

In The Loop



March 2021 Issue



The start of 2021 has certainly been challenging for everybody, and here at Mid Norfolk Mencap, January and February have felt like the longest months ever. After almost a year of battling to keep Covid-19 out of the organisation, we, along with many other residential homes and settings across the country, fell victim to this horrible virus. It spread through the residents and staff team at an alarming rate, regardless of the stringent cleaning regime and required PPE.



Hand on heart, it has been an incredibly scary and stressful time. There are not the words to convey just how amazing and brave the staff team at Merle Boddy House have been during this period. Their continued dedication, care and support to the residents was outstanding, and we thank and applaud each one of them.

As we now enter March, it feels like we have turned a corner with the residents and staff all recovering well, and whilst we breathe a sigh of relief at this, it is a reminder that there is no room for complacency.

The vaccine roll-out is a huge positive step for the country, however, it angers us that not all people with a learning disability have been made a priority. Mencap National have launched a campaign to highlight this, and whilst the Government are starting to listen, a lot more could and should be done. Mid Norfolk Mencap have voiced their concerns to local MP George Freeman.

Spring is in the air, and slowly but surely life will return to some form of normality, and we cannot wait to see all our members, family carers, volunteers, and friends again, but in the meantime stay safe and well.

Anya

100 Club

Don't forget in April, we will be renewing our fundraising raffle.
The first draw date for 2021/22 will be 14th April.

Sign up for our monthly draws for a chance to win one of the 3 prizes of £15, £10 or £5. The yearly cost is £15 and an application form can be obtained from the Mid Norfolk Mencap office.

Call or email Sarah on **01362 693013** or **sarah@midnorfolk Mencap.org**.

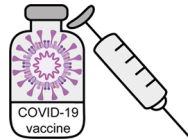


SPRING IS NEARLY HERE!

Remember the clocks go forward at **1am** on **Sunday 28th March 2021**.



It's that time of year when gloomy, dark mornings and evenings start taking their toll and we look towards Spring, especially after the year we've all had. The period when the clocks are one hour ahead is called British Summer Time and mean there's more daylight in the evenings allowing us to maximise sunlight hours all year round.



COVID-19 VACCINE

Norfolk and Waveney's Covid-19 vaccination programme continues to make good progress as it was revealed that more than a third of people in the area have received their first dose. The majority of our staff in the community and at Merle Boddy House are now waiting for their second vaccination.

As of mid February, over 17 million people had received a first dose in the UK, with more than 600,000 of those having received a second dose. This progress means the UK continues to be among the countries with the highest vaccination rates globally.

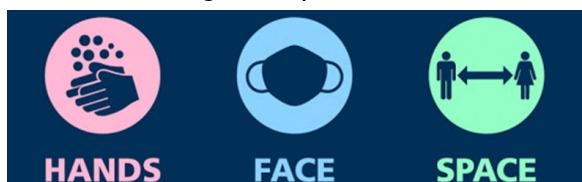
You'll be invited to book an appointment as soon as it's your turn, by phone or letter. Please wait for your GP to contact you unless: You are over 64, you have previously received a letter saying you are at high risk of Coronavirus, you are an eligible frontline health or social care worker or you are eligible for Carer's Allowance. You may then use the NHS national booking service online at nhs.uk/covid-vaccination. Vaccines are being given to the most vulnerable first. The list of 9 high priority groups is being followed:

- Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers.
- All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers.
- All those 75 years of age and over.
- All those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.
- All those 65 years of age and over.
- All individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality.
- All those 60 years of age and over.
- All those 55 years of age and over.
- All those 50 years of age and over.

Face Coverings: You will have seen in the news that most supermarkets are now enforcing the use of face coverings on their premises. People who are exempt from wearing face coverings may feel concerned about this news and worried that they will face further challenge. As well as a face mask, people can use a scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth covering. If you have an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering:

- You do not routinely need to show any written evidence of this.
- You do not need to show an exemption card.

Carrying an exemption card or badge is a personal choice and is not required by law.





AFTER



Now the Prime Minister has revealed the roadmap out of lockdown, we asked some of our community clients what they were most looking forward to. This is what they told us:



I'm looking forward to going to Colchester Zoo.
Pam



I can't wait for the pubs to be open. I want to get back to kisses & cuddles too.
Stephen



I want to get back to the track, and banger racing.
ZB



I want to go and see all my friends again.
Craig



I want to start my college course, start running discos again and go bowling.
Michael



I want to get back to normal, stop wearing a face mask, and see my friends.
Kevin

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO DOING....?

Census Day takes place on 21st March and households will soon start to receive a unique code which will allow them to take part in the 2021 census. The census takes place every 10 years and is run by the Office for National Statistics. It will be 'digital first' this year and there will be assistance available for those that need it and paper copies are available on request.

Every household in the country is asked to take part and it involves completing a questionnaire on different aspects of each household and is used to build an accurate picture of the country's population and its demographic make-up.

The census is a crucial part of gathering the data local and national organisations and public bodies use to plan and fund services, so it's really important that everyone takes part.

Office for National Statistics

census 2021

NORFOLK WINTER SUPPORT SCHEME

Norfolk County Council, alongside local councils across Norfolk, is aiming to support as many residents as possible this winter to access financial and other support if they are facing hardship. They have implemented the Norfolk Winter Support Offer.



If you are a family or resident in Norfolk who is currently suffering from hardship and unsure how to pay your bills, keep warm and buy food, you can apply to the support offer. You can do this online at www.norfolk.gov.uk/covidwintersupport using a simple form. The scheme offers a package of support to give families peace of mind over the winter months by helping those suffering from financial hardship due to Covid 19. For many people this winter will be challenging for a variety of reasons — many who have never needed help before. Help is also available to those suffering hardship because they are having to self-isolate or support their child or vulnerable family members to self-isolate.

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/support-for-living-independently/money-and-benefits/norfolk-assistance-scheme>

WATCH THIS GREEN SPACE



We are in the process of renting an allotment in Dereham which we are very excited about.

This new project will call for a lot of hard work but we believe will be very beneficial for our clients in the community and our residents at Merle Boddy House to get involved with.

Being out in the open air, working with the land and exercising will promote better mental and physical health. With this enterprise we can become part of the community there, acquire new knowledge and skills and, seeing a project through from clearing to growing produce, will be extremely rewarding.



We will post updates on our progress. Please get in touch if you would like to either donate items (plants, seeds, bulbs, compost or garden tools) or help with clearing the site.



IMPORTANT HIGH COURT RULING REGARDING CHARGES FOR CARE

At the end of 2020, news came through that a 24-year-old woman with Down's syndrome has succeeded in her claim that Norfolk County Council's decision to increase her care charges was discriminatory. The implications for others whose care charges have increased since NCC lowered its Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) have yet to be clarified.

A High Court judge has ordered Norfolk County Council to look again at the decision to increase the amount it charges severely disabled residents for care and remove any discrimination. In its judgment, the court noted NCC "has exercised its discretion to charge SH the maximum permissible, and, at the same time, has lowered the overall cap on her charges by reducing the council's minimum income guarantee".

Mr Justice Griffiths agreed that NCC's charging policy discriminates against severely disabled people, contrary to Article 14 read with Article 1 of Protocol 1 and/or Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. He ruled that the policy that means the council excludes a person's earnings from its assessment for care charges formed part of the discrimination against severely disabled residents who are unable to work but are treated as if they would have an earned income as well as benefits. The Judge concluded that charging those with the highest need more than those with lower needs was an unjustified interference with SH's human rights.

The solicitor representing the family said: "Today's judgment means that Norfolk County Council will have to rethink its discriminatory care charges policy".



FAMILY CARERS MEETINGS

Monthly meetings were planning to resume in March in a Covid-secure manner, but they have had to be postponed again.

We will keep you informed of the new start date. Normal meetings take place between 10.30am and 12.30pm at Dereham Memorial Hall one Wednesday every month.

New faces are always welcome with a donation of £2 to cover the cost of refreshments and room hire.

SATURDAY CLUBS

Due to continuing lockdowns, all meetings of the Saturday Club are still cancelled until further notice.

They would normally run from 10am to 4pm at £8 per session, held at Sacred Heart School in Swaffham and at the Mid Norfolk Mencap Office at Tavern Lane, Dereham.



SOUTHERN

Locality Group Meeting
Norfolk Learning Disability Services

CANCELLED

until further notice

Usually held at:

The Annexe,

Watton Sports Centre,

118 Dereham Road, Watton IP25 6HA

NORTHERN

Locality Group Meeting
Norfolk Learning Disability Services

CANCELLED

until further notice

Usually held at:

The Bayfield Centre,

Kelling Hospital,

Old Cromer Road, High Kelling NR25 6QA

SPECIAL CELEBRATION DAYS IN MARCH 2021



DeChox Month (in aid of the British Heart Foundation)

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

1st, St. David's Day



1st - 7th, Eating Disorders Awareness Week

Endometriosis Awareness Month

4th, World Book Day



8th, International Women's Day

10th, National No Smoking Day

11th, World Kidney Day

14th, Mothering Sunday



16th, Young Carers Action Day



17th, St. Patrick's Day

19th, Red Nose Day / Comic Relief

21st, World Down Syndrome Day

21st, World Poetry Day



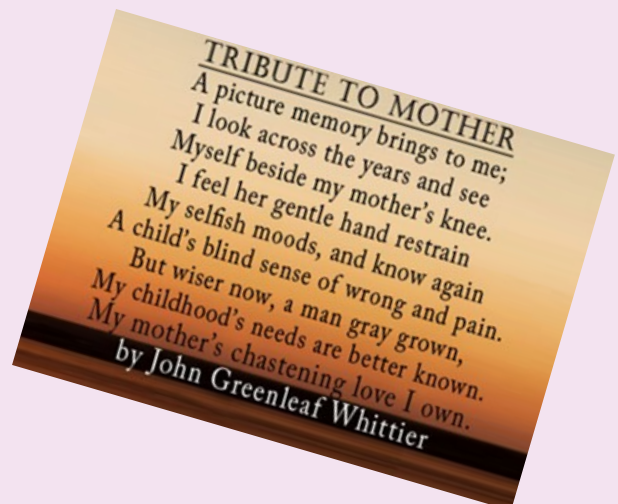
29th - 4th April, World Autism Awareness Week

30th, World Bipolar Day

In these tough time, the best way to overcome hardship is to lean on your loved ones, but this pandemic has made that impossible to do. Some of you may be quarantining in homes alone away from family members, friends or colleagues and social distancing means you can't do the things you normally do together.

This current way of life to keep Covid at bay is far from easy.

Writing or reading poetry can help you say or show how you are feeling. It can also provide a great escape to somewhere new and wonderful. With World Poetry Day on 21st March, here is a selection of poems which we hope you enjoy



SMALL POETRY SELECTION

I have thought
my entire life
I needed
seas
or mountains
or magnificent
city lights
to be happy.
Truth is:
I do not
care where
I am
as long
as I have
you.

-Christopher Poindexter

I Heard Your Voice In The Wind Today

I Heard Your Voice In The Wind Today - Unknown

I heard your voice in the wind today
and I turned to see your face;
The warmth of the wind caressed me
as I stood silently in place.

I felt your touch in the sun today
as its warmth filled the sky;
I closed my eyes for your embrace
and my spirit soared high.

I saw your eyes in the window pane
as I watched the falling rain;
It seemed as each raindrop fell
it quietly said your name.


I held you close in my heart today
it made me feel complete;
You may have died...but you are not gone
you will always be a part of me.

As long as the sun shines...
the wind blows...
the rain falls...
You will live on inside of me forever
for that is all my heart knows.

On Aging

When you see me sitting quietly, like a sack upon a shelf,
Don't think I need your chattering. I'm listening to myself.
Hold! Stop! Don't pity me! Hold! Stop your sympathy!
Understanding if you got it, otherwise I'll do without it!
When my bones are stiff and aching and my feet won't climb the stair,
I will only ask one favor: Don't bring me no rocking chair.
When you see me walking, stumbling, don't study and get it wrong.
'Cause tired don't mean lazy and every goodbye ain't gone.
I'm the same person I was back then, a little less hair, a little less chin,
A lot less lungs and much less wind.
But ain't I lucky I can still breathe in.

- Maya Angelou



Happiness

You cannot buy your happiness,
'Cause happiness is free.
Don't you know, or can't you guess,
It's there for you and me.

And what you do with what you've got,
Can change the way you feel.
Just do your best and smile a lot,

You'll keep an even keel.

'Cause happiness is made for YOU,
Just take a bite and see
That happiness is what you do
With something that is free.

George Savige

No one is too small
To change the course of man
Each of us is special
And does all that we can

Strength can come from anywhere
From words or thoughts and deeds
By making the world better
For those that are in need

Maybe you just help someone
And go out of your way
Making them feel special
And brighten up their day

It's often just these little things
That make the world a better place
Changing life for one person
With a smile on their face

- Robert Longley

love will come
and when love comes
love will hold you
love will call your name
and you will melt
sometimes though
love will hurt you but
love will never mean to
love will play no games
cause love knows life
has been hard enough already

- rupi kaur

DROP INS

Unfortunately, due to the continuing lockdowns, both the Cromer and Dereham Drop In sessions are cancelled until further notice. We will constantly be reviewing the situation and will keep you posted as to when the sessions will start again.

Cromer

Thursdays

1.00pm — 4.00pm

Merchants Place,
16 Church Street,
Cromer, NR27 9ES
£5.00 entry fee



Dereham

Tuesdays and Fridays

10.00am — 2.00pm

1a Tavern Lane,
Dereham
NR19 1PX
£4.00 entry fee

Stepping Out Club

All meetings of the Stepping Out Club are still cancelled due to Covid 19.

We will keep you updated and informed of any change in the situation.

Meetings held at:

Church House
Church Street
Dereham
7.30—9.00pm

£1.50 Entry Fee

Gateway Club

All meetings of the Gateway Club are still cancelled due to Covid 19.

We will keep you updated and informed of any change in the situation.

Meetings held at:

Dereham Community Hub
Independence Matters
Rash's Green, Dereham
7.00—9.00pm

£1 Entry Fee



If you would like details on anything seen in this leaflet, please contact Mid Norfolk Mencap, 1a Tavern Lane, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 1PX.
Telephone: 01362 693013 Email: info@midnorfolkmenca.org

Website: www.midnorfolkmenca.org