

In The Loop



January
2026



Don't Forget Our AGM!

A reminder that our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place on **22 January 2026 at 6:00pm** here at Mid Norfolk Mencap, and we encourage all members to attend. The AGM is a key moment in our calendar and an important opportunity to be involved in the governance and future direction of the charity.

This year's meeting will include a vote on the new trustees we have been recruiting over the past few months – all strong and enthusiastic candidates – as well as updates on our planned service developments and upcoming changes. We are also keen to hear your views and ideas as we look ahead, making this a valuable chance to check in with our members and shape what comes next together.

Further details, including the agenda will be shared soon in your official invitation. We very much hope you can join us and look forward to your participation.



Happy New Year!

As we step into 2026, we do so with reflection, resilience, and renewed purpose. The past year brought significant challenges and uncertainty, and we are incredibly proud of the strength shown by the adults we support, our dedicated staff, and our wider community.

Looking ahead to 2026, we remain deeply committed to our mission of empowering adults with a learning disability to live independent, fulfilling lives. The year ahead brings new opportunities to strengthen our services, grow meaningful partnerships, and champion choice, inclusion, and dignity. Together, we will continue building a future where independence is supported, potential is recognised, and every individual can thrive.



A Message from Our Chair

I'm starting 2026 as I ended 2025 - with interviews for new trustees. We met some really excellent candidates who would bring a valuable range of professional skills and lived experience to the organisation. Several people have recently asked me questions about the board of trustees...

Why do we have trustees?

In the UK, the law means that charities have to be led by Trustees - people legally put in a position of trust. We are responsible for making decisions together about the running of the charity. Because Mid Norfolk Mencap is also a business, we are legally responsible for the financial running of the business, as well as health and safety, and safeguarding.

What do the trustees do?

We meet as a Board every 3 months. Here we discuss the direction that the organisation is going in. We make sure that the charity is being run well by the CEO and the managers, by looking at the financial papers, and reports about how our different services are going. We spend time with people who work here or are supported by us, to help us make decisions in an informed way.

How much do trustees get paid?

Nothing. Under UK law, trustees cannot be paid. Strangely, the law means that the trustees have a lot of legal duties and responsibilities for the charity - the same as directors would in a business. But unlike directors in a business we cannot be paid anything.

How many trustees do we have?

Unfortunately, because of very sad events some of our trustees had to stand down recently. We currently have just three. We can have up to 14 so at the AGM we will nominate more people to become trustees.

Are any people with learning disabilities on the Board?

There are people who are neurodiverse on the Board, but we do not have people with learning disabilities as trustees. It is my great hope that over the next year or so we can create meaningful ways for the people we support to get much more involved in the running of the charity.

I am really excited that our AGM on the 22nd January 2026 will see a fantastic new board being elected. I hope to see you there but if you would like to get in touch in the meantime, please email me at chair@midnorfolkmenicap.org.

Sarah

Chair - Board of Trustees
Mid Norfolk Mencap

Christmas Market & Disco 2025

On 12th December, we were delighted to host a Christmas German Market Day, and what a wonderful celebration it turned out to be!

Everyone enjoyed delicious food inspired by traditional German Christmas markets, including schnitzel, bratwurst and stollen. The celebration didn't stop there – the dancefloor was soon buzzing thanks to a fantastic disco, with music provided by our very own Michael! It was a proud moment to see his confidence and talent on display as he took on the role of DJ and kept everyone dancing throughout the day.

A big thank you to everyone who helped organise the day and to all who came along and made it so special. It was a truly memorable way to celebrate the Christmas season together.



What's been going on in the Community Outreach Support service?



Josh is our new recycling champion! He has taken on the task of getting us some bins to recycle different types of rubbish and making sure they're all labelled! This volunteering means he can make a difference and help us become more sustainable. Well done Josh!



Alfie and Gavin recently went fishing at Sea Palling. They practised casting, caught fish, and even learned how to gut, clean, and cook them. This exercise helped build practical skills and confidence outdoors.



Elizabeth worked on a sewing project, learning how to use different functions on the sewing machine.

James explored Felbrigg Hall, going on a lovely walk and stopping for some lunch in the winter sunshine



What's been going on in the Community Outreach Support service?

Mark joined in with some Christmas crafting, helping to make this amazing nutcracker decoration out of cardboard for our Christmas market.



Danny enjoyed a visit to RSPB Titchwell Reserve, where he loved the walk and spending time outdoors. He was particularly delighted by the birds, especially a very friendly robin, and also enjoyed being on the beach, taking in the fresh air and beautiful surroundings.

William and Debbie enjoyed a lovely visit to the Sea Life Centre. They enjoyed exploring the different exhibits.



Dereham & District Gateway Club

2025 - AN EVENTFUL YEAR FOR GATEWAY

2025 has truly been an eventful year for the Dereham Gateway Club. We've introduced many new activities and events but the core of what we do still remains the same: to offer a safe, interesting and, hopefully, fun social club to all of our members from wherever they come and whatever their ability.

In spite of the difficulties Meeting Point has had in maintaining its future funding, it continues to provide us with an excellent facility that is in the heart of the community. So we thank Shonette, Louise and all of the staff at Meeting Point and wish them well in securing their future.

We have established many new activities this year including line dancing; the Gateway Stitchers (for the budding knitters and sewers amongst us); indoor sports and games; watercolour painting and seasonal and topical quizzes as well as maintaining the tried, tested and much loved Music Club and Zumba, for which we thank Ian and Jeanette for the special atmosphere they create and the opportunity for physical exercise they provide. Art and Craft, however, is still one of the mainstays of the programme we offer.

Our special events this year have comprised the seriously enjoyed and extremely 'vocal' Easter, Summer and Halloween themed bingo sessions; the Gateway Christmas Disco and Spring Karaoke with the incomparable Gary Friend; a notable Quiz and Chips Happening (with Bradley as resident Question master) and a sumptuous Summer Picnic and festive Christmas Buffet. For these events we give our special thanks to Key Workers from Link and Fairway Houses for all of the exceptional help they have supplied. We are also blessed with the support we receive from the few members' parents who have attended the Club with their sons and daughters as well as Key Workers from Sense, the organisation for deaf/blind people. Special thanks also to Lucy Smith, Debbie Newson and the Community Outreach workers who recently stepped up to help us out. We couldn't have run the Club without any of them.

In looking back at 2025 we have also experienced our sad moments, most particularly with the death of our Club Member Neil Hornsby who we lost in March this year and who will be hugely missed. But he will always be remembered for his enthusiasm, his smiling face and his eagerness to help in spite of his many health problems.

Looking forward to 2026 we hope to recruit more desperately needed volunteers to be able to offer the specialised and wide ranging support that we know could make such a difference to the lives of people in our community. And we need all that Mencap can offer, as well as the local Community, to join with us in that endeavour.

Gateway Club

Dereham & District Gateway Club

Welcome to
2026 and
Music Club

**Jan
9**

**Arts &
Crafts**

**Jan
16**

Zumba

**Jan
23**

**Club
Night**

**Jan
30**

**The
Gateway
Games**

**Feb
6**

**Music
Club**

**Feb
13**

& Break for Half Term



7pm – 9pm

At the
Meeting
Point

4 St.
Withburga
Lane

Dereham
NR19 1ED



£3.00 entry
(plus money for
refreshments
and raffle)



Gateway Club Gallery



Our club members enjoying the Christmas buffet!



Showcasing the amazing arts & crafts projects our members have done recently!



Getting ready for Christmas, making cards and baubles



Wreath making activity



Special thanks to Gloria and her husband for donating lots of goodies for our Christmas buffet!

NORFOLK LEARNING DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP

www.norfolkldpartnership.org.uk

Open to the public and can include:

- People with learning disabilities and their families / carers
- People who work at the County Council, including County Councillors
- People who provide services for people with learning disabilities
- People from the local area who want to help



SOUTH NORFOLK Locality Meeting

Next meeting:

Wednesday 11th March 2026,
1.30pm-3pm

Venue:

Mid Norfolk Mencap,
1a Tavern Lane
Dereham, NR19 1PX

WEST NORFOLK Locality Meeting

Next meeting:

Thursday 5th March 2026,
1.30pm-3pm

Venue:

Forward 33 Shop,
33 Broad Street,
Kings Lynn, PE30 1DP

NORTH NORFOLK Locality Meeting

Next meeting:

Wednesday 25th February 2026,
1.30pm-3pm

Venue:

About With Friends
22D Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9JW

NORWICH Locality Meeting

Next meeting:

Wednesday 18th February 2026,
1pm-2:30pm

Venue:

Lazar House, Sprowston Road,
Norwich, NR3 4HX



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QR code.



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Registered Charity No. 1049364

Registered Company No. 2992726