

# volunteer voices

Your news bulletin from KMPT Voluntary services

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## Welcome to Volunteer Voices...

This is your October edition, coming to you from KMPT's Voluntary services team.

Although the restrictions on us as a nation may have increased, our Voluntary services team are working hard to bring back as many volunteers as possible. As a Trust we are continuing to ask anyone who visits one of our sites to adhere to the two metre social distancing rules, use the available hand sanitiser and wear a mask at all times. As our Voluntary services resume we are trying to think of more innovative and interesting opportunities that allow for all of the guidance that is in place.

This month we have been busy providing vegetable boxes and ingredients for cooking classes, as well as continuing to support all of our amazing befrienders, drivers and the other voluntary projects that help countless people every day!

Nominations close on Friday 2 October 2020 for this year's KMPT Awards. Don't miss your chance to nominate a fellow volunteer who you think has gone the extra mile this year by nominating them for the Volunteer of the Year Award. There are lots of other awards you can also nominate KMPT staff, patients, carers and students for, so take a look at the [website](#) for more information.

Don't forget to keep sending us your stories - we love hearing about your hidden talents, hobbies and creative outlets, so please [email us](#) anything exciting or interesting you've been up to so we can share far and wide.

Thank you again for your continuing support - you are all brilliant and we can't wait to have all of you back in our services again. In the meantime, keep in touch and get involved with the opportunities

that are still available.

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## The Friends for Mental Health East Kent meeting

The Friends for Mental Health East Kent are holding their Annual General Meeting (AGM) this Friday 2 October at the Umbrella Centre in Canterbury. Because of the need to socially distance, the Trustees required advance notice of attendance and therefore they cannot accept any further attendees.

During these challenging times, the Friends have not been able to meet in person so business has been conducted by email between the Trustees.

The Friends have continued to provide help to those with mental health needs and their families in many ways such as providing garden furniture for wards and new gym equipment.

Friends for Mental Health now have a [Virgin Money Giving page](#) for anyone who would like to support the Friends for Mental Health, and make a donation.

[Find out more about the Friends of Mental Health](#)

## Veggie boxes

At St Martin's (in Canterbury) we have the amazing Webb's garden, which is run by volunteers. It's purpose is to help volunteers and service users to get a sense of relaxation and happiness - whether that is from helping with the planting of crops and flowers, or just walking around and admiring the garden's beauty.

Due to COVID-19, most of the customers that normally purchase our produce from Webb's have had to stop. This meant we became increasingly worried that all of the amazing fruit and vegetables that had grown this year would be wasted.

That's when Voluntary services developed the idea of placing the produce in the reception area at Eastern and Coastal Area Offices for staff to purchase. We have had great success with selling the fruit and vegetables and it has really been a massive win for both Webb's garden and our staff.

On the back of this, our volunteers have had a few requests for custom made vegetable boxes. The team have been putting a variety together, with the cost varying from £5 to £10 for a box.

This has helped guarantee a lot of the produce has got sold and allowed staff to have access to

reasonably priced fresh vegetables, which they can then take home, straight from work! Thank you everyone who has got involved in this fabulous project!



## Iain Spinks is running the London Marathon and would love your support!

Iain Spinks, a Music therapist at KMPT and Friends for Mental Health East Kent Trustee, will be running the London Marathon 2020.

The race was originally cancelled in April, but those with places have been given the opportunity to run a virtual version - creating their own route and submitting their time on the 4 October 2020.

Iain's planning a route to and from his home in Canterbury, taking in Chartham, the University of Kent, Whitstable and Tankerton.

"It would be great to have some support along the way. If anyone would like to cheer me on, or run or cycle part of the run with me – please contact me for more details. I will be setting off from Canterbury at 8am. Returning approximately by 1pm. I can give you an estimate of where I will be at any particular point if you would like to see me or join me!"

Iain is running this year for two charities: The East Kent Friends for Mental Health (affiliated to KMPT) and Holding On Letting Go – who provide support for bereaved children in Kent. Funds raised will be split between the two charities using the Virgin Money Giving platform.

If you would like to donate - Iain's fundraising page is:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/IainSpink>

If you would like to support Iain, then you can contact him directly: [iain.spink@nhs.net](mailto:iain.spink@nhs.net)

Money raised by the East Kent Friends for mental health will help support KMPT service users both in hospital and in the community.

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsForMentalHealthEastKent/>

Holding On Letting go provide support for bereaved children and young people in Kent: <http://holdingonlettinggo.org.uk/>

Go Iain! We are rooting for you!

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## Animal therapy

Last Saturday, Zoe, our Voluntary services coordinator for east Kent, went to [Buttercups Goat Sanctuary](#) with her two daughters and granddaughter. She thought it would be good to do something nice as they have all been feeling a bit down in the dumps with life's challenges at the moment.

A little bit of goat therapy turned out to be truly uplifting! Not only being out in the fresh air, even though it was cold and the winter coats and scarves came out, but also being amongst nature's creatures who showed Zoe and her family how they strut, lie and jump around, without a care in the world. Spirits were raised and smiles were brought to faces - particularly by one lovely goat who the gang nicknamed Aslan! (See below!)

On the topic of animals, Zoe and her colleague Louise, our Voluntary services administrator, spent a day in Dartford recently. They met up with staff and some prospective volunteers, and on their travels they bumped into Felicity, the Pat Dog! What ensued was another brilliant pet therapy session - as having Felicity around brought so much joy, smiles and lifted everyone's morale.

This week, Zoe would like to remind everyone to take some time for themselves - and to really focus on their own wellbeing, as she feels so much happier after her lovely animal-filled week!



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## Returning to volunteering

It's been a difficult time these last few months. Earlier in the year we had to suspend nearly all of our voluntary activities due to COVID-19.

There was still the need for drivers to transport Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and other

supplies and new roles were formed like our telephone befriender service, for patients who felt (and continue to feel) isolated in their own homes.

However, from August onwards we have been able to allow volunteers to go back to their usual roles. There are some exceptions to that, unfortunately, but we are trying our best to re-open as many roles as possible.

In the meantime, if you are usually a KMPT volunteer, but your normal role isn't back in action, then please get in contact with us and we can find another suitable role for you. We would love as many of you to be back volunteering at KMPT as possible, so please send an email or give us a call and we will do our best to re-open your normal role or find you a new one.

Email: [kmpt.voluntaryservice@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.voluntaryservice@nhs.net)

Phone: 01622 723210

We look forward to hearing from you.

[Find out more about our volunteering opportunities](#)

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## Cooking up a storm

Our Voluntary services team have been going the extra mile to find new and exciting projects for our patients at KMPT. This month, Louise Blackwood, Voluntary services administrator and Zoe Young, Voluntary services coordinator for east Kent, went to Greenacres in Dartford to hand over seven big boxes of pasta, rice and beans so that the inpatients on our Forensic learning disability wards could engage in some cooking lessons!

Initiatives like these can really help boost morale and be a highlight for patients - particularly in their uncertain and challenging times!



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## And finally...

When the world is such an uncertain place, it's important to remain positive - so take moments to relax and enjoy a spot of tea...POSTIVE-TEA!

## CUPS OF POSITIVI-TEA



Don't give up,  
you can do this!



Your feelings  
matter.



Better days are  
on their way!



You are brave,  
you are valued &  
you are heard!



Keep believing  
in yourself!



You are so loved,  
no matter how  
you feel.

@mynames\_ellen



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Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, Farm Villa, Hermitage Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 9PH

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