

ISSUE 24 WINTER 2024

REAL ROCHDALE

FREE LOCAL
MAGAZINE

STARLIGHT BALL
35 YEARS OF SPRINGHILL HOSPICE

THE PLACE TO BEE
WE VISIT BORO BEES

CHANGING LIVES
AN INSIDE LOOK AT LITTLEBOROUGH U3A

People - Life - Leisure - Business

Your Journey to Health

with Sayan Surgery

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EDITOR'S WORDS

A warm welcome to Real Rochdale



Hello and welcome to the latest issue to Real Rochdale.

We've got some great, in-depth features in this edition, including a detailed look at Littleborough U3A - a thriving community group which is improving so many lives.

We also paid a visit to local business Boro Bees to see how the owners are turning their newly-acquired plot into a vibrant bee sanctuary and community garden.

Speaking of local businesses, we went to the launch of Rochdale Creates at Rochdale Town Hall - a fantastic new website which has been launched by creatives, for creatives, with funding from the Arts Council. You can read all about this on page 10.

You may already have heard of Tackling Minds, an outstanding local charity aimed at improving mental health through the art and skill of fishing. We were delighted to catch up with their owner, David Lyons for this edition, who updated us on some major lottery funding. See what else he had to say on page 23.

As ever, there's just too much to mention here as the magazine is packed with everything from features to health columns to recipes. You'll just have to have a look for yourself.

As ever, a big thank you to our readers, advertisers and contributors who help make each edition such a high quality read.

I hope you enjoy this edition.

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Printing

Jones & Brooks Ltd, Rochdale

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CONTENTS

WINTER 2024



- 12 LITTLEBOROUGH U3A**
10th anniversary is a time to reflect
- 13 LEWIS ELSE**
Hornets half-back wins league award
- 17 ROCHDALE CREATES LAUNCH**
Website launch for creative community



- 18 RECIPE**
Pear and ginger cake
- 21 TACKLING MINDS**
Almost £20k for mental health initiative
- 24 PHOTO GALLERY**
Starlight ball



- 39 RECIPE**
Sea salt and rosemary focaccia
- 43 JOHN MCLAWRENCE**
Local windsurfer is British champion
- 45 LEGAL COLUMN**
The aftermath of the Horizon scandal
- 46 WHAT'S ON THIS WINTER**
A guide to upcoming events



- 29 FINE DINING**
The Martlet opens at Rochdale Town Hall
- 33 HEALTH ADVICE**
Dr Sharma on the winter cold
- 34 WINTER GARDENING**
Petrus offers tips for winter



SPRINGHILL HOSPICE RAISES £70K AT STARLIGHT BALL



Springhill Hospice celebrated its 35th anniversary in style, hosting the Starlight Ball at Rochdale Town Hall in October. The event proved a major success, raising over £70,000 in vital funds for the hospice.

The night of celebration brought together a mix of local residents, sponsors, and hospice patrons for an evening filled with live entertainment, exceptional food, and a special auction.

Esteemed guests included Springhill patrons Lady Mary Peters and Sue Devaney, along with rugby legend Kevin Sinfield CBE, all of whom lent their support to the cause.

Vicki Barnett, the corporate and partnerships fundraiser at Springhill Hospice, expressed her gratitude for the overwhelming support: she said: “Raising over £70,000 is truly amazing, and it wouldn’t have been possible without the generosity and support of everyone involved.

“A huge thank you to our sponsors, donors, volunteers, and guests for making this event such a triumph.”



Hospice patron, Lady Mary Peters



Chair of the trustees, Lesley Mort

The night’s entertainment featured an array of talented local performers. Guests were treated to acts by Rochdale Music Services, Rock Choir, Turners Dance Studio, the Soul’d Out band, and close-up magic by Ian Lavin.

Host Cole Page kept the evening lively and engaging, while Sue Devaney thrilled the audience with a surprise performance of “Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien” by Edith Piaf and “Stupid Cupid” by Connie Francis, bringing an added touch of joy to the celebration.

A highlight of the evening was the auction, where attendees could bid on an array of impressive items and experiences.

The ball also featured an auction where guests could win some impressive items and experiences. During the event Kevin Sinfield presented a World Cup France 2023 signed shirt from the England squad, which he had kindly donated to be auctioned at the ball. Reflecting on the success of the evening, Springhill Hospice’s Chief Executive, Sam Wells, described the Starlight Ball as “a night to remember.”

She said: “Not only were we celebrating 35 years of Springhill Hospice, but we were raising money to ensure we can continue to provide the care that’s so desperately needed.

“The total of more than £70,000 was beyond our wildest dreams and will mean we can continue to be there for people in the borough



The hospice’s new patron, Sue Devaney

when they need us most. I’m so grateful to our amazing team and brilliant supporters.”

Founded in 1989, Springhill Hospice has long been a pillar of care and support in the Rochdale community, providing specialised palliative care for patients and families facing life-limiting illnesses.

Funds raised from events like the Starlight Ball play an essential role in allowing the hospice to continue its mission and ensure its services remain available for those in need across the borough.

This year’s Starlight Ball success marks another significant step in Springhill’s commitment to its community, helping ensure that it can continue to offer comfort and support for many years to come.

Photos courtesy of Leanne Hazlehurst Photography and JJR Video Productions



Celebrating 10 years of Littleborough u3a: learning, friendship, and fun for all ages

As Littleborough's u3a group approaches its 10th anniversary, it's the perfect moment to reflect on a decade of success and celebrate the thriving community it has created.

Often mistakenly seen as a group solely for people of retirement age and above, Littleborough u3a is breaking the mould by opening its doors to anyone not in full-time work, whether they're retired, working part time, or simply seeking to stay socially and mentally active. With over 380 members, this vibrant volunteer-led charity is proof that learning and connection aren't bound by age or stage of life.

The Littleborough branch is set to mark its milestone year in December, with a special celebration at Rochdale Town Hall.

As this anniversary approaches, it's worth highlighting one of its key messages: The group welcomes anyone not tied down by a 9-to-5 job, creating an inclusive space where members can discover new passions. It's a place to meet like-minded people, and engage in stimulating activities, regardless of age.

Since its inception in 2014, Littleborough u3a has flourished, becoming a cornerstone of community life. From its monthly gatherings at the Coach House to its diverse array of special interest groups, the branch has created a welcoming environment where members can explore hobbies, enjoy outings and make lasting connections.

One of the unique aspects of u3a is its relaxed approach to learning, giving members the chance to explore subjects at their own pace. Whether it's learning a new language, taking up photography, or delving into local history, Littleborough u3a offers a wealth of opportunities for personal growth.

Littleborough provides the perfect backdrop for many of the group's outdoor activities. Members regularly enjoy walks, nature photography, and other outdoor pursuits.

For those working part-time or looking to broaden their horizons outside full-time employment, Littleborough u3a offers an ideal solution. It's a place to explore interests, develop new skills, and maintain a sense of purpose while enjoying a rich social life. All the groups that have been set up have come from suggestions by members.

Committee member Jo Wiggans recalls her initial involvement. "When I was asked to attend the first meeting about a new u3a in Littleborough, I thought it might be a nice way to meet some people locally.

"I'd retired and didn't know many people in the area. Now, ten years on, I can't walk down the street without seeing someone I know. I've learned Italian, discovered birdwatching, visited nature reserves, and taken part in creative writing. There are so many opportunities - I don't have enough days in the week to do everything that interests me!"

At the heart of Littleborough u3a's success is its ability to connect people. Neil Bamford, a recent addition to the group, has found the experience to be an enriching one. He said: "I joined Littleborough u3a because it seemed like a great opportunity to meet like-minded

people and develop my photography skills. I've enjoyed several outings to different locations, guided by the group organiser. It's been fantastic to get out, meet new people, and try something different."

For many, u3a is a lifeline to social engagement and intellectual stimulation, particularly important at a time when loneliness and isolation can be challenges for those stepping away from work. The group's welcoming atmosphere and wide range of activities ensure that members stay connected and energised.

Founder Janice Bray said: "When I see all the people coming to the monthly meetings, and to the things that they attend, I feel very proud.

"These days, people stop me on the street, and thank me for doing it. It's fair to say that it's changed lives, including my life."

She added: "When it first started me and my husband went to every group to get it off the ground. It got the ball rolling to a certain extent. These days all the classes are



Members of the Littleborough U3A committee

all full, so it just goes to show how far it's come."

"These days people come from far and wide, not just Littleborough."

Chair Sue Temperley said: "I have been involved in Littleborough u3a from the very start and I feel privileged to be carrying the baton passed on from Janice Bray, Sandra Kokocki and Bob Coley, into our tenth year.

"We are so proud of our expanding organisation and we decided to celebrate our tenth year in style. We now have 380+ members, so we're holding it in Rochdale's glorious Town Hall. What better place to hold our

celebration."

It's set to be a memorable occasion, celebrating a decade of learning, laughter, and friendship.

Membership is easy to arrange and flexible, allowing you to participate in as many or as few activities as you like. The friendly committee is always on hand to provide guidance and support, ensuring that new members feel at home from day one.

It's not just about learning - it's about building friendships, staying active, and enjoying life with like-minded people.

Find out more by searching for Littleborough u3a online.



New arts website launched to boost Rochdale's creative scene



Local businesses, artists, politicians, and residents gathered at Rochdale Town Hall to celebrate the launch of Rochdale Creates, a brand new arts website aimed at supporting and promoting the borough's vibrant creative sector.

The website, described as "by creatives, for creatives," serves as a platform to showcase events, access employment, training, and funding opportunities, and stay informed through a comprehensive 'What's On' guide for the arts in the Rochdale borough.

The creation of Rochdale Creates was made possible through funding from Arts Council England and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), as part of Rochdale's CDF2 Project.

The website was delivered by the culture and placemaking team at Rochdale Development Agency and is managed by the Rochdale-based organisation Sound Roots.

Councillor Sue Smith, portfolio holder for communities and co-operation, gave an impassioned speech highlighting the transformative power of the arts on Rochdale's development.

She remarked: "Arts and culture are critical to the success of any place, and in Rochdale we are blessed with an abundance of artists, supportive organisations and spaces that allow the benefits of the arts to be realised."

Mayor of Rochdale, Councillor Shakil Ahmed, also encouraged attendees to sign up to the new website, urging the community to help showcase Rochdale as a fantastic place to live, work, and visit.

Rochdale Creates is now live and open to artists, musicians, designers, and all creatives across the borough.



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Katrina Williams, Head of Service at Adoption Now, said: "Now more than ever, we need people to come forward and consider adopting our wonderful children. The national database has less than 350 families currently available and Adoption Now alone works with over 100 new children every year who need a family. We know that starting the adoption process is life changing and you may be waiting for the 'perfect' time, or finances to improve. However, that first step can be the most difficult and sometimes the timing never feels perfect. This is your sign to start the adoption process and we will be here to support you every step of the way."

Adoption Now is the Regional Adoption Agency for Rochdale. If you would like to find out more visit our website or call 01204 336096.

To find out more about the adoption process, book on to our Virtual Information Event!



Rochdale Hornets' Lewis Else crowned Betfred League 1 Player of the Year

Rochdale Hornets' half-back Lewis Else was named the Betfred League 1 Player of the Year during the annual Rugby League Awards in Leeds in October.

Lewis has had a standout season for the Hornets, scoring 15 tries in 23 matches and contributing numerous assists. His impressive performances earned him the accolade ahead of Oldham's Danny Craven and Phoenix Laulu-Togaga'e.

Lewis also triumphed at the Hornets' End of Season Awards Night last month, winning Ray Myers Player of the Year, Timekeepers' Player of the Year, and Players' Player of the Year.

Taking to the stage, Lewis said: "I'd like to thank Gary Thornton, because for me, playing well is all about being happy.



"Especially as a part-time player - going to work the next day, and training after work - you need to be happy at games.

"This season, we weren't far off. We fell at the last hurdle, but we'll continue our form into 2025 and will hopefully be back next year."

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Hopwood Hall College and University Centre is adding even more life-changing courses for those who are ready to seize the opportunities that come from studying higher education.

Fresh from holding its annual graduation and awards ceremony, the college – which has campuses in Middleton and Rochdale – is now accepting applications for routes beginning as soon as January 2025.

It marks a great opportunity for those people who want to 'stay local and go far' through gaining qualifications that are extremely sought-after by employers.

This includes the HNC in Construction Management, which is expected to be very popular when it begins in the first few weeks of the new year.

The course – which is the result of the college working closely with the construction sector to upskill workforces and drive growth – comes as the college launches a higher apprenticeship for people to

become a Level 4 Construction Site Supervisor apprentice.

In addition, there are a wave of exciting university-level courses due to begin in September 2025.

This includes the HND in Esports, which promises to springboard students into an abundance of roles in this booming industry.

There are also degree-level courses on offer following college's groundbreaking new partnership with the Open University.

These are the BSc in Zoo Science and Wildlife Conservation and the BSc in Health and Social Care.

These two routes, along with all the other pathways at the University Centre, are designed



to be as accessible as possible and feature competitive course fees.

Meanwhile, those who dream of going to university but don't currently have the qualifications to do so have the brilliant opportunity to complete an access course at Hopwood.

These routes let learners 'get on their way to a degree for free' by gaining coveted qualifications which will allow them to earn places at universities across the country.

Hopwood is currently accepting applications for all its higher education courses, with people encouraged to submit applications ahead of the UCAS deadline on 29 January 2025.

For more information on the full range of pathways, visit hopwood.ac.uk



HAIRDRESSING TREND

by GREG COUZENS

90s BLOWOUT

Christmas means party time, and parties require big hair with lots of height and volume. Think glamorous blow-dries with a bit of an edge and an abundance of sophistication.

This year, the 90's blowout is the perfect party look, offering luxurious volume and bouncy layers that bring a modern twist to classic styles. Whether you're attending a formal event or a casual holiday gathering, the 90's blowout delivers the perfect balance of effortless elegance and standout glamour, making it a must-have hairstyle for the season.

Achieving this voluminous look starts with prepping the hair using volumising products and a round brush to lift the roots while blow-drying. Adding soft waves or curls with a large barrel curling iron or Velcro rollers gives the hair movement and texture, creating that signature 90's bounce.

Thick hair can be tamed with lighter styling products, while fine hair needs stronger root-boosting sprays and light hairspray to maintain volume throughout the evening.

Complementing this glamorous blowout with healthy hair care is equally important, and that's where henna comes in as a game-changer.

Henna's natural, chemical-free properties make it an excellent alternative to traditional hair dyes, offering vibrant, long-lasting colour without damaging the hair. The added bonus is its conditioning effect; henna coats the hair strands, improving texture, reducing frizz, and enhancing overall hair health.

Whether you're looking to achieve a rich auburn or deep brown shade, henna provides not only stunning colour but also hair that's strong, shiny, and well-nourished.

For this party season, consider pairing the iconic 90's blowout with a natural approach to hair care like henna. You'll get the best of both worlds: a stylish, voluminous look that's perfect for any holiday event and hair that's healthy, vibrant, and naturally nourished.



Model: Kirsty Olczak
Hair & Photo: Gregory Couzens
Colour: Natural henna

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PEAR AND GINGER CAKE

WITH A SALTED CARAMEL DRIP

by *Natasha Brown* - owner of *Brown's Cakes*

The sticky pear and warming ginger makes this a perfect cake for a winters day. The salted caramel sauce is super easy to make and is so tasty!

Ingredients for the pear top

- 3 pears peeled, cored and cut into thin slices
- 60g butter
- 100g light brown sugar
- 3 chunks of stem ginger (optional) chopped into thin slices
- Pinch of sea salt

Ingredients for the cake batter

- 4 medium eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 280g self-raising flour
- 150g light brown sugar
- 225g Stork margarine
- 1½ teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 heaped dessert spoons treacle

Ingredients for the salted caramel drip

- 1 tin of condensed caramel filling
- 100g butter
- 4 tablespoons water
- ½ teaspoon sea salt

Preheat the oven to 180 °C and grease and line an 8" round cake tin.

Melt the butter and sugar for the pear top together gently in a pan.

Once melted add a pinch of salt then pour into the base of the tin and arrange the pear slices on top of the sugar and butter mix.

If adding the stem ginger (which I would if you can find it as I love it) sprinkle the slices over the pears.

Next, make the cake batter. Put the eggs, vanilla extract, self-raising flour, light brown sugar, margarine and spices in a large bowl and beat well with an electric mixer.

I tend to really beat this so that the mixture goes paler and is very soft. When well beaten, gently stir in the two dessert spoons of treacle.

Spread the mixture over the pears and smooth down leaving a small dip in the centre of the tin.



Bake the cake mix in the centre of the oven for approx. 45 minutes.

Check the cake is cooked by inserting a wooden skewer and checking that it comes out clean. If it's not baked keep it in the oven and keep checking every few minutes until it's done.

Once the cake is cooked, take it out of the oven with oven gloves and allow it to cool a little in the tin.

Once cooled enough to handle carefully turn the tin and release the cake. Gently peel off the baking paper and let the cake cool on a wire rack.

To make the salted caramel drip, heat the condensed caramel filling, butter

and water in a pan. Once it starts to bubble take it off the heat and sprinkle in the sea salt.

Place the cake on a serving plate and apply the drip to the edge using a teaspoon to vary the amount to create a drip effect.

You will have lots of sauce left which can be served with the cake. You may even have enough left to use as a dip for other treats such as fruit and biscuits or pour on to ice cream.

This is such an easy and tasty sauce and keeps well in the fridge if you have leftovers.

Enjoy!

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Children's University (CU) – a fun programme for Primary aged children where they can record their involvement in extra-curricular activities, building up hours in their 'Passport' and graduating at the end of the year.

REACH – a centralised online hub bringing together a local enrichment offer for secondary aged young people (11+), showcasing activities, programmes and clubs available.

Are you a Provider who wants to get involved with CU and/or REACH, showcasing your offer?
Are you a parent/carers who wants to know more about how your child/ren can be involved?

If the answer is yes, contact us at:
CU – RochdaleCU@altusep.com
REACH – contactus@rochdalereach.co.uk



Tackling Minds awarded £19,800 lottery grant to expand mental health support through fishing therapy

Local organisation Tackling Minds has been awarded a £19,800 grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, allowing it to expand its mental health support work using fishing as a therapeutic tool.

The funding, secured in February, will enable the group to help individuals facing mental health challenges, addiction recovery, disabilities, and social isolation.

Founded by David Lyons, Tackling Minds has pioneered the integration of fishing into mental health recovery plans.

The organisation made history as the first to have angling officially recognised by the NHS, allowing GPs to prescribe fishing as part of patients' mental health care. This initiative provides participants with a peaceful, reflective environment to support their recovery and wellbeing.

David Lyons' efforts have been widely recognised, earning him a Coronation

Champion award from King Charles, chosen from over 5,000 nominees.

David was invited to Buckingham Palace, where he was honoured for his groundbreaking work in using fishing to improve mental health outcomes.

In addition, Tackling Minds has contributed to the first-ever peer-reviewed scientific research linking fishing to mental health improvements, which confirmed its benefits, such as reducing anxiety and boosting self-esteem.

Speaking about the grant, David Lyons said: "We are incredibly grateful to the National Lottery Community Fund for their continued support. This funding allows us to extend our reach, helping more people experience the mental health benefits of fishing."

Tackling Minds organises accessible, inclusive fishing sessions across Greater Manchester, benefiting hundreds of participants to date.

STARLIGHT BALL



Photos: Leanne Hazlehurst Photography



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New fine dining restaurant opens at Rochdale Town Hall

The Martlet Kitchen, a fine dining restaurant, has officially opened its doors to the public within the recently-restored Rochdale Town Hall.

The grand opening was marked by a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by mayor of Rochdale, Councillor Shakil Ahmed, Mayoress Sultanah Begum, and consort Councillor Rachel Massey.

The new restaurant, supported by funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is set against the stunning backdrop of the Grade I listed Town Hall, promising a unique dining experience for locals and visitors alike.

The Martlet Kitchen offers a fine dining evening menu on Fridays and Saturdays, led by executive chef Darren Parkinson, a Heywood local with an impressive culinary career.

Darren, who has earned multiple AA rosettes, previously worked at notable establishments like Shibden Mill and The Fleece.

He has designed a menu that showcases seasonal ingredients and local produce, elevating traditional northern fare to new heights.

Highlights from the menu include mackerel and Whitby crab served with pickled cucumber, Granny Smith apple, sorrel, and sourdough croutons, North Sea halibut with



masala-spiced pumpkin, saag aloo, tandoori onions, and purple sprouting broccoli, as well as the signature 'RTH Fillet Rossini', a luxurious dish featuring Lee Horsley beef fillet, truffle, duck liver pâté, wild mushrooms, and rösti potatoes.

Chef Parkinson worked closely with acclaimed chef Tristan Welch, known for his work in renowned kitchens like Le Gavroche and L'Arpège, and for his appearances on the BBC's Great British Menu.

Tristan's expertise has contributed to the development of the menu, ensuring a top-tier dining experience.

Previously in a soft launch phase with a Café Luxe menu, The Martlet Kitchen is now fully open, offering both northern classics and gourmet fine dining.





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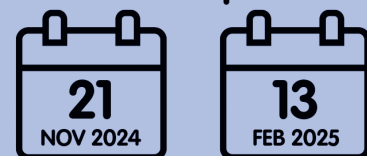
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Hero mum honoured for tackling youth violence

A mother of four from Heywood has been awarded 'Special Officer of the Year' at the Chief Constable's Annual Awards for her outstanding voluntary service as a special constable.

Jemma Mallon was honoured at a ceremony held at The Emirates Old Trafford Cricket Ground in September, for her dedication to addressing youth violence and supporting vulnerable young people in Rochdale.



In just over a year, Jemma has volunteered an impressive 360 hours, more than double the expected commitment, working closely with schools to educate and safeguard local youth.

Through her involvement, she has reached over 100 pupils and staff at 12 schools, delivering vital lessons on crime prevention and helping foster positive community relationships.

A key focus of Jemma's work has been bridging the gap between schools and the Neighbourhood Policing Team, identifying children at risk and ensuring they receive the support they need.

Her unique perspective as a mother has been instrumental in her approach. She said: "I've got four children of my own,

two teenagers and two younger boys. I'm able to get on their level by being a mum."

Jemma's proactive efforts have led to a noticeable reduction in youth violence. Between August 2023 and August 2024, violence with injury incidents fell by 4.9% in Rochdale, a testament to her impact.

Inspired by her father, a former detective constable, Jemma's dedication to making her community safer has been widely recognised.

Balancing her policing role with being a self-employed network marketer, Jemma continues to be a driving force in protecting Rochdale's young people.



Buzzed about Boro Bees

A buzzworthy transformation is unfolding in the picturesque hills of Littleborough. Mark and Sharon, founders of Boro Bees, are on a mission to turn their newly-acquired plot of land on Blackstone Edge into a vibrant bee sanctuary and community garden.

This ambitious project, taking shape on New Barn Farm near The Moorcock Inn, aims to benefit not just the bees, but also the local community and environment.

Mark is known in the community for his work with AAA Pest Control Services Ltd, and has long harboured a dream of becoming a beekeeper. "It's been a long-awaited ambition to develop a bee garden that everyone can enjoy," he says.

The first phase of this dream is set to be completed by August 2025, just in time to celebrate 20 years of his business. "It's our way of giving back to the community that has supported us so much over the years."

Boro Bees is more than just a personal project. Mark and Sharon envision it as an educational hub where people of all ages can learn about the importance of honeybees and wildlife. "We want the whole community, near and far, to come along and get involved in the planting, growing, and development of this project," says Sharon.

The land for this venture was generously offered for rent by the Smith family. Since acquiring it in August 2023, Mark and Sharon have been hard at work clearing and preparing the site. "There's still a lot to do," admits Mark, "but we're welcoming any volunteers who want to help out."

The bees at Boro Bees come from local beekeepers Andy and Nicky, who, due to other commitments, could no longer continue their beekeeping activities. Mark saw this as an opportunity and purchased five hives along with the necessary equipment.

The bees are now thriving under the care of Mark and Sharon, with the help of an artificially inseminated queen. "These AI queens are superb, calm, and productive, which helps immensely when working with the bees," explains Mark.

Despite challenges such as adverse weather and ensuring the bees have everything they need to survive, Mark remains optimistic. "What I love



most is knowing that all the hard work will benefit the environment, the community, and most importantly, the bees themselves," he says. "It also provides a relaxing and tranquil environment, which is good for the mind and body."

Giving Back

Charity is at the heart of Boro Bees. Jolly Josh, a local charity supporting families of children with complex needs, is now the permanent fundraiser.

Any surplus honey produced by the bees will be sold, with all profits split between Jolly Josh and a second charity, which will change annually. "Whenever we've carried out bee relocations, we haven't charged for the service but requested a donation to Jolly Josh instead," says Mark.

Looking ahead, Boro Bees aims to open its doors to the public in summer 2025.

They also plan to allocate areas of the land for groups and individuals to plant flowers, shrubs, or vegetables, creating a diverse and abundant landscape for the bees to forage and pollinate. "We want the whole community to benefit from this open space," says Sharon.

As Boro Bees buzzes towards its official opening, it's clear that this project is about more than just bees. It's about community, education, and giving back. The sweet success of Boro Bees is sure to be a cause for celebration.



Rochdale venues unite for 'Plates & Pours' wine tour

Town centre establishments are coming together for the Plates & Pours Wine Tour, a new event featuring some of Rochdale's top venues. The tour includes The Baum, The Little Acorn Restaurant and Vicolo Del Vino, with support from the recently opened Hampton by Hilton, Rochdale.

The tour is the brainchild of Austin Hopley, who aims to celebrate Rochdale's thriving independent food and drink scene.

Participants in the tour will receive a specially designed passport to collect stamps from each venue. Those who complete the tour will be entered into a prize draw to win an overnight stay at Rochdale's new Hampton by Hilton.

One of the highlights of the tour is its accessibility. Each participating venue will offer a unique Plate and Pour experience for just £10 per person.

Participating venues:

- The Baum
- The Little Acorn Restaurant
- Vicolo Del Vino

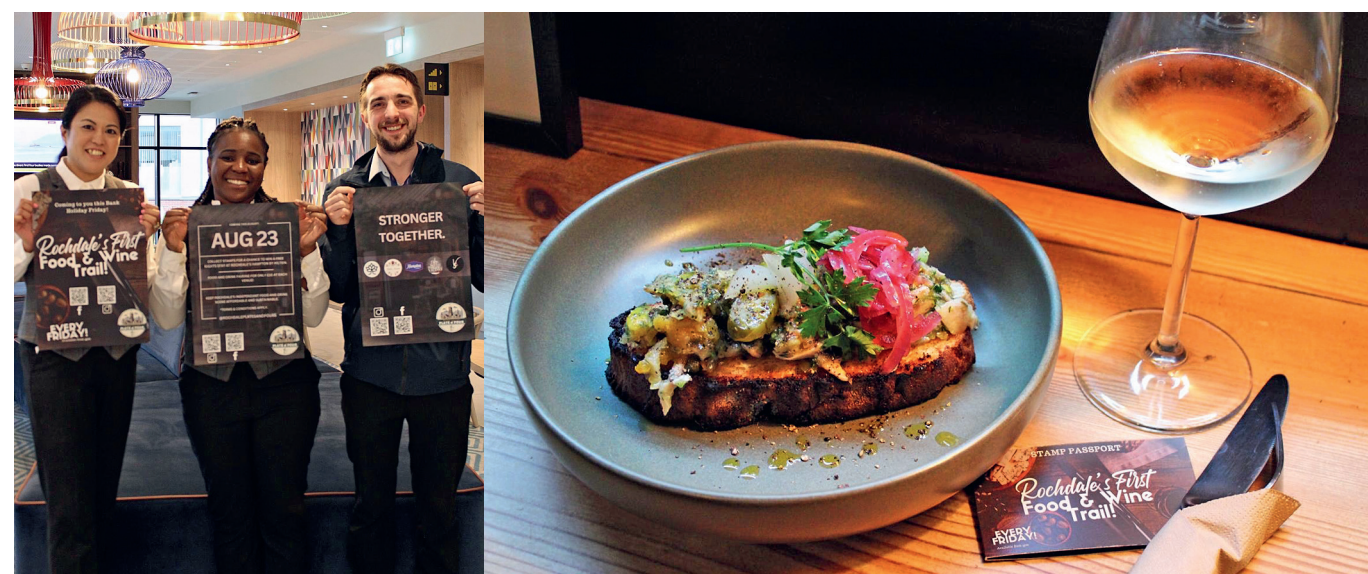


Austin expressed his excitement, saying: "We're extremely proud to have created a multi-venue wine and food pairing tour, and pleased that all of the venues we approached shared our vision."

Local leaders, including Nicola Walker from Rochdale's Development Agency, were instrumental in bringing the event to life. Austin added: "This support has been key in making this idea a reality."

The Plates & Pours Wine Tour aims to create a unique experience for punters while shining a spotlight on the town's vibrant independent dining and drinking establishments.

The tour kicked off in August, and is on offer every Friday evening from 5pm.



Champness Hall brought to life by fiery Flamenco show

The historic Champness Hall was transformed into a fiery, pulsating stage of Andalusian passion in September, as the Daniel Martinez Flamenco Company kicked off their Art of Believing tour.

Rochdale was the first stop for this award-winning production, and the near-capacity crowd was treated to an extraordinary evening of authentic flamenco that radiated with passion and energy.

Art of Believing has garnered rave reviews across the UK, and it was clear why. From the moment the first guitar chord rang out, the audience was immersed in the vibrant sounds of Andalusia.

Daniel Martinez, a masterful flamenco guitarist and composer, led his talented ensemble through a stunning array of flamenco styles, from the intense and emotional Seguiriya to the joyous rhythms of the Alegria.

The performance was nothing short of captivating. Each member of the ensemble brought their own brilliance to the stage, including flamenco singers, guitarists, a violinist, and a cajón player.

But it was the electrifying flamenco dancer who stole the show, her movements flawlessly mirroring the raw



intensity of the music. Having recently won the prestigious Herald Angel Award, Art of Believing proved to be a spellbinding celebration of flamenco, brimming with authenticity.

The audience was swept up in the magic of the music, feeling the fiery emotions that flamenco is so famous for.

Champness Hall, with its historic charm, provided the perfect backdrop for such a culturally rich and passionate production.

As Art of Believing continues its tour across the UK, Rochdale can take pride in having been the launch pad for such a unique and unforgettable evening. Those who

attended witnessed an explosion of artistry and musicianship that will linger long in their memories.

Art of Believing is a triumphant showcase of the soul and spirit of flamenco, delivered by some of the finest musicians and performers in the genre.



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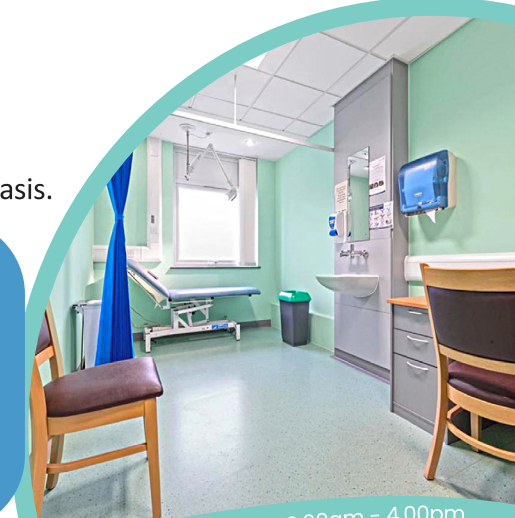
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WHY IS A COLD SO COMMON IN WINTER?

Coronavirus, asthma, eczema, chapped skin, and painful, arthritic joints.

Winter truly is the season to make you far from jolly.

But have you ever wondered why it yields so many health problems for so many of us, and what can we do to prevent them?

Keep it cosy

Exposure to extreme cold quite obviously causes conditions such as hypothermia. Diminishing temperatures chill us to the bones; meaning arthritis gets more painful. Blood circulation, particularly to the feet and hands, is affected and blood pressure increases. This can put us at greater risk of heart attack or stroke. That is why we should keep our temperature at home to 18 – 21 degrees Celsius and wrap up warm when we venture outside.

Cold outside can exacerbate conditions such as eczema and cause flare-ups. Freezing air – particularly when moving from the warm to the cold – might provoke an asthma attack. Precautions have to be taken if you have either condition; and asthmatics need to have inhalers at hand. Cover your mouth with a scarf in cold weather is always good practice.

The slippery road

Plummeting temperatures also cause hospital Emergency Units nightmares, with falls particularly prevalent. Sturdy solid footwear and a warning to watch your step, apply here.

The inclement will probably put you off going out at all, and that's where the problems really start.

We may not like the cold, but viruses do, and being in enclosed spaces closer together sees them thrive. Tiredness and other factors can lower our immune systems. I am not advocating going out in ten inches of snow, but exposure to the outside world raises vitamin D levels and exercise is always good, whether you are basking in the sun or walking in the cold.

Those who become hermetic also tend to eat and drink – habits not helped by Christmas! Moderation is the name of the game with both, particularly as you are bound to be more sedentary.

Brighter days ahead

From irritated pink eyes to runny rhinitis, winter can seem like the season of illness, but there are also positives along the way. These include a prevalence of root vegetables, brisk walks in the cold air, healthy home-made meals in front of the fire and to ease our mental health issues, the camaraderie of Christmas and other religious festivals.

Ill health is more prevalent in winter, but it doesn't have to be inevitable. Stay warm, get outside for some vitamin D, remember to attend your inoculations (especially that flu jab), cover your mouth when you cough and look out for your neighbours, especially the elderly.



ABOUT THE WRITER

Dr Anita Sharma is a published women's health expert, the founder of the charity Endometriosis Awareness North and the president of the Rochdale Inner Wheel club.

As a GP, she previously coordinated the NHS pessary service for Greater Manchester. She also works closely with Rochdale medics to reduce unnecessary antibiotic prescribing.

GARDENING TIPS FOR WINTER



ABOUT THE WRITER

Jo Rose Brewerton is a social & therapeutic horticulture practitioner at Petrus. Their PIER project invites volunteers and individuals referred through the Social Prescribing program "Nature For Health" to engage in gardening activities that promote well-being.

PIER is a community allotment and gardens located on Belfield Road (next to the Croft Shifa Medical Centre) in Rochdale, which belongs to homelessness charity Petrus. It is a beautiful, relaxing and therapeutic oasis that grows fruit and vegetables and is a member of the wider Incredible Edibles network representing Rochdale. It is open to the public and people are welcome to visit and take a look around this award-winning garden. Petrus' vision is to create kind, confident and connected communities through the power of growing food.



As we settle into the end of the year, the days grow shorter, and the sun's warmth begins to wane.

The growing season slows, but for those of us who planned ahead, there are still crops to nurture. Winter and spring cabbages, kale, cauliflower, and purple sprouting broccoli can provide sustenance during this quiet period. Regularly checking on these plants, covering them with horticultural fleece, helps maximize daylight while deterring pigeons and insects. These simple tasks can foster a sense of connection to nature, even on the greyest days.

If you missed the opportunity to sow these valuable crops, why not consider shopping now for seeds for 2025. Then set a reminder to sow them in late summer.

Even those without a garden can participate by using window boxes or pots by the door.



For all types of gardeners, this is a busy time to invest in soil health. Let the fallen leaves settle onto beds and borders, providing a feast for microorganisms and invertebrates. As they break down the leaf matter, they'll improve aeration and enrich the soil with organic matter.

If the leaves become overwhelming, bag them damp in bin bags, knot them, and store them for a year. This will yield a rich homemade leaf mulch compost, perfect for your spring sowing.

As you tend to your garden, consider holding back on pruning for now. Seedheads provide vital food for local wildlife. Finches crack open cherry stones, while siskins and other birds hunt for seeds among the alder and birch. Leaving herbaceous flower heads intact offers a delightful spectacle of wildlife foraging.

If you must prune, keep any long, flexible branches to twist into wreaths for the festive season. By cutting back some of the longest growth in woody shrubs to create a "stool," you'll also provide ideal nesting spots for birds.

Finally, consider leaving a few flowers, like coreopsis, or even "weedy" treasures like fat hen and Michaelmas daisies. These will serve as additional food sources for birds, who will reward your kindness by helping to control pests like aphids and greenfly in the new year.





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FARROWDALE HOUSE: A SMALL SCHOOL GEM WITH BIG RESULTS

Just across the Rochdale border in Shaw, there's a little-known treasure that happens to be one of the region's most affordable private schools.

Farrowdale House Independent Preparatory School has been cultivating young minds since 1983. Known for its small class sizes and warm, family-oriented ethos, it offers a nurturing environment where every child is treated as an individual.

With a strong focus on both academic excellence and character development, Farrowdale fosters confidence, curiosity, and integrity in pupils aged three to 11.

With no more than 15 students in each year group, this intimate setting provides an enriched, focused learning experience that allows every child to flourish.

This small class size is a core part of Farrowdale's philosophy, allowing for a highly personalised learning experience.

Owner and proprietor Suzanne Hall told Real Rochdale magazine: "With such small

classes, pupils get a huge amount of teacher time, which elevates learning, enhances student engagement, and improves academic performance.

"The benefits of a small pupil-to-teacher ratio are enormous and can often be overlooked."

Beyond academics, Farrowdale places significant importance on building respectful and well-rounded individuals. Farrowdale fosters close relationships between students of different age groups, encouraging older children to look after younger ones.

The school's location in a building filled with history and character adds to its unique atmosphere.

The school offers modern facilities including an ICT suite and interactive whiteboards, while its historic structure creates a sense of tradition and community.

Farrowdale offers a wide range of extracurricular activities, including Jiu Jitsu, football, origami, and board games.



The school also provides pupils with the opportunity to take London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) courses, allowing them to work towards recognised exams in drama and public speaking.

To support parents, Farrowdale provides a free morning club starting at 7.30am and offers an after-school programme that runs until 5.30pm, with a variety of indoor and outdoor activities for pupils.

Prospective parents are encouraged to visit the school and experience for themselves the warm, welcoming environment that has made Farrowdale a success for over 40 years.



Chef Austin Hopley is a Rochdale born and bred food expert who launched his own venue, Vinesteins in Rochdale town centre in 2023. He has worked in hospitality for over 10 years.



This no-knead focaccia recipe is not only simple but incredibly versatile, making it the perfect base for a variety of toppings and flavours. Whether you stick with the classic sea salt and rosemary or get creative with your own favourite ingredients, this focaccia is a foolproof way to bake my delicious bread with minimal effort. The high hydration (80%) gives it a light, airy interior with a crisp, golden crust.

Ingredients:

- 500g strong bread flour (preferably 00 or all-purpose)
- 400g water (80% hydration)
- 10g sea salt (for dough)
- 7g instant yeast (or 10g fresh yeast)
- 30g olive oil (for dough)
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary, roughly chopped
- 15g flaky sea salt (for topping)
- 40g olive oil (for drizzling on top)

Equipment:

- Mixing bowl
- 9x13inch (23x33cm) baking tray
- Plastic wrap or clean kitchen towel
- Parchment paper

Step 1: Mix the dough (no-knead)

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour, yeast, and 10g sea salt.
2. Add 400g of water and 30g of olive oil, then stir with a wooden spoon until all the ingredients are fully mixed. The dough will be wet and sticky, which is perfect for a high-hydration dough.
3. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a kitchen towel and let it rest for 10-15 minutes.

Step 2: First rise (bulk fermentation)

1. After resting, perform a quick stretch and fold by wetting your hands to prevent sticking. Pull the dough from one side, stretch it upward, and fold it over itself. Repeat from all sides.
2. Cover again and leave it at room temperature to rise for 12 to 18 hours. The dough should double in size and become bubbly on the surface.

Sea salt and rosemary focaccia



Step 3: Shape the focaccia

1. Line a 9x13 inch baking tray with parchment paper or grease it generously with olive oil.
2. Scrape the dough onto the prepared tray using oiled hands and gently stretch it out. You don't need to force it to the edges; it will spread further as it rests.
3. Drizzle the dough with olive oil and cover loosely with plastic wrap or a damp towel for the second rise. Let it rise for 2-3 hours at room temperature until it's puffy.

Step 4: Prepare toppings and preheat

1. Preheat your oven to 220°C (430°F).
2. Strip the leaves from the rosemary sprigs and set them aside.
3. Once the dough has risen, use your fingers to dimple the dough, making deep pockets across the surface.

Step 5: Add toppings and bake

1. Generously drizzle olive oil over the dough, allowing it to pool in the dimples.
2. Sprinkle flaky sea salt and the chopped rosemary evenly across the top.
3. Bake in the preheated oven for 20-25 minutes, or until the focaccia is golden brown and crisp on top.
4. Let it cool slightly in the tray for about 5 minutes before transferring to a cooling rack.

Step 6: Serve and enjoy

1. Allow the focaccia to cool for at least 10 minutes before slicing to ensure the best texture.
2. Serve warm or at room temperature.

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Rochdale-born windsurfer crowned British champion

Rochdale-born windsurfer John McLawrence, who began on Hollingworth Lake, was crowned Masters British Champion 2024 after a stunning victory at Scotland's Tiree Wave Classic in October.

The active 50-year-old, who attended Lowerplace Primary School and Balderstone School, first discovered windsurfing at the age of 25 when his brother Paul introduced him to the sport.

Originally a rugby league player for local teams, John quickly became passionate about windsurfing, honing his skills at locations like Rhosneigr and Fleetwood.

At 40, he joined the Masters Fleet in the British Wave Sailing Championships, with

2024 marking a standout year: third at Rhosneigr and first at Tiree, earning him the overall British wave title.

Ranked 11th globally by the IWT Masters, John now aims to enter the world's top 10. His wife Liz supports his journey, proudly accompanying him as he represents Britain on the international stage.

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POST OFFICE HORIZON SCANDAL

This is the fourth article in a series where Molesworths’ Dispute Resolution team delves into the aftermath of the Post Office Horizon scandal.

In this final instalment, we will explore the criteria for initiating private prosecutions, the legal obligations involved, and the duty of full disclosure that binds all prosecutors, whether public or private.

Decision

Under English law, individuals and organisations, including entities like the Post Office, have the right to initiate private prosecutions, as outlined in the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985.

To start a private prosecution, the prosecutor must first identify the offence alleged, gather sufficient evidence and then submit a complaint to a Magistrates’ Court, which will issue a summons requiring the defendant to attend court to answer the charge.

The decision to prosecute must meet rigorous criteria; there must be sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction, and the prosecution must be in the public interest.

These standards, similar to those used by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), are fundamental to ensuring fairness. In the Horizon case, it appears both criteria were misjudged, leading to wrongful prosecutions.

Objectivity

Simon Clarke’s 2013 legal opinion, known as the “Clarke Advice,” was pivotal in exposing the Post Office’s lack of objectivity. Clarke, a barrister from Cartwright King, raised concerns about Gareth Jenkins, an expert witness, who failed to disclose key information about bugs in the Horizon system.

Despite Clarke’s warnings, the Post Office continued using Jenkins’ testimony, prioritising the protection of its IT system over fairness in its prosecutions. This breach of prosecutorial duties contributed to one of the largest miscarriages of justice in UK history.

Role

The misuse of prosecutorial power in the Horizon case raises broader concerns about the ethical boundaries of private prosecutions. While private prosecutions allow organisations to seek justice, they also carry a higher risk of conflicts of interest.

Prosecutors must always serve the interests of justice, not their own financial or reputational concerns. In the Post Office case, the duty to remain objective was overshadowed by the desire for convictions, causing irreparable harm to the wrongfully accused.

Conclusion

The Post Office scandal is a cautionary tale about the responsibilities that come with prosecutorial power. Whether public or private, prosecutors must remain vigilant in their duty to act in the interests of justice. Failing to uphold this duty risks undermining the very integrity of the legal system.

Obligations

Once a private prosecution is initiated, the prosecuting body must adhere to legal obligations, especially fairness and objectivity. These obligations ensure that prosecutions are not driven by personal or commercial motives but are pursued in the interests of justice.

One of the most critical obligations is full disclosure — prosecutors must reveal any material that could undermine their case or help the defence. In the Horizon scandal, the failure to disclose problems with the Horizon IT system played a central role in the wrongful convictions of sub-postmasters.

WHAT'S ON THIS WINTER

IGNITE FIRE FESTIVAL ROCHDALE TOWN CENTRE FRIDAY 22 - SUNDAY 24 NOVEMBER

Fiery displays, blazing sculptures and illuminated installations created by artists and pyro technicians will be open to walk through from 5pm to 8pm each evening.

There will also be performances from Flame Oz, Bring the Fire, Skylight Circus Arts and Travelling Light Circus.



BOMBAY BOOZY BINGO ROCHDALE TOWN HALL SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER

A Bombay Boozy Bingo returns with an exciting mix of Indian-themed food and lively, adult-themed bingo entertainment.

Attendees can enjoy a one-course meal, fun prizes, and an energetic atmosphere. VIP tickets offer front-row seating and a welcome shot for added fun.



DICK WHITTINGTON THE CURTAIN THEATRE, ROCHDALE SATURDAY 8 - SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER

Set out for an adventure with Dick Whittington as he travels to seek his fortune on the streets of London.

Joined by Sarah the Cook, Tommy the Cat and a whole host of pantomime characters, will Dick seize his destiny and rescue London from the clutches of the wicked Queen Rat?

Filled with catchy songs, colourful costumes and hilarious comedy, Dick Whittington is the perfect panto for all the family.



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