

# News Matters

Summer 2024

Independence  
Matters

*'the life you choose...'*



**INSIDE:**

**We're winners at the  
2024 Norfolk Care Awards!**

# Welcome to News Matters

Hello everyone and welcome to the Summer edition of News Matters.



As I sit writing this the sun is shining, which always makes us feel better. I hope that warmer weather is here to stay, so that customers and colleagues can celebrate and enjoy the many summer events which are being planned over the coming months.

I really am struggling to express how proud and emotional it makes me feel, having read this edition. It is so vibrant, full of special moments, celebrations and achievements and just having fun together and appreciating each other.

To steal Maria's words, it is all about being 'in the moment' together and the pictures tell the story much better than I can. This edition is filled with lots of moments, making memories and happy times.

Life is all about relationships, trust and a sense of belonging and acceptance of what makes each of us unique, different and amazing.

So please do, put the kettle on, kick off your shoes, get the deckchair out and take some time out from your busy day to share with us in our moments and stories.

Take care everyone, relax and enjoy the summer.

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

Sarah Stock, Managing Director

## Congratulations, Matt!

Sprowston colleague Matt Fulcher has passed his Level 5 Leader in Adult Care Diploma with a distinction.

The Level 5 is equivalent to a Higher National Diploma (HND) and Distinctions are not easy to achieve, so a huge well done to Matt on his achievement.



## Carolyn retires

Carolyn, our Operations Director, retired in June, having been with Independence Matters since its inception in 2013.

We were all sad to see her leave, but know she's going to be having a wonderful time keeping busy doing things that she loves, including spending lots of time in the garden over the summer ☺.

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## Norfolk Care Awards

We were super proud to have three category finalists at this year's Norfolk Care Awards:

**Jack Anthony-Knell** (Motivational Leader/Manager award)

**The Training & Quality Team** (Learning and Development award)

**Maria Bond** (Collaboration/Co-production in Care award)

Finalists and guests, including team members and customers, attended the ceremony at Sprowston Manor on 6th June. Massive congratulations go to Jack who won the Motivational Leader/Manager award.

You can view the official photos from the event using the links below:

[View the professional photos here](#)

[View the photo booth photos here](#)



# Norfolk Care Awards 2024



# Norfolk Care Awards 2024



# Norfolk Care Awards 2024

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## “A picture paints a thousand words”

Recently, I was lucky enough to be nominated for the Collaboration/Co-production in Care category at the Norfolk Care Awards and I was totally amazed that I made it to the final! I had the pleasure of attending the awards ceremony on 6th June at Sprowston Manor and I invited customers Zoe, Rachael, Braedon and Isabel our PR, Branding and Communication Officer as my guests. We all got dressed up for the occasion and really valued the opportunity to get together for the night, socialising, enjoying each other’s company and being in ‘the moment’. They say a “a picture paints a thousand words” which means that pictures show meaning and emotion far more than just words and I am sure you can see from our pictures how happy and proud we were to be there.

The other finalists in the category alongside myself were Badgers Wood Care Home and Community Step Down Flats. The finalists were chosen for ‘excelling in their role’ and the judges expressed that it was “very difficult to choose a winner”.

Unfortunately, I didn’t win the award (but secretly I was glad not to have to get up on stage!) with Badgers Wood being announced as the winner. All was not lost though as we celebrated Jack’s (Faro Lodge Service Manager) achievement for winning the Motivational Leader Award and for the Training and Quality Team to be in the final too.

Despite not winning, NorCA (Norfolk Care Association) have suggested that I am ‘Highly Commended’ in the care sector which is a massive achievement for me and one that I definitely didn’t expect.

I believe that I have passion, enthusiasm and dedication for the work that I do and that I am committed to delivering exceptional outcomes with people. I work alongside the most incredible and inspirational people every day, so really, I am the true ‘winner’.

**Maria Bond**

*Working Together Co-Ordinator*



# Norfolk Care Awards 2024

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# Bailey 'On The Air' - part II

Last December we brought you the story of PAS East customer Bailey and his progress at Harbour Radio.

Service managers Alex Spinks and Emma Cobley, along with Team Manager Peter Cox, were recently invited to Harbour's studio to see Bailey in action.

As part of the Bailey's Mix Show, Alex was interviewed and asked questions about Independence Matters, our services and his interests. Bailey then played a song of choice for each of the three visitors.



## HOW TO LISTEN

Tune in every Wednesday for the Bailey Mix between 12 and 2pm online on your smart speakers or 107.4 FM in the Yarmouth area.

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# Happy retirement

Attleborough team member Donna has retired after 23 years of service at the Hub. Customers made a thank you present which was presented to her by Shirley. You've been a fantastic member of the team Donna, and we will all miss you!



## Twins for a day!

We had to laugh when we saw this pic of William Day Centre manager Sherralyn and Operations Director Carolyn 😊 Obviously they both shop at Next!



## New photoshoot

We welcomed local photographer Michael Lyons to Dereham Hub for a photoshoot with customers. Everyone knows Michael as his daughter Georgia attends the Hub. We are looking forward to showing some of the new pics our website.



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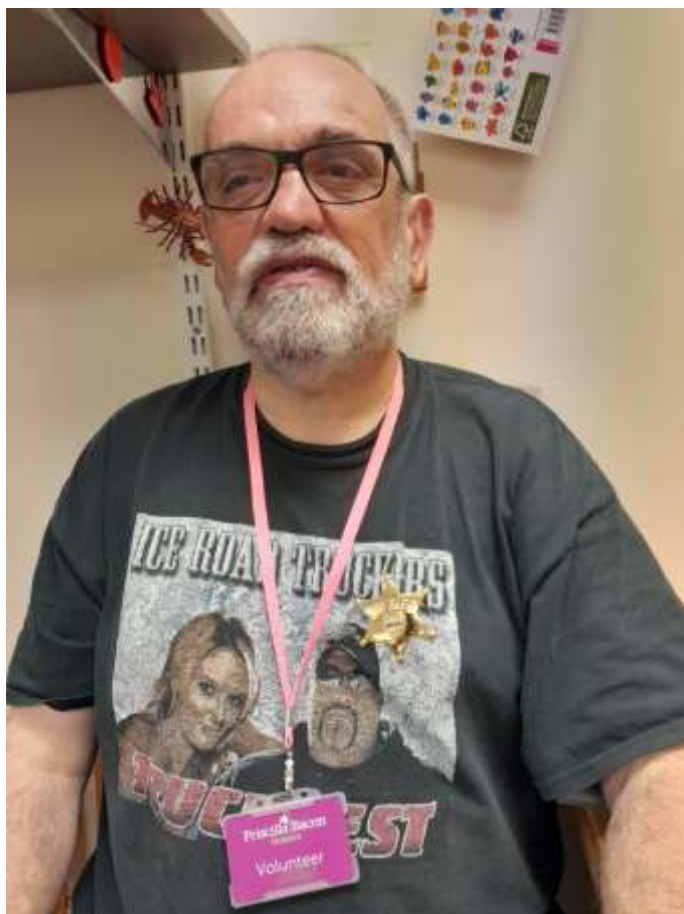
## e-learning success secures role for *Jason*

With support from colleagues, PAS North customer Jason has secured a voluntary job, which is a huge step for him!

Colleagues assisted Jason to complete all the required online learning, which was compulsory for the role and done through the NHS portal. Various modules needed to be completed successfully, including safeguarding, GDPR, fire awareness and health & safety, with a multi choice quiz at the end of each.

Jason now volunteers at the Priscilla Bacon charity shop in Bowthorpe. His support worker attends with him, and currently he works mainly in the backroom, sorting through the donations ready for them to be put on the shelves.

Huge well done to Jason, we are all super proud of you!



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# Shaun's charity challenge

Holt Community Hub support worker, Shaun Sidell, has completed [the Tough Mudder](#) challenge raising £1000 for the charity Mind. Described as hardcore obstacle courses designed to test your all-around strength, stamina, and mental grit, this is not for the faint-hearted!

Shaun and his niece embarked on the mission and we're delighted to report the pair proved they 'have what it takes'.

Even though it was hard (and they have many war wounds) they both completed the course. Congratulations from us all!



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## Carers Week crafting at *Crossroads*

Customers at Crossroads Community Hub celebrated Carers Week (10-16 June), by creating cards for the member of their family who had taken on the caring role.

They added a personal message which gives a nice touch to what we feel are some real masterpieces. Don't they look proud!



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## Cooking up *lunch*

Sprowston Hub's cooking group customers are being encouraged to make healthy food choices, making their own meals from scratch, which everyone then eats together at the table.



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## We ♥ doing the maths!

Arithmetic might not be for everybody, but customers at Dereham Community Hub have been really enjoying weekly maths sessions with Simon from the Multiply Programme.

Covering money skills and how numbers work, the sessions use different learning techniques and include games and activities to make it fun.

Learning is now taking a break for the summer, but everyone is looking forward to continuing with the sessions in September.



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# Welcome to Hubfest!

Customers and colleagues at Great Yarmouth Hub embraced the Glastonbury vibe and threw themselves into a week of fabulous, festival-themed activities.

Everyone worked really hard to design and make decorations for the Hub. Unfortunately, the weather put paid to the BBQ, but it didn't dampen spirits and the burgers were cooked indoors instead.



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## Supporting Ann to make a *new start*

Customer Ann came to our Pine Lodge replacement care service in March as an emergency placement, having experienced a number of devastating and rapid changes to her home life.

Having recently spent a weekend at Church Green Lodge (CGL) it was clear that its location, being closer to Norwich and our Hub services, was better suited to her needs.

Supporting people in a person-centred way is at the heart of what we do, and our priority was to arrange the best outcome for Ann's wellbeing.

Our service managers worked together to arrange for the change to be made and Ann has now moved to CGL where she is enjoying spending time at nearby Sprowston Hub, helping out in the café and making new friends.



## Josephine's Apollo Project *success*

The Apollo Project is a workforce programme set up by the East Coast College. It provides training and job coach support to help people progress their careers or gain local employment in the health and social care sector.

Josephine Victor completed the Care Start Certificate as part of the project and attended a 'Meet the Employer' event at The Priory 1101 venue in Great Yarmouth.

She met our lovely colleague Claire (Pilkington) and secured herself a role with Home Support Matters.

Fantastic news and congratulations Josephine! We wish you every success in your new role.

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# Hub's Scarecrow Festival Fun

Customers at Attleborough Community Hub had a wonderful time at their Scarecrow Festival. Some made scarecrows, including ones representing Harry Potter and the King and Queen, and others dressed up with a prize for the best dressed. Visitors were able to browse the stalls and purchase afternoon tea in the Platform Bistro.



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# Dementia Action Week 13-17 May

Norwich Dementia Community Hub celebrated Dementia Action Week in style with lots of activities.

The team worked hard as always to make it an extra special time for customers, celebrating lives, embracing challenges and above all - having fun together!



Customers chose the Seaside Reminiscence Box to lift their spirits on a dreary, wet day in hopes that the sun would return!

That didn't quite happen, but thank you to David for taking us all back to the good old days 😊☀️

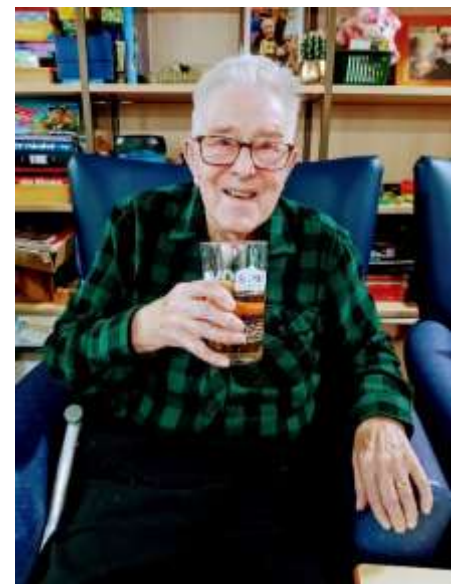


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Tasty food, drink and shared games played a big part in the week's activities. Customers enjoyed several pub/bar days, and the Hub had its very own glamorous barmaid!



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No pub / bar day would be complete without some pub games! Darts was so much fun and of course, very competitive!

Some darts didn't quite make the dart board, which made our customers laugh even more! Family carers who were passing by also had a quick go - thank you for being great sports!



Special thanks to Alison for the absolutely delicious cream teas, catering for every dietary requirement, and to the wonderful bar staff who served drinks on the pub-themed days throughout the week. Happy times 😊



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# Dementia Action Week 13-17 May

Rosewood Community Hub also celebrated Dementia Action Week holding a coffee morning. A great opportunity for customers, carers and colleagues to get together, eat cake, and chat over a cuppa ☺



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# We do Shrek 2!

Attleborough Community Hub's Wednesday Drama Group put on their very own production of Shrek 2, with the Fairy Godmother played by Maddy.

They played to a full house with lots of laughter and received a huge round of applause for all their hard work with lots of compliments on their great performance.



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# Looking after our mental health

Holt Community Hub recognised Mental Health Week (13-19 May) with an afternoon session to discuss anxiety.

The discussion was based around a document created in easy read by Working Together Co-Ordinator, Maria. Customers placed each section on to the display board after they had spoken about it. This was left in place all week so those who were not at the Hub on the day could see it later.

A group discussion was held, and the interactive white board was used to capture some good answers. Well, done to everyone who joined the session. We know that talking about feelings can be difficult and we are so proud of you all.



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# Pamper sessions get the *thumbs up*



Pamper Sessions are a popular new addition to the weekly timetable at Dereham Community Hub.

Customers enjoy the chance to relax, unwind and chat over a cup of tea while having a manicure or a foot spa/massage. It has led to a separate Ladies Group being set up to discuss female-related topics and exchange information.

The sessions have received lots of lovely feedback: Joan and Judith enjoyed talking with other ladies and said the pamper session is not only very relaxing but makes them feel good too.

Customers Arrabella and Paige both agreed they liked having a foot spa and massage, whilst Alice said: "It's very relaxing and I enjoy the discussions in the Ladies Group".



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## It's a fair cop!

Customers at Great Yarmouth Community Hub received a visit from the police and had a lot of fun 'arresting' some of our colleagues! We hope they were allowed back on duty without charge 😂



The Hub also time out to celebrate Carers Week (10-16 June) by inviting carers in for cake and tea.



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# Colleague of the Month Awards

Each month, Home Support Matters recognises colleagues with awards that highlight the importance of their individual contributions to the company's success.

The awards are given for exceptional performance, dedication, and contributions to the team. They are based on specific criteria including:

- **Outstanding Performance:** Demonstrating exceptional skills, productivity, and quality of work whilst going above and beyond in their role.
- **Teamwork:** Contributing positively to team dynamics, collaboration, and supporting colleagues.
- **Initiative:** Going above and beyond regular duties, showing creativity, and problem-solving abilities.
- **Customer Service:** Providing excellent service to clients or customers, leading to high satisfaction.

Huge congratulations to all our recent winners, we count ourselves lucky to have such talented and dedicated people working for us.

Our photos show clockwise from top left: Paul Eaton, Maria Carvello, Sandy Peens, Rebecca Keers, Olivia Rigg, and Rachel Pocock.



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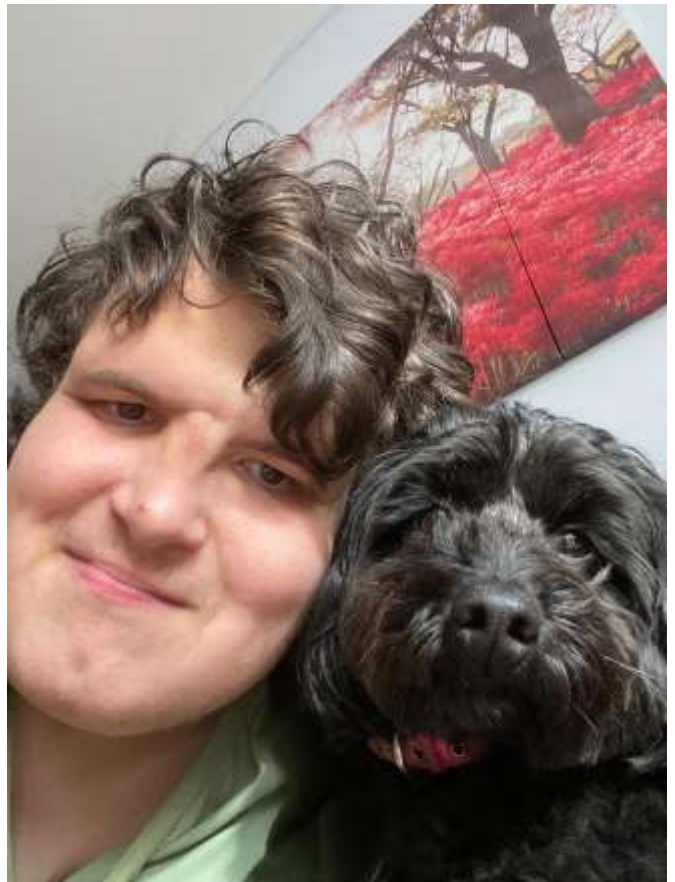
# Jason's *blog!*

Hello everyone, Jason here with a long-awaited blog, hooray they say!

I have been going out and about, I have been to Sheringham Park, it is so beautiful. I love seeing all the wildlife and plant life. We have been to Miniature World and Blickling Estate – my favourite room was the Library.

I have looked after my aunt's dog, which I love. It's a cockapoo and I can tell you a little story. When I first met my aunt's dog she was so timid she was scared of everything. She didn't like me moving or walking around my own home. She wouldn't come near me or take any treats from me.

But now when she visits, she walks around like she owns my flat, she comes up to me and lays on my lap. My aunt says when they are coming Misti gets so excited and jumps in the car. She is my best friend.



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Recently I have been busy and I have helped in Sheringham Little Theatre with Matilda the Musical. It was so much fun I was helping with a few bits, like one day I was helping show people to their seats, another I would be behind the scenes.

It was so much fun, I really love theatre and helping out. I think I know Matilda the Musical off by heart... if I didn't already! I have been asked to help again, maybe in the summer, yay!

So that's my blog, I'm sorry it's been so long I won't leave it too long next time.

See you in the next blog!

Jason



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# Sun comes out for sports day! 😎

It was a cool start to the summer, but the sun put in a much-needed appearance in time for Dereham Community Hub's sports day. The event was attended by Sense, who support people locally who are deafblind and with complex disabilities. Everyone had a fun time together, joining in with all the games.



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# The TAPS blog!

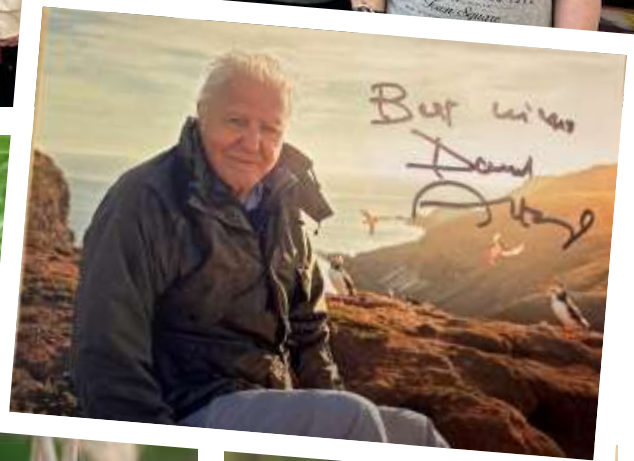
TAPS have some very exciting news to share. An autograph from one of the most important and treasured wildlife conservationists ever, Sir David Attenborough!

The wildlife team wrote him a letter telling him what they do at the Hub and if they could possibly have an autograph.

Justin said he was one of the most important people in wildlife and they would love to add him to their wall of wildlife fame, so everyone was very excited to receive this treasure from a national treasure, how amazing!

The group always enjoy visiting Pensthorpe, and the photos here were taken on a visit earlier this summer. They include a drake mandarin duck in his full breeding plumage, a cute three-day old crane chick, and a bearded tit. We are also pleased to say the oyster catchers have returned to the Hub! Until next blog, best wishes.

The TAPS wildlife team.



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## The National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards 2024

Norfolk Industries received a Highly Commended at this year's National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards.

The award was given in the Employer of People with a Disability category which looks for a business or charity that demonstrates true values of respect, equality and accessibility for their employees who have a learning disability and / or autism.

Sharon and former colleague Alison Holmes attended the awards ceremony in Birmingham on 21st June. This is a national award so a huge well done to Sharon and the team, as she said: "It feels good being second in the country!"



### What the judges said:

Norfolk Industries for Disabled People go above and beyond in employing those with learning disabilities and are much deserving of high commendation in this category.

They stand as a shining example of inclusivity and take an approach many can seek to learn from.

**HIGHLY  
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## Polite request

To deter unwanted parkers, we've resprayed the concrete blocks we use on our forecourt. A couple of blocks are sometimes left out when we are expecting a smaller lorry in, so hopefully this will get the message across!

## EVOLVE success!

An EVOLVE candidate who completed the programme this spring has gone on to secure a part time role as a cleaner with NORSE. This is a great validation for EVOLVE and we are of course delighted when our candidates succeed in achieving their goal of paid employment.

Anna Sayer from Seetec Pluss (a leading provider of training, skills and rehabilitation services in the UK), visited Norfolk Industries with a potential volunteer and paid us the most amazing compliment:

"My colleague and I were blown away with your approach, the work that you are all doing and the environment in general. Not only do you support those with disabilities, but I loved how eco-friendly your site was. I left on a high knowing that our customer took a massive step and was so looked after by yourselves."

NCC's Quality Monitoring Officer also had some great things to say when the PAMMS team visited us to inspect the Floating Support team and was shown around by colleague Sue.

"We were blown away by Sue, aside from her knowledge and her passion for the service, the thing that made her so extraordinary was the way she worked alongside all colleagues as her equals. She spoke with customers as she did her fellow Independence Matters employees, she guided them appropriately and chatted to them as the individuals they are. When asking about processes, Sue just assumed her role and directed us to the individuals to answer, never stepping in – with the most natural recognition of their ability and competency to answer questions on equal par to any answer she may have given.

"The (NI) service was so impressive, it wasn't a 'service', it was a workplace. I would never be able to distinguish between it and any of the other similar industrial services who do not have a focus on employment opportunities for persons with an LD – which is always our aim, but so rarely fully achieved. Just a little island of wonderful that we are so grateful to have seen."

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# 'Get to know us day' at Holt Hub

Colleague Chloe (right) organised a 'get to know us day' at Holt Community Hub which was a big success raising £210 towards the customers amenity fund.

Chloe wanted to bring the community together, so they could see the work done at the Hub and invited guests including rangers from the nearby country park and a local councillor.

The Hub was filled with stands organised by Chloe and manned by customers and colleagues with a tombola, book stall, raffle, bucket game, guess the number of sweets in the jar (won by Josh below), guess the teddy's name and Holt Hub's horti vegetable stall.



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We can't not mention the cake stall! So many kind people baked cookies, Victoria sponges, coffee & walnut cakes, and so much more - they were all delicious! A huge well done to Chloe, we are so pleased that the event went so well. Thank you for all that you continue to do and for bringing so much fun and happiness to our customers' day. You and your colleagues are amazing 🧡



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## Artwork by Joe



Thank you to Joe at Faro Lodge for sharing these lovely, colourful drawings with us ❤️



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# We get Trendy!

We've been working with production company Trendy Grandad to make a new induction video featuring customers and colleagues.

It was an exciting time for customers with filming taking place at our services and out and about in Attleborough.

Everyone taking part had a fantastic time and enjoyed taking part in the shoots. We can't wait to share the finished video!



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# Bug-tastic!

The Studio Group paid a visit to [The Bug Parc](#) in Lenwade and found it to be a truly incredible experience!

Not only did they get to see and learn about the bugs, they also got to hold several of them, including the world's largest species of snail.

The Bug Parc staff were all amazing and customers found the talks very interesting, especially the one on the ants. The Studio Group highly recommend this as a place to visit and are looking forward to going back when the Parc's new attractions, an interactive butterfly experience and woodland walk area, open to visitors.



"I enjoyed seeing the bugs especially when I got to hold the big snails. It was a nice day." - **Thomas**



"I found it an amazing experience especially when I went into the handling area. The snail was my favourite when it came out of its shell. I would very much like to go again, a great day out." – **Pam.**

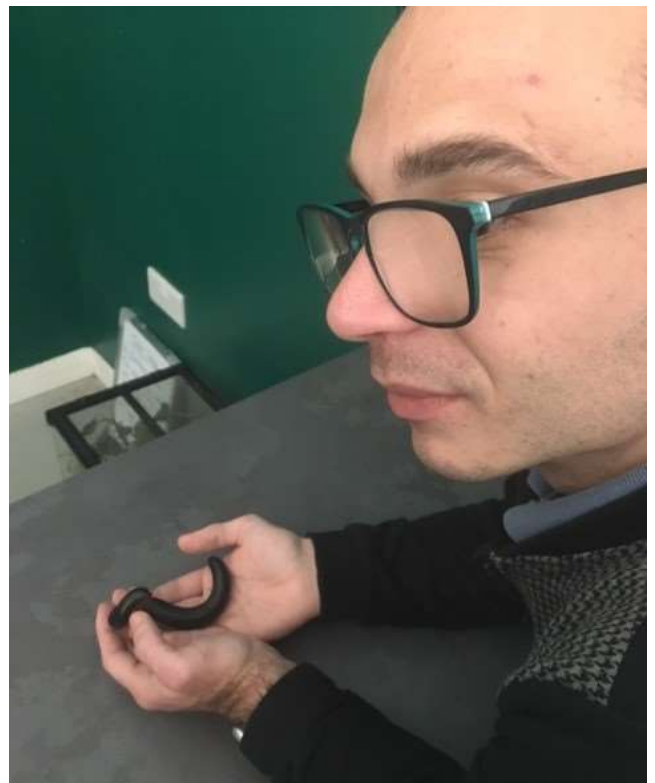


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"I liked looking at the spiders and going to a new place, I enjoyed the Go Karts outside too." **Melissa**



"I enjoyed my visit to The Bug Parc. It was a great day out, I got to hold a big snail." **Tom G**



"It was a great day out and I enjoyed it very much." **Craig**



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# VOLUNTEERS' WEEK



Volunteers' Week (3 – 7 June) is an annual celebration of the contribution many people make to their local communities.

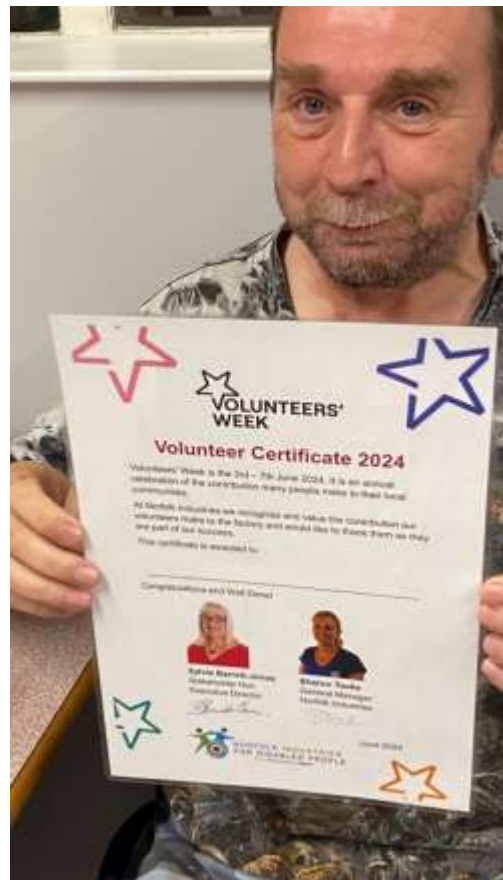
Norfolk Industries held a celebration to recognise the value its volunteers make to the factory and thank them for their contribution – they are a huge part of our success.

The celebration was attended by Sylvia Barrett-Jones (above right with Sharon) and IM's new Chief Finance Officer, Zaliha Williamson (below).



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**VOLUNTEERS'  
WEEK**



## A big thank you

**Crossroads Community Hub** is fortunate to have a wonderful volunteer who has been with them for several years.

Colleague Marie said: "Our volunteer is always thinking and planning things that our customers can achieve linked to their personal stories and interests."

"In recognition of all her input and support for the service we surprised her with flowers during Volunteers' Week. She was, in her own words, 'touched and emotional' as a result. Customers also made a thank you card which brought a tear to her eye."

"Thank you, quite simply isn't enough for all that she contributes. She is absolutely part of the Crossroads family and all of us here are grateful that she is."

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# Working Together Group

## Healthy, Happy, Safe event

Customers and colleagues attended the Healthy, Happy, Safe event at the Forum on 12th June.

Led by people with learning disabilities, the event was organised by Opening Doors and included talks, information stalls, performances and more. Everyone involved was promoting the themes of being Healthy, Happy, and Safe.

A lot of hard work went into putting together the safety information and activities for the stand. Everyone did a fabulous job and a special thank you goes to Gavin for organising it all!



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# Working Together Group

## Co-Production Week event

Working Together Groups joined other providers and services at The Forum on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July to celebrate Co-production Week.

The event was a lovely opportunity for customers to talk to visitors about all the things they do and network with other people and organisations.

We were very proud of our new display banner bearing our very own logo designed by our Working Together Groups.



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# Working Together Group



Rachael from Holt worked really hard on making a document about her successes of getting onto the Learning Disability Partnership Board and the Making It Real Board.

This created a lot of interest from the public at recent events and really showcases how her hard work and determination to succeed has paid off.

Superb work Rachael!

### How I got onto the boards

Help! My name is Rachael Philips. I started going to Holt Community Hub on 18th July 2022.

I found out that the Learning Disability Partnership Board and the Making It Real Board were looking for people to join them.

I did some research which means looking into things to find out more about the boards. I found out who they are and what they do.

I spoke to Maria the Working Together Coordinator and told her that I would be interested in joining the Boards.

### My co-production story

I got the forms for the Boards to fill them about me and what skills I have. I filled them in and sent them back for people to read.

The Boards said that they would like me to have an interview so I arranged to have some interview skills coaching with Maria.

I worked really hard getting ready for the interviews. I thought about my skills and if I could do the job.

I like being a voice for people who can't or who have difficulty to speak out and I enjoy helping people.

### My co-production story

I had an interview on WhatsApp for the Learning Disability Partnership Board and 2 days later I got told that I was on the board!

I had an interview for the Making It Real Board and I got accepted! I was really pleased and proud of myself and so was everyone else.

I like being a voice for people who can't or who have difficulty to speak out and I enjoy helping people.

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