



Speakup CIC Newsletter Winter 2023



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A Warm WELCOME to our 2023 Newsletter!

Foreword from SpeakUpCIC Managing Director and Founder -
Maggie Gallant

"Seasons Greetings to one & all!"

2023 has been a year of some big changes within SpeakUp! We made the difficult decision to downsize service provision and reduce the areas where we offer support.

This meant we would not be applying for funding from April 2023 due to what we'd be expected to achieve a list of 'outcomes' in opposition to our focus being on people we provide support for. However, we did retain the PERDI service.

Over the last year or so, we said **Goodbye & Good luck** to long-term staff members Amanda Godley, David Rowden and newer members Roxana and Aram. However, we say a big **Hello** to Becky Penney who joined us in October.

In March, the wonderfully supportive Tracy Dighton, agreed and signed up to become an unpaid Director member, mentioned further into this newsletter.

Having a smaller team, it was agreed to reduce the working week to just 4 days, Tuesday to Friday! This was made possible with the additional support of our volunteers and helpers, without their help we would struggle.

Its always difficult losing people, this year started sadly with the loss of Sally and Elaine, followed later with Sue and most recently our beloved 'Sugar' aka June who supported many events over the years.

We have had a variety of people donating money, details are mentioned further on in the newsletter.

As usual, we had two Mental Health specific celebrations, Mental Health Awareness Week in May and World Mental Health Day on 10/10/23, this was held at the Margate Caves with Margate Mayor Cllr. Rob Yates opening both events.

**We would like to thank Porchlight and EK360
for their funding and continued support for our
important groups**

Happy reading and very best wishes

Maggie



New team member and Director profile page

Here is a little something about the new members of the SpeakUpCIC team



Hello, my name is **Becky** most of you know me from before Covid, I am now back at SpeakUpCIC doing admin and feedback clinic. For members that don't know me here is a bit about me. My previous jobs have included, working for Wilko as their new store support, I have worked for KCC in their Millbank centre which was for asylum seekers under the age of 18, I have been a support worker for people with learning disability. Throughout Covid I worked as a HCA at the hospital, and my most recent job was at Starbucks, but when I am not working I like spending time walking my dog

(Reggie the British Bulldog) in the woods or down the beach or spending time making memories with my family. Other than that I live a pretty quiet life.



Hello, I am **Tracy Dighton**. I've been supporting Maggie and the Team with service development, management and governance issues since SpeakUpCIC was founded in 2011.

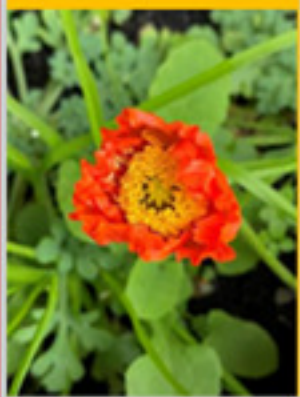
I have since joined the Board as a Director to mark a greater commitment to the organisation and its members going forward. The positive energy at SpeakUpCIC makes contributing a joy. I am experienced in managing community organisations both as a trustee and a chief executive. I have managed the CAB in Hastings and Rother for a number of years and before that ran Ashford Counselling Service. I haven't always found it easy to keep myself in good wellbeing but have found in recent years sticking with the mindful activities I enjoy, such as working in a community garden, walks in nature and wild swimming has really helped.



Never give up



"Where flowers bloom so does hope" at SpeakUpCIC



Whilst I might prefer sunny days & light spring mornings leading to summer we are entering our phase of autumn, it'll also pass into winter. It reminds me that all this will change again. Like moods, it's important to learn how to cope during darker days, learn what we need in each season & look after ourselves knowing the spring will return!

Adrienne

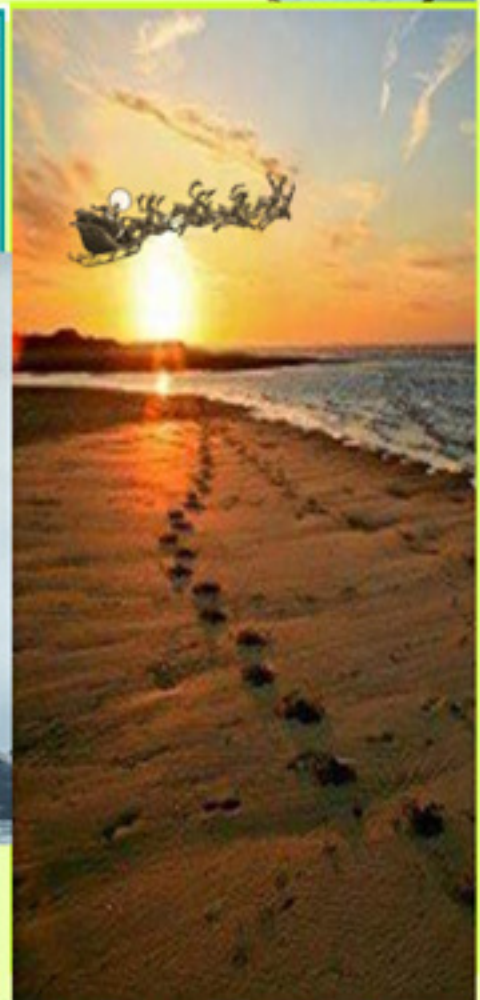
Those who don't believe in magic will never find it." ~Roald Dahl



You are strong for getting out of bed in the morning even when it feels like hell. You are brave for doing things even though they scare you or make you anxious. And you are amazing for trying and holding on no matter how hard life gets.

Mental Health Believe

To raise my spirits, I go outside and walk. The world is so big and I am so small, the big space and big sky helps so much!!



SHOUT, SCREAM, LET IT OUT.

What to do when the sun is not shining in your world but is beautifully bright outside? Don't stay in! No matter how hard the effort feels, go out.

Stand your ground. SHOUT / SCREAM leave your troubles and get yourself OUT.

Watch the sun go down, bury your troubles for a while. The New Sun tomorrow could be shining JUST FOR YOU

When I feel like giving up. I will try not to. Take a deep breath and relax!!!! Mar R

Today I will not stress over things I can't control.



My Story



Pics of my first attempt at artwork after sight loss.



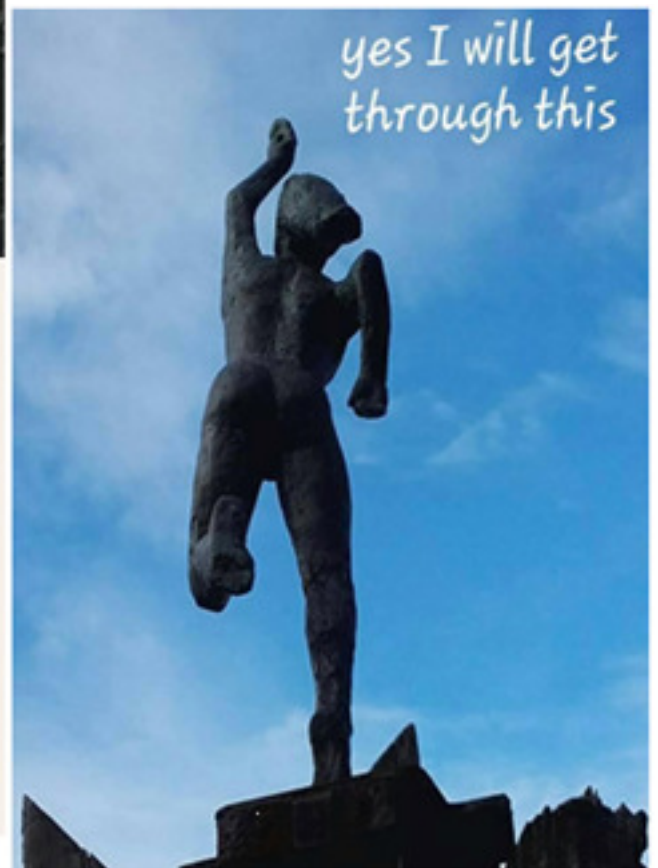
Grab every opportunity of trying new things, having fun, going on adventures, creating memories as you never now what life will throw at you one day...

Yep, it was a year today that the lights went out for me. One day I could see, the next I was completely blind. Life will never be the same...

But I still get up every day and hope to get through it with no accidents/too many disappointments. Yes it's tough, yes it's tiring. But do you know what keeps me going? You peeps, my children and their children and I'm so grateful to have you all in my life

Surgery booked for my right eye next week. Fingers crossed my wise man Mr Zia and his team will perform miracles again. I'm not asking for much, anything is better than nothing right?

Hope everybody is coping ok out there. Sending out big hugs to you all. *Nikki*



"BLINDNESS IS NOT AN END. BUT A BEGINNING OF A REMARKABLE JOURNEY WHERE COURAGE AND RESILIENCE PAVE THE WAY."



Members Feedback

Here are some of things our members have been feeling and saying about our SpeakUpCIC Forums...

APPRECIATION OF SPEAKUP'S SUPPORT By Courtney

Within this world there's a lot of people who mask a lot of struggles because of background, ignorance of people and lack of support for them. This might sound sad and feel negative, but why does it sound sad and feel negative?

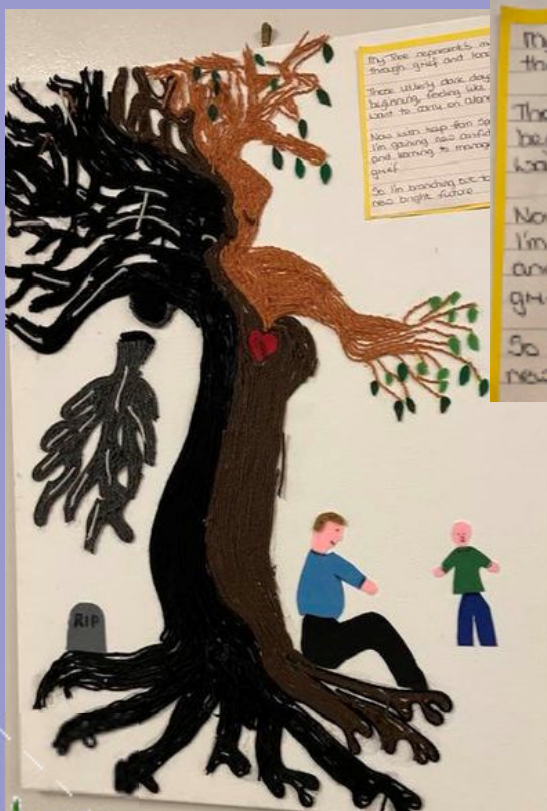
I can tell you why, and so can a lot of other people, and that's because mental health is not recognised until physically seen. But with my own opinion, SpeakUpCIC has done a lot for people and rescued people and that's why I appreciate SpeakUpCIC such a lot.

Having SpeakUpCIC groups are so supportive, helpful and inspirational as you can be yourself, get inspired and meet new and lovely people which turns into friendship, which is what a lot of people need.

If there wasn't a SpeakUpCIC community service, then I don't know if I would be able to get myself more sociable and actually doing something for myself which I enjoy due to depression. SpeakUpCIC always gives me motivation to come to groups and focus on the positive and happy side of myself and share with all the friends I've made within SpeakUpCIC

So, all I can say is thank you to everyone within the groups, it's much appreciated.

And also a massive thank you to Maggie and Kay who brought SpeakUpCIC in this world.



This tree represents my journey through grief and loneliness. These utterly dark days beginning feeling like I want to carry on alone. Now with help from Speak Up I'm gaining new confidence and learning to manage my grief. So I'm branching out to my new bright future.

My tree represents my journey through grief and loneliness

These utterly dark days in the beginning, feeling like I don't want to carry on alone.

Now with help from Speak Up I'm gaining new confidence and learning to manage my grief.

So I'm branching out to my new bright future.

This tree represents life. Trees will heal themselves over time. No matter how bad the wound is. The tree can adapt to heal. The drops are pain and trauma falling. The bandages are helping to hold the tree together while it heals. The flowers mean new beginnings and new growth, but the gashes wound means there is still a lot of healing left to do. Based on the tree of life symbol and a ash/weeping willow.



Wednesday art and craft group with Nicky



On Wednesdays from 10am until 12pm, the lovely Nicky runs the art and crafts group at the media centre. This is a small group and Nicky encourages us to come up with ideas for projects as well as giving us free rein with the resources

available to get our creativeness flowing. I enjoy coming here immensely, and the time seems to fly by which is a shame, but it is always relaxed and has a 'go with the flow' vibe. We decorated masks for one project in order to project how we were feeling with our designs, and were encouraged to decorate old boots and shoes to 'walk a mile in my shoes'... These were displayed recently at an event at 'Margate Caves' recently.

We use a whole plethora of art materials that are available to us, and I have found that if I'm not sure what I am in the mood for, I either doodle... This helps me to relax my mind, or, by having a rummage through the drawers, come across something to set my mind to. I love this time of year when we can get stuck in to making Christmassy stuff.. I love it. After we went to the turner centre recently, we were inspired and each designed our own small canvas to display.

I always look forward to my Wednesdays.... Art and craft in the morning with a great bunch of people and then the PERDI group in the afternoon.

Thank you speak up.



What the craft group means to me. This group is the only social thing I do. It is my life saver. I love craft as always keep my mind busy. I have a laugh with some fantastic people I've met, A chance to talk through my worries, without being judged. To learn new things and solve craft problems with the group. I feel safe and comfortable and look forward to coming and spending time, having fun with this group, who now I call my friends, and I'm very grateful to Speak up for this.



Good morning, Good afternoon, Good evening and welcome to today's lecture. I am here to talk about writing, specifically our creative writing group but also about writing in general. So why writing? I hated writing at school, why would I want to do writing now? Simple.

Because now there are no rules. Now there is no one telling you what to write. Now there is no one moaning about your spelling or your punctuation. Now you can do you.

For me, I love words. I love what they do, I love what they say, I love how they sound in song lyrics or poetry. Words have power and it's a power that can free you. For those of you that don't know me I am known as the poet of the writing group. I spent 50 years being told I wasn't good enough, I didn't have a creative bone in my body. You know what? The naysayers were wrong. I found out by turning up to the creative writing group and the words just started flowing. Luckily (or maybe unluckily), they

haven't stopped since.

So what do I write or why? I write about anything and everything. If I'm down I write about that. If I'm stressed about something, I write about it. If it's stuck in my head I write about it. I put it down on paper to get it out of my head. I get the poison out of my system and down onto paper. It frees my mind. It doesn't have to be perfect, it doesn't even have to make sense. Just write it down. You can bin it, you can burn it, you can read it to others or you can chuck it in a drawer and forget about it. Just get it out of your mind and onto paper, it really does help you feel better. As for the writing group? We talk about anything and everything and from there people get inspiration. I write poetry, other people write stories, other people just write what's in their heads.

You can share it with the group or keep it to yourself, we don't mind, we want you to be you. We have fun, we help each other with our problems and, hopefully, we all leave with a smile on our faces.

So in simple terms all I'm saying is write stuff down. It gets it out of your head and might even give you a fresh perspective on it.

By Damian

Give it a go, what do you have to lose?



If you have anything to say, poems to share, or some other contribution for future newsletters we would love to hear from you! You could be featuring in our spring newsletter! Please send anything you want to share to admin@speakupcc.co.uk or send it in to the Media Centre, 11-13 Kings Street, Media Centre, Margate, Kent, CT9 1AD or call us on 01843 448384



Moving the Safe Haven to QEQM

I have never used the safe haven in Holy Trinity Church near Dane Valley but understand how vital its work is for those suffering mental health crises. So I was astounded to read it is being moved to the mental health unit in QEQM hospital Margate

An appalling decision. I have never felt safe in a mental health unit. How stigmatising to move the unit. Why? The unit has connotations of mental illness and medication of psychiatrists and unease. The fear of sectioning and of E.C.T.

Please write to Maggie Gallant with your views so she can compile a letter of complaint

Thankyou!

Feedback from our members

I think it's a bad move the safe haven is not safe in the mental health unit, one would be worried about being kept in and not in control and what about the staff and will it be financially under the NHS worried about waiting times and the service you will get when you go the maybe in crisis would they be trusted to help you and always cutting costs

Against the move. I have used safe haven when very ill and found its softness and a satellite from all of the 'institutions' beneficial to my mental health. It was a service I felt easier to trust so possibly aiding recovery.

I think it is very Foolish not to have a clear physical separation from the Hospital and NHS...Safe Haven implies respite from too much medical interference. Like Sanctuary a Safe Haven is not a concept understood by the profit driven control from up above Society we now move in..

2023 King's Speech and the 1983 Mental Health Act

There was a glaring omission in the recent King's Speech. There was no mention of the mental health act 1983 long overdue for reform

Promises were made by Government in 2018 and civil servants have been working on the legislation and making preparations so I see it as a huge betrayal on the part of the Government to go back on its word. There has been much in the news about people with autism and learning difficulties being locked up in mental health units often in seclusion. This is cruel. Also some mental health units are rated unsafe. It is imperative that this act is reformed as soon as possible and I urge you to write to your MP right now!

**DARE
TO
WRITE
IT:**

SEND US YOUR LETTERS!

We publish a selection of your letters! So get writing! Send in your news and send in your views on anything you've seen in this edition or your ideas for things you'd *like* to see in this newsletter. Let off steam about something you may have seen in the media. Let us know what you're doing and what you're thinking.

Letters should be original and include your name, address and day-time telephone number if available. Letters should be **no more** than 250 words please!

SpeakUpCIC has been supporting the Magnificent Moths conservation project led by the Butterfly Conservation Society. Members of the gardening group have been involved in supporting this project which provides the opportunity to play a key role in relation to helping to protect endangered moths within the East Kent Coast area.



Earlier this year members sowed and cultivated seeds (in the SpeakUpCIC Safe Haven Garden area) to attract endangered moths and in August participated in a Moth Workshop activity. Members were delighted to ascertain that a variety of 11 different moths have been visiting the garden area. Participation in this project has been particularly beneficial to members as it has encouraged them to work as part of a team to help improve the environment and there has been positive feedback in relation to how this involvement has helped to improve their wellbeing. If you are interested in becoming involved or would like to learn more please contact Kay at SpeakUpCIC.



On June 14th, those of us that attend the Wednesday morning art group held by Nicky, visited the Turner center in Margate to see an exhibition being held by the Brazilian artist Beatriz Milhazes whose art style is modernism.

I was really looking forward to it as I had never visited the Turner before, although I had heard many opinions. Some good, others not so keen. When we walked in, there was a shop area, and as I turned, what struck me immediately was a riot of colour!!!! A lso the huge magnificent windows that face out to the sea!!!! Wow, I was blown away.

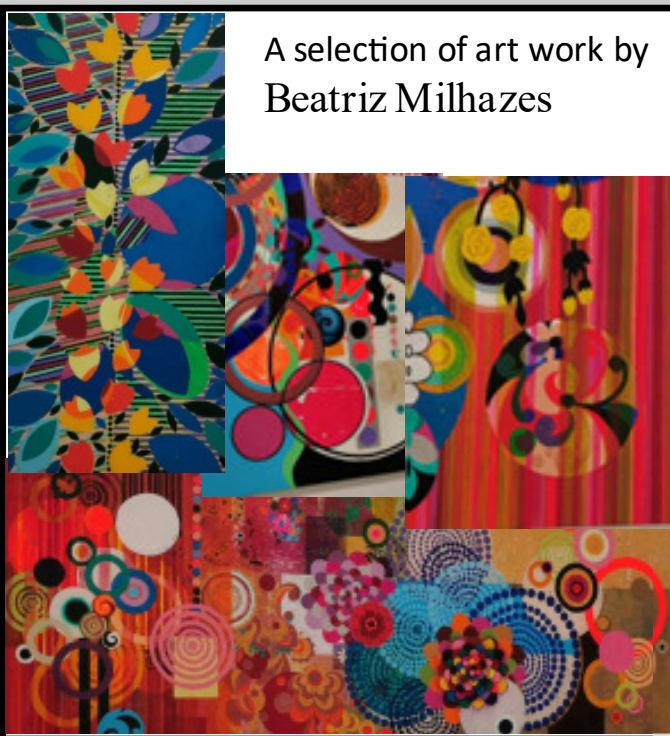
We walked into several rooms, and along wide corridors with art works on the walls that I personally felt were colourful and must have been enormous fun to create.

Some walls had several artworks, and others would stand alone in the centre of an entire wall. I had a few personal favourites that I have shared with you here.

I have never considered myself to be an 'art lover', but I do like to doodle, and Beatriz's artwork made me feel that they were along the same lines as doodles, using bright colours that caught my eye, and lots of lines, circles and swirls.

I, along with the others that came along being Nicky, Nic, Melissa and Maggie, had a really nice visit together and all really enjoyed it. We ended our time there excitedly discussing what we had seen and deciding that our 'Beatriz' visit would be the first of others that we will begin to enjoy by arranging further visits in the future months. I hope you like these pictures. Jaynie

A selection of art work by Beatriz Milhazes



DOODLING – ‘WITH & WITHOUT DIANA’ PROJECT

SpeakUpCCare delighted that several members (and staff) have enjoyed and benefited from participating in this lovely project which was created by local textile designer Rachelle Francis as a legacy to her mum Diana. Throughout this year, Rachelle has been running doodling workshops to promote the therapeutic benefits of doodling in relation to helping to improve mental health and wellbeing. Rachelle has now launched the doodling journal ‘Mind to Pen’ which members have really enjoyed using to help reduce stress and anxiety while having lots of creative doodling fun! If anyone would like more information about this project, please visit: www.with-and-without-diana.co.uk or email:

rachelle@with-and-without-diana.co.uk



Kay Nicolson Artist Creator of My Moon Garden Dream with me...



Running with the Wolves

“They fed her to the wolves, not knowing that she already led the pack.”

Kay's work is autobiographical and therapeutic, often containing themes of dreams, nature and cycles of the moon. She has a deep love of the natural world and Scottish countryside and is committed to highlighting the need to conserve our beautiful, magical universe. Kay's illustrative pieces 'tell a story' which form connections with others on a deep, spiritual level.

Her creative practice helps process emotions and give focus for mindfulness and relaxation. “Painting has been my one constant throughout my life. It's helped me get through difficult times. I am developing some mindfulness workshops which I'm hoping will inspire others to take some time for themselves and enjoy creating.”

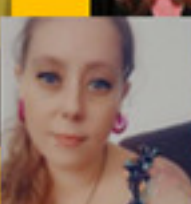
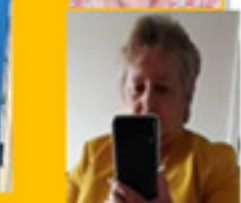
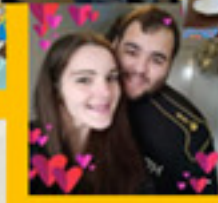
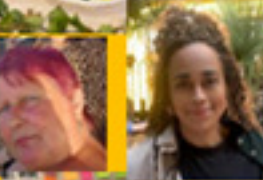
Please feel free to like Kay's Facebook page and enjoy her work here:

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/MyMoonGarden>

<https://facebook.com/mymoongarden>

Throughout this newsletter I am sharing her pictures. Do take a look at her amazing work on her Facebook page

Happy Christmas from and to members and supporters!



Artwork from Tammy



Artwork by one of our members Janet Reynolds of two members of SpeakUp-CIC. Can you guess who they are ?

Live - Laugh - Love



Vickki Barro Art



Janet wins first prize at World Mental Health Day



BROADSTAIRS Folk Week

This year our traditional annual outing of the forums to the Broadstairs Folk Week event was a great success, as usual. Members from SpeakUpCC met to relax and enjoy the ambience of the day. With sunny weather, fancy dress, dancers and music drifting across the bay to keep us entertained it was a feast for the soul. We visited the craft tents and their various stalls with an abundance of home made goodies from toffee apples, honeycomb and fudge to leather belts and hats to ornate sculptures and iron grates from old scrap. Even if you didn't spend a cent you couldn't fail to be fascinated and amused by the goings on of this event that has proved so popular year after year. Members enjoyed teas, coffees and shandies at the Charles Dickens and a variety of options for lunch on offer at the various cafes and stalls locally. As ever it proved an enjoyable and worthwhile occasion as members from the different groups met one another while soaking it all up. Thanks to Maggie for inspiring and supporting this tradition, long may it continue.



Daphne Celebrates her Birthday



On Daphne's birthday Jaquie, Gail, Daphne and myself went to Westgate for the day it was a beautiful day very hot went to

Molly for dinner which was really nice we sat outside after for a while just watching people in the water after a hour or so we went for ice cream which was yummy we went to the bar and had drinks not alcohol ones.. Haha! Then just before we went home Daphne, Gail and Jaquie went for a paddle in the water it was really peaceful the whole day was absolutely enjoyable Jaquie gave everybody lifts home afterwards. I think Daphne had a good day in fact I know we all had a good day

Thank you Jaquie for taking us



SpeakUpCIC Event on Tuesday 16th May
11.00am to 3.00 pm Celebrating
Mental Health Awareness Week.



The event was being held at the Media Centre, 11-13 King Street in Margate. The event was interactive with lots of positive creative and fun activities for people to enjoy and participate in - all based around the theme of finding ways to help reduce the impact of Anxiety. The Mayor Cllr Rob Yates opened the event. Here are some pictures (to the right) of our activities for you to enjoy.

Winners of the post card competition



Doodling with Rachelle

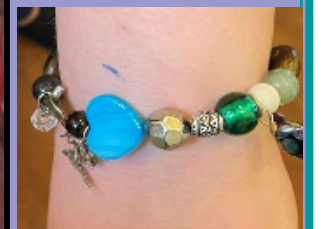
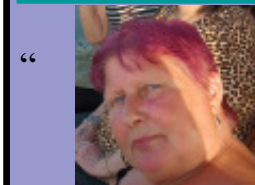


It's Mental Health Awareness week; But still many do not understand what having forms of mental health issues are like, so it gets swept under the rug or people have less contact as they don't know how to handle your symptoms. Firstly, I am not My Diagnosis!!!. Yes I struggle with depression, generalized anxiety disorder, and EUPD. Sometimes there are reasons behind the mental health issues sometimes not. We have feelings, just like you but we are more sensitive, we are often self critical, seeking approval from those around us as we feel insecure. Our moods change and our emotions like a light switch, you wonder why? So do we. What we need is someone, a friend to come alongside us, support us spend time just being there for a shoulder to cry on, vent when we don't understand what's going on in our minds. Yes there is medical intervention for which we are grateful but LOVE, COMPASSION, PATIENCE AND YOUR TIME LISTENING IS even more important. Take time to call someone you know is struggling, check on them, let them know you care. If you don't understand mental health look in to it so you have some basic understanding. We are broken and need people to love us through this season of darkness and fear. Vanessa

Mask painting



Jewelry making with Michelle





All too often when we pass a milestone or achieve something that has been a challenge for us the importance of our achievements are overlooked or we aren't acknowledged as much as we should be. So, here in the newsletter we would like to take a moment to say a few words about some of the things you have done or achieved recently.



A big Well Done to Kelly for passing her PRINCE2 Agile® Project Management - Foundation Exam

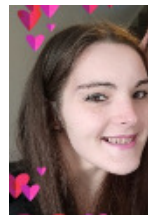
We'd like also to wish you lots of luck to your next exam in the New Year!

PLUS Thanks You for your help to oversee and support the SpeakUpCIC volunteers.



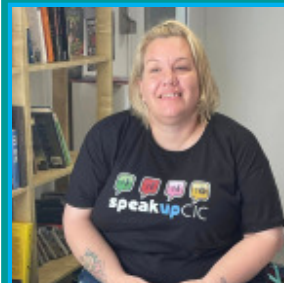
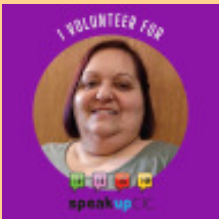
A big Well Done to volunteer Georgina for helping to restructure and facilitate the former Tuesday Service User forum now known as 'Speak Up, Meet Up'. Georgina has ensured that the group includes ideas and suggestions put forward by members and we are delighted with how the group has progressed. The sessions include talks and updates with providers, topical discussions, games and crafts and the opportunity for people to socially engage over a drink and biscuits. If anyone would like further information, please let us know.

A Big Well Done to Louise Jukes who achieved her Counselling and Mentoring Degree with a 2.1 pass. Louise has now successfully been putting all her learning and expertise to good use by securing a counselling position with a local support organization so that she can help people within the community.



Well Done Courtney after a lot of hard work passed her first aid exam with flying colours!

A Big Well Done and Thank You to volunteer Paula for passing several courses this year, including Mental Health Awareness and Reflexology. Paula has also run a very successful and most appreciated Well-being course for SpeakUpCIC members who were able to learn about different relaxation techniques to promote calm and positivity. Paula is planning to run another course focusing on relaxation in the New Year. If anyone is interested, please let Maggie or Kay know



We are delighted that Nicki B has become a SpeakUpCIC helper and is now supporting our EK360 work by helping to collect feedback about services from people within the community. Nicki has been out and about in Thanet with Becky attending community drop-ins where she engages with people and documents their experiences. Nicki also supported the World Mental Health Day event by helping to monitor the reception desk. We are very grateful for all the support and wish to say a very big 'Well Done'

THANK YOU DAVID...

We would like to say a special 'Thank You' to David Rowden who, despite leaving SpeakUpCIC last year to take up a new job role with the Windmill Project, has continued supporting us, especially when it comes to IT queries! David has been a great help in supporting us to finalise the new SpeakUpCIC website which will be launched very soon and his continued patience and understanding is most appreciated by our team when there's a computer query or a laptop needs setting up.



We're not Weirdoes - a Reflection, by Luke



People who refer to 'weirdoes', or call people 'weird' are often really expressing the oppressive prejudice against the mentally ill as pointed out by thinkers like Gramsci and Foucault. It always upsets me when I hear people use this term. It's like it's a way of saying 'I don't understand anyone who is different to me therefore I question their right to exist'. But people who say this never acknowledge that it is their ignorant incapability to understand others that is really the problem.

This form of language perpetuates stigmatisation and marginalisation in mental health.

Antonio Gramsci was an Italian Marxist theorist who introduced the concept of "cultural hegemony," which describes how the dominant class or group in society shapes the cultural norms and values to serve its own interests. Through various institutions: media, education, and religion the dominant culture perpetuates an ideology which marginalises or stigmatises those who do not conform to established norms.

Applying this to the term "weird" in relation to mental health suggests that labeling someone as such serves to uphold the values of the dominant culture while isolating and marginalising those who diverge from the accepted norms. It is a way to establish "otherness" and places a negative connotation on supposedly 'abnormal' mental states or behaviour.

Michel Foucault, a French philosopher and historian, focused on the relationship between power and knowledge, particularly as manifested in institutions like medicine, psychiatry, and the penal system. Foucault's concept of "medicalisation" relates to how medicine and its institutions have the power to define what is

"normal" and "abnormal" resulting in the marginalisation (or even institutionalisation) of those of us unlucky enough to be 'unusual' in that way.

If we apply Foucault's ideas to the stigmatisation of mental health, calling someone "weird" could be seen as a form of exercising power, a way of making a boundary out of being 'normal' and classifying those outside it to a position of less power and status. This could be extended to understand how such language affects public opinion and policy towards mental health services and support.

Sociologists like Erving Goffman have extensively discussed the concept of stigma, where societal labels significantly alter how an individual is perceived and how they perceive themselves. Social theorists have also talked about the concept of "othering," where the dominant group defines itself by excluding and marginalising those who do not fit their norms.

So, while the term "weird" may seem casual, its implications are far-reaching, affecting social integration, self-perception, and even access to opportunities for those who are labeled as such. Recognising this can be the first step in challenging the oppressive elements of our language and, by extension, our social norms.

Punk as a subculture and musical genre has long been associated with challenging societal norms or power structures. The ethos of punk is anti-establishment, emphasising individuality, rebellion, and a DIY ethos that encourages people to create rather than consume. Make a band and play in your dad's garage not a million dollar recording studio... that kind of DIY.

This resonates with the anti-psychiatry movement and Gramsci and Foucault, all of which challenge existing power structures and the dominant ideologies that sustain them. The way in which we have a chance to create independent supportive communities among us diagnosed people (or service users/survivors whatever term you prefer) is truly DIY and I believe in it. Other people like the good old anarchists might call it 'direct action' or 'mutual aid'. It's just when you do what's needed without having to wait for someone in authority to tell you to do it.

Mentally ill individuals have often appeared to me to be "natural punks". Many of us feel marginalised or alienated, which makes the punk ethos appealing as it provides a space to express dissent and individuality.

The alienation we feel could be exacerbated by the ways in which society treats mental illness as something to be hidden, stigmatised, or

as something to be hidden, stigmatised, or controlled. In this way, punk can become an avenue to assert identity, challenge the status quo, and reject societal norms. It's thoroughly healthy, let's have some Mad Pride. Oh and by the way I have nothing against hippies, goths, emos or whatever you want to be - the point is self-definition. Punk was just something that I found because of when I was born (1970 - old fogey maybe). It applies to you if you need it, if you want to dress differently, or have piercings wherever... or if people call the music you like 'weird'. If you want to be, or find yourself, different to so many of the others I hope you can realise you are in our club!

Words have the power to shape our perceptions and, in turn, influence perception, and even public policy as created by governments or other powerful lobbies. There are broader implications of stigmatising language. Beyond affecting individual well-being, this language hinders progress in the field of mental health. For instance, funding for mental health services and research may be influenced by public opinion, which is, in turn, shaped by the words we use. Addressing stigma at its linguistic roots can have a ripple effect leading to more comprehensive support systems and a more compassionate system. To be marginalised may look like being put 'on the scrap-heap'. But it's DIY mutual support that can fight that..

Words like "weird" not only isolate individuals but also affect how they perceive themselves, potentially leading to a negative feedback loop that worsens peoples' health. We must recognise the power of words and their role in shaping society's attitudes towards mental health. By challenging oppressive language and fostering acceptance and understanding, we can move towards a more inclusive and supportive society.



A poem I conjured up last night.

Tears fall from my eyes
Wounds pour from my heart
Evaporation of existence and that's just the start

Feel like I'm alone in soul, spirit and mind
Intrusive, destructive thoughts to myself I Cannot even be kind
When you feel pain like this people call you strong
But underneath the armour I can barely hold on
Not even sailing through the days
Just ruminating in this head that feels like a maze
Can't even understand my own thoughts and feelings
Acting on impulse trying to understand the meaning
Falling to my knees heart thoroughly breaking into bottle after bottle trying to pull through the wreckage with no due
Suicidal ideation no fear of the unknown
Risking my life feel like my heart has no home.

By Howa



The Men's Group is run every Friday between 2pm and 3.30 pm by Jon



The group is diverse in its content and can include any subject a member wishes to talk about. All this in a safe and non judgemental way that is geared for us men to be able to talk openly and in a relaxed way. The subjects vary and Ben always is a

valued member of the meetings and a pleasure to be around as is Shane himself who has a brilliant knowledge of both Military stuff and Music both of which are passions of his. It is a safe space for us Guys to meet online and chat and chill together for the duration of the meeting all whilst having fun doing so.

It is great to be part of this group and the diverse range of people and subjects that it brings together. I hope new members will feel able to join and experience the brilliance of this group and all it has to offer them.





Gordon Clarkson Productions

Sing As We Go - meet the cast Meet the show's host Dr Webster (played by Ian Douglas). Dr. Webster was born in Edinburgh...



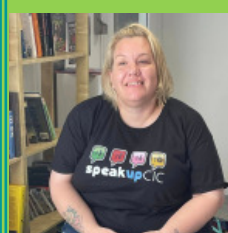
across Kent and to those who may not feel comfortable with in-person groups. Our original face-to-face group still meets once a month for a

In 1993, I was attending counselling sessions at Westbrook House, Margate following a nervous breakdown. On the notice board in the foyer was a handwritten poster advertising a Gay Forum. I gave the number on it a call. Fast forward to 2023 and that group, the SpeakUpCIC LGBTQ+ Forum, is still going strong, offering peer support not just once a month but twice thanks to the advances in digital technology. The latter has enabled us to extend our membership

meal and a chat, and it's been great to welcome new and returning members to both groups. Thirty years ago, there wasn't the equality enshrined in law that there is in the U.K. today but homophobia and transphobia still regrettably exist. A display in support of Pride Month in the Cancer Research shop at Broadstairs brought a complaint that not only should the shop not have done it but it shouldn't be LGBTQ but just be P for "perverts". Although our local LGBTQ community is more visible now than it was thirty years ago, it is still possible to feel isolated, all the more so if you face mental health challenges, and it's important that we remain a part of the "safe and supportive spaces" for the LGBTQ+ community.

We thank Roger Newman and members of the Thanet LGBTQ 50+ Group for their generous donation towards our work and to the Mayor of Margate, Cllr. Rob Yates, for his ongoing support, along with Margate Pride for letting us participate in their annual parade.

If you identify as L,G,B,T or Q and find yourself in the place I was in thirty years ago, be assured that a warm and supportive welcome can still be found here at the SpeakUpCIC LGBTQ+ Group, either in-person or via Zoom so please do get in touch with either Maggie or myself. Wishing you all the best this festive season and here's to the next thirty years! Ian Carter-Chapman, Volunteer Director



My name is Nikki, At the time I was referred to SpeakUpCIC, I was really struggling with my mental health and feeling that I didn't fit in anywhere. I started attending the PERDI group and finally found my home. I have found the group incredibly helpful and supportive. I have met some wonderful people at SpeakUpCIC and finally feel that I can be me without fear of being rejected. Maggie, has created a safe space that empowers those that voice has been silenced to finally be heard.

After being a member of SpeakUpCIC, I wanted to give something back to an organisation that has given me so much. Maggie saw my skills and put me to work gathering feedback on different services. I now attend different groups in the community with Becky and get to speak to many different people. Doing this has helped increase my confidence and given me a purpose. I really enjoy helping to play a part in making someone feel heard.



My memory of 'Sugar' (in the blue hat) by Hazel



One of SpeakUpCIC's wonderful volunteers passed away on 10th October. She was known as Sugar, but her real name was June. She used to make the tea and coffee when we used to have Monday meetings at St. John's Church Community Centre but had to give this up due to health reasons. Sugar was very popular. She was a very kind and a lovely lady.

Sugar was a wonderful artist; she liked to draw and paint pictures of birds and flowers. She once sent a picture of a bird on a tree branch to the BBC, and this was mentioned by a presenter on the radio who said how wonderful her picture was.

R.I.P Sugar



What a beautiful evening at Samhain Sanctuary. At one point I ended up here with my ancestors. Enjoy the transforming energy of the blood moon lunar eclipse, Kay Nicholson





Here are some of the things that Ashford members have said recently about the peer support aspect of our group.

"Being able to speak to people with very different ways of thinking about things and engaging with people is terrifying - and so to have a group leader who checks up on people after the group if they have been upset is really important to me. It is great that our group leader does this."

"I'm really happy always with this group I have been depressed recently but today being able to come to this group has made me feel good."

"What I would like to feedback about this group is that I'm learning the value of other people's contributions and not just my own contribution."

Love when we have topic and reading poems, Marion.

Ease off use in the winter, like the interaction with other people, not as daunting as face to face

Love the contact with people and the connection with the group, attached, it is a family from a distance, Vilma.

To all Ashford Members

If you have something to say about mental health services. Come along and meet others and relax over a cuppa. **Third Wednesday of each month 10.00 am - 12.00 pm** Berwick House, Ashford Volunteer Centre, 8 Elwick Road, Ashford TN23 1PF. We look forward to seeing you there for more information contact Maggie on 07958 242 834

We also run a variety of online Zoom groups, every Wednesday at 11 30am, different topics each week. We have the Saturday crossword, Chat and Share every Wednesday and Fun Friday. And once a month we have an LGBTQ online group. If interested in any of these groups please let me know

SpeakUpCIC Ashford Meeting.

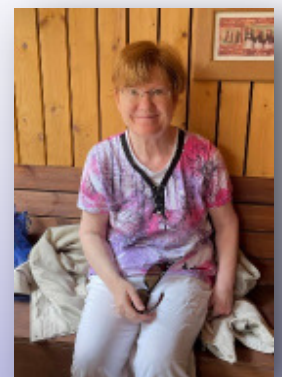


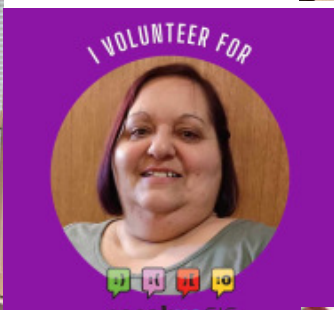
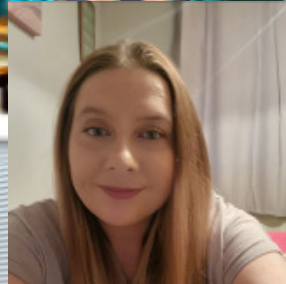
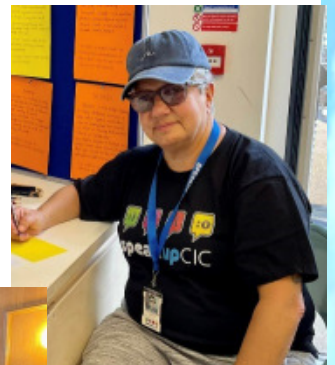
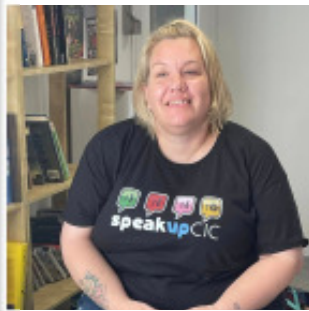
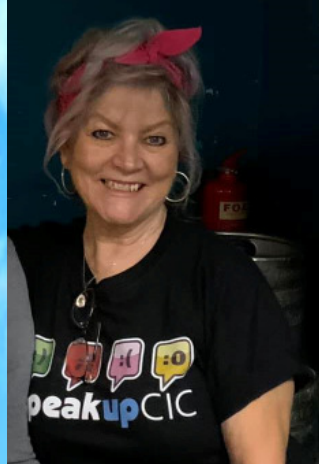
I haven't been to a meeting in a while so decided to go yesterday to catch up with everyone. This week we had a visiting speaker from EK360. Martyn explained to us all how local mental

health services are going through a change of strategy. He was interested in all our feedback regarding services. Becky who will be running the group from now on was there as well as Maggie. It was nice seeing Jane, Claire and Neil there too. We discussed the forthcoming Christmas lunch in December and chatted about other members of the group who hadn't been there for a while. I enjoyed going to the meeting. I'm looking forward to the Christmas lunch. By Debbie

Saturday Crossword Croup

I am a member of the crossword group, which takes place on Saturday from 10 a.m. on Zoom. We exercise our brains by doing crosswords as a group. We also talk about various things. One of the lovely things about this group is the way we care about each other, and try to help with ideas, advice or in practical ways. The lady who presides over proceedings, Clare, is charming, sometimes quirky and unique. She makes doing crosswords really good fun, with her individual style. If you would like to join this group please let Maggie know!
By Claire W





POETS CORNER



YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW by Janet

Christmas was a time of joy.
When busy bees did jobs deploy.
Rushing round and scrubbing veg.
Baste the turkey, enough is said.
Today we have a sadder sight.
With wars to fight with all our might.
While all this stuff is bad.
Thinking much is very sad.
I'm glad we have a chance.
To see the good and do a dance.
Forget the past it will not last.
Enjoy the season, for the reason.
News of a grandchild brought today.
Has put an end to my dismay.



It's Christmas Eve and I get ready for bed, Rebecca

Thoughts of toys fill my head.
Pour a glass of milk and cut a slice of cake,
Something I helped my mother bake.
I grab my stocking and kiss my father
goodnight,
My mother will be up soon to turn off my
light.
I sing a Christmas tune as I head up the
stairs,
Then brush my teeth and say my prayers.
Please God can Santa bring me a doll and a
bike,
These are things I really would like.
My mother comes up to tuck me into my
bed,
Reads me a story and kisses my forehead.
Now get some sweet dreams, Santa will be
here soon,
My mother smiles at me sweetly as she
leaves the room.
I dream of Santa arriving on his sleigh,
And of the toys he will bring me in the
light of day.

I Am Depressed (sung to the tune of Jingle Bells)

Dashing here and there
Feeling in total despair
On the phone I go
Crying all the way
Numbers we are told to ring
To try and ease our fear
O what misery it is
When it falls on deaf ears
I am depressed, I am depressed
And in a bad way
Phone the Mental Health team
But they are all away
Take your pills, take your pills
That's what they would say
If you don't feel better
Increase them more each day
A few days' passes by
And I try hard not to cry
And much to my surprise
The Psychiatrist was by my side
She said that all was well
And dismissed it was a living hell
And that is how the system goes
As far as I can tell





This reverse transcription reveals all.
 The real possibilities of the matter in mind:
 If there's any grass at all on the other side
 The competition is so intense and wall to wall,
 My presence is not registered at all. My options are not even also rans.
 Why not then stay.
 The flood of displaced aspirations

Record the broken nerves reporting.
 How the absorbent sponge of memory is wrong.
 In the grip of these gentle hands
 Cradle a rabbit's wracked and fractured spine.
 Suspend the ribs and try to lift.
 From terminal incomprehension
 The weight of a breath of life,
 That crushes in and hits against
 The tender spots in hearts
 Pulsing with the conviction
 Infinity is glimpsed in this utopia.
 Before the Interruption of death.

By Murray

You might think that you don't matter in this world, but because of you, someone has a favorite mug to drink their tea out of that you bought them. Someone hears a song on the radio and it reminds them of you.
 Someone has read a book you recommended to them and gotten lost in its pages. Someone's remembered a joke you told them and smiled to themselves on the bus.
 Never think you don't have an impact. Your fingerprints can't be wiped away from the little marks of kindness that you've left behind.

Believe in you by Paul Hammerton

In these dark times we're living in, when the world is crashing down on you, its maybe time to change your thinking, maybe look at life from a different view.

And it all feels so overwhelming, your head dizzy from so much stuff, but you're not on your own, people are there, if you look hard enough.

Its not always the big things in life, that can bring you down, sometimes the smallest problems, can make you wear a frown.

It all seems so much, much more than you can bear, it all seems so hopeless, no help from anywhere.

but you've built walls around you, to keep any danger at bay, but those solid walls you've constructed, also keeps all help away.

People are there to help you through, if you'll only let them in, break those walls that keep them out, escape through the darkness and win

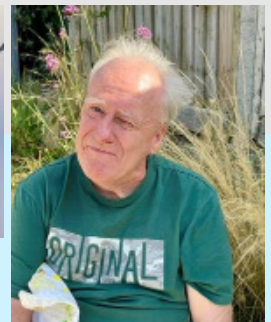
You feel so very useless, of that you're in no doubt, but you have so much going for you, if you'd only let it out.

You stand outside a door, a dark dread in your heart, but just beyond that door, is your brand new start.

Step through that door with confidence, even as your heart begins to heave, only you can change your thinking, you just have to believe.

Money and power can help you, but they're not the greatest wealth, the most important thing you need, is to

..... **believe in yourself!!!**



World Mental Health Day



We are all here we are to celebrate
World Mental Health Day 10/10/23

Where everything gets better
Hooray, Hooray, Hooray
The great and good will eulogise
With a serious and grave fare
How we must help so many people
And bring them into our care
And then the day is over
You go on with your lives
But what about us
Who have to live with it 365
While we support your gesture
Its true we really do
There is so much more needed
Systems need making anew
So don't blame us we're Broken
Completely broken down
We just need some help
Don't treat us like a clown
We need a fresh start
Not just one little day
Because we are here forever
We are not going away
Damian 2023

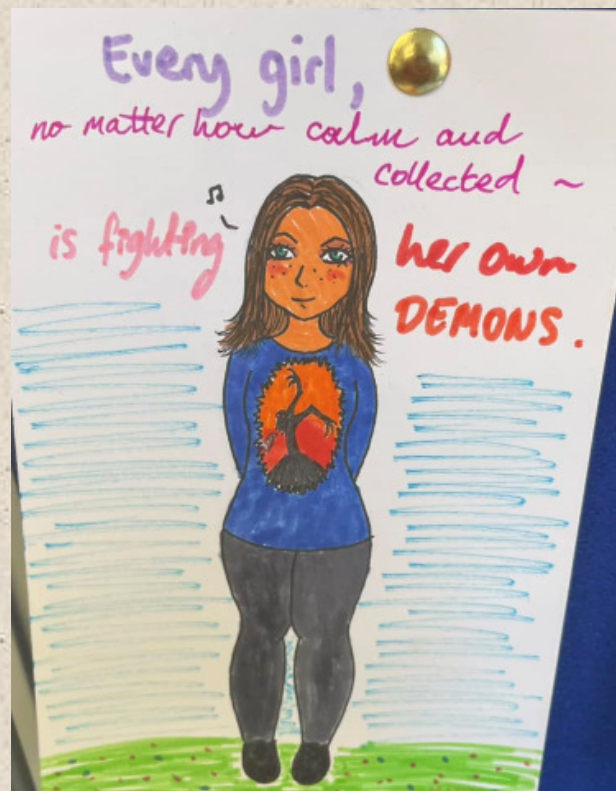


Teamwork makes the Dream work

The Mermaid

You sold my soul as the dark waves.
Tossed the oyster shells onto the shore.
Seaweed tangled and black pulls at
My feet and sucks me under the inky
sea.
I drowned, but you didn't notice.
Still, the mermaid sings her spellbinding
song.
Calling me to swim with sea horse at
play.
Calling me to dive deep into the shady
depths of marooned wrecks.
Still, the mermaid sings her magical
song.
Calling me to stay in wide, soft foam and
never surface.

Ann Shephard



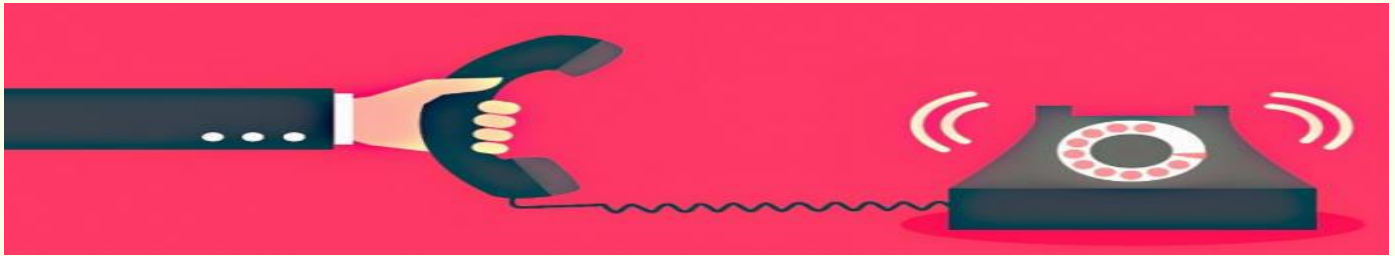
PATTERNS OF THE PAST

Let the light in, just a little bit
There's a chink in the curtain.
Try and open it up, just a little bit.
Been closed for so long – too long.
The blackout that shut out the world.
And kept you safe – for so long.
Is now a prison.
No longer the safe place.
Or the sanctuary – that it was once.
The walls close in and suffocate.
Stealing your breath – so your heart
aches.
And your head inflates.
With the dark thoughts as your company.
In the blackness of the tomb.
In your curtained room.
Time to let some light in, just a little bit.
And start with the chink in the curtain.
To repair the crack in your amour.

By K

The Tick by Ann

Six rounds of CBT.
Tick the box, you're recovered you see.
Six hours of chit and chat,
no time for anything nasty or black.
Just tick the box, you're recovered you
see.
A drug therapy fest, you live in a haze.
You can't find the box,
But they, tick it anyway.
Mindfulness that's the key.
To tick the box, you're recovered you
see.
Well-being on-line will hit the mark.
Tick the box, you're recovered at last.
But, what if I'm not, I try to say.
No. Tick the box, we need it today.
But my hallucinations are worse, I
bravely say.
No. Tick the box and put them away.
My pen spews black blood across the
page.
My hand trembles white.
Tick the box. Tick the box. Tick the box.
And sign my real life away.



OUT OF HOURS HELPLINES: MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS HELPLINE: Tel: 0800 107 0160
Available: 24/7. 365 days a year Email: info@mhmm.org.uk Call from mobiles free on 0300
330 5486 FOR URGENT HELP WHEN GP SURGERY IS CLOSED ring 111 for physical and men-
tal health issues.

KCC SOCIAL SERVICES OUT OF HOURS SERVICE Tel: 03000 419191 for urgent help out of
hours.

THE SAMARITANS: Tel: 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org Free, One to one, 24/7 listen-
ing service. A safe place for you to talk anytime – about whatever’s getting to you.

KENT DEMENTIA HELPLINE Freephone: 0800 500 3014 Available 24/7 Email: [helpline@alz-
dem.org](mailto:helpline@alz-
dem.org)

COMBAT STRESS HELPLINE 24/7 365 days a year Tel: 0800 138 1619 Open to veterans or
their family Tel: 0800 323 4444

For serving personnel and their families or text on 07537 404719 or email:
helpline@combatstress.org.uk Standard charge

KMPT Crisis Contact Centre Telephone number: **0800 783 9111**

Thanet Safe Haven (Closed 25-26 Dec) phone: **07850
655877** email: thanet.mhm@nhs.net

Canterbury Safe Haven phone: **07876 476 703**

MHM Helpline phone: **0800 182 2418**

Mental Health Matters Helpline – Kent and Medway phone: **0800 107
0160**

SHOUT Text KEYWORKER to **85258**

**If you require urgent safety advice, please contact
your local GP, go to A&E or call 111/999.**



Help is at hand!

Whilst I might prefer sunny days & light spring mornings leading to summer we are entering our phase of autumn, it'll also pass into winter.

It reminds me that all this will change again. Like moods, it's important to learn how to cope during darker days, learn what we need in each season & look after ourselves knowing the spring will return!

If you are in emotional distress Life can get tough sometimes, but talking can help. The Release the Pressure team in Kent is available 24/7. They provide urgent support with trained counsellors who will listen, no matter what you are going through. You can text the word KENT to 85258 or call 0800 107 0160

You can also webchat with Mental Health Matters, an independent charity, who are available 24/7.

<https://eastkentmind.org.uk/the-ramsgate-crisis-cafe/>



The Ramsgate Crisis Café Service will be available by telephone over the Christmas and New Year weekends.

Christmas

Friday 24th December 6pm-9.30pm
Saturday 25th December 6pm- 9.30pm
Sunday 26th December 6pm -9.30pm

New Year

Friday 31st December 6pm - 9.30pm
Saturday 1st January 6pm-9.30pm

Please call 01843 260 643

Please note there will not be a face to face service on the above dates

Normal face to face service

34 King Street, Ramsgate CT11
BNT will resume on Sunday 2nd January 6pm-9.30pm

Half hour sessions available, no appointment necessary.

ADVOCACY



Sometimes you may feel you are not being listened to by health and social care workers, You may feel unable to communicate or express yourself in order to get your own view point across,

An advocate is someone who will support you to make sure that your views and rights are respected, that you are treated fairly, your concerns are taken into account and you have real control over the big decisions in your life, They can help you speak up at meetings, deal with difficult issues and help understand important decisions that are being made, They are professionally trained, fair and impartial, and

the service is completely confidential and independent of the local authority,

Some advocacy services you can get for yourself, without any help from us, by contacting our local advocacy providers direct, Other advocacy will only be given to you if we agree that you are eligible for it

If you're unsure about your right to have an advocate, speak to your case worker or one of our local advocacy providers,

Kent Advocacy, led by The Advocacy People, provides advocacy in Kent To find out more information and make a referral visit the

[Kent Advocacy website,](https://sites.google.com/prod/sep.org.uk/kent-advocacy/)

<https://sites.google.com/prod/sep.org.uk/kent-advocacy/>

For health complaints regarding advocacy, you can call The Advocacy People [0330 440 9000](tel:03304409000) or email info@theadvocacypeople.org.uk



Fancy getting involved? Here's a peek at some of our groups

What is FUN FRIDAY?

Merry Christmas from Me!

WHO AM I?

My name is Kelly, I volunteer at SpeakUpCIC & have done for a few years now. I am sure many of you know me from running the Online Zoom Group "FUN FRIDAY" or as the moderator on Night Owls. Or maybe you know me as the Point of Contact for the Volunteers Team. I'm passionate about bringing a bit of joy into peoples lives by using my skill set. This was how "Fun Friday" zoom was born.

SO WHAT IS FUN FRIDAY?

It's a very interactive group, packed full of different content. Each week we have a minimum of 90 minutes of Topical Chat, Facts, Jokes, Games & Puzzles. You've most likely seen my slides online on the Speakup Facebook Page or included in publications. All my zooms are very visual, giving everyone a chance to relax into the session, be entertained or participate as much or as little as feels right for them.

Really, Fun Friday does what it says on the tin. Even if you're feeling a bit low or lonely at the beginning of the session, by the time you leave, the aim is everyone is feeling uplifted & setup for a good day ahead.... If you like any of the following things below, then you should give it a try. I would love to see you. Just drop me an email & request to be added to the invitees list.

WHAT'S THE CONTENT IN THE GROUP?

We cover many (if not all) these things each week:- Fun Friday Factoid, Tongue Twisters, Origins of Idioms, Limericks, Did You Know...Collective Nouns, Know Your Nyms, Poems, Visual Comedy & Jokes, Numbers Games, Word Games, Catchphrase, Spot the Difference, Optical Illusions, Riddles, Affirmations/Quotes, Pen & Paper Games, Blast from the Past, Hypothetical/ Reality Chat Questions, Would You Rather...? Game, Brain Teasers & always a Group Sharing/Contributions Opportunity.



[KELLY-VOLUNTEER@SPEAKUPCIC.CO.UK](mailto:kelly-volunteer@speakupcic.co.uk)

Kelly (SpeakUpCIC Volunteer)



SpeakUpCIC's Saturday morning 10am online crossword group brings together word enthusiasts from all walks of life and regardless of skill level. You don't need to be a wordsmith or a crossword pro to join. Everyone is given time to work out the crossword answers. You don't need to be "good" at word games, and can drop into the session anytime as it's quite easy

to catch up. The group offers a safe haven for all, whether you're a novice or a seasoned wordsmith. With just a pen, paper, and a willingness to embark on a mental journey, we gather to tackle the challenge of crosswords, often requiring us to think beyond the obvious and challenge our cognitive faculties. The added joy is from the shared camaraderie of fellow crossword enthusiasts. Each clue is like a puzzle waiting to be unraveled, and the satisfaction that comes from finding the right solution is immensely gratifying. So, if you have an hour to spare on Saturday mornings, why not immerse yourself in the joy of wordplay? Join us and discover the pleasure of unraveling crosswords, forging connections, and expanding your horizons. Contact Maggie at maggie@speakupcic.org, and be a part of this delightful journey through the world of words.



The Meet Up - Speak Up (formally the Users Forum) takes place on Tuesdays at the Media Centre in Margate, it is now a drop-in session between 10.30am - 1pm.

The group was changed to provide more social environment where people can chat and be engaged in a variety of activities. A speaker is invited in once a month and Martin from EK360 comes in on the last Tuesday of the month to chat with anyone who has questions and to experience how we support each other in a peer support group.

The activities are member led, which means as a group we pick what we'd like to do each week. Members are also encouraged to take the lead and show the group



new skills. So far we've learnt the sign language alphabet, made jewelry and had art lessons. We enjoy quizzes and gaming as well as just chatting over tea and biscuits.

I am always there for anyone to have a chat with and take feedback for any services you've used. Having a place to go and be social is so important to keeping your mental health balanced, for some of us going out can be a very anxious time and the aim of this group is to provide a safe and regular space. We welcome all members and it would be lovely to see more and for members to show the groups their interests, whether that's teaching us a new skill or telling us about a favorite topic. Look forward to seeing you **Georgina**

THANET MUSIC APPRECIATION GROUP

Thanet members who enjoy socialising and music continue to meet on Thursday afternoons at the T.D.S Social Club in Cliftonville, Margate. This group – which has been running for nearly 8 years - provides the opportunity for people to meet up for a good natter while listening to a range of different CDs that help lift the mood and, for those who enjoy the opportunity to dance, to get up and boogie! Steve keeps everyone topped up with tea, coffee and biscuits and does a fabulous job of spinning the discs and ensuring much fun is had by everyone! If anyone would like to join us, please



A closed Facebook Group (covering East Kent) for people who find it difficult to sleep through the night wishing to post in a safe place or chat with others who are awake. Night owls is looked after by our volunteer Kelly, who wishes us Good Night and Good Morning



I am a member of Talk and Share, which is on Wednesday mornings from 10–11am. It's a mixture of sharing around a set theme, asking and answering quiz questions, talking about what took place on this date in history, and playing a word game or two. Carolyn is a kindly presenter, who has many interesting things to share, and she keeps things positive. I look forward to this



MENTAL HEALTH LISTENING EVENT

SpeakUpCIC held a Listening Event on Thursday 23 November which was very well attended by members. The event was an informal way to capture views about mental health services in Thanet by providing the opportunity for participants to share honest feedback based on their personal experiences. Our friends from C2 (Connecting Communities) joined us and helped to facilitate. Everyone who attended, including three professionals, were invited to share their comments anonymously on post-it notes under the headings which included: "What's Working", "What's not working" and "What needs to improve".

Following this there was a discussion about the current issues relating to lack of preventative support and the inadequacies of the Community Mental Health Teams. The event concluded with a sing along and dance to some of the music group favourites.

Two days prior to the event, SpeakUpCIC were alerted to the change regarding the Thanet Safe Haven relocating to the QEQM. This announcement appeared - without any warning - in the local online press. A large percentage of members have relied on this highly valued service and have voiced their concerns about it being relocated to a hospital. SpeakUpCIC set up a petition which was launched at the event against this decision that has been made without any consultations with the people who use the service and organisations who support the local community.

A report summarising people's views will be forwarded to everyone who participated and will be sent to decision makers and commissioners so that they will have an honest and clearer picture of what is and isn't working. SpeakUpCIC will be planning further Listening Events throughout 2024 so watch this space!

Clive Bowers (from C2) who helped to facilitate sent this message following the event. "Just wanted to say a massive thank you to you both and all of the members for inviting us to Margate, it was a truly inspirational visit and has spurred me on yet again. The energy, passion and thinking in the room was brilliant, as always this was all down to the years of dedication, experience and trust that you have built up. I am convinced that there is enough energy and passion within the members to form a movement that will be impossible to ignore. I am less sure how we are going to do that (I have some ideas) but am convinced (with your permission) that we could work together and become a genuine force for transformation that is designed by and led from within Speak Up and the membership. Anyway I am probably getting ahead of myself, as my Mum often says 'when I get an idea in my head I go so fast, one day I will meet myself coming back' she also drummed in to me to 'never let anybody tell me something can't be done. To be continued...'





On Tuesday, 7th November, the **Meet Up** group was attended by Adam Litchfield from EKH Trust Patient Voice Team. The meeting was to get opinions from users on improvements that could be made when people with mental health issues are accessing services for not only their mental health but for physical conditions too.

In a previous meeting, the group had broached the idea of a kind of passport which listed conditions, medications, and how medical staff can best help you. Various things were discussed, such as a better understanding of anxiety and how it affects us, lack of compassion and privacy when at receptions, advocacy, and more volunteer/ support with appointments.



It was a good brainstorming session with all members giving valuable insight into how difficult it can be at times, especially when you're judged by your mental health first.

Adam and Mandy Mitchell have arranged to make regular 4-6 weekly visits to update on things that are happening and to get input from our members. So please keep a look out for future dates to attend and get your voice heard. If you have any feedback on the hospital service, we will be setting up appointment for you to do that

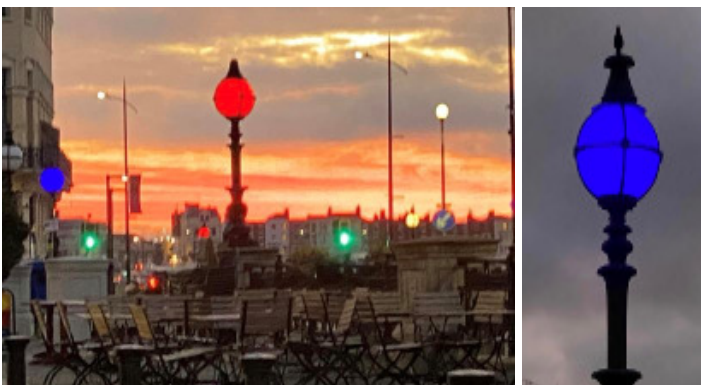


Another first achieved!
A big well Done to Nicky for Walking home alone from SpeakUpCIC with *Dick the stick* IN THE DARK! It's actually easier to see landmarks and cars

with the lights. The lights look amazing Had couple bumps into bins, benches and overhanging bushes but no humans were harmed in the process (wellnbody shouted if Dick hit their ankles) That "anxiety ogre" can do one! I'm stronger than you! I will keep fighting you!

Proud of myself tonight so stopped off local pizza for treat and now home warm cuppa and snuggle blanket. Roll on bedtime.

We are delighted to have received a Mayor's Community Award from the Mayor of Margate under the Health and Wellbeing Category in recognition of the support SpeakUpCIC provides within the community. Councilor Rob Yates was elected as the Margate Mayor in May and has been exceptionally supportive and appreciative of the work SpeakUpCIC does. There hasn't been a Mayor's Community Award for 10 years so SpeakUpCIC feel honoured to have been elected to receive this recognition.



A SHOUT OUT TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE AN INTEREST IN GARDENING!

WE NEED YOU!

People who attend groups at the Margate Media Centre will know that we have a lovely little roof-top garden area – called the ‘SpeakUpCIC Safe Haven Garden’ - which was created by members several years ago. It provides a place where members can enjoy peace and tranquility in an outdoor space where they feel safe and the opportunity for those who enjoy gardening to tend to the plants. Nicky H has been working tirelessly to keep the area maintained and is seeking some much - needed help. So... If you have an interest and some time on your hands, Nicky would really appreciate your support.

If you are interested, please contact Maggie or Kay

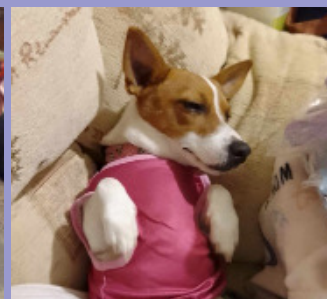
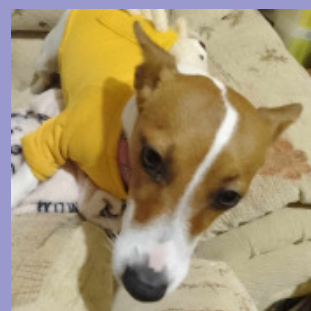
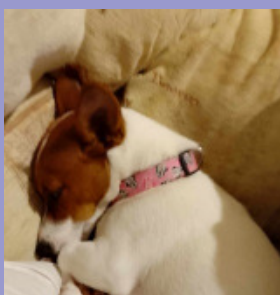


My Dog Lula

By Mary Jarrett

I became a mum to Lula on the 27th of August. I put an item on Facebook about losing Winston & my great niece saw it. She told me that her sister had a Jack Russell to re-home. She asked me if I wanted her. I said yes please & I said yes please. All three sisters brought her over at 4.45 pm. She was almost 7 months. I was really excited when I got her. She was & still is very adorable. I love her so much. She makes me laugh when she does silly things. She found a cola bottle sweet that I must have dropped & she was tossing it about on the bed. It was so funny. She loves laying next to me on the sofa or on the back of the sofa. In bed she gets under my pillows. She loves her chicken bones that I get her from home bargains. She gets spoilt with attention when we go in there. She likes all the staff, but her favourite is Andrea. She loves going down the seafront even

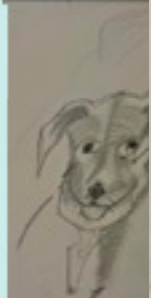
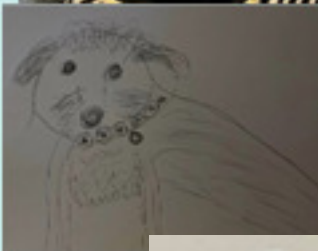
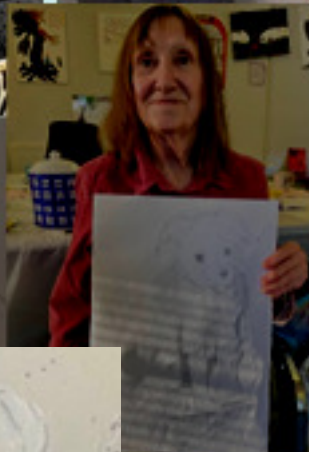
though she barks at all the dogs and some people. She knows who she likes & who she doesn't like. She has got lots of outfits that I have bought her on wish. Some in home bargains.



Daisy was very proud to be chosen to be a life model at Mirandas art group,. at the end of the summer. She posed for 2 hours with a couple of breaks, as you can see from the drawing below there was some wonderful pieces of art done as you can see below, Daisy was very grateful for the opportunity to be a model in Miranda's art group

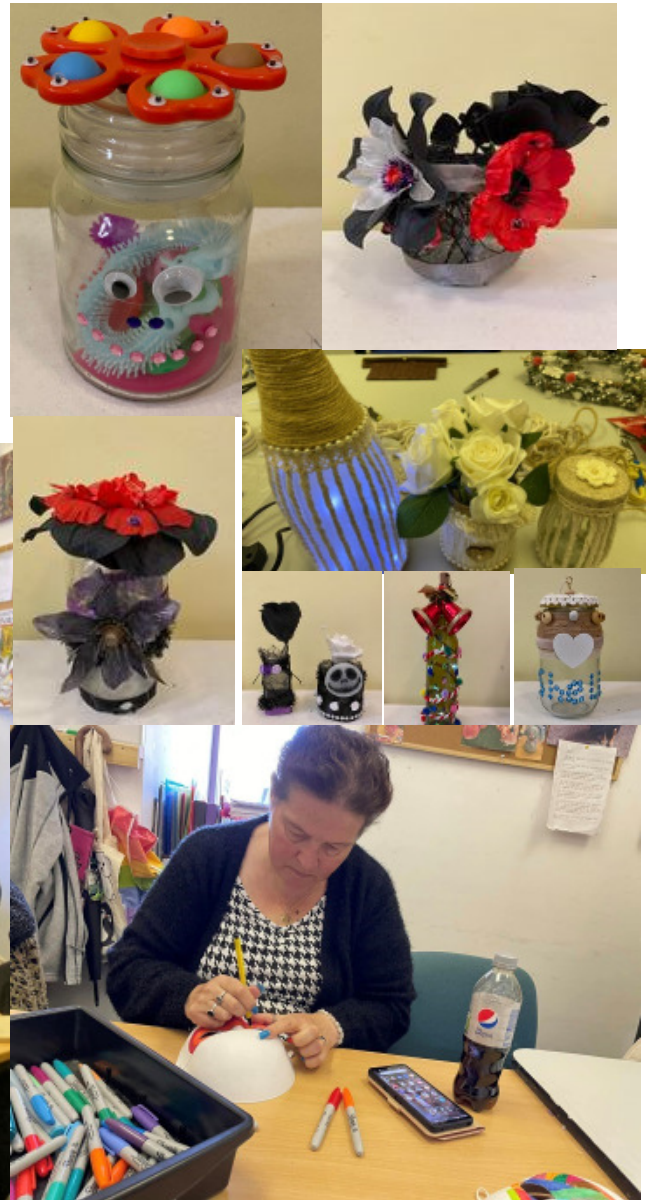
IN MEMORY OF SUGAR

A lovely lady,
 But sadly gone.
 But never forgotten,
 Her memory lives on.
 Ruling the kitchen,
 Like a real martinet.
 Scaring off volunteers,
 And some of you I bet!
 Gone but not forgotten.
 Generous with her time.
 Her memory lives on.
 Commemorated in rhyme.
 Loved by everybody,
 Everyone she spoke to.
 Grooving at Music Group,
 Rocking away with you.
 So, here's my little tribute,
 To a lady sadly gone.



FRIDAY ART & CRAFT

At Friday group recently we have been using bottles and jars to decorate, we used string, beads, and lights. We use the time to talk about our week and any feelings we have. Friday group is a safe place to socialise. It's a group we can come to make arts and crafts, have a laugh and escape from our day-to-day stresses of life. By Suzy and Tammy



SPEAKUP, MEET UP

This group is run by Georgina (a volunteer member) and it is an in-person group that covers different topics and activities which are chosen by the members. My first session was a gentle introduction where we chose pictures to colour that meant something to us on the 31st October, whether we are pagan or just enjoy the spin off activities. I find colouring, whether physically or using apps on my mobile, to be a calming therapeutic distraction to my on-going problems. I can temporarily, at least, escape into the world of my picture and stop myself scratching my inflamed eczema by keeping my hands busy. During the session I started to come out my shell and join in the group discussions. We paid £1 to cover the price of our hot drink, biscuits and resources used and as this was a special occasion, Georgina also brought a box of chocolates for all the share, which were welcomed by us all. At the end of the session members offered different ideas as to what we could try next and we were all asked to bring our ideas and games etc so we could choose **what we** wanted our next session to cover. I had enjoyed my first session, and I will continue **to come** along to future sessions. I don't get out and mix socially so this is an excellent venture for me and others. I wholeheartedly recommend it to all our members.

By Amanda



Capturing the Voice of the Mental Health Service User

SpeakUpCIC is a delivery partner for the EK360 Service User Voice project and provides this service for people living within Thanet and Ashford. We want to hear stories and feedback—whether good or bad - about the experiences people have had relating to any support regarding their mental health needs. This can be Secondary or Primary services – such as the Community Mental Health Teams - GP surgeries, and other mental health support organisations within the community.

All feedback is collected by staff and volunteers and then forwarded to EK360 so it can be shared with authorities, commissioners, and as necessary, mental health support organisations. All feedback is valuable because it plays an important role in helping to improve services and inform the decision makers where money should be spent. By

identifying where the gaps are and what does and doesn't work, sharing your voice can help to shape services. So, you see, **YOUR VOICE MATTERS!**



If you or anybody you know would like to share feedback, please contact us.

Everything is collected anonymously and in confidence unless you wish for EK360 to support you directly to get individual issues addressed. We can also arrange for people to meet with an EK360 representative for a 1-2-1 if required in either Thanet or Ashford.

What's happening at the Thanet and Ashford Forums



*As the Lived Experience Lead for the Community Mental Health Transformation, Mental Health Together, **Martyn Cheesman** plays a pivotal role in bridging the gap between service users and the new interventions that are being implemented within the Community Mental Health Teams. Martyn's goal is to ensure that the voices and perspectives of people with lived experience of mental health issues are heard and incorporated into the Transformation process. To achieve this, Martyn plans to visit the local forums in Ashford and Margate to engage with service users about their ongoing experiences and feedback, as well as to provide updates on the progress of the Transformation and how the changes will affect service users.*

Mental Health Together is a new service that aims to provide better support for people in Kent and Medway who are experiencing mental health challenges. The service is a collaboration between the NHS, local authorities, voluntary and community organisations, and people with lived experience of mental health issues. The service offers a range of options, to help people access the right support at the right time. Mental Health Together is based on the principles of co-production, recovery, and social inclusion, and strives to empower people to take control of their own mental health and wellbeing.



During this year we have very sadly lost some members who shall be fondly remembered by all of those who knew and regularly engaged with them via SpeakUpCIC groups and activities.

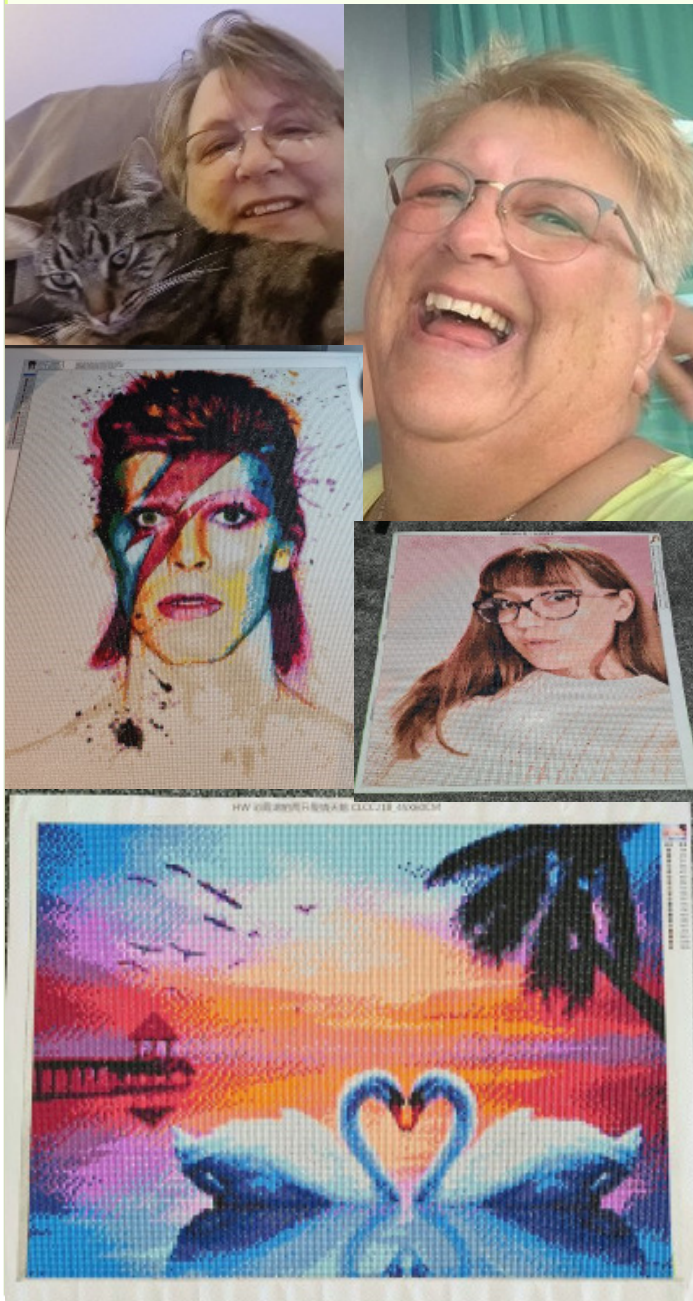
Sue Shilling had been a SpeakUpCIC member for several years and became a good friend to many. Her kind heart shone and touched everyone she engaged with, especially those who were struggling. Sue had a natural ability to instinctively know when somebody needed someone to talk to and would offer a helping hand at every opportunity. Sue participated in many groups and was always ready to speak up at forums to inform providers what people need in the way of support and was very passionate about sharing her views to benefit others.

Sugar (June) Reed was with SpeakUpCIC virtually right from when the organisation began by a chance meeting with Maggie while trying to find the Women's Institute so she could do some volunteering. Thankfully, for us, Sugar decided SpeakUpCIC was the better option, and she soon became a much-valued volunteer, pouring the teas and coffees at group meetings, providing buttered buns, and keeping everyone in line! Sugar had many interests including art and music and had a beautiful singing voice. Sugar loved dancing at the Music Appreciation Group and got everyone up to dance to her favorite song – "Firestarter" by The Prodigy.



Elaine Hill participated in PERDI groups and forums and was known for providing a much-valued listening ear and advice, based on her own personal experiences, which was a great support to other members. Elaine's bawdy sense of humour brightened up many a group session and helped to lift people's spirits on many occasions. Elaine was also a huge inspiration when it came to crafting and her diamond art was phenomenal; some of her beautiful pieces below and as Elaine always said "I love Diamond art it takes me to a happy place",

Sally Blem enjoyed participating in several online groups including the Crossword group, service user forums and Women's Group zooms. Sally shared amazing stories about her travels and adventures abroad and was always recommending interesting films and programmers' with a feel-good factor which members found helpful. Sally had many varied interests and enjoyed participating in group discussions. Her gentle sense of humour and love of animals and nature always shone through and resonated with those she engaged with.





YOUR VOICE YOUR STORY

Written by Caroline from Peterborough, I do creative writing, history and yoga to help my mental health.

It was always the image of the last time I saw him, that stayed with me, like a old fashioned camera that startles you with its flash, The kettle was whistling to the sound of the breeze outside the open window, Flowery mats, that we had got for our wedding anniversary sat cheerily on the oak dining room table, next to the bright yellow painted kitchen. I walked in and he was standing there in his black rimmed glasses and mug with rabbits it on it, that one of our adult children brought us for Christmas. Roger liked shooting, and it seemed a paradoxical present to give, rabbits running free in the woods, looking so peaceful and a picture in my mind of him shooting them, evaporated into the air. He was a taciturn but kind man, always staying calm and as he got angry his voice would lower gently rather than shout, though it felt like a nick on a cardboard box, a rock in a smooth, steady river, He said he was going for a walk, and was wearing his jeans and knitted jersey, I rushed to kiss him goodbye like I always did, he was going to take the little dog Yappie, the jack Russell with him. I never wondered where he went or what he did, he was most probably think of the farm and what his next project would be. The dog would wander by his side with head held high in anticipation of the long walk and the chasing of all the birds, I greeted my daughter at the door, who was holding the baby in the sling asleep, who popped round for a cup of coffee. We had a long chat about how to deal with colic, what she was babbling, and how often she slept, when to wean her. I felt so secure sitting talking to my daughter of days to come and I felt like I had a warm blanket round me. I had left my parents at 18, who remained happily married for 60 years, but died at a good old age, and they were ready to go. I had married Roger at a 22 and it was a steady marriage, our love was like the gentle ripples of water. That day, I couldn't imagine anything different, Our daughter leaving was hazy, I'm sure she left with a huge smile, whisking the baby off, who was beginning to

waken. I felt a sense of serenity, as the leaves gently leaped on the ground. The television, which was a low murmur in the background, sounded the news, and I began to feel a sense of unease, where was he, surely he would be back by now. I know he likes long walks but this was longer than normal. I started to tidy away the flowery mats and polish the dining room table. After hours, I called the police, 'he is probably with another woman' they said callously, I knew he wouldn't be. Shooting and the woods were his obsession and passion. He was never late back, he was so reliable, like a clock ticking. I hurried in panic and felt complete loss and sense of dread, I couldn't find him. I paced many hours and eventually the police turned up, 'it's a mystery' they said, 'I'm so sorry, probably another woman' they repeated, I knew it wasn't, I reiterated. .Eventually after days, I burst in to tears. 'How dare do this to me. How dare he vanish'. 'Is he dead?' I sat on the floor and wept, I didn't want to clean and polish another thing. Gradually as time went on the sun shone a bit brighter and the rain, reminded me of the children splashing in puddles. To this day I don't know where he is but now ii only see him in my dreams, when I see him again. Then I wake and he is not there.' I hate him, I miss him, yet was who I loved just a fantasy.' My children are busy and I am alone, I started using the rabbit mug again and put the lonely place mats in order, sometimes I polish so much there are sores on my hand, the blood reminds me I'm alive. Often I see him . Just missing him every time, I shout out but his shadow escapes me, When, I go to the market, I see his glasses or grey hair and think it is him. I ring up my daughters to see if they are still there or are they are a mirage too. We did find the dog and she whimpers at my side, running circles sometimes, chasing the unseen. Sometimes I wander to woods and search, thinking I will find his body, maybe a heart attack or even murder or accident. But to no avail. At least he wouldn't of chosen to. Leave me. It is the not knowing that does it. In a small cafe in Rome, sits a man called Roger drinking a latte, reading the papers. By himself, just him. Living by himself in a small apartment, watching everything go by.

A PERDI member's experience

I greatly appreciate the valuable support of the PERDI group sessions. At first, I attended the online zoom group as I care for my 95-year-old mother, and I am doing my best to avoid her catching flu or Covid.

This group had a great feeling of camaraderie. Kay is wonderful at encouraging people to talk about big and little issues, she always manages to draw it out of us.

Since the summer I have been attending an in-person group as the levels of Covid have dropped and the room (where the group meets) is big and airy, so I feel safe that I am not carrying Covid back to my mother.

The first week I started I was greeted by a member with a warm congratulatory hug as I had at last managed to risk the in-person sessions. I felt very welcomed and instantly included.

Kay, accompanied by joint facilitator Sara, continued to put us all at ease and this group now feels like a second family to me. We all help each other and support each other from a basis of comparable shared experiences and our heightened feeling of empathy toward each other makes us aware of protecting each other whenever a member is feeling particularly vulnerable and lightening the mood within the group when necessary.

I have also benefitted from being given extra support from another organisation while going through a particularly difficult time via Kay referring me.

Having been a member for several years, I know and trust that Maggie and her team will do whatever they can to get us the additional help we need.

Amanda. S



(Personality Disorder Peer Support Service) an Update .

Throughout 2023 SpeakUpCIC have continued to provide this service as part of the Live Well Kent and Medway partnership. We run peer support groups for people diagnosed with a Personality Disorder (now known as CED – Complex Emotional Difficulties) living within Thanet, Dover and Deal.

The groups provide the opportunity for people to engage with others in a safe space so that they can support each other by sharing experiences and coping techniques etc.

THANK
YOU

A big thank you to Steve for Making teas and coffee and being our DJ at the music group every Thursday



Thank You



for your Kindness

SpeakUpCIC are exceptionally grateful for all the support from our volunteers and helpers. Without this help we couldn't provide the range of groups and activities that we do. Members feedback that they really appreciate and benefit from the opportunity to meet and connect with others - whether via participating in an online group or attending an in-person group or a ctivity - our volunteers and helpers play a major role in helping others and keeping things running as smoothly and effectively as they do!

During this year Nicky Harwood – who has been a SpeakUpCIC helper for many years – has worked exceptionally hard to develop and maintain the Art, Craft & Gardening Group. Despite Nicky's health difficulties, she has supported and encouraged numerous Thanet members to learn and explore different crafting techniques via projects which has resulted in members producing some amazing pieces of art which have been exhibited at events. Nicky has also maintained the SpeakUpCIC garden area and the alley behind the building to additionally benefit the local community. A very special thank you therefore goes to Nicky for all her much-valued support over the years.



Mayor of Margate, Cllr. Rob Yates, for his ongoing support towards SpeakUp-CIC, Rob opened two events for us Mental Health Awareness Week which takes place in May and World Mental Health day on 10th October.

Rob kindly judged the postcard competition for us and Janet Reynolds came first along with Margate Pride for letting us participate in their annual parade.

We thank Roger Newman and the members of the Thanet LGBTQ 50+ Group for their generous donation towards our work A big thank you to [Roger Newman](#) for the very kind donation of £100 for the LGBT group. A discussion with the group to see how we should spend this at the next gathering.

Peter Blem, for his very generous donation of £2000, in memory of **Sally Blem**

Peter arranged a minibus to take staff, member, friends to attend a service to Guildford, Surrey commemorate Sally's life and where Sally is laid to rest.

Kelly M for her role in Night Owls, wishing folks a happy Good Night & an equally cheery Good Morning, this in addition to her weekly Fun Friday online group and for the support she offers to the volunteers, even though one herself!

Pre-Christmas Resolutions to help you through the Festive Season

Be realistic about what can be achieved and afforded. Don't aim for perfection and be disappointed.

Share the work out. Don't take on every responsibility, such as shopping, cooking and coordinating engagements just because you always do. Ask someone else to help you out – people are often grateful to be asked.

Plan in advance. List making is an age old tactic, but it really works, and don't leave everything until the last minute.

Make sure you get plenty of fresh air and exercise. Both are scientifically proven to improve mental health and wellbeing.

Don't drink to excess. Alcohol can make you act in a way you might regret, and it can also have a depressive affect.

Try not to spend too much money. Gifts are not the most important part of Christmas and you may be storing up problems for the future if you get yourself into debt.

Help other people. Helping and giving to others will benefit the recipient of the help as well as yourself.

Take a break. If the family is getting too much, take a break, a spot of meditation or a walk in fresh air will help. Try to not let tensions mount up.

Be sure to check up on family and friends – particularly the elderly and vulnerable.

Loneliness can be a particular issue over Christmas, so try and make sure no one spends the whole time without visitors or company.

Get enough sleep. A good sleep pattern can help you maintain good mental health and **make you feel more alert and able to cope better with stress.**



Have you got anything to day about hospital services in Thanet and Ashford



The Patient Voice and Involvement Team works across all of the EKHUFT hospital sites – including QEQM in Margate, Kent and Canterbury Hospital and William Harvey in Ashford. We listen to patient

feedback, their suggestions and ideas and then work with them and our colleagues in the hospitals to improve things for everyone.

Adam, the Lead for the team, used to work in

the Local Mental Health Network and as a Lived Experience Lead and we have a clear focus on mental health so we asked Maggie to share our details with you.

At the moment we are really interested in people's experiences going to the ED (A&E) but if you want to give us any feedback about anything to do with the hospitals, good or bad, we are here to listen. We can arrange a video call, a call on the phone or meet you for a coffee and can work around your needs in terms of the time of day and also have some sessions at Speak Up to chat with people too. Anything you tell us will be treated anonymously too, if you want it to be. We want to give everyone a voice as we work to change things for the better and if you would like to be involved, please **email us** on ekhuff.patientvoice@nhs.net or give us a ring on 01227868605.





LIGHTBULB MOMENTS...



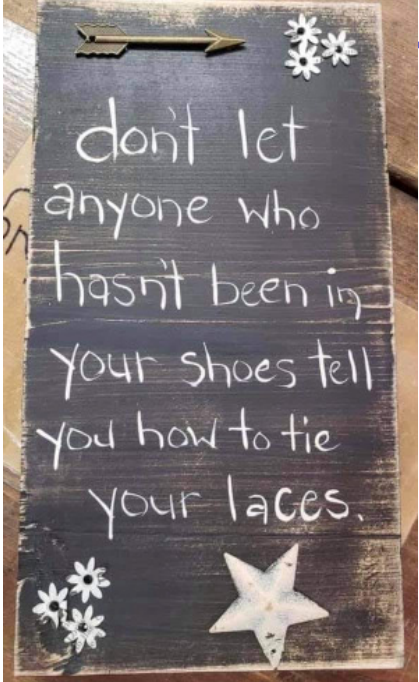
Do you have any good tips for maintaining a healthy mind and body? Or maybe some good tips on coping? Perhaps you've got a good mood food recipe you'd like to share? An amazing book? Or there's one person or thing you couldn't live without that's made all the difference?

I am so proud of this I have never tried something like this before.
I was aiming for the person who I wanted to be Someone at peace with herself beautiful and confident pain free and able to live with her grief and loneliness and self doubt
I'm getting there , Marissa



My peace is a tree in Dane Park

Gives me serenity and makes me feel alive and grateful

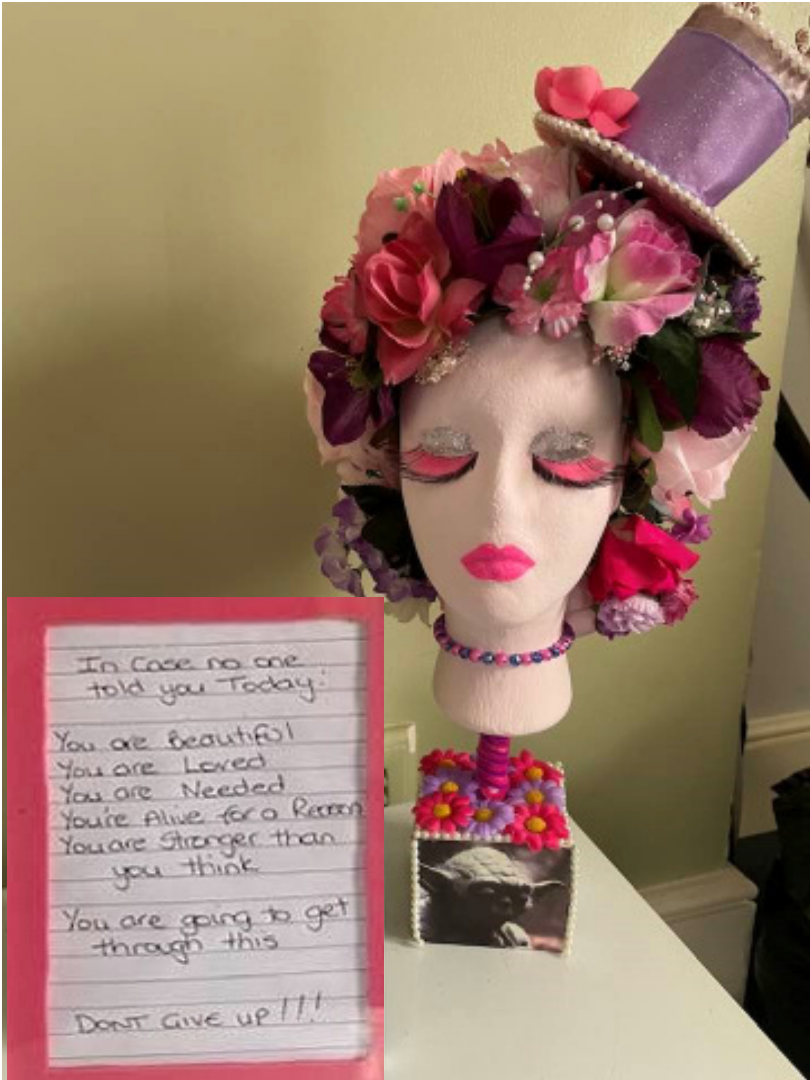


don't let anyone who hasn't been in your shoes tell you how to tie your laces.

Tidying up after myself!

Such a small thing that may bring a smile to most people. From railing against this most of my adult life I had a sudden revelation of 'household chores' as my own form of self-care. Tidying up after myself without, for once, begrudging the effort and feeling the satisfaction once everything is in its proper place. It really is the little things that make a difference.

Clare



In case no one told you Today:
You are beautiful
You are Loved
You are Needed
You're Alive for a Reason
You are Stronger than you think
You are going to get through this
Don't give up!!!

Thoughts on Happiness

As one of our group members said, 'being happy is a goal for most of us in life, bringing it down to a level of the everyday'. Yet happiness can mean so many different things to people. Might happiness for some be about just not feeling down or not totally debilitated? Or being in the act of total absorption in something else outside of our head for a moment? As individual human beings we experience our good and bad days differently from the next person. And just this fact means that we will achieve some level of calmness, satisfaction and maybe even happiness in myriad different ways too.

Having read the quote 'life is like a soap opera but with the boring bits taken out' perhaps where happiness is concerned might this be when sometimes the humdrum of daily life is shone upon with such noticeable calmness that we experience a lightness of heart? Maybe this too is a facet of happiness.

Whatever it is and however we may define it for ourselves, perhaps it is the journey towards happiness that might help in reaching a feeling of what happiness means to us as an individual human being? And thinking of the journey, we may use various techniques to help us along and that I have found useful over the years. These include techniques adapted from Emotional Freedom Technique, Brain Gym, Mindfulness, HANDLE and Ayurvedic Yoga to name but a few. We used some of these techniques in the Happiness Group that took place during Lockdown and I hope they might intrigue you too and explore further. Perhaps this journey towards an honest understanding of our current selves and moving towards happiness might also be described under the umbrella of 'Lightwork'? Do we even need a description?

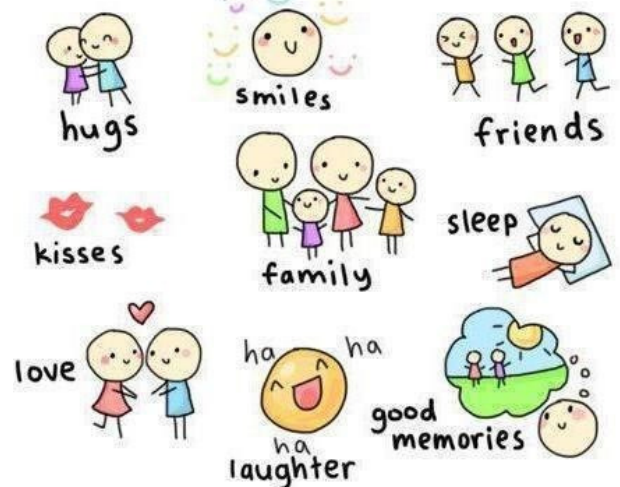
What makes **you** happy? We are all so very different.

But there is comfort in knowing that we are not alone in seeking our own individual versions of happiness.

Wishing everyone warmth, safety and comfort - and happiness! - for this winter season.

Clare, a Volunteer Director of SpeakUp CIC

the best things in life are free.



Everyone who is part of SpeakUpCIC is a valued member - whether you are a service user and/or a volunteer. We pride ourselves on developing our services based on your suggestions and feedback - so please feel free to let us know if you have any ideas. Also, if you're not a member and would like to join, or would like to volunteer, please contact us. Finally, the SpeakUpCIC team and I would like to wish everyone a safe, and joyous festive season and very best wishes for the coming year. [Maggie](#)



How to take the stress out of Christmas



Be realistic about what can be achieved and afforded. Don't aim for perfection and be disappointed.

Share the work out. Don't take on every responsibility, such as shopping, cooking and coordinating engagements just because you always do. Ask someone else to help you out - people are often grateful to be asked.

Plan in advance. List making is an age-old tactic, but it really works, and don't leave everything until the last minute.

Make sure you get plenty of fresh air and exercise. Both are scientifically proven to improve mental health and wellbeing.

Don't drink to excess. Alcohol can make you act in a way you might regret, and it can also have a depressive affect.

Try not to spend too much money. Gifts are not the most important part of Christmas, and you may be storing up problems for the future if you get yourself into debt.

Help other people. Helping and giving to others will benefit the recipient of the help as well as yourself.

Take a break. If the family is getting too much, take a break, a spot of meditation or a walk-in fresh air will help. Try to not let tensions mount up.

Be sure to check up on family and friends - particularly the elderly and vulnerable. Loneliness can be a particular issue over Christmas, so try and make sure no one spends the whole time without visitors or company.

Get enough sleep. A good sleep pattern can help you maintain good mental health and make you feel more alert and able to cope better with stress.

Poem is set in the late fifties or early sixties, I hope it stirs a few memories for you too. A Christmas Long Gone I lie here awake, afraid to sleep, I've prayed 'the Lord' my soul to keep



My stocking is hung on my bed,
Really brother's long sock
instead. But Mum said 'it would
do for now' as she kissed my
cheek, kissed my brow, She
tucked me in on Christmas Eve
when I was young and still

believed. Was that a footstep on the stairs, My brother's snoring really scares, Will he get down that chimney tight, will I get my first glimpse tonight? I lie awake, for ages and ages, Skimming last year's Beano pages, Under my blanket torch alight, Getting sleepy, losing the fight. Woke next morning, screams of glee, Missed him again, How could that be? A bulging sock suspended there, An apple, an orange, maybe a pear. Cadbury's chocolate! what a delight! Three new pennies: shiny and bright, A piggy bank with its own key, It wasn't much but meant all to me. The front room always looked divine, A roaring fire, the smell of pine, Tinsel draped on the real fir tree, Foil wrapped chocolates just for me. Silver baubles' reflections revealing, Paper chains strung on the ceiling, Needles dropping on linoleum swept up daily by tidy Mum. Lone present neath the Christmas tree, wrapped really well, was that for me? This was as good as it could get, I've got a new Meccano set. Ripped off wrap all over the floor, One present each but that was more than we could expect, times were hard, some mates didn't get a Christmas card. So ten young children eat the grub which cooked while Dad was at the pub, He'd already had a drink or two, but then, it was his holiday too. Poor Mum would have to slave away, No fun for her on Christmas day, Times were tough, yes, I agree, but at six years old, it worked for me!

Eric Harvey 08/12/2018



E E N A C Y D N A C M X D
 Q S L L E B E L G N I J S
 V U G C L U C L I P S X T
 B A P T C R O A N H T R O
 X L C O H T R F G U L X C
 L C V A N L A W E S E K K
 S A G P T M T O R W T R I
 Y T J I I I I N B R O Z N
 H N J L F G O S R R E F G
 T A Y G W T N N E F P P S
 M S M U R H S F A T N P C
 Y R E B M E C E D P J C Z
 J S T H G I L E Y V I R E

MERRY CHRISTMAS

GIFTS DECEMBER STOCKINGS DECORATIONS
 FAMILY VACATION CANDY CANE SANTA CLAUS
 LIGHTS MISTLETOE GINGERBREAD JINGLE BELLS
 SNOWFALL

WORDSEARCH PUZZLE



Word Inse!

THE THEME IS
"SANTA CLAUS"
 THE START WORD IS
"CHILDREN"

CONTINUE THE LENGTH OF TINSEL WITHOUT BREAKING IT. EVERY WORD FOLLOWS ON FROM THE PREVIOUS. YOU CAN TWIST & TURN BUT YOU CANNOT GO DIAGONALLY! THE FIRST WORD HAS ALREADY BEEN GIVEN TO GET YOU STARTED! WORK OUT ALL THE WORDS TO SOLVE THE PUZZLE... IT USES EVERY LETTER IN THE GRID.

E R B R D V L J E
 E D E A S E E O L
 I N S K W E D L O
 E O H R O R Y L P
 R P C E S E N T H
 L I H R P G N N T
 D R S S L Y I O R
 N E T L F O T T O
 G I F E I G H G R

Reading an uplifting quote or inspiring message can leave you feeling good... putting those words into action in your life, can be Life Changing... Try it and see!

~Jennifer Gayle~

EMERGENCY CARE WALL

for sadness

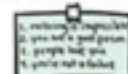


for loneliness



best friend's phone #

for self-doubt



list of reasons why you can

for anger



calming music

for worry



comfort blanket

for other



stress ball

fav. books





O CHRISTMAS TREE! O CHRISTMAS TREE!

1. An acre of Christmas trees provides the daily oxygen requirements for how many people?
a. 8 b. 18 c. 80 d. 180
2. Electric tree lights were first mass produced in 1890. Who came up with the idea?
a. Thomas Edison c. Edward Johnson (Edison's assistant)
b. Mary Stillwell (Edison's wife) d. William Leslie (Edison's son)
3. How long does it take the average Christmas tree to mature?
a. 2-3 years b. 4-6 years c. 7-10 years d. 12-15 years
4. Which US President(s) banned having a Christmas tree in the White House?
a. Barack Obama, because it violates separation of church and state
b. Teddy Roosevelt, for environmental reasons
c. James Garfield, because he was allergic to pine
d. all of the above
5. Artificial trees will last for centuries in a landfill. What is their average life expectancy in the home?
a. 6 years b. 9 years c. 12 years d. 15 years
6. Picking a perfect Christmas tree takes skill. Which beloved cartoon character was ostracized for what his friends considered a poor choice?
a. Mickey Mouse c. Charlie Brown
b. Homer Simpson d. all of the above
7. Whereas 80% of artificial Christmas trees are manufactured in China, North American real Christmas trees are grown in every state EXCEPT:
a. New Mexico & Nevada c. New Mexico & New Jersey
b. Hawaii d. none of the above (they're grown in all 50)
8. Who started the National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on the White House lawn?
a. Franklin Pierce in 1856 c. Calvin Coolidge in 1923
b. Abraham Lincoln in 1861 d. John F. Kennedy in 1961
9. What specialty tree was first introduced in 1959?
a. the flocked tree c. the aluminum tree
b. the bottle-brush tree d. the fiber-optic tree
10. Which of the following does "The Happiest Christmas Tree" mention being dressed in?
a. shiny bells and blinking lights c. silver tinsel and golden stars
b. bows, mistletoe, and presents d. sentimental ornaments from days of old

