE, STATION PARADE, EASTBOURNE, BN21 1BD

ENTERPRISE-CENTRE.ORG



Craft, courses and community

A CREATIVE space in Eastbourne's Old Town brings colour, coffee and community.

By **Dylan McCully**

Maker Studio, based at 52 Ocklynge Road in Old Town Eastbourne, is a craft shop and workshop space where visitors can pick up inspiring supplies, take part in hands-on classes and enjoy great coffee in a friendly, welcoming and inspiring setting.

Opened last May by local husband and wife team Kate and Martin McCully. Both professional designers with backgrounds in craft and creative direction, they opened the studio with the aim of building a modern creative hub for the local community. Creative workshops are at the heart of the business, curated to

inspire in exceptionally engaging and well thought out classes.

Crochet, being Kate's passion, features a lot in the line up of workshops month to month, and there are many to choose from. Never picked up a hook before? Then the four week crochet course will give you the expert knowledge and foundation to start your crochet journey. If you are looking to improve your crochet skills, you can come and make a toy bee and discover the world of amigurumi. Want a challenge? Sign up to make the popular crocheted cardigan, as seen in the window.

Whilst specialising in crochet, there is so much more on offer at *Maker Studio*, from Lino and Gelli printing to Still life Collage and Creative

Writing, and more! The workshops are taught by an amazing line-up of artists, writers and makers from Eastbourne and beyond.

Inside *Maker Studio*, the shop is stocked with a carefully chosen range of craft supplies, tools and kits. Yarn is a huge feature of course, with good quality yarns from *Stylecraft*, perfect for making cosy blankets or cushions. Or if Amigurumi making (crocheted toys) is your thing, then they stock the complete range of *Ricorumi* cotton plus the popular *Chenille* for soft plushies.

And there's more! At the heart of the studio is a cosy coffee bar serving expertly made drinks from award-winning Bristol roasters *Extract Coffee*. Drinks are available to enjoy in the studio or take away. Why not bring a project, grab a drink, sit and relax.

What to meet other makers? Every Thursday there is a free Meet and Make session where locals gather to work, chat and share ideas. Like a knit and natter – but it doesn't have to be knitting. Embroidery, crochet, sketching, felting, sewing...whatever floats your boat.

For a closer look at what's coming up, head to maker-studio.co.uk for the latest workshops and courses. If you'd like first pick of new dates, sign up to the newsletter and be the first to hear what's on the way. And if you're searching for a thoughtful gift, the online shop is stocked with



Every Thursday

Meet & Make, a free meet up for local crafters. 2–4pm

Upcoming workshops

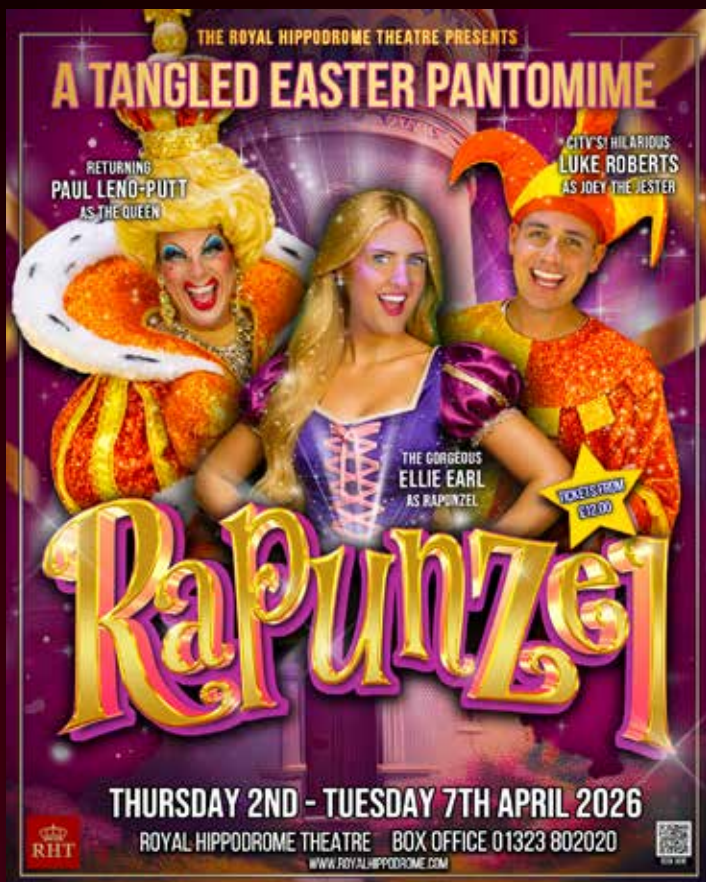
- Kids Crochet Beginners Class.
- Kids After School Crochet Club.
- Adults Beginners Sewing Machine Class – make a craft pouch.
- Hexi Cardigan Crochet Course.
- Adults Beginners Knitting Taster Class.
- Creative Writing.
- Lino Printing.
- Gelli Printing.
- 4 Week Course – Learn Amigurumi Crochet.
- 4 Week Course – Learn to Crochet.

beautiful yarns and carefully chosen craft kits, all available for quick delivery across the UK.

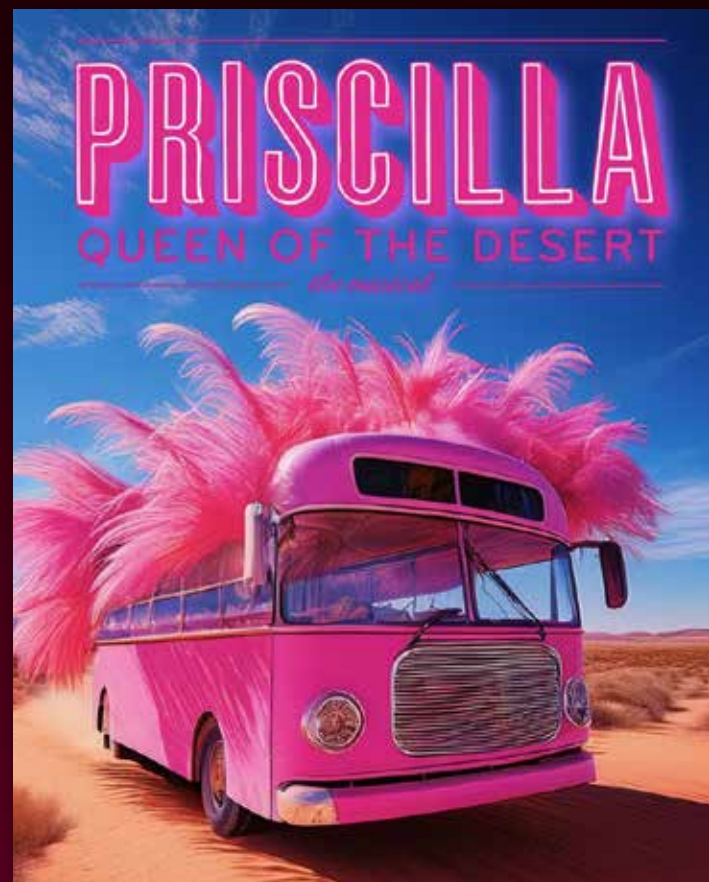
Book online
maker-studio.co.uk

Visit the shop
52 Ocklynge Road
Eastbourne BN21 1PR
Instagram & Facebook
@maker.studio.eastbourne





Easter Pantomime: Rapunzel
Thursday 2 - Tuesday 7 April



EODS: Priscilla Queen of The Desert
Wednesday 22 - Sunday 26 April

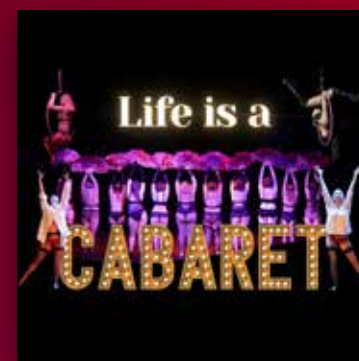


Oh What a Night!
Friday 10 April



RHT

Royal Hippodrome Theatre



Bodiblossom: Life is a Cabaret
Saturday 11 April



RAPA Dance: Celebration
Sunday 12 April



Screaming Blue Murder
Thursday 16 April



Oasis
Friday 17 April



The Luke Combs Experience
Saturday 18 April

Box Office 01323 802020 | royalhippodrome.com
106-114 Seaside Road, Eastbourne, BN21 3PF



Green and pleasant

APRIL'S here and spring has finally sprung! We can expect the inevitable April showers but with sunny days too we hope. This month you can focus all your attention on the garden as the weather warms up and early flowers start to bloom. There's a load of jobs to do outside and in the greenhouse. It's an exciting month with daffodils and flowering trees starting to bloom and indoor-sown seeds well into growth. It is also time to start sowing outdoors but just watch out for any frosts. Easter is coming up, the clocks have gone forward, so let's hope all the dreadful wet weather has gone away and we can finally enjoy some pleasant time outdoors with family and friends.

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

I've recently finished delivering a series of seven talks over the winter months, about my own garden, gardening by the sea generally and growing succulents. It is about now that garden clubs, horticultural societies and WI groups start looking for speakers for their next season! Over the years I've presented over 120, so, if you know of any groups or societies that are still looking for speakers across Sussex or the borders of Kent and Surrey this autumn or next spring and beyond, please get in touch.

Houseplants

Many houseplants are easy to grow, are long lived and can be very rewarding. Whether you are a fan of large architectural plants to use as focal points in a room, miniature plants for growing in terraria, or fascinated by collecting and growing a particular group of plants like orchids or cacti, there are houseplants available to suit everyone's tastes. I've got over 80 assorted plants in my house. Most houseplants are tolerant of many conditions, choose from those suitable for sunny or shady areas. They can be ideal for gardeners with homes lacking in outdoor space and there is a wide choice for rooms with high humidity such as bathrooms and many large-leaved architectural forms for a modern look.

The key factor in looking after your collection is to know when to water. This should be done when the surface of the compost becomes dry, drier pots feel lighter than wet ones. Don't just water routinely, check that the pot needs water first. I tend to use a meter to insert in the compost telling me how damp the compost is. Remember, pots dry out faster in winter when the atmospheric humidity is lowered by central heating. Plants in a cool room will need watering less often than plants in a warm room.

It is always good to bring water to room temperature before use, particularly in winter, as cold water can kill. Water the pot thoroughly so that water escapes from the drainage hole.

National Garden Scheme

This month, there is a brand-new garden opening for the scheme in Mayfield that you may like to visit on the 11th of the month. *Quarry Wood Farm and Tilsmore Vineyard* is located in Newick Lane, Mayfield, TN20 6RQ. It will open from 10:30am through until 3:30pm with entry £6. This is a 2-acre organic garden set in a beautiful valley, surrounded by wildflower meadows and mature woodland. It features extensive spring bulbs and flowering shrubs, mixed herbaceous borders, and colourful pots. There is a Mediterranean garden, as well as vegetable and cut flower gardens with raised beds. Enjoy the woodland walks, a vineyard and an orchard.

Over towards Battle there is *The Old Rectory*, Warbleton in Kingsley Hill, TN21 9PT. It will be open, for pre-booking only, on Thursday 23rd from 10am to 3pm with entry £10. Nestled in the *High Weald AONB*, *The Old Rectory* garden was re-imagined by

renowned designer Arne Maynard. His vision blends formal elements like yew and beech topiary, a knot garden, and herbaceous borders with wild flowers and rambling roses. A stream separates the formal garden from an orchard interplanted with roses and wild flowers. Over 10,000 tulips bloom in spring. Other features include a cutting garden, pond, copse, meadows and pot displays. Full details on both venues at www.ngs.org.uk

Driftwood Opening 2026

Geoff's multi-award-winning garden, *Driftwood by Sea*, will be open again this summer, for pre-booked visitors only, from 1st June through until 2nd August. You can book your slot by emailing visitdriftwood@gmail.com or by calling Geoff on **01323 899296** to arrange your visit, for individuals or groups of up to 25. His small coastal garden is full of character, with a tapestry of plants and a sunken Mediterranean garden. See inventive planting and design all complemented by original sculptures throughout with seven local artist's work on display for sale too. Geoff's home-made tea and cakes are served on vintage china on trays in the garden. Full details on the website below.

Read more of Geoff's garden at: www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk or follow both him and the garden on social media.

Geoff is a member of the Garden Media Guild and 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.

Enjoy Spring at Sharnfold Farm



23rd - 31st May



20th & 21st June



28th June

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