

News Matters

Autumn 2024

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INSIDE:
We're Special
Olympics winners!

Welcome to News Matters



Hello everyone and welcome to the Autumn Edition. It's a beautiful time of year, with the lovely colours of the season. This edition is full of colour and wonderful pictures and stories to warm you up as the nights draw in. So, get all cosy, pull the curtains and have a read and a cuppa.

As always there is so much to choose from, we have colleagues celebrating 10 years with us and a customer at our Caister Hub, celebrating 50 years with us. It is amazing to be part of such a wonderful and giving family of people. Community and belonging is vital for our health and well-being, as, is feeling valued for who you are and safe.

There are also some brilliant achievements, customers winning medals at the Special Olympics and running the Norwich 10k race, well done Simon!

We are very proud to be able to welcome Jim, Joseph and Rachel onto the County Working Together Group, being listened to and having your voice heard is so important. I am looking forward to meeting them and working with them in the future.

Congratulations to Norfolk Industries on the new contract with Natures Grub Ltd, it will be fab to see our own products on their website and maybe even on Amazon.

And lots of fun photos and smiles; I love the HSM coffee morning and adorable Norfolk Owls 😊

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Stock".

Sarah Stock, Managing Director



2024 Annual Report

Look out for our Annual Report due out week commencing 4th November. It contains updates about the business as well as lots of lovely stories from across the Independence Matters Group.



Celebrating 10 years

Congratulations to Rosewood Hub colleagues Kirsty Sturman and Gail Bensley who each celebrated 10 years at Independence Matters on 15th September. They are pictured with Donna after receiving their 10-year service cards.

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Celebrating Special Olympics success!

A huge well done to customers from Attleborough Community Hub who represented Independence Matters at the annual Special Olympics Regional Athletics Competition.

This group of customers work hard every Friday attending track and field events at the UEA to build up their skills and confidence to represent IM each year.

The competition was hosted by Special Olympics Suffolk and took place at Bury St Edmunds on Sunday 29th September.

It brings together groups of people with varying levels of ability, from different organisations, and this year over 70 athletes took part, with teams travelling from as far away as London, Yorkshire, and Worcestershire.



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Unfortunately, not everyone was able to make it to the event this time, but as you can see there were good results all round, with plenty of medals and lots of fun had by both customers and colleagues.



A very big well done to Lynsey Attoe, Stephen Easthaugh, Carol Easthaugh, John Sharpe and Philip Reeve (Freddie). Your colleagues and friends at the Hub are extremely proud of you all.



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County Working Together Board

Introducing paid opportunities for our customers

Earlier this year a small Working Together committee was formed to talk about and implement a positive new approach to our County Working Together Board (CWTB).

It was important to us that the CWTB would provide paid opportunities for customers. This makes sure everyone is equally represented, through having a voice and being paid for their contribution.



1

We secured an agreement for customers to receive a discretionary payment of £11.50/hour for their time spent on the Board.

2

The customer Board member roles were advertised across IM during the summer and customers invited to apply.

3

We received 8 applications for the 3 roles and invited 5 candidates to interview.

4

Interviews took place during October with members in place for first meeting to take place in early November 2024.

5

Congratulations to candidates Jim, Joseph and Rachael, on becoming our new CWTB members.



I am so pleased and excited that the paid opportunities for customers have become a reality. It has taken a year or more to get to this point and now there is just no stopping us!!

We are delighted to introduce Jim, Joseph and Rachael as our new CWT Board members. It was so very hard to let other applicants down, but we are confident we have chosen the right people to be able to fulfil the requirements of the Board. A big thank you to Ruby for supporting with the interviews and preparation.

I am sure you will all join us in celebrating people's achievements. Everyone is absolutely delighted and very much looking forward to meeting each other at our first Board meeting in November."

Maria Bond, Working Together Coordinator

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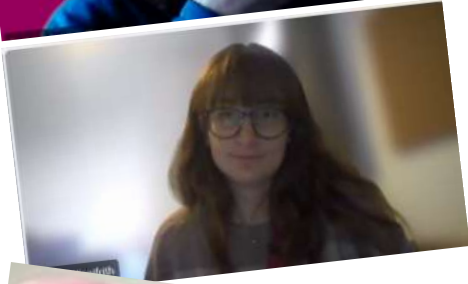
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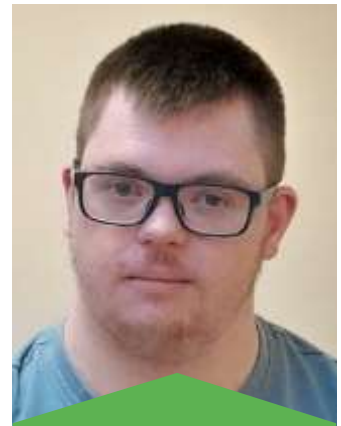
Maria Bond



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I'm Rachael
and I'm a Board member



I'm Joseph
and I'm a Board member



I'm Jim
and I'm a Board member

“

The newly designed County Working Together Board means customers voices will be heard across all of Independence Matters and beyond. This is an exceptional achievement, and these new opportunities underpin and strengthen our mission and values.

I am sure you will celebrate this success with us and support us on our new journey.”

**Maria Bond,
Working Together
Coordinator**



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Brenda celebrates 50 years with us!

On 9th October Caister Community Hub held a party to celebrate customer Brenda's 50 years with the service.

Colleague Louise has known Brenda since 1985 when she attended Great Yarmouth Hub which was known then as the training centre. Brenda is 83 now and the team felt it was an appropriate time to celebrate with her while she is still well and coming to the Hub.

The party was attended by friends and those who have supported Brenda over the years. This included a lady who knew Brenda when she was in her thirties and had a customer holiday with her in Ireland back in the early 1980s.

It was a wonderful event with lots of photos and memories to chat about.



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Love and peace at summer fete!

For anyone who is missing summer (isn't that everyone?!), here are some lovely photos from Dereham Hub's summer fete.



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We make the news!

Thanks to Nicola Cordle for this lovely photo and write up in the EDP.

And a heads-up – it's the Hub's 40th anniversary in 2025!



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Oui, nous parlons français!

Customers at Attleborough Hub are learning French thanks to colleagues Helen and David. The sessions are led by David who speaks fluent French.

Customers all take turns to speak individually and have learnt phrases such as 'How are you?', 'I would like a coffee please', 'I would like to go to the Louvre' and 'Where is the Eiffel tower?'

The group used the interactive screen to find out more about different places in France, including Paris and the Eiffel tower. They also talked about French culture and learnt that if you aren't polite to a waiter in France then they will not want to serve you!

The customers were encouraged to decide what they wanted to learn in French, and they all chose to learn how to ask, 'How do I get to Disneyland Paris?'

They spoke about the entire trip including what modes of transport they would use to get there, what they would need (passports), what they wouldn't be allowed to take through customs (food, drugs, alcohol) as well as what they would do on their trip and what snacks they would buy on the way.

It was easy to see how this really helped to boost people's confidence. Maybe they will organise a trip across the channel!



Larn yew Norfolk?

Crossroads Hub celebrated Norfolk Day in July with lots of laughter about the lingo and phrases, some still used generally today and others that have got lost over the years.

Customers also enjoyed the obligatory taste of local delicacy samphire. Many could reminisce about having it with family and friends.

We were lucky that it was picked locally and was eaten fresh - with vinegar... just as it should be!



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We're ready for fright night! 🤪

Thank you to customers at Norwich Supported Living for sharing these lovely pics of their Halloween decorations. Spooky!... 🎃 🕷️ 🦇



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A visit we won't forget!

On 19th September Dereham Hub had a very special visit from Norfolk Owls.

Richard, who owns the owls, brought in lots of different species for us to see and learn about. It was so nice to get up close to birds that we usually only see overhead - or for some not at all, as they are not native to this country.

Lots of people held the owls, some went for Siberian eagle owl, Gracie, who was the biggest while others choose one of the smaller scops owls. They were all beautiful and it's an experience no one will forget – it's been a big talking point!

Richard also gave the TAPS wildlife team a selection of feathers for their ever-growing collection. The visit was so good for everyone's wellbeing and mental health and generated so many smiling faces.



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Customers get cooking!

Attleborough customers always enjoy cooking in their Platform Bistro kitchen and, as these photos show, it's a real team effort with everyone getting involved.

Customers Tommy and Stephen visited the local supermarket to do the food shopping. They both had great fun walking around the store, finding items on the shopping list, then helped to pack up the food at the checkout. Tommy did a wonderful job of packing and Stephen counted and paid for their purchases.



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On arrival back at the Hub all customers helped to prepare a delicious lunch of baked potatoes with tuna and salad.

Customers Luke, MJ, Stephen, Tommy, Sara, John and Connor prepared a summer salad, by chopping up lettuce, spring onions, tomatoes, and cucumber.

Cheese was carefully grated; tuna was emptied into a bowl and each customer took it in turns mixing in mayonnaise and spring onions.



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They all worked fantastically as a team, cleaning, washing and wiping up as they went along. 12 meals in all were prepared for colleagues and customers, we all enjoyed our, lunch as you can see. All customers have a chance to cook Monday to Thursday, this is a small example of what we do at Attleborough Hub.



HSM Colleague of the Month

Congratulations to Great Yarmouth Care Worker, Tracy Archer, who was nominated by her teammates for her outstanding care and the wonderful relationships she builds with our customers. They truly appreciate all she does! She consistently goes above and beyond and is such a fantastic colleague to work with.

Thank you, Tracy, for being **amazing!**



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Congratulations to HSM race finishers Simon and Felix

HSM customer, Simon, completed the 2024 Run Norwich event on 8th September, running alongside support worker Felix for almost the entire race.

The 10km run is organised by the Norwich City Community Sports Foundation and takes place in the heart of Norwich's city centre. It was Simon's first time at the event and he has trained hard to get ready for it.

Felix said: "Simon kept pace with me almost to the end. He didn't walk or stop at all during the race. He was exhausted at the finish line, but very proud to have completed the race in about 71 minutes. We've been training for this event for years!"



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TAPS wildlife blog

Hi everyone TAPS wildlife team here!

Back in the summer National Trust ranger Ben visited us at the Hub. He gave an interesting talk and arranged for us to make some decoy birds for them to use at Blakeney Point.

These are made from modelling clay and need to be an even size and shape, to mimic a little tern nesting. Once dry, they are painted to look like the real thing!

Well at the beginning of September we visited the reserve at Blakeney to hand them over to Ben. The decoys will be used to help guide little terns to safer nesting sites. Ben was really pleased with them and will be putting them out next year.

We were then treated to a wonderful fun filled day with our very own guide Carl, a former ranger who now works as a volunteer. Carl had been a ranger alongside Ajay Tegala who is now a Countryfile and Springwatch presenter. Claire had read all about Carl in Ajay's book so it was nice to put a face to a name.

Adorned with our National Trust lanyards, we started with a walk and talk at Friary Hills where Carl told us all about gall wasps and how they lay eggs at the ends of oak trees creating these round hard berry-like deposits with the eggs inside. We were all fascinated by this!

We then went pond dipping at a small river of water called a barnet where Carl found us a lovely array of pond life including eels, which he really wanted us to see. He told us how eels come all the way from their breeding place in the Sargasso Sea in the North Atlantic and travel via Scotland to end up at Blakeney. An American gentleman with a dog stopped to listen and asked if American eels were the same as our eels.



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Apparently, the American eels have two less vertebrae. European eels are called *Anguilla* and American eels are *Rostrata*. It was so interesting to hear that when both types leave the Sargasso Sea, the Europeans go one way and the Americans the other. Now how clever is that?! In late October these wriggly little creatures make the long journey back, eels can live up to 30 years. Wow!!!

Carl also showed us the reeds which are used to make thatched roofs and the rushes and to remember the difference 'rushes for brushes'. Stephen took one of each home.

We walked back for our picnic lunch with Ben where Carl had to leave after a huge thank you from us all. He has offered to take us out again next spring so we can't wait!

After lunch we walked down to the quay with Ben and up to the viewpoint where we looked out to sea, so peaceful and beautiful. Sadly, the day went too fast, and it was time for us to return. We couldn't thank Ben and Carl enough for making us so welcome and making our day so special. Ben and the rangers are going to look for more ways we can help in the future. One very exciting project could be on the horizon, but more about that another time, as it's still in the planning stages.

If you've never visited Blakeney it's well worth a trip to see the wonderful work that the National Trust does to keep it a haven for our precious wildlife. Until next time, keep an eye out for the autumn migrants coming in for the winter and keep watching wildlife and help where you can.

Best wishes. Justin, Jasmine, Mark, Lucie, Stephen, & Claire



You can keep up with the TAPS wildlife blogs (and see more of their photos) by [visiting our Facebook page](#).

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Autumn crafting at Crossroads

Customers and colleagues at Crossroads Community Hub have been busy enjoying seasonal crafting projects with some great results. Here are some before and after shots, showing their work in progress.



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NI attends the Chamber of Commerce B2B Exhibition

Norfolk Industries exhibited at the Norfolk Showground on 17th October to promote our contract packing services to businesses across Norfolk and Suffolk.

We had a great day, met lots of lovely people with some helpful advice, and made lots of new contacts.

Packing work is great for us as a business. It helps provide a more reliable service to people on work placements and offers a softer introduction to the workplace. Being part of the main team in the factory can be a lot for people to cope with, whilst packing is individual work and can be undertaken in a quieter space.

We have struggled recently to find reliable contract packing work which has resulted in us calling people off work placements.

We are hopeful the tradeshow will help put some new packing work our way. This will benefit those currently on work placements and means we can continue to support even more people looking to move closer to employment.



Do you have any packing work?

If you know of anyone who has packing work they need doing, please put them in touch. We will have a go at most things; collating, stuffing envelopes, packing hampers, splitting down bulk goods into smaller packs, shrink wrapping, boxing etc. but we are unable to do any packing which involves direct contact with food.



Goodbye to Julie

Our Business Support Officer, Julie, officially retired on 6th September after an amazing 40 years of service.

We waved her off with presents and decorations which totally filled the back of her car. We'd like to say huge thanks for your contribution over the years, you will be missed!

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New partnership with Natures Grub

We're excited to announce a new partnership with Norfolk-based company, [Natures Grub Ltd](#).

Based in Dereham and Fakenham, Natures Grub Ltd is a family-owned company and one of Europe's largest manufacturers of specialist pet and wildlife feedstuffs.

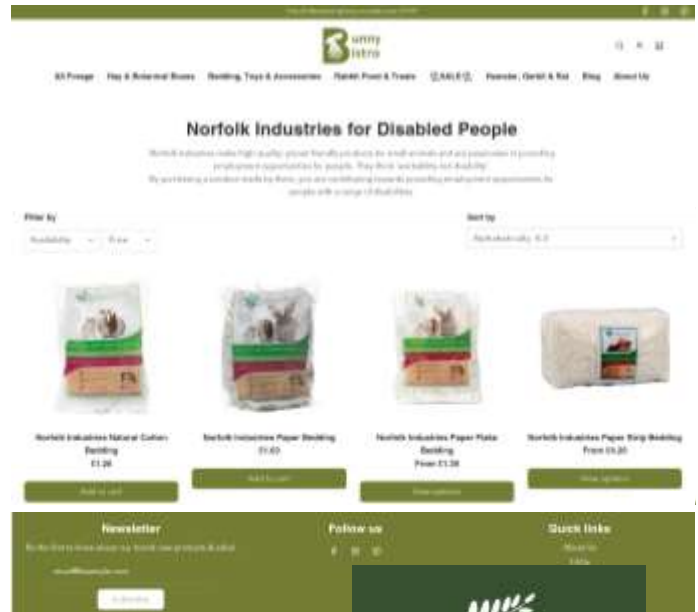
They are expanding their range to include small animal paper bedding and have chosen to support Norfolk Industries by promoting 8 of own-branded products across a range of online platforms.

We've received the first order of £3k and our bedding is now available to purchase via the Natures Grub sister website [Bunny Bistro](#).

Going forward, they plan to include our products across their Natures Grub corporate website and Natures Grub Trade Portal (for shops to purchase), as well as including our products in their trade price list and catalogue.

We are also delighted that the arrangement includes plans to facilitate our products being sold on Amazon and eBay.

They are keen to promote both the recycling/planet friendly aspect of our business, and how we provide employment to people with disabilities, and plan to use this USP to help promote Norfolk Industries via social media.



They love what we do and how we do it and are hoping that this will grow into something great for both of us. It's exciting stuff!"

Sharon Tooke, NI General Manager



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Student sessions a great success

East Norfolk Sixth Form College invited HSM's training and development team to take part in a two-day 'immersive' workshop event, delivering dementia awareness sessions to students.

The event took place on 24th and 25th September and was attended by Year 10 students from high schools across Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, and the college's Year 1 T-level health students.

The HSM coaches delivered eight sessions across the two days, ending each with a five-minute talk on the rewards of working in the social care sector, and how it can be a stepping stone into related occupations.

Feedback from students indicated the dementia awareness session was the most popular. The coaches were approached by the deputy head teacher from Pakefield High School in Lowestoft, asking if they could deliver dementia awareness training sessions to pupils at the school and give a talk on the Health and Social Care sector and job roles.



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A fabulous day out at Gressenhall

On 10th September colleagues Claire, Sue and Howie took their history group to visit Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse.

The whole group fell in love with the Suffolk punch horses, which were beautiful. The farm has five of these lovely horses, which are believed to be the oldest breed of heavy horse in Britain, and are now an endangered species, with only around 500 left.

Everyone enjoyed a tractor ride to visit and feed horses Reggie and Casper, which was the highlight of Justin's and Martyn's day. We are very lucky to have them at Gressenhall.

We learnt how they are used to plough the fields just like they would have done years ago. Everyone got their height checked using the special measuring stick used on the horses, which measures in 'hands'. Only Ollie and Stephen were declared the full Reggie at 16 hands!



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After the farm we visited the old farmhouse. It was great to bring our history sessions to life with all the period features. We sang a verse of All Things Bright and Beautiful in the little church, and didn't get detention in the school room, which was good as we didn't want the cane!



After our picnic we made our way to the workhouse, which was a bit creepy, especially looking at all the displays of things that were used. We took photos and used them the following week to help us remember the things we'd seen.



Everyone liked the old-fashioned shop and pretended to buy things, we also had fun dressing up in the period costumes and hats. The trip wouldn't be complete without a trip to the gift shop where everyone bought a souvenir of the day.

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Soapbox Derby is on our doorstep!

HSM was in on the action on 29th September for the first Beccles Soapbox Derby. The Beccles office was at the end of the course, which ran from the top of Station Road to the bottom.

The HSM carpark was the perfect place for the carts to enter and for the drivers to receive their medals as they completed the race.

Watch this space as discussions are already taking place in the HSM office for a team to enter the race next year with their very own cart!



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Policing the neighbourhood!

Dereham Hub had a great time in September when Damian and two of his colleagues from the local police visited.

Damian told us all about the work that they do and showed us their police car and the tools that they use to keep us all safe. They were very friendly and full of interesting facts. The morning was a great success, and everybody enjoyed meeting them.



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Raising funds and spirits at coffee morning

Home Support Matters hosted a coffee morning on 27th September to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Support. Whilst the weather was overcast and wet, this didn't dampen the event or attendance. The four-hour event raised an amazing £500 for the charity, through cake sales and a raffle, with approximately 50 people attending.

A special thank you to HSM's quality manager Sally Palin who organised and hosted the event, even though she was technically on annual leave, and to Paul Eaton and Jo Duale who chose to spend their non-working day escorting customers to and from the coffee morning.

One customer mentioned that apart from hospital appointments he hadn't stepped foot outside his home for 6 years and was so happy to have the opportunity to sit and talk to people and eat cake. 😊



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£500
raised for
Macmillan



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We visit Sea Life at Hunstanton

On Friday October 4th The Studio Gang took a trip out to Hunstanton for a visit to the sea life centre.



We all had such a great time and learnt so many interesting facts from our host Pixie, especially about starfish which we continued to research and study on our return to the Hub. We even got to see the penguins getting fed!



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CRAIG "The penguins were nice."

MELISSA "I enjoyed everything."

BILLY "I enjoyed looking in the viewing bubbles."

ARRABELLA "I liked the seahorses."

PAM "I really enjoyed watching Ernie the turtle as I had never seen one so big before. It was a fantastic day out."

JAMES "I liked looking and touching the starfish, it was a lovely day out."



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Award presentation

Our Norfolk Care Awards finalist Maria Bond received her Highly Commended award from event sponsor NorCA's Caitlin Moll at our Joseph King House head office.

Maria was nominated for the Collaboration / Co-production in Care category for her work with customers and the Working Together Groups.

News from NDCH

Norwich Dementia Community Hub celebrated Harvest Festival with a difference this year. Customers, family carers and colleagues were asked to donate items for animals and birds.

They received some very generous gifts which will go all to PACT animal sanctuary.



Bowling fun for Faro

Thank you to Faro Lodge for sharing these photos which show Joe, Lewis and Tim having a great time bowling.

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Autumn project

Rosewood customers and colleagues wanted to share this fantastic hedgehog house with us. This was created as part of their autumn project which also included the seasonal poem on the next page.



Halloween crafting

Norwich Dementia Community Hub has been getting ready for Halloween making decorations. SPOILER ALERT! Biffy has some batwings to wear too!



PAS photoshoot

A big thank you to our PAS South customers and colleagues who spent a fun day out and about in Attleborough on a photoshoot with photographer Steve Wright.

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An Autumn Poem

By Rosewood Hub customers and colleagues

Frosty mornings, crispy air,
Cold winds whipping through my hair.
The sun sets even quicker with
crimson skies,
Trees so colourful before dropping in
front of our eyes.

Russets, yellows, pinks and browns,
Wearing wellies to hear the crunches
of leaves on the ground.
Splashing in puddles, splish, splosh,
splash,
Stews, casseroles, homemade soups,
'oh my gosh!'

Coats, gloves, scarves and thermals,
That cosy warm feeling we keep
internal.
Autumn gives such sights to behold,
Even when we're feeling so dreadful
cold!

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