

Spring Newsletter 2022



Let's spring forward!



Artwork by Barry Steel: an EKM member

Members Committee



Amy W- Thanet Day
Resource & Community



Hilary R- Thanet &
Deal Housing



Ian S- Swale Day
Resource



Laurie J- Swale
Housing &
Community



Natalie S- Thanet
Day Resource
Ramsgate



Natasha R- Thanet
Day Resource
Margate



Neil E- Thanet Day
Resource &
Community



Patricia B- Thanet &
Deal Housing


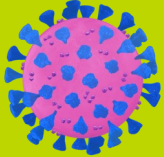








Paul P- Herne Bay
Day Resource,
Housing &
Community



Stephen S- Thanet &
Deal Housing

This is what the Members Committee have been working on in response to requests from both members and staff.

	<p>Recycling bins have been put inside day services. We're working with the Thanet Day service to find the best way members can be supported with the process of recycling.</p>
	<p>Members asked us to discuss the best way of communicating staff changes caused by rising Covid cases. These changes are now in place and working well.</p>
	<p>Tenants in one of our houses asked about replacing their lounge sofas. Together with the Housing Manager, they chose a suitable sofa.</p>
	<p>Members and staff requested more Easy Read copies of forms such as Complaints/Compliments and Policies. We're working with Fiona to create Easy Read forms. These will be available soon.</p>
	<p>Stephen and Natasha attended a Bank of England Forum on Zoom on behalf of EKM. There were many people with a learning disability from across the UK on the call. The forum discussed difficulties people with a disability face when using cash or card to make payments and when applying for jobs. Stephen and Natasha made some important and valuable points. They were very proud to be able to speak on behalf of themselves and their friends at EKM.</p>
	<p>The Virtual Valentine Disco was a huge success; members really enjoyed it and thanked our Support Worker Tris Kennedy who volunteered to DJ.</p>
	<p>In some day services, members have chosen their new sessions, starting in April.</p>
	<p>We know the number of people with Covid-19 has been rising recently. We wish anyone who has tested positive a very speedy recovery. EKM continues to take measures to ensure members' safety, at all sessions and centres.</p>

Thank you to all the staff at EKM for the continued support they give. While rules often change, we still feel safe, listened to, valued and supported.

Thank you and Happy Easter.



A Message From Our CEO Jason Gerlack

The Members Committee have once again been very busy speaking up for everyone who uses our services. It is so important that you share your views so that EKM can continue to meet your needs. You will see from their report that they really do get things done. You can talk to a Committee Member or Fiona Wonford – we want to hear from you!

Our Spring Forward Campaign is a great example of the Members Committee in action. Stephen came up with the fantastic idea of an activity challenge to raise money for EKM. Members have so many different interests and talents – from cycling to drawing amazing artwork – that they could challenge themselves to try. Read about how David is getting involved and please share your stories and photos. We would love to hear about your challenges.

23 March marked 2 years since the first lockdown of the pandemic. Sadly, whilst vaccines means Covid-19 is less severe for most people, we are still seeing a lot of cases. I want to thank you for your patience and understanding whilst we continue to have staffing issues due to illness. The UK government recently released a statement on how the Adult Social Care sector is to move forward with COVID. We are working quickly to interpret how this impacts on how we can work safely and will be in touch with you.

I recently met with the committee of Ashford Mencap. For various reasons they were finding it difficult to maintain their activities and approached EKM to ask if we could help them. We were only too happy to step in and will be working closely with the members of Ashford Mencap to set up activities locally in the future. We look forward to meeting you soon and welcoming you to EKM.

Wishing you all a Happy Easter,

Jason



David Talks About His Spring Forward Challenge



Our Fundraising Manager Jane Brooke (left) and David (right) fundraising at the Co-op in Ramsgate

For David's Spring Forward challenge, he will be doing walking and cycling every day! He has been busy asking his friends and family for donations using the sponsorship form, and so far he has raised over £20.

He said: "I want to take part in this challenge because it will make a difference for me and it will raise money for East Kent Mencap".

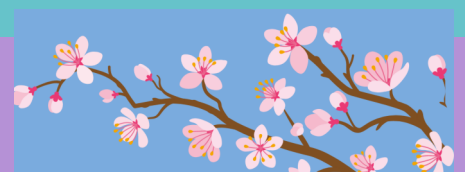
David and Jane Brooke (our Fundraising Manager) have also been on the radio (Academy FM) talking about the Spring Forward challenge, which you can listen to on SoundCloud here: bit.ly/3uiFccr

Take part in the Spring Forward challenge to raise money for East Kent Mencap!

This was a brilliant idea from Stephen on the Members' Committee, who suggested that the members take on an activity challenge to raise money for EKM.

You can choose any activity you would like to try, and ask friends and family to sponsor you. Ask a member of staff for the sponsorship form and to help you.

All of the funds raised will go towards more activities for EKM members. We can't wait to see what you do!



Neil Talks About His Spring Forward Challenge



For Neil's Spring Forward Challenge, he will be walking his dog, Suzie. He is taking her out every morning. His mum will be taking photos and videos. Neil has a sponsorship form and is asking his friends and family to support him. Neil is on our Members Committee and wants to inspire other members to choose their Spring Forward Challenge.

How to take part in the Spring Forward activity challenge:

- **CHOOSE YOUR ACTIVITY**
What challenge would you like to do? This could be sport, craft, art, gaming or anything else you'd like to try.
- **ASK FOR SPONSORS**
Ask friends and family to sponsor you. Use the sponsorship form or the GoFundMe website to get donations. Go to the GoFundMe website and search "East Kent Mencap".
- **ASK FOR HELP IF YOU NEED IT**
If you need help, ask a staff member. We're happy to help.
- **TELL US WHAT YOU'RE DOING**
Send us an email to funds@eastkentmencap.co.uk with photos or videos. If you need help doing this, ask a staff member.

Valuing People Now

EKM has been part of the Kent Learning Disability Partnership Board for over 10 years, delivering Valuing People Now (VPN) across East Kent. We are very pleased that Kent County Council have asked us to continue our work for a further six months from 1 April 2022. There are six delivery groups for VPN – shown here. As we emerge from the pandemic, this is an important opportunity for members to express their priorities for the future in all aspects of their lives. VPN enables people to speak up about what is important to them and for their views and opinions to be listened to and acted on.



Save the date!

Watch out for details of our Football Fun Day at Minster Football Ground on Saturday 11 June!

Can you find the words in the Easter word search below?

N	G	L	F	K	L	N	R	M	L	O	G	O	L
L	C	P	C	O	E	A	S	T	E	R	S	C	I
E	K	H	C	I	B	H	A	E	P	B	F	T	C
O	A	A	I	C	T	G	C	O	I	U	B	B	L
H	S	K	S	C	C	S	P	R	I	N	G	G	L
T	A	M	E	D	K	T	K	R	C	N	C	K	C
L	I	D	O	F	F	A	D	B	E	Y	S	S	S
P	C	R	P	S	T	L	A	S	U	D	T	E	G
O	S	L	L	S	S	D	N	D	R	F	O	C	U
L	T	G	E	F	K	O	T	G	D	K	R	O	F
E	A	R	G	E	T	A	L	O	C	O	H	C	T
N	C	M	L	E	E	L	P	B	H	I	L	H	M
T	L	O	T	S	N	O	S	M	C	T	C	R	S
C	S	G	A	N	N	I	M	I	O	L	A	M	B

BLOSSOM
EGG
LAMB
CHOCOLATE
EASTER
LENT
SPRING
BUNNY
CHICK
DAFFODIL



Hive of Industry

When the Swale Gardening Group told Sheerness Town Council about their idea to make a 'bee friendly road' green area, the Council were so impressed that they gifted the group some gardening equipment and a new shed. They also agreed a grant of £500 for plants and soil. Now the group are talking to Kent Wildlife Trust about working with them on the project.



Fresh

Ian and Lee completed a six week painting and decorating course with Castle Connections in Swale and passed! They received a free kit for painting and decorating, and helped to freshen up the cafe and art room. They also completed their CSCS card training, and were offered a reference service for work in the future. We hope this will lead to work opportunities.



Celebrate

Members at Swale Day Resource love using their local community resources. They recently celebrated Ian's birthday with a game of Lazer Tag.

Getting Online

Thanks to the Let's Get Digital project, we supported 20 members to receive free tablets. We also offer lots of support to use them, whether you enjoy gaming and shopping online, becoming more independent or just staying in contact with friends. Get in touch if we can help you to be more confident using IT.



What have EKM's members been up to?

Winning Entries

Robert, Neil, Gavin and Adam submitted their photos to a photography competition and were selected! They visited the exhibition at the Nice Things Gallery in Ramsgate to see their winning images on show.



BINGO

One of Neil's dreams during lockdown was to play Mecca Bingo at Westwood Cross. When restrictions lifted, EKM supported him to join and play his first game. He's looking forward to more visits in the future.

Parade

Members of GOLD's Women's group took part in a lantern workshop for International Women's Day. They and their lanterns joined the parade in Margate.



Drop In Café

Our Thursday café drop in at Foresters Hall in Ramsgate welcomed speakers including Kent Police talking about hate crime and community safety. On Thursday 16 June Margate Firefighter are visiting the café, from 2pm with one of their vehicles, to talk about fire safety in the home. Why not come along to meet them?



What have EKM's members been up to?



Cooking

Swale Day Resource have been running their very own 'Master Chef' challenge – cooking up some fantastic dishes to share. Tenants in Thanet are also getting excited about cooking, after a kind donation of some Easy Read cookbooks!

Snooker

The Thanet Snooker Group have started meeting again every Wednesday from 1-3pm in Northdown Road, Margate. They are a friendly bunch and will always welcome new members to join them.



Employment

The two 'Just the Jobbers' at the Scrapstore, Ann Marie and Tanya, have been busy sorting donations and recording them. The ScrapStore has saved just under two metric tons of craft materials from landfill since it starting taking donations 18 months ago. That's the same as 12,672 bananas!

Heritage

Our History Group in Thanet have been exploring the Blue Plaques Trail and learning more about their heritage. In April they are working with CITiZAN (Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network) as part of the Walk Create Project along the Kent coastline. Our groups at GOLD and Herne Bay will also be taking part and the hope is to produce a book featuring everyone's contributions!



Meet Sharon



Support Worker, Sharon Cosgrove, joined EKM at the start of 2022, to support people who use a video care phone. The system, known as Kara, provides vulnerable people with virtual care and support via video carephones. Those with little or no technical ability, are able to connect with loved ones and caregivers. This means that, wherever you are, there is always someone you can speak to if you need help, have a problem, or want a chat.

Sharon explains that the Kara has a screen, so you can see each other, as well as hear them. Her job is to call people on their Kara phone to have a chat and check if they need anything. She can also ensure the person feels safe, is not lonely, or if they have any health concerns.

It varies how often she speaks to people. She calls some people every day, and others two or three times a week. It's not always at a set time everyday and, if they are busy, she will always call them back later. She said at first it felt strange, not having met any of the individuals, but after a few conversations, it is more like speaking to a friend. Sharon said, 'Now we chat away about anything and everything. Even if I call and someone is a bit down, by the end of the conversation we are usually laughing. If they do have a concern, I put them in touch with someone who can help. I'm amazed by the different skills of the people I speak to. One plays the piano, another the guitar and one often sings and dances! I even do the cleaning with one person – we grab our dusters and clean together while we chat.'

Sharon understands that a simple conversation and a friendly face can make a real difference. Some of the people I call aren't able to get out of the house, and rarely see anyone else. I feel very lucky to be the person whom they look forward to seeing. I tend to rush around a lot but when I see someone on the screen to talk about their day, and hear how they are coping, it reminds me to calm down and enjoy every moment.

For more information about the service, go to: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/care-and-support/help-to-live-at-home/kara-service>. If you'd like to speak to someone about getting a Kara, you call EKM on: 01843 808964

Thank you!

We are so grateful to our wonderful supporters who made donations over the last three months! Your generosity will fund greater resources and opportunities for people with a learning disability in East Kent

Angela Stuart; Barbara Barber; Katie Hogben; Kent Community Fund; Mencap; Lorraine from Bits and Bobs; Margate Firefighters; Sue Baron; Shoppers at Tesco; The Mayor of Ramsgate; Brian Whitehead; Vodafone; The Folkestone Coffee Club; The Harrington Family; The Hygiene Bank; Veronica Brooke; In memory of Mr Bradley; In memory of Paul Calcutt.

Easy Easter Nest Krispie Cakes Recipe

Ingredients:

- 225 grams of chocolate – chopped or broken up roughly
- 75 grams of cornflakes or rice krispies
- 50 grams of butter
- 2 tablespoons of golden syrup
- 36 mini eggs



If you try this recipe, send us your photos to funds@eastkentmencap.co.uk

Method:

- Line a 12-hole fairy cake tin with 12 paper cases.
- Put the chocolate, golden syrup and butter in a bowl. Heat up the mixture for 10 seconds in the microwave. Stir the mixture and cook in the microwave for another 10 seconds.
- Stir until smooth and gently stir in the cereal until it is coated in chocolate.
- Divide the mixture between the paper cases and press 3 chocolate eggs into the centre of each nest.
- Chill in the fridge for 1 hour, or until completely set.



Registered charity number: **1188118**

If you or someone you care for has a learning disability and needs support, please do get in touch. We are here to help.

Find out what activities we offer by searching East Kent Mencap on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



Call: 01843 808 964

info@eastkentmencap.co.uk

www.eastkentmencap.co.uk