

Spring Newsletter 2026



Exciting Excursions



Quiz Night Fun



Celebrations

Hello from our CEO Jason Gerlack



Welcome to our Spring Newsletter!

In times that test us, it is often our shared moments, kindness, and collective spirit that shine the brightest.



Four months have passed since our last newsletter, and it's a real pleasure to bring you this latest edition. I hope you enjoy reading the many articles and stories that reflect the dedication, care, and achievements across our community.



A heartfelt thank you goes to everyone involved in the wonderful progress being made with our new Ashford-based hub service at Kennington Parish Room. We are incredibly grateful to our local Councillors, Ashford Borough Council, and the Bernard Sunley Foundation for their generous and very welcome financial support.



There is also exciting news on the horizon, with new services coming soon to Folkestone. We look forward to sharing more updates with you in the near future.



Everything we achieve is made possible through teamwork. Our successes are not the work of one, but the result of many people coming together, each playing a vital role in creating something truly special.

Best wishes, Jason

Members' Committee News



During March and April, Members Committee representatives chaired members' and tenants' meetings within their services. There was some great feedback about the support people receive from East Kent Mencap.



Our hubs are thriving, with lots of activities, new sessions and fundraising events taking place. Members at the Swale Hub are especially pleased to be in their new, more accessible building and are looking forward to welcoming new people.



New sessions are being introduced across the hubs, with members playing an important role in deciding what is delivered.



Tenants shared how positive it was to meet Jason, Karen and Vince during recent house visits and audits. People said they felt listened to and were reassured that any issues raised would be addressed.



The Red Arrows Disco in March was a great success, with everyone enjoying a night of dancing. The next disco will take place on Friday 12th June.

We had a cracking December, packed with festive celebrations. Take a look at some of the highlights!



Gateway Club Christmas party

What a night! Everyone got stuck in with dancing, music and plenty of festive cheer. A brilliant way to round off the year together.

Herne Bay hub Christmas Carols

Our talented Herne Bay hub members performed Christmas carols outside Morrisons on 12th December.



Thanet hubs Christmas party

Members enjoyed festive tunes, games and live performances from Dame Jame, Brigitte Aphrodite and Quiet Boy. There was also a raffle and lots of fun games.

Ramsgate hub Christmas dinner

Our Ramsgate members enjoyed a delicious festive dinner. Great food, great company and plenty of smiles.



Swale hub Giving Tree gifts

Bluewater donated £300 worth of gifts to our Swale members from their Giving Tree, spreading plenty of Christmas cheer.



Swale Hub member Ryan said: "I was given a really nice toiletry gift set, it was a nice present. It made me really happy and grateful. I want to say thank you to the Bluewater Giving Tree for my Christmas present!"





In early January, East Kent Mencap members enjoyed watching The Marlowe Theatre's Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs pantomime. They had a blast!

Member Iona said, "It was fabulous," and Michaela, along with many others members, especially loved the seven dwarfs. There was lots of fun throughout the show.



Trips like this give our members the chance to get out and about, enjoy shared experiences and build confidence, all while having a great time together.



Margate hub members received their certificates after completing a British Red Cross First Aid course.

Neil, Natalie and Natasha all worked hard and say they feel proud of what they achieved.



Steering clear of the January blues, members of the Herne Bay hub wellbeing group celebrated National Popcorn Day on 19th January!

The group explored how watching movies can lift moods, spark imagination, ease anxiety and boost overall wellbeing.

On Monday 16th February, our members held their **Thanet Nature Photography Exhibition** at Radford House in Ramsgate.

The exhibition showcased a stunning collection of nature photographs taken by Thanet hub members during their photography sessions around the local area. Visitors responded very positively and enjoyed the creativity and talent on display.



A special thank you to Tris Kennedy who leads the Thanet hub photography groups and supported members throughout the project, and to Radford House for hosting the exhibition.



Elsewhere in February, our Swale Hub kicked off their first Scenes on Sheppey session with a visit to IslandWorks, the beautifully restored Sheerness Dockyard church. Members spent the day exploring the space and learning about the island's history.



Swale hub Member Emma shared: "I loved our first session and liked the dockyard. I picked the Scenes on Sheppey session to learn about the history of the island and I'm excited for what we have planned next."

A great start to a programme - we're looking forward to the next session!

News - March



Swale hub have been taking part in Friday cooking sessions focused on budget-friendly recipes. Alongside cooking together, the group research ingredients, compare prices and explore different meal ideas they can make at home.

Jack, who takes part in the sessions, said: “I enjoy the cooking session and I am learning new skills. This is important to me because I will be living independently soon.”



Our Ramsgate Hub members took part in the Great British Spring Clean with Ramsgate Town Council. They were proud to be part of the 585,038 litter heroes across the nation who pledged to collect an incredible 451,887 bags of litter between 13th and 29th March 2026.



East Kent Mencap held a quiz night on 28th March. With 19 teams taking part, we raised an incredible £1,250.

We were delighted to have live entertainment from the talented Ruby Sansom, alongside some brilliant raffle prizes. A huge thank you to Eve at Tesco Cliftonville and Thanet Earth for donating hampers, Beauty by Cara for a treatment voucher, and to everyone who donated prizes and supported the event.

A special shout-out to Vicki Wilks, Herne Bay hub coordinator, for organising the event. Save the date for the next quiz: 18th July. Email Vicki for more details:

vicki.wilks@eastkentmencap.co.uk

Join the Learning Disability Register



The learning disability register is a list at your GP surgery.

If you have a learning disability, you can ask to be added by contacting your GP surgery. It helps doctors understand your needs and give you the right support. You may need to speak to a doctor or make an appointment.



Why join?

Being on the register can make things easier for you. You may:

- Get support that works better for you
- Be invited for a free annual health check
- Be offered things like a free flu jab



What might the doctor ask?

The doctor may ask questions about your learning disability and how it affects your daily life. You can talk about:

- The support you need
- Any help you have at home, school or from a social worker
- Any benefits you receive



You can use different words to describe your learning disability, but it can help to say “learning disability” when you first speak to your GP.



Important to know

- You do not need a diagnosis or tests
- You do not need to get benefits
- You do not need support from social services



Mencap has a service that can support you to write a letter to your GP to ask to join the register.

Scan to write your letter:

www.mencap.org.uk/easyread/letterbuilder/join-the-learning-disability-register



Thank you

St Lawrence Bowls Club



We're so grateful to St Lawrence Bowls Club for their continued support - in February we visited the club to present the money they'd raised for East Kent Mencap - an impressive £583.34!

Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes



Supported by their Kent Community Fund, we were able to install bi-folding doors and build a partition wall at our new Swale Hub. This has created a flexible, accessible and welcoming space at our new hub.

Ramsgate Town Council



We're incredibly grateful to Ramsgate Town Council for awarding us £6,000 to support The ScrapStore. This is a fantastic boost that helps keep The ScrapStore running.

CCCU Charity of the Year

We are delighted to have been chosen as Charity of the Year by Canterbury Christ Church University's Estates and Facilities, Sport and Active Health teams.

We are very grateful for this support and are looking forward to working together over the coming year. Partnerships like this are so important in helping us continue our work across East Kent.

We are excited about what we can achieve together and thank the team at Canterbury Christ Church University for their support.



East Kent Mencap updates



Folkestone hub

We have recently moved into our new Folkestone hub. We are now in the process of setting up and kitting out the new space, and we are really looking forward to starting our sessions there soon.



Ashford hub

The refurbishment of our Ashford hub is progressing well. We have made strong progress since work began a few months ago and are currently on track to open towards the end of summer 2026.

Generously supported by:



Interested in our new hubs? Get in touch!



info@eastkentmencap.co.uk



07377 101895

Help our Folkestone hub come to life

Support our Amazon Wishlist to create a welcoming space for our members.

With items from **£3.23 to £99.99**, you can give what feels right for you.



Scan the QR code to support, or visit:

www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/4EY1WSULPZ1Y

The ScrapStore

Reduce. Reuse. Relove.



Open Wednesday-Saturday, 10am-2pm



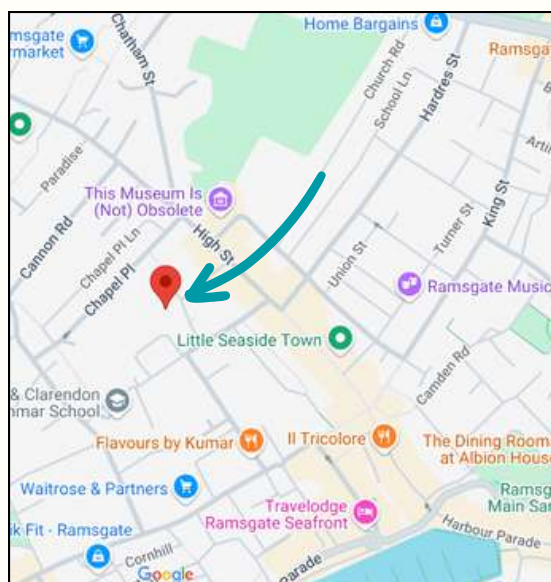
A treasure trove of donated crafting materials



Every penny raised supports people with a learning disability



Find us at Foresters Hall, Meeting Street, Ramsgate, CT11 9RT



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