

creative
SUPPORT

Celebrating 30 Years



CREATIVE LIFE

2022/23

ISSUE 37

Green Christmas



GOING GREEN SPECIAL ISSUE



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Would you like to appear in this magazine?
Email: marketing@creativesupport.co.uk and send in your story!



Hello and welcome to this special festive edition of Creative Life!

This will be our first Christmas without lockdown or restrictions in place since 2019, making it a memorable time for us all. I truly hope everyone has a lovely Christmas, and that it leads into a positive start to 2023.

While a 'white Christmas' would be lovely, this year we're encouraging people to consider a 'Green Christmas' instead. This issue includes lots of information about sustainability, as it has never been more important to be kind to our planet.

There are many ways we can make daily changes to help combat climate change, whilst saving yourself some money during a tough time in the UK. I am personally committed to being as eco-friendly as possible, and will be using the empowering tips and tricks detailed in the various articles myself to make more changes in my life. You can read about ways to have a 'Green Christmas' on pages 12-13, hear Eco-Champion Charlotte's 'Sustainability Tips' on page 22, and find John's 'Money Matters' article on page 19 to give your financial health a check-up while thinking about the planet too.

Of course, it wouldn't be a Creative Life without the inspirational stories from the people we support across the country. You can find the moving experiences of lockdown from our friends at Creative Together in Manchester on pages 16 – 17, and read about the incredible determination of cycling safety champion Olly in Rugby, whose strength and passion for the cause speaks volumes. Don't forget to check out the bite size good news stories on the next page too. Whether the achievements are on a grand scale or a personal one, your positivity and amazing work always moves us and we can't wait to see what 2023 brings for you all.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Creative Life and you find it as inspirational and empowering as I did. A very merry Christmas to you all and a happy New Year!

Anna Lunts, Chief Executive

We would love to hear what you think of this issue!
If you'd like to get in touch, please email: marketing@creativesupport.co.uk

YOUR GOOD NEWS STORIES

Let's take a look at some of the lovely things that are happening in our services all across the country. We love seeing what everyone gets up to, so if you have a good news story you'd like to share, send it to communications@creativesupport.co.uk and you could feature in the next Creative Life!

Magic mood

Coopers Court in London have been working on an eight-week project with the charity Magic Me, which was centred around what it means to be welcomed into a community. They had screen printing and poetry sessions, where the words and images were sewn onto fabric to create this fantastic display for the service garden. "When we all get together, we're in a good mood and that's magic!" said Tony, a tenant.



Daniella reading the news

Daniella from Murray House in Warwickshire gave a speech on ITV Central News. She overcame her nerves to talk about the Freedom Day Centre she attends, and how they may need to close if they don't get further funding. Amazing job Danielle, it's so important to speak up for what you're passionate about.



Back in the saddle

Leigh from Poplar Tree Court in Bedford travelled down to Cambridge to take part in her first horse riding competition since before lockdown. She was very nervous but excited to be back in the ring, and she'd done lots of practicing. Leigh came first place in her dressage class, walking away with a red rosette. Well done Leigh, you should be so proud!



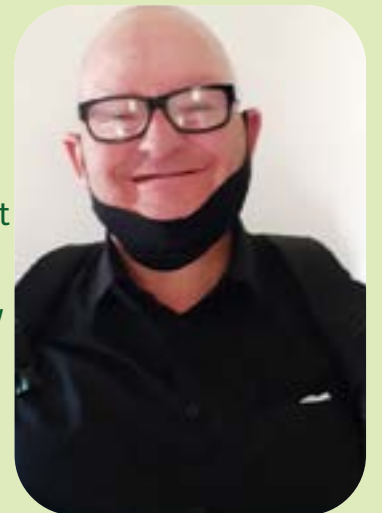
Good enough to eat!

Carol from Station Road in Grimsby had a great time painting pottery with her support staff, and made this ice-cream that looks good enough to eat! Carol really enjoys accessing the community and being creative, and this activity allowed her to express herself and come out of her shell. Go Carol!



Budget boss Michael

Michael from Clough House in Manchester has been working with staff member Debby to arrange a weekly budget plan, which helps him feel very organised. Each Friday he pays his bills at the local Post Office independently, and he looks forward to it every week so he knows exactly how much he has left over to spend on his favourite things! To read some of our top budgeting tips, check out page 13.



Have you got an interesting story, some exciting news or a photo of something that you're really proud of?

WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT!

We can share your story on our website, social media, or maybe even feature you in the next issue of Creative Life!

Keep up to date with our good news by following us [@crtvsprrt](https://www.instagram.com/crtvsprrt)





Service user feature

COMBATting LONELINESS AT CHRISTMAS

Rebekah Salisbury, who we support in Birmingham, has shared some of her top tips to help us combat loneliness this Christmas.

Having a sense of comfort and security is very important to us all. If Christmas is a tough time for you, please know that you're not alone, and there are different ways you can combat loneliness and difficult feelings throughout the festive period.

Being alone is different to feeling lonely. Sometimes being alone can help us focus, but other times we need to feel supported, and this is when a good network is needed. Your network can be made up of your family and friends, loved ones and even animals. If you don't feel comfortable opening up to the people closest to you, it's important to know that there is always someone available who can support you. From wanting a quick chat, to a crisis situation, there are lots of different options.

Using a peer support service is an amazing way to get help from others and can cover a wide range of topics.

- **Togetherall** is another **online community** where people can support each other anonymously, to improve mental health and wellbeing.
- **Meet-up.com** is a website where you can meet new people and join groups based on your location and your interests. This is a great way to meet new people, build friendships and socialise in a safe environment.
- Your local **Citizen's Advice Bureau** branch and your local health providers can also signpost you to the right support – just ask!

Looking after yourself mentally and physically are huge factors when it comes to loneliness. Try to get enough sleep and keep to a routine, and eat regularly to keep your blood sugar stable. **Exercise** can be really helpful for your mental wellbeing – even a five minute walk a day can help you relax and de-stress.

Spending time around **animals** can help with feelings of loneliness, whether it's by owning a pet or spending time around animals in their natural environment. The organisation Social Farms and Gardens has a list of outdoor community projects across the UK, many of which have animals available to the public.

Just remember that different things work for different people. Only try what you feel comfortable with, and try not to put too much pressure on yourself. If something isn't working for you, you can try something else, or come back to it another time. Stay strong, and remember you have the power to do whatever you want to do. Keep yourself safe and know your limits- realise when you're feeling lonely and reach out to those who can help.

By Rebekah Salisbury from the Yardley Hub, Birmingham.



THE ALLOTMENT DIARIES

We spoke with Lyn, Mark and Geoff in Tameside and Joanne in Stockport about their amazing allotments. They shared with us some helpful tips for growing your own at home!

Senior Support Worker Lyn leads the allotment by Town Lane. "There's a lot of social activity on the site, and recently we've had Halloween and Bonfire Night events," said Lyn. "The friendship and community elements are really special, and visiting the allotment brings everyone together."

Joanne, who helps oversee the Webb Lane allotment in Stockport, had a fantastic harvest in autumn, pulling courgettes, green beans, potatoes, tomatoes, carrots and one very large pumpkin. **"It's great being able to see the fruit of your labour and enjoy what you've grown. A couple of local services have been helping to harvest and they've whipped up some delicious meals,"** said Joanne. Over at Town Lane, they had peas, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, kale, beans, onions and swiss chard. "There are sprouts, cauliflower and more cabbage planted so we can have some of them with our Christmas dinner," said Lyn.

Lyn is also preparing for next year. **"We discuss our allotment plans in tenant's meetings to see if there are any different vegetables the service would like to grow. Everyone helps**

Harvesting at Town Lane



(Left) Joanne shows how to pot and seed

in their own way with digging, visiting, and cooking with the harvested veg." Geoff said he most enjoys "digging the veg up", and Mark, who is also on the allotment committee and works at their plot shop, likes "going down to the allotment and relaxing". They also have a wildlife camera recording all the animal visitors, which include lots of birds, badgers, and foxes.

When we asked green-fingered Joanne for her best gardening tips and recommendations, she said **"If you're a keen gardener already or want to make more use of your green space, try and rotate where you plant your fruits and vegetables every year as it'll help keep the soil healthy and full of nutrients."**

Lyn, Mark and Geoff's tips for a smaller space are to find easy-growing things which don't need too much room. **"Obviously it's dependent on your soil, but composting your leftovers and good soil can help things grow well. You can grow strawberries and onions in buckets, and you can also buy potato bags, as one potato helps to grow another 8-14 spuds!"**





CYCLING SAFETY WITH OLLY



(Above back line L-R) Mark Pawsey MP, Julie Dibsedale (Olly's mother),
(front row) Olly, Trudy Harrison MP

We spoke with the inspirational Olly D in Rugby who has been on an incredible journey to improve cycling safety for all. He told us about why this is an issue close to his heart, his dedication to campaigning, and tips to keep yourselves and your loved ones safe while out on your bike.

Michelle, a Support Worker at Lanchester Court, supported Olly to complete this interview.

"When I was a teenager I cycled to school, and one day I didn't wear a helmet. It was one mistake, and I know that if I'd worn a helmet it would have prevented what happened to me," Olly explained. Back in 2015, Olly sustained a Traumatic Brain Injury after falling off his bike and hitting his head. Since then, Olly has tirelessly campaigned to make it law to wear a helmet whilst out cycling. "I am passionate about this because I feel like helmets are a vital piece of equipment you need to wear to prevent serious injury," he explained in his compelling presentation that he used to

approach law makers and make a change.

Olly spent days upon days researching information to prove his argument, and found that **helmet use reduces likelihood of head injuries by 51%, serious head injuries by 69%, face injuries by 33% and 65% for fatal head injuries.** He used these statistics to start petitions and create a movement in England for better cycling safety. "Olly started a petition before he moved to Lanchester Court which was shared widely," added Michelle. "Over 12,000 people signed it!" said Olly.

"Oliver's story is deeply moving and I have a great deal of sympathy for his calls for a change in the law to make wearing a helmet while cycling mandatory."

– Mark Pawsey MP

Not one to be deterred, he also used his well-researched information to get in touch with his local MP and the Government's Transport Secretary. After lots of calls and emails to reach out, Mark Pawsey MP met with Olly to hear about his ideas. In newspaper article from Warwickshire World, Mr Pawsey said: "Oliver's story is deeply moving and I have a great deal of sympathy for his calls for a change in the law to make wearing a helmet while cycling mandatory. Wearing a helmet can massively reduce the risk of being seriously hurt in the event of an accident."



Mr Pawsey was so moved by Olly's story that he helped set up a meeting with the Department of Transport so they too could hear about Olly's campaign. The pair met with MP Trudy Harrison, former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport in Westminster, and Olly shared his story to petition the Government to make a change to the current laws regarding cycling helmets. Olly said **"If you don't do it then no-one else will,"** and Ms Harrison listened to his argument. She thanked him and invited him to be a part of the Government's road safety campaign so he can help raise further awareness of the subject. While there is no change to the law just yet, Olly will continue to fight to make a difference and raise awareness of ways to look after yourself when you're cycling. This won't be the last time you hear from Olly that's for sure! "He's a very determined and passionate young man," said Support Worker Michelle.

When asked for some tips to help keep others safe while cycling, Olly said:
"Make sure you wear a helmet and that it's properly fitted at the back. You need to make sure you have a light attached to the front and back of your bike, and that they work at night time. Check your breaks are working well, and wear a high visibility vest so people can spot you."

Follow Community Hero Olly's safety tips and make sure that when you're out cycling that you wear a helmet, and encourage your friends and family members to do the same!

HELEN THE HEAVENLY HOST!

Back in July, we celebrated our sixth and final 30th birthday event in the city where it all started, at the absolutely stunning Manchester Monastery in Gorton. With almost 400 people in attendance, it was a jam-packed evening filled with unforgettable moments.

As guests were treated to a glass of alcohol-free bubbly and tasty canapés, we welcomed everyone into the venue with the angelic singing of Lexi Hibberd from Leeds. In the courtyard, we had an inspirational drama performance from Creative Together, highlighting the important message that not all disabilities are visible.

Helen Alton, who we support in Stockport, and Directors Leigh Birch and Julie Cooke were our amazing hosts for the evening. They introduced us to our show reel of highlights from our other five events, and also our '30 Years 30 Voices' video, where our staff and the people we support shared their favourite thing about Creative Support. You can watch both of these videos on our website.

Throughout the evening we had some incredible service user entertainment, including

singing, DJing and hula-hooping. Thank you to everyone who took to the stage with your classic pop tunes, beautiful opera, power ballads and everything in between- it was certainly a night to remember!

During the delicious three-course meal, we celebrated our staff and the people we support with an awards ceremony. Our wonderful winners each received a certificate, trophy and voucher to recognise their achievements. We even had a round of bingo! A huge congrats to all of our well-deserved winners.

After heartfelt speeches from CEO Anna Lunts, Director Colette Leigh and Board Member Joolz Casey, we had a good old-fashioned disco to end what had been an unforgettable evening. We're so sad to have come to a close of our 30th celebrations, but here's to the next 30 years of Creative Support and we hope to see you all again soon.

Helen did such a fantastic job as our host, helping to welcome everyone, hand out awards and bingo prizes, and bring out the fabulous birthday cake. As this was Helen's first time hosting, she talked to us about how it all went, as well as her top tips for being a great host.



"Helen, a shining star, made everyone feel welcome!"
– Anna Lunts, CEO.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR DAY AS A HOST, AND SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE PARTS?

I liked introducing everyone who had come from different places. I liked talking to everyone and meeting new people- there were lots of people there! I brought out the big 30th birthday cake, and I even got to blow out the candles. I took turns being host with Julie and Leigh, so we were working as a team, and everyone thanked me for helping. I gave out everyone's certificates and awards, and I also got a voucher and certificate for helping out. I've still got my purple sash, and I'm going to get a frame for my certificate!

THAT'S GREAT! HAVE YOU SPENT YOUR VOUCHERS YET?

I've bought two DVDs with my voucher: Singing in the Rain, and Summer Holiday, which is my favourite. I got another voucher for being in the 30 Years 30 Voices video, and so I'm saving that one to buy Christmas presents this year.

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP TIPS FOR BEING A GREAT HOST?

I'd say remembering people's names is important, as it was tricky sometimes to remember. Make sure you have something to eat in between for energy. You've also got to be able to hand lots of things out! They printed out the words I had to say which helped me a lot. I was excited about it and not nervous- if people are quite shy, I'm willing to help them out as I like to help people conquer their fears.



Helen is such a natural, she even helped us to announce the awards at the Stockport Business Awards. Here she is with Fraser (left) and Neil, who we support in Stockport.

GREEN CHRISTMAS

Move over White Christmas, this year it's all about a Green Christmas!

Making sustainable choices has never been more important, and being eco-conscious can also save you some money, so it's good for both the planet and your pocket! This festive season, why not try some of our tips and tricks below to make this your greenest Christmas yet.

Choosing a Tree

A plastic tree can be a sustainable choice if you use it for at least ten years, as they aren't recyclable. A real tree however will last you the Christmas period, and if you purchase one with the roots still attached, you can plant it into your garden afterwards! If you don't want to keep it, you can also carefully cut up your tree and put it into your green waste bin for recycling.



Top Tinsel

Once you've got your tree, the next step is decorating it! While tinsel is a Christmas staple, it's not very eco-friendly as it cannot be recycled. You can make your own tinsel using string (around 6m long) and any old clothes in your home. Remove the buttons or labels off your clothes, cut the fabric into 1 or 2cm x 8 to 15 cm long strips, and start tying the scraps around the string by knotting it. Once the string is full, you'll have a funky tinsel which you can use year on year!

Beautiful Baubles

Baubles are often made of non-recyclable materials and nowadays can be very expensive! Rather than spending pounds, you can spend pennies by whipping up your own baubles to make your tree shine. A simple idea is grabbing some string and some sticks from outside. Then you can shape the twigs into a Christmassy shape like a star or a tree, and either glue them down or tie them together with your string. Then add a small loop with more string or a ribbon and hey presto!



Crafty Cards

Everyone loves receiving a Christmas card to put on their mantel or string up on the wall, but did you know that glitter isn't recyclable? This is because it's made of microplastics which aren't recyclable and instead can get into rivers and pollute them. As many

Christmas cards use glitter, why not try and make your own with sustainable materials? All you'll need is a piece of card cut to your preferred size and shape, pens and whichever craft materials of your choice, and your imagination!

Good Gift Wrap

Rather than buying factory-made wrapping paper, which often uses non-recyclable materials like plastic and glitter, you could have a go at making your own. You could use old newspapers or magazines to wrap up your presents, or use old boxes and food packages and jazz them up. Pringles can become a bottle bag, or an Amazon box can be a gift box!

Perfect Presents

Rather than buying stocking fillers or small gifts, why not try making some decorated biscuits or fudge? They don't need too many ingredients and you can personalise them by adding your own artistic flair and packaging them in nice jars or boxes. There are lots of other options too, such as making your own candles, spa packages, and more. Search 'homemade Christmas presents' online for even more ideas and easy to follow instructions for presents that still show a lot of love and thoughtfulness, if not more!

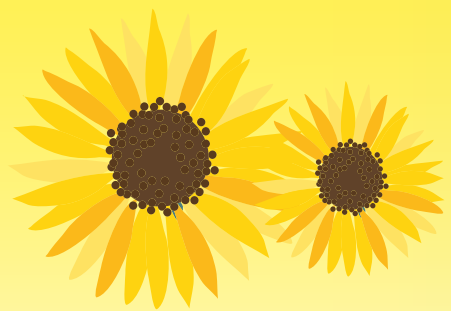


Divine Dinner

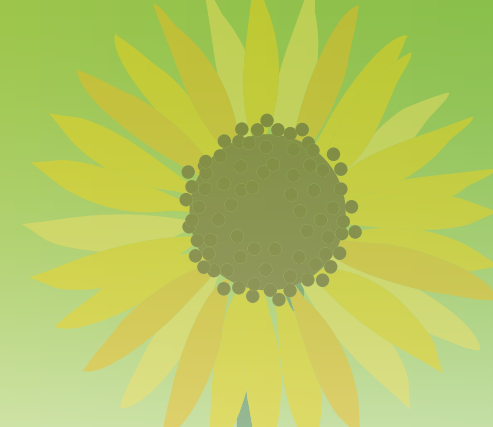
Christmas dinner is one of the best parts of the day, and there are ways to get the most out of your delicious food. If you have a turkey, rather than throwing away the bones, you can use them for stock in the future. To do this, put the turkey bones into a big pot with some halved onions, carrots, celery and some bay leaves, thyme or other herbs you've used for your dinner. Add enough water to cover everything and let it simmer for at least three hours, skimming off any white foam that comes to the surface. Then drain the liquid into a container through a sieve and freeze, or use in your next recipe!

If you're green fingered, you can also purchase a herb plant and simply snip off what you need and save the rest to grow for other recipes. As long as you keep watering them and put them in a place with good light like your kitchen windowsill, live herbs can continue to grow for months and months!





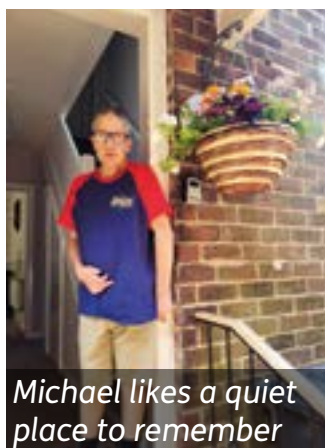
GROWING GARDENS!



Earlier this year, we gave out 90 grants of up to £100 to help the people we support to enhance their gardening projects and brighten up their outdoor spaces. We caught up with some of our successful applicants to find out how they used their new and improved gardens during the warmer months.

A touching tribute – Roe Lee Park, Blackburn

The staff at the service applied for our grant as a tribute to Michael, who sadly lost his twin brother last year. They wanted to make the garden a more friendly and peaceful place, where Michael can spend time to remember his brother.



Michael likes a quiet place to remember

“He uses the garden a lot more now,” said Ema, Senior Support Worker. **“He helped us to plant all his chosen flowers and clean up after it was done. He chose his own decorations, like the fairy lights to make it look cosy at night.”** They also cut the hedges back to allow more light, and bought some lavender to add those sensory smells. We hope you enjoy spending time in your new outdoor space Michael, we love the bright flowers you chose!

Gnome sweet gnome – The Houghtons, Bedford

The Houghtons have used their grant to create this adorable and unique ‘gnome patch’! The tenants at the service are very visual and enjoy smells, so they’ve created a colourful and busy display for them to enjoy. **“I do like a gnome, I’ll admit! It’s my brainchild,”** said Gaynor, Senior Support Worker. “I brought some in for the tenants to paint and they seemed to enjoy

“He helped us to plant all his chosen flowers and clean up after it was done. He chose his own decorations, like the fairy lights to make it look cosy at night.”

– Ema, Senior Support Worker.

them, so we decided to give them their own little patch in the garden.” One of the tenants went out and bought a solar powered windmill to put in, so they can enjoy the sounds of the chimes.

“We’re far from finished, as next year we want to get a solar powered fountain so we can add some more relaxing sounds. There’s another planter next to it that’s a bit overgrown, so I want to add some wildflowers as a couple of the tenants like to look at them. I also want to get some lavender and lemongrass so it smells nice.”

Tenants Roy and Tom are big contributors to the space, and they enjoy spending time out there. They even have a sunflower that started growing from scattered birdfeed, and they’ve made sure to place plenty of protector scarecrows around. We love your adorable gnome village, and we can’t wait to see how it improves!



Enjoying the gnome village

Raise the Roof- Sue Starkey House, London

Angela, a Support Worker at Sue Starkey House and a keen gardener herself, told us about the incredible roof garden at the service. We requested money to help us get things like compost and some additional tools so we can get more people involved,” said Angela. “The tenants have asked to do more gardening, so we’re starting a gardening club too. They will help us pick the plants and pots and where things should go.”

“Living in London we’ve had to make the most of the spaces we’ve got, and so our garden is on the roof! I saved seeds from the previous plants we grew so we can grow things that were popular. People were really interested in the tomatoes, cucumbers, chillis, runner beans, French beans, pumpkins, and sunflowers.”

Angela also explained how the garden is a communal space for everyone and helps people to relax in a nice environment. “We support one gentleman who finds the roof garden a safe space to relax in and feel happy. We also support another lady who sadly had to go to hospital and afterwards found it difficult

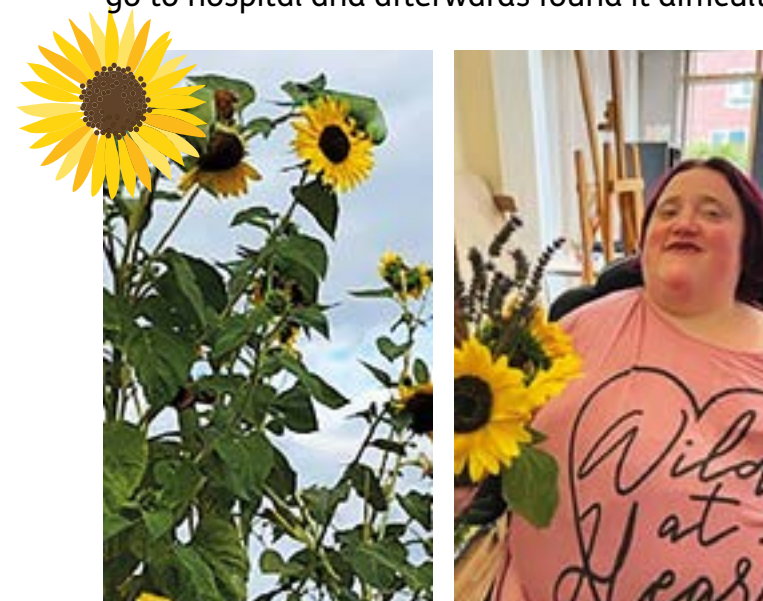


Roof top gardening – growing delicious tomatoes

to leave her flat, so we helped bring her up to the garden to come and sit with the plants and enjoy some fresh air.” The tenants love to get involved, Crystal helps to water the plants and loves the flowers and Albert loves to pick tomatoes and cucumbers for his sandwiches: **“it doesn’t get fresher than that!”**

When asked what everyone enjoys most about the garden, Angela said “Everyone thinks the best part is the food that comes out of it! The tomatoes especially went down well so we’ll be planting those again.

“It’s a real team effort,” Angela said proudly. **“Robert, Luckan, Michael, Tyler, Jean and Crystal really get involved, and staff members Reema, Polly, Fatema and Inma always help out.”** Amazing work everyone, your garden looks fantastic!



Sunflowers brighten up Crystal’s rooms



LOOKING BACK AT LOCKDOWN

For many of us, lockdown was a very difficult time and we're glad to be able to see our friends and family again. As we get used to life getting back to normal, the folks at Creative Together in Manchester took some time to reflect on their experience, and think of some positives things that came from time at home.



Kim

"I really enjoyed cooking for my family members, and spending that quality time together. I learned how to use my phone a bit more and chat to my friends using it. I started to colour my own hair, which I still do now and saves me a lot of money."



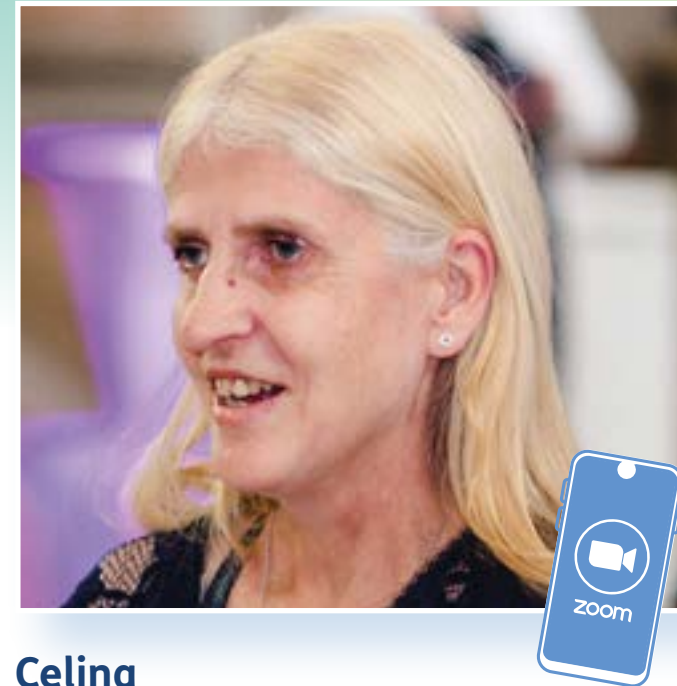
Carolyn

"I decluttered my flat and kept it a lot tidier, which I had been needing to do for a while! I enjoyed sitting out in the sunshine on a green patch, and going for more walks. I was able to cook and watch TV more, and spend time on my creative writing and poetry."



Edward

"I really liked seeing my support workers and talking to them. I spent more time gardening, and I used my phone to chat to my fiancée. I also saved a lot of money!"



Celina

"I learned lots of new things. I can order my food online from Tesco now, which I'd never done before but I still do now! I can also use Zoom to keep in contact with the centre members. My favourite thing is using the Google voice feature on my phone - everyone calls me 'Google girl' now, as I can search for anything they want!"



Stephen

"I got to know my neighbors more, as we spent time chatting outside. I also spent more time with my dog Oscar, I think he liked having me around a lot more! I used my mobile phone to keep in contact with my friends, and also spent more time with the centre members on Zoom, getting to know one another better."

WORKING AND CREATING TOGETHER



Creative Together is our national coproduction centre; an inclusive space promoting inspiration, participation and collaboration.

Visit: www.creativesupport.co.uk/creative-together to check out what we do, including our newsletters, artwork, blogs, podcasts and upcoming events.

Everyone is welcome!

Follow Creative Together on:

@creativetogethermanchester and
 @creativetogether_mcr



Service user feature

A MERRY GREEN CHRISTMAS IN DIFFICULT TIMES

December is here already, which marks not only the festive period, but also the end of the year. Whether you're celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Yule or Kwanzaa, we're all being affected by the energy crisis due to the war with Russia and Ukraine. I'm going to give you some tips for ways to cope this upcoming holiday season.

The end of the year can be a trying time for everyone, whether you're celebrating with family and friends, or would prefer to keep to your own company. The energy crisis has hit both gas and electric prices, which have risen to a critical point. This in turn has left many families and businesses in the UK struggling.

There will be less Christmas light displays and markets this year as businesses and councils will be unable to pay the huge bills.

However, it's not all doom and gloom this upcoming holidays. Family, friends, housemates and communities can come together to celebrate. To ease the energy bills and resources needed to go through this time, you can use energy efficient decorations that bring a lovely and bright feeling to people's homes, businesses or community centres. The use of budget shops for food such as Iceland, B&M, Home Bargains or Poundland have many different options out there for budget priced products and gifts. The options

and choices for people are endless, and working to your own budget and lifestyle means doing what works for you.

When it comes to Christmas or other holidays around this time, there are always alternatives when it comes to families and individuals looking to save money, and there are always people around to offer a helping hand.

I personally spend Christmas time with family. This is due to saving money on personal shopping around Christmas (especially in this time of crisis) but it also means that I get to spend time with my niece, brother and his wife. I feel a personal connection to Christmas because I find that it's a very good time of year for regardless of religion: people come together and celebrate the road to the end of the year and to a start of a new chapter.

By Katy Taylor from Knavesmire House, Tyneside.



121 Town Lane enjoying their Christmas dinner together

MONEY MATTERS!



John, Senior Support Worker in Manchester has shared with us some financial health tips to help us budget and manage our money this winter.

You may have seen about an upcoming 'cost of living crisis' on the news recently. This can seem very frightening, but there are plenty ways you can cut down your bills and have some money left over to spend on things you want. Good financial health is all about paying for things on time and looking after your money in case you'd like to save some for a rainy day.

Here are some great ways to manage your money and become a financial expert:

- **Make a budget plan with a member of staff.** This will help you see how much money is coming in, how much you need to spend on bills and expenses, and what's left over for savings or fun activities.
- **Switch off your plugs and light switches when you're not using them.** This is also good for the environment! If you forget, put a handy reminder next to each light switch.
- **Speak to staff to help you find fun activities that are cheap or free.** Sometimes cinemas, swimming pools or theatres have special offers, so you can enjoy the same activity for a cheaper price!



- **Plan your journeys in advance so you can use public transport.** This can be cheaper than getting a taxi. Public transport is better for the environment and will leave more money for your activities.
- **Make your own packed lunches.** Buying food on the go can be quite expensive, so bringing your own lunches out can be a big money saver.
- **Grow your own.** Why not start growing your own fruit and veg and enjoy some delicious homemade meals? [Check out our Amazing Allotment page for some tips about this.](#)
- **Join a local library.** If you enjoy books and films in your spare time, join your local library for free! You can borrow books and DVDs again and again, without costing you a penny.
- **Have a homemade Christmas.** Christmas can be very expensive, so try making your own cards and presents to cut costs. You can even do a 'Secret Santa' with your friends, so you only have to buy one present and everyone can enjoy receiving a gift! [Check out our Green Christmas page for some handy homemade gifts that will save you money.](#)

If you really are struggling to keep on top of your finances or you have any worries about money then you can always speak to a member of staff.

There are also other helpful organisations to talk to such as:

Citizens Advice: 0800 085 7414

Mencap: 0808 808 1111

Rethink Advice: 0808 801 0525

Disco Fever

All across the country, the people we support come together and boogie the night away at a local disco. We chatted with some of the folks in Stockport and the North East, who told us what they get up to on the dancefloor.

STOCKPORT DISCO

Twice a month, our Stockport disco takes place on a Tuesday evening. Our super volunteers make sure everything runs smoothly- when they're not making cups of tea and sandwiches for our party-goers, you can find them on the partying away and making the most of the tunes. **"I come to every disco and I just love it,"** said Elaine Morris, Registered Manager. "I even won an award at the Manchester 30th birthday event for my dedication to the disco. I'm the number one tea maker, I think that's why everyone asks me for a cuppa, so I'll take it as a compliment!"

The dancefloor wouldn't be as packed out if it wasn't for DJ Groove, who makes sure to play crowd pleasing tracks, both old and new. **"I've been DJing since I was 21, and I'm in my 40s now!"** he said. **"I love all kinds of music."**

Helen and Daniel who met at the disco and now a couple!

Jeremy from Dial Park Road always helps out before and after the discos. **"I like helping out, I help Elaine and I clean the tables. I also make new friends!"** he said.

OXBRIDGE DISCO, STOCKTON

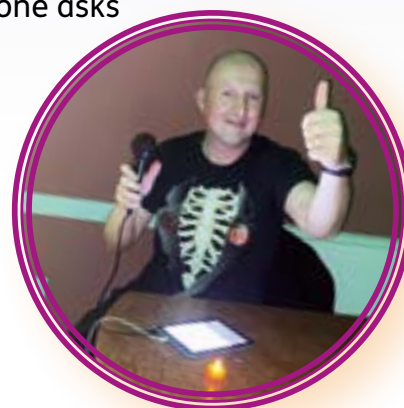
Every week, the folks in the North East come to the Oxbridge Disco in Stockton to get their groove on. They have different volunteers who help out at the tuck shop, take ticket money, and hand out raffle tickets. "We love to have a rota of who's working," said one of the volunteers.

"It's a lovely atmosphere, everyone makes new friends or catches up with people they've met before at the discos," said Anthony, who runs the disco every week. "What I find great is that our volunteer DJs have bought T shirts with their names on!"

"We also have a Facebook group for the discos so everyone can let us know what they want to see, such as themed nights, music recommendations, and birthday parties."

"Staff at the disco are very friendly and helpful, and I love coming every week to have fun and dance," said one of the attendees.

Mark from Maxwell Court is a regular at Oxbridge, and he enjoys coming each week with his girlfriend. **"I like sitting down and watching everyone dance to the music,"** he said.



DJ Groove playing at the Stockport Disco



Ann-Marie and Tanya enjoying the Oxbridge Disco

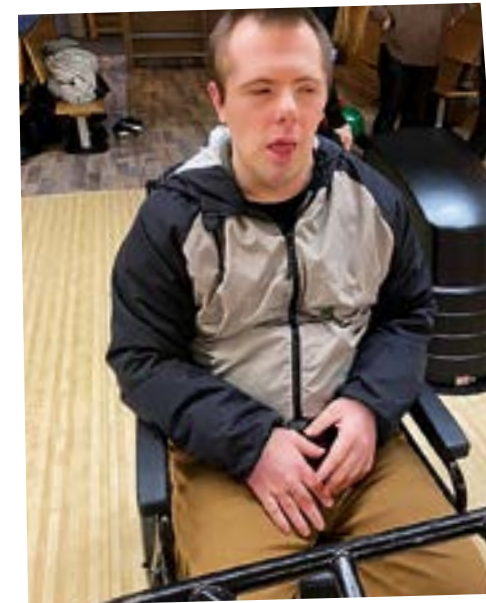
IN THE STYLE

Jordan in Grimsby has slowly been introduced to trying new things, including being supported to pick his own fashion attire! Here he is in outfits he's chosen himself which he is very proud of.

Jordan, who communicates non verbally and was supported by Registered Manager Katie Burton to complete this feature, is a really cheeky chappy.

'He has recently been supported to do lots of fun things, including: going to the zoo, trips to the theatre, and even choosing his own new car, right down to the interior!' He uses his own 'Jordan sign language' and has started using people's names at the service. He said he loves his core support team and enjoys being supported to do new things, like hanging out his own washing so his clothes smell lovely.

His core team are very proud of Jordan and all of his achievements. Keep up the amazing work Jordan and Grimsby team!



JORDAN'S STYLISH WINTER WARDROBE



FAB FLANNELS!



WARM AND COSY WHEN OUT WITH SUPPORT!



we LOVE pre-loved

We LOVE vintage pre-loved clothes

Did you know that picking up second-hand clothes in vintage or pre-loved clothing shops goes a long way to reduce your carbon footprint?

Lots of clothes end up in landfills but they can have a new lease of life for others. Going thrift shopping can be a really fun activity and you can find some real treasures at great prices. Apps like Vinted, Shpock and Depop are also great ways to pick up second-hand clothes all from the comfort of your own home.

Vinted
depop

SHPOCK
THE JOY OF SELLING



SUSTAINABILITY TIPS WITH CHARLOTTE!



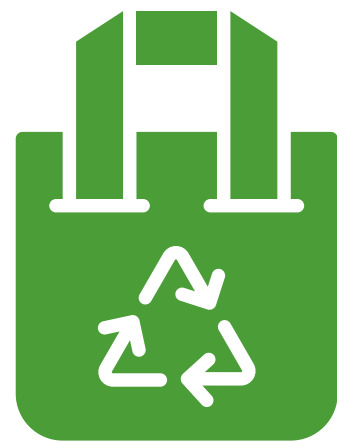
Eco-Champion Charlotte lives at Lanchester Court, and has been encouraging everyone at her service to get involved with reducing waste and recycling. Check out Charlotte's top tips below for easy and effective ways to make a difference at home!

Recycling

In the tenants meetings I like to remind people what can and can't be recycled. I also printed out a poster to try and encourage everyone. A good tip is to check the packaging and look for the special recycling symbol, which will tell you which parts go in which bins.

One person here would never bother recycling, and now he does! It's all about learning and realising what it does for the environment. I'd say about half of the people here recycle now, which is great!

Charlotte printed this recycling poster and put it up in the service for all to see



Use less plastic

It's also really important to reduce your plastic usage. Every time I go out I have a bag for life, which you can reuse. If you use a paper bag you can recycle those too.

It's really important to look after the environment and the wildlife, and reduce your carbon footprint.

Food waste

Food is really increasing in price, so I try to avoid wasting as much as possible. I plan my meals for the week and only buy what I need, and it also helps me to eat healthier. I like to batch cook my meals and freeze them so they last longer. You can also look for the yellow sticker items in the supermarket that are reduced and get yourself a bargain!



Would you like to appear in this magazine?
Email: marketing@creativesupport.co.uk and send in your story!

2023 HOROSCOPES WITH ADAM

We hope that the coming New Year brings you much happiness and fortune! Adam from Railway Street in Yorkshire has helped put together horoscopes for the coming year to help you get the most out of 2023.



ARIES: MARCH 21ST – APRIL 19TH

The fiery Aries are a determined bunch. You will achieve whatever you set your mind to, and this year will be no exception. If you've been putting off trying something, now is the time to put your Aries passion into play and smash your goals.

TAURUS: APRIL 20TH – MAY 20TH

Taureans live by the rule of work hard and play harder. They love the finer things in life but sometimes it's hard to make time for yourself in a hectic world. This coming year in Taurus, make time for yourself and complement it with activities related to you. Why not try making your favourite dish from scratch or visiting a new place to make some more happy memories?

GEMINI: 21ST – JUNE 20TH

Usually a very busy bee, Geminis are curious and love to try their hand at everything. It's never too late to try something new, but if you focus on one specific goal or hobby, you'll be an expert in no time.

CANCER: JUNE 21ST – JULY 22ND

Cancers are known for being very kind and caring to all, but you need to make sure you give the same kindness to yourselves too. Make time for your loved ones by doing activities that you love and bring you happiness so you can cover all bases.

LEO: JULY 23RD – AUGUST 22ND

Leos love being in the spotlight, and 2023 can be your stage. Follow your heart and pursue your dreams, but make sure to bring people you love along for the ride too- every star needs a supporting and lovely entourage to help them achieve big!

VIRGO: AUGUST 23RD – SEPTEMBER 22ND

This sign is organised, practical and dedicated to doing their best. The year ahead will bring Virgos even closer to your goals, just try and not get bogged down by your own expectations- every step forward is one more closer to your desired goal.

LIBRA: SEPTEMBER 23RD – OCTOBER 22ND

Known for wanting harmony, balance, and peace, we're sure this next year for Libras will be all about finding that delicate middle ground. Focus on what's important and keep going, peace will come when you feel most peaceful.

SCORPIO: OCTOBER 23RD – NOVEMBER 21ST

One of the most mysterious signs in the zodiac, Scorpios are emotional and focused on doing what makes the most sense to them. Trust your gut and the people around you, and don't overthink everything- sometimes the most spontaneous things can bring you unexpected happiness.

SAGITTARIUS: NOVEMBER 22ND – DECEMBER 21ST

Always on the hunt for knowledge and new experiences, Sagittarians love trying new things and mastering them. Find what brings you the most joy and follow that path, rather than trying lots of things and losing sight of what's important.

CAPRICORN: DECEMBER 22ND – JANUARY 19TH

Capricorns are patient and dedicated, knowing that good things come to those who wait (and put in the work!). In 2023, stay focussed and be patient, you will reap the rewards of your effort even if they take time.

AQUARIUS: JANUARY 20TH – FEBRUARY 18TH

This sign always finds the humanity in any situation, and always looks out for others. This is a valuable skill to have, so continue to be compassionate to the people around you and they'll reward you in kind.

PISCES: FEBRUARY 19TH – MARCH 20TH

Pisces are sensitive souls who can pick up on things other people might overlook. Stay in tune with your loved ones and continue to support them, but make sure you're finding happiness for yourself too in your own creative pursuits.

A huge thank you to Adam, a Virgo, for helping us put the horoscopes together.



Would you like a copy of the What's On Guide 2023?
Email: marketing@creativesupport.co.uk for one!

IN 2023 WE ARE LAUNCHING



Welcoming Empowering Compassionate
Aspirational Respectful Effective



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