



# ActivLives

## Changes Lives

Read me & Pass me on

January - March 2025  
Newsletter



Picture by The Indigo Opportunities

### Every Help Counts



As another year starts, we continue to appeal for your support to help us fund our projects and services across Ipswich and Suffolk.

As a local charity we rely on grants, trusts, donations, fundraising activities, sponsorship & commissions to keep doing our projects in local communities.

To support us in every way you can, please call us on 01473 345350 or visit our website: [activlives.org.uk](http://activlives.org.uk).



Picture by Active Suffolk Awards

Starting the year with new opportunities



ActivLives. A Company Limited by Guarantee, registered in England and Wales No.7672809 Registered Charity No. 1147615

Brightspace, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 0HH Tel. No: 01473 345350

[activlives.org.uk](http://activlives.org.uk)



Launching of Love to Move exercise



Turning a new leaf in ActivGardens for Spring



Celebrating success to kick off the new year

**Looking forward to 2025!**

Well, another amazing and busy year at ActivLives. We saw lots of new projects start and some end, where we had to say goodbye to staff, which is always sad, and we wish them well, in their new ventures in the future.

The AGM in November was a very special afternoon with over 117 people attending and a big thank you for The Mayor of Ipswich, Councillor Elango K. Elavalakan, District and Borough Councillors and some of our funders and supporters for attending. We watched a video of a few of our dedicated volunteers talking about their experiences and the personal benefits of volunteering and then we thanked Jean White, Anita Bimpson and Barrie Powell for their dedication and commitment in supporting ActivLives over the years in the Office, at our Lunch Club and at ActivGardens, looking after our lovely bees.

December was 'full on' with parties and celebrating all the different groups and activities that we have developed over the years.

This will be our 18th year, including our 4 years as a health project called the 'Town & Bridge Project'. I would like to thank everyone, past and present, who has been involved with the organisation as a member of staff, a volunteer, a member, a Trustee or a supporter, for your passion, time, dedication, experience and skills that you have brought to this wonderful organisation and have made ActivLives what it is today and hopefully for the next 18 years....

So, looking forward to a new year – 2025 – let's get even more people moving this year, being active, involved and connected and learning new skills. So, share this Newsletter with your friends, family and neighbours. Let's aim to have over 2,000 people registered with us this year!

I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year in 2025.



**Julie Stokes**  
ActivLives CEO



**Ian Hirst**  
ActivGardens Operations Officer

**Gardening for physical health**

Gardening is an excellent form of physical activity that improves strength, flexibility, and endurance while burning calories. It combines moderate exercise with enjoyable outdoor work, benefiting both physical health and overall wellbeing. Different gardening tasks burn varying amounts of calories depending on their intensity:

- Weeding: 150–200 calories/hour – Great for flexibility and core strength through bending and pulling motions.
- Planting seeds or seedlings: 150–200 calories/hour – Light digging and kneeling enhance mobility and coordination.
- Raking leaves: 250–300 calories/hour – Tones arms and core muscles while engaging in rhythmic movements.
- Pruning and trimming hedges: 250–320 calories/hour – Builds arm and shoulder strength with repetitive cutting motions.
- Mowing the lawn (push mower): 400–600 calories/hour – A full-body workout that improves cardiovascular health.
- Digging and shovelling: 400–500 calories/hour – Strengthens arms, back, and legs through lifting and turning.
- Harvesting vegetables or fruits: 200–300 calories/hour – Combines bending, lifting, and carrying for moderate calorie burn.

Gardening is not only an enjoyable way to burn calories but also an holistic exercise that strengthens muscles, improves flexibility, and contributes to overall physical and mental wellbeing.

**Gardening for mental health and wellbeing**

Gardening offers profound mental health benefits, providing a calming and restorative connection to nature. Engaging in tasks like planting, weeding, or harvesting promotes mindfulness, helping individuals stay present and reduce stress. The physical activity releases endorphins, which improve mood and combat anxiety or depression. Gardening also fosters a sense of purpose and achievement as plants thrive under care, boosting self-esteem. Spending time outdoors exposes individuals to natural light, which can help regulate sleep patterns and alleviate symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

Tending to a garden can enhance emotional resilience and provide a sense of community through shared gardening spaces or projects. Undertaking winter gardening tasks, such as pruning, mulching, or planning for the spring, keeps the mind active and focused, fostering a sense of accomplishment and anticipation.

**Planning gardening jobs for the year is essential for maintaining a healthy, productive, and visually appealing outdoor space. A well-structured plan ensures that tasks are completed in the right season, such as pruning in winter, planting in spring, and harvesting in summer.**

**Jobs to do in your garden over Winter**

**Pruning and Maintenance**

- Prune apple and pear trees to encourage healthy growth (leave stone fruit until spring).
- Tidy up hedges and shrubs.

**Tool and Equipment Care**

- Sharpen and clean gardening tools.
- Service lawnmowers and other mechanical equipment.

**Planning and Design**

- Create garden layouts and plant schemes for the coming year.
- Plan vegetable plots and order seeds.

**Winter Protection**

- Cover delicate plants with fleece or cloches.
- Insulate greenhouse plants with bubble wrap.

**Hardscaping Maintenance**

- Clean paths, patios, and garden furniture.
- Repair fences, trellises, and garden structures.

**Greenhouse Gardening**

- Grow vegetables like lettuce, spinach, or herbs year-round.
- Start seedlings early or overwinter plants in pots.

**Composting**

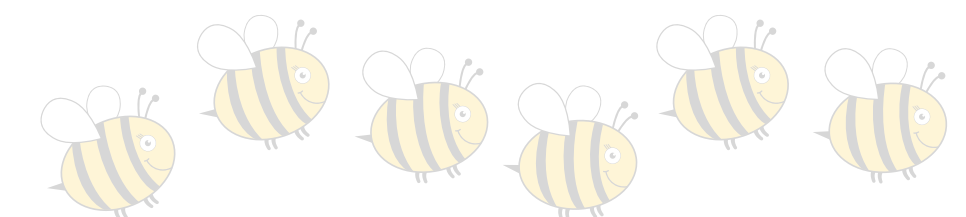
- Maintain compost bins, turning material regularly for aeration.
- Add kitchen scraps and garden waste.

**Community Gardening**

- Volunteer in local community gardens or allotments.
- Participate in local horticultural societies or clubs.

**Wildlife Support**

- Build and maintain birdhouses, feeders, or bee habitats. You could also volunteer for your local community apiary to help care for their bees.
- Ensure water sources are available year-round.



> **What's Inside?** <

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| Ian's Gardening World | 3  |
| ActivGardens          | 4  |
| Special Update        | 7  |
| ActivHubs             | 8  |
| Special Hubs          | 12 |
| ActivSport            | 17 |
| Special Tribute       | 21 |
| What's New?           | 22 |

**ActivLives is a local independent charity working in Ipswich and across Suffolk to keep people active, connected and involved with their local community through accessible sports and exercise, courses, learning new skills and volunteering opportunities.**



@ActivLives

**Turn over a new leaf and come and volunteer with us!**

The beginning of a new year is a great time to try something different – so how about volunteering at ActivGardens?

We need people to help our busy days run smoothly – gardening, helping others and supporting staff.

You don't need to be an expert gardener - enthusiasm, willingness to work as part of a team, and love of the great outdoors are the most important ingredients.

Giving to others and supporting a community effort is a great feeling – and you'll be helping the local environment by getting involved in nature-friendly gardening and conservation activities too.

If you would like to give us try, please contact Operations Officer Ian Hirst Email: [ian@activlives.org.uk](mailto:ian@activlives.org.uk) Mobile: 07599 951060 or call ActivLives on 01473 345350.

**A HUGE THANK YOU to all our volunteers across our garden sites who have put in a tremendous year's work to keep our gardens and our community blooming!**



Sudbury get-together

Volunteers celebrated the end of the year at Christmas parties across our garden sites.

**Here's to another year of growing and gardening in 2025!**



Chantry Walled Garden party

People's Community Garden and ActivSheds celebration

**Bye bye for now!**



Sam was a volunteer at ActivGardens for four years

Thanks to Gardening In Mind Project Officer Sam Grainger-Cowles who ran a fantastic project over two years.

More than 60 people joined the 12-week course and got involved in gardening, growing and therapeutic activities for the benefit of their mental health.

Sam was a volunteer at ActivGardens for four years before becoming employed as our Green Care Worker - helping people who needed an extra level of help and support. She took up the GIM post in February 2023.

The course was funded by the NHS and was a joint partnership - Equity In Mind - between Norfolk and Suffolk Mental Health Trust and Suffolk Community Foundation to deliver mental health interventions at a community level, working with charities and grassroots projects.

The course was so successful, we are nominated for an Ipswich and East Suffolk Alliance award (Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System).



Sam's last day at the ActivGardens

**Gina moves on to pastures new**

ActivBlooms Project Co-ordinator Gina is opening a floristry shop in Debenham, after bringing the joys of flower arranging to a whole range of groups and participants as part of ActivGardens.

For the past year, Gina has delivered workshops around Suffolk to budding florists, care home residents, families, and transgender support groups, as well supporting volunteers to develop new skills.



“ I have learnt new things, how to look after bees and build stag beetle towers. The project has helped me to leave the house and meet people from various backgrounds. I feel at peace when doing the course. I feel better the next day and I look forward to the next session. I am going for walks more often and doing photography on walks. -Participant, GIM ”



“ I've been so looking forward to this event as it was something for me to enjoy when so much of this month is about giving or doing things for others... It felt like a bit of therapy and respite and was definitely good for my wellbeing. -Participant, Christmas Wreath workshop ”

A successful year of Grow Your Future by Project Officer Phoebe Hyett

Grow Your Future is our 12-week programme enabling people to develop practical skills and build confidence on their way to further learning, training, volunteering or employment. We have welcomed many new people to our sites this year, who have contributed brilliantly to the gardens, events and wider community. Twenty people completed the course, 13 have continued to volunteer with us and five have gained employment and/or training.

It has been a fantastic year of making new connections with people and nature.

Everyone has been a pleasure to be around, vibrant and happy... It's very nice to meet an array of people from different places and walks of life.  
- Alex

This year, we have developed our cut flower project, in partnership with Gina's ActivBlooms floristry project. Participants have designed, planted and harvested flowers. These have been used for workshops, gifts and decorations for events.

Additionally, we have grown and harvested for donations to the St Peter's Church Top Up Shop and our own harvest meal, as part of the Grow Well Eat Well project.

Dan said: "I have been learning about companion planting on the raised veg beds and soft cuttings and composting, and meeting new people, which has helped me a lot."

Joe feels "really confident being here" and has "enjoyed getting involved in everything, learning lots of new skills and plant names".

Our Autumn participants have been busy establishing a strawberry bed in the food forest at The People's Community Garden. Alisha made a creative new sign for the area, where we are also growing Thai basil and wild violas – which are edible flowers.

We have had our fair share of close encounters with nature! Participants recorded slow worms in two new locations across the sites. Some found themselves buzzing with enthusiasm during a beekeeping experience with Ian. Those on our Spring course identified dragonfly larvae in our pond, while the Autumn course saw them fly and land on their shoes!

Contact us if you would like to join our **Spring Course**:  
- **Tuesdays 11th February until 29th April at Chantry Walled Garden**  
- **Wednesdays 12th February until 30th April at The People's Community Garden.**



Come along to our **Open Days** to find out more:  
**Tuesday 21st of January at Chantry Walled Garden, 10am-2pm OR Wednesday 22nd of January at The People's Community Garden, 10am-2pm**



**Grow Your Wellbeing**, our horticulture course in **Sudbury**, has also had a successful year, with 13 people completing the course and several of them staying on to volunteer with us in Belle Vue Park.

We have welcomed back **Bridge Project** students to the park, who have joined us in gardening and wellbeing activities such as Autumn leaf art.

Our next **Grow Your Wellbeing** course begins **Monday the 10th of February, 10am-12:30pm in Belle Vue Park, Sudbury**, and runs until 28th April. Come along to our **Open Morning on Monday the 20th January, 10am-12pm.**

AGM 2024



On 14th November, we celebrated our volunteers' commitment and support to ActivLives during our Annual General Meeting with a special guest, the Mayor of Ipswich, Councillor Elango K. Elavalakan



Good News!

ActivLives CEO named Activity Champion at Active Suffolk Awards

The CEO of ActivLives, Julie Stokes, has been recognised as the Activity Champion of the Year at the Active Suffolk Awards 2024 on 15th November.

Julie said, "I am very proud and honoured to receive this award. I have enjoyed developing the Charity over the last 17 years and working with so many talented, committed, passionate staff and volunteers and all our work colleagues, supporters, funders and networks across East Suffolk. This award isn't just for me it's for everyone who has been involved in the Town & Bridge Project and ActivLives, since 2006. A big thank you to Active Suffolk for the Award, it means a lot, and for a lovely evening at Trinity Park. I hope everyone enjoyed the seated dance, it was great to see so many people joining in."

Her leadership was recognised for establishing sports activities and physical exercises that benefit young and older people with physical and mental health needs and learning disabilities in the county. The Awards also commended her for encouraging people from all walks of life to get involved in the community.



ActivLives team at the Active Suffolk Awards 2024

A life-changing exercise launched in Felixstowe

ActivLives kicked off its Love to Move programme with a free taster event on 25th November at the Trimley Sports and Social Club, Felixstowe. It's an exercise to help older people with dementia, Parkinson's and other forms of cognitive impairment to get active and have a regular weekly physical activity.

If you are interested to join the Love to Move programme, you will participate in a regular weekly session every Monday from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM at the Trimley Sports and Social Club, High Road, Trimley St Martin, Felixstowe, IP11 0RJ. To register, you may contact ActivLives at 01473 345350.

ActivHubs



The free taster event of Love to Move on 25th November at Trimley Sports & Social Club with instructor Laura

It's a festive season celebrations at our Step by Step exercise sessions across Ipswich and East Suffolk. Members sharing their time with our instructors, friends and fellow active movers. Our community is growing with new members and new programmes such as Love to Move.





**FREE 12-week Strength and Balance Programme**



Feeling unsteady on your feet or have experienced fall?  
If you are aged 65 or over, try this Strength and Balance programme or share it with someone you know who will benefit!

- ✔ **12 free Strength & Balance Sessions**
  - ✔ **OTAGO specialist qualified instructors**
  - ✔ **Exercise to improve, gait, co-ordination, strength & confidence**
- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Saxmundham</b><br/><b>Monday</b><br/>11.45am -12.45pm<br/>The Fromus Centre,<br/>Street Farm Road,<br/>Saxmundham, IP17 1AL</p> | <p><b>Ipswich</b><br/><b>Monday</b><br/>1:30pm-3pm<br/>Holbrook Village Hall, The Street,<br/>Holbrook, Ipswich, IP9 2PZ</p>            | <p><b>East Bergholt</b><br/><b>Tuesday</b><br/>11.45am – 12.45pm<br/>Constable Memorial Hall<br/>Gandish Rd, East Bergholt, CO7 6TP</p> |
| <p><b>Leiston</b><br/><b>Wednesday</b><br/>11.15am -12.15am<br/>Waterloo Centre, Waterloo Ave<br/>Leiston, Suffolk IP16 4HE</p>       | <p><b>Felixstowe</b><br/><b>Thursday</b><br/>1.15pm – 2:45pm<br/>Walton Community Hall<br/>High Street, Walton, Felixstowe IP11 9DS</p> | <p><b>Woodbridge</b><br/><b>Friday</b><br/>11:45am – 12:45pm<br/>Fred Reynolds Centre, Churchill Close,<br/>Woodbridge, IP12 4UU</p>    |

- To refer, you can:**
- Call ActivLives on 01473 345350 for more details
  - Speak to a health professional to submit a referral on your behalf
  - Submit a self-referral via: [www.activesuffolk.org/strength-and-balance](http://www.activesuffolk.org/strength-and-balance)

This programme is in partnership with East Suffolk Council, Babergh & Mid Suffolk Council.

**Love to Move**



**£6 per session**

This exercise programme is specially designed to get older people moving and functioning better. It is a seated movement programme to music that benefits older people and those living with dementia, Parkinson's and other forms of cognitive impairment.

Every Monday, 1:30-3:00pm

at the Trimley Sports and Social Club, High Road,  
Trimley St Martin, Felixstowe, IP11 0RJ

Contact Laura Lopez at [laura@activlives.org.uk](mailto:laura@activlives.org.uk)  
or call on 01473 345350 for more information



**ActivLives Men's Breakfast Hub success for 2024, with Woodbridge and Felixstowe on the horizon for 2025**

We have now reached the end of 2024 for our weekly ActivLives Men's Breakfast Hub, and the hub has grown from strength to strength with new members joining us recently.

We have had some really wonderful sessions, historical presentations, members topic discussions, gardening, wildlife presentations, reminiscence about life, work and Christmas, wellbeing and exercise to name a few.

We now have a core group of 14 very friendly, regulars, who come weekly to share news, discuss local issues, and enjoy the wonderful bacon breakfast rolls we have to offer, with the help and support of our members John, Bob and our wonderful new volunteer Mary Sones. Laughter and banter are the order of the day, we always have a lot of both at the sessions. So when one of our members surprised me at Halloween with "Sid" the spider, a huge, furry robot controlled spider, there was a huge amount of laughter and we decided to adopt Sid as a mascot for the hub.



Sid the spider with Men's Breakfast Hub members

So, if you want to join us in 2025 in Ipswich, or are interested in joining us at new hubs in Woodbridge or Felixstowe, contact Alison Pearson on 01473 34535 in the New Year, to discuss attending.

Happy New Year!



**Bringing people together in a fun and social way, making friends, reducing stress and boosting self-confidence through song!**

**ActivSinging 2025 Schedule**

**Woodbridge**

**Twice a month on a Friday morning, 10am - 12 noon**

17 January, 7 & 21 February, 7 & 21 March, 4 April, 2 & 16 May, 6 & 20 June, 4 & 18 July, 5 & 19 September, 3 & 17 October, 7 & 21 November, 5 & 19 December

**Venue: Quay Church, Quay St, Woodbridge IP12 1BX £7 per session**

Call us at 01473 345350 for more details!



ActivSinging members and instructor Evie serenading the audience at the AGM 2024



**Christmas Celebrations at ActivFriends**

ActivFriends had a busy end to 2024, filled with much laughter and some great activities, around music and singing, with visits from the lovely Gina, fabulous Lynette from Dance East, Phil Jackson and his amazing guitar and the wonderful Elvis (AKA Andy Ottley), to name a few. We have bowled and had competitions, crafted and reminisced about days gone by, remembering loved ones along the way.

We have sung and danced our hearts out and quizzed a plenty. We have laughed until stomachs hurt and enjoyed the most important thing, friendship, love and support, because that is what ActivFriends is all about.



Our members are family to us, and by us I mean myself and my core of 7 dedicated volunteers, who come along, whatever the weather. We have had storms, cold weather and heatwaves, yet we always manage to deliver ActivFriends. Volunteers are the lifeblood of ActivFriends and to say thank you to them, just doesn't feel enough, for the dedication and support that they all give to the project.

So, I would like to take this opportunity to say a MASSIVE thank you to all my volunteers....Pat, Bob, Sandra, Barbara, Melissa, Barbs and Jackie. Not forgetting Sandra's husband Ray, who has helped at many of the sessions. They provide the glue that holds the group together.

All of this happens as we work towards the most important day in the year, our wonderful Christmas Party Lunch on Friday 6th December. This year we had Councillor David Goldsmith, our Chair of Trustees Daniel Billson and Trustee Louise Kenlock, and local Asda Community Champion Debbie, who all joined in the festivities.

ActivFriends had a sumptuous feast of Turkey, Gammon and all the trimmings and were once again thrilled to have Elvis, (AKA Andy Ottley) to get the Christmas Lunch off to a fabulous start.

We would like to thank everyone for their support this year and we look forward to 2025 with happiness and anticipation.

Call Alison Pearson on 01473 345350 for more information.



Some snapshots from the ActivFriends Christmas Party

Bespoke Sessions

As well as our own ActivLives sessions, we also work in partnership with other organisations and run bespoke sessions to enable us to reach more people and communities and keep them informed of what we do at ActivLives.

Every few months we visit the Britannia Ladies Group in Ipswich for a seated/standing activity session and run weekly seated/standing activity sessions with the Bangladeshi Support Centre & Multicultural Services Carers Project with 15 members attending on a regular basis. We have also visited Ipswich Oddfellows, the Fibromyalgia Support Group - Ipswich, St Philips Community Hub in Felixstowe and Neuro Café, Livability Icanho in Stowmarket.



The new group at the McCarthy Stone - Thomas Wolsey Place

We had to say goodbye to our Priory Park Group, but we were contacted by a resident at the new McCarthy Stone – Thomas Wolsey Place retirement scheme and a new group was established. This group has come on leaps and bounds with their strength and balance. We enjoyed our last session in 2024 with festive outfits and Christmas dance routines. (Photo)

We also attend WI groups and local social groups, such as the Jubilee Club in Felixstowe to demonstrate the various activities and inclusive sport that we do. This group participated in a taster of seated dance and exercise, and members had a go at Boccia and New Age Kurling. If you would like us to come and speak at your group and demonstrate some of our activities contact Julie on 01473 345350.



Britannia Ladies posing during an exercise session



Exercise session at Ipswich Oddfellows



Fibromyalgia Support Group with ActivLives



Weekly seated/standing activity session with the Bangladeshi Support Centre Carers Project

Callout for Carers in 2025



ICare Connect project has now been running for a year, and so far we have had 28 direct beneficiaries of the grant who were unpaid carers including husband/wife, family members or friends/neighbours and carers in transition, with loved ones in care or that have passed. Given the time of the project, some experienced the whole change, from being an unpaid carer, to becoming a carer in transition, and then sadly an ex-carer.

The project has provided support to carers at various stages of their journey e.g. Support for Carers - All carers received individual sessions during the project to ensure that they felt included and listened to, to discuss their concerns, ensuring they felt listened to, both in person and on the phone.

We were able to provide information about Suffolk Family Carers, and other relevant local organisations, along with guidance of obtaining a carers assessment. Of the 28 beneficiaries over 40% participated in other activities through ActivLives.

The project addressed physical, emotional and well-being needs through conversations, support and encouraging people to revisit or explore old or new hobbies / interests.

Carers needing respite were supported through conversations, texts and in person visits, similarly with carers who experienced a loss of their role through bereavement or for their loved one moving into residential care.

Please do reach out to Alison Pearson on 01473 345350 in 2025 and discuss your caring concerns.



Carers Conversation



We had a Carers Conversation Meeting on the 24th October where we talked to existing and former carers from within ActivLives to identify the issues they felt were important, such as an earlier interventions from their GP, increased support in the community and feeling listened to, both as a carer and a family.

## Special Hubs

### St Mary at Stoke Lunch Club

The Lunch Club is held on a Tuesday at St Mary at Stoke Church, Stoke Street, Ipswich, IP2 8DA from 12 noon. You can expect a fantastic two course meal cooked by Tina the cook and our two lovely volunteers Pam & Rose for just £6.00 plus refreshments. 'Great value'....

The Lunch Club is run by a group of dedicated volunteers who welcome and support our members, to ensure that they feel safe, comfortable, that their needs are met and that they meet and make new friends while they are there.



Some members of the lunch club during the party



A festive Christmas party with members and volunteers

ActivLives would like to thank Anita, Linda, Carole, Barbara, Alison, Pam & Rose for their commitment and dedication over the year. We especially would like to say a big thank you to Anita, who helped establish the Lunch Club, 16 year ago and who is retiring in December. It's not goodbye, as we hope to see Anita in the New Year as a member. Anita received an award at ActivLives AGM in November for her long-standing service to ActivLives, the Lunch Club and members. Thank you Anita, for your time, your commitment all those years and helping us grow the Lunch Club from 8 members to 30.

We would also like to thank the Church for their support and holding the pop-up shop each week for our members.



A happy Christmas lunch with our lunch club members



Anita volunteered at the lunch club for 16 years

## ActivSport

### Saturday Kurling & Boccia Group in Walton



The Saturday Group meet at Walton Community Centre at 1pm to play New Age Kurling and Boccia, with a break in between, to enable members to have a chat over a hot drink and a biscuit. We are always looking for new members, so if you would like to give this very social group ago, just turn up and you will get a free session. Following sessions are £5.

The last session before Christmas, the group enjoyed some fun festive games followed by their Christmas party.

**Come and stay active with our ActivSport programmes this year!**



# Get active with ActivLives






An inclusive community-based sport and physical activity programme, that is open to any adults who would like to become more physically and socially active. People new or returning to activity are particularly welcome, as are those with a disability and/or a long-term health condition.

Sessions include Boccia, Short Mat & Lawn Bowls, Walking Football, Badminton, Yoga, Ping Pong, Kurling, Short Tennis and Health Walks.

To find out more and to learn about our full ActivSport programme please visit [www.activlives.org.uk/activsport](http://www.activlives.org.uk/activsport) or call 01473 345350








# Join our ActivYoga Class

(for Beginners/Improvers)

**Come and try our free taster!**

Where:  
Landseer Road Methodist Church  
382 Landseer Road  
Ipswich IP3 9LX

When:  
Every Wednesday  
1.15pm - 2.15pm  
£6.50 per session

Chat with us on 01473 345350 if you want to know more and join!

### Inclusive Badminton Tournament attracts 30 competitors

The *ActivLives Inclusive Badminton Tournament* was held recently at Gainsborough Sports Centre in Ipswich. The event, delivered by ActivLives, in partnership with Special Olympics Suffolk, was full of action with 30 competitors from inclusive groups in Ipswich, Wimbledon, Canterbury and Lincoln taking part.

These inclusive events are specifically for athletes who have an intellectual (learning) disability, they are sanctioned and supported by Special Olympics GB, as part of their calendar of events held across the country.



Competitors at the ActivLives inclusive badminton tournament

“The quality of play and the atmosphere created by the players and their supporters have been absolutely brilliant”, said Mike McCarthy from ActivLives. “We have already had some really positive feedback from athletes, families and volunteers”, added Mike.

Many thanks to the brilliant team of volunteers who made the event happen, and to our supporting partners Special Olympics Suffolk, Special Olympics GB, Suffolk Community Foundation and Ipswich Borough Council.

If you would like to find out more about getting involved with badminton for players with a learning disability, please call ActivLives on 01473 345350 or email [mike@activlives.org.uk](mailto:mike@activlives.org.uk). (Pictures by A. Boggis and The Indigo Opportunities)



Athletes received medals during the inclusive badminton tournament

### ActivBowls Volunteer Alfie

Alfie is a new volunteer who has been helping ActivAgeing Officer Frazier at his weekly ActivBowls sessions at Gainsborough Sports Centre.

Alfie has been involved in the sport for 13 years. He started when he was just 8 years old. Having played at various clubs in and around Ipswich honing his skills and knowledge of the sport over the years, it eventually led to him being called forward to represent Disability Bowls England. Earlier this year in the period of May 15th- June 3rd, Alfie went to Johannesburg, South Africa to play in the 2024 world championships. Alfie says “It was my first time ever playing for England and it was the experience of a lifetime!”

His enthusiasm and passion for Bowls is truly inspiring and we value his efforts supporting our wonderful members at ActivLives. Thanks Alfie for all your hard work as a volunteer- we’re lucky to have you!



Alfie (left) with Frazier at the Gainsborough Sports Centre

### Record attendance at Leiston BreatheFit!



On 11th December 2024, Frazier delivered his final ‘BreatheFit’ session in Leiston for the year to a crowd of 20 active participants! This has set a new record attendance at this session.

Members lovingly provided lots of lovely treats and we enjoyed a tea party after the session to celebrate another successful year together as a group.

Each week members are encouraged to stay after exercise to enjoy refreshments and the understanding company of others living with similar health conditions.

“It was wonderful seeing so many people keeping active, pro-actively managing their health in winter, which can be a very challenging time for those living with respiratory conditions. It was a proud moment and demonstrates the resilience we are experiencing amongst our ‘BreatheFit’ members here at ActivLives”, said Frazier.

“I’m proud of the sense of community in my ‘BreatheFit’ sessions. You can really feel a positive, caring atmosphere in all four of ActivLives’ ‘BreatheFit’ groups across Ipswich and East Suffolk. When participants are unwell with colds and the like, they keep away from sessions, which means people don’t feel worried about becoming unwell themselves. It is wonderful to see how members are mindful of others and protect one another, to keep healthy during the winter periods. We all keep in contact during the week via WhatsApp which provides much needed encouragement and motivation throughout winter, and this can be vital to people’s mental and physical health”, Frazier added.

Our BreatheFit sessions in Leiston at the Waterloo Centre, Waterloo Avenue, Leiston, IP16 4HE are every Wednesday from 1:00pm to 2:30pm.

### Beth from Asthma+Lung UK visits BreatheFit sessions

Beth has been visiting ActivLives ‘BreatheFit’ sessions to share her inspirational story and life experience with our members. Our members thoroughly enjoyed meeting with her and learning more about the charity she is a part of. Thank you for your time and efforts coming to meet with us, Beth!

Asthma+Lung UK is a fantastic nation-wide charity that can provide practical support and information to people living with respiratory conditions. The picture is from our ‘BreatheFit’ session in Stowmarket.



Beth from Asthma+Lung UK chatting with our BreatheFit members



If you want to know more about Asthma+Lung UK, please visit their website [asthmaandlung.org.uk](http://asthmaandlung.org.uk). Or contact them on 0300 222 5800 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information on our BreatheFit sessions in Felixstowe, Leiston, Stowmarket and Ipswich, please visit our website [activlives.org.uk](http://activlives.org.uk).

### BreatheFit programme receives recognition at Active Suffolk Awards 2024

'BreatheFit' was nominated for the Active Suffolk Awards 2024 for the category 'Innovative Project of the Year'.

'BreatheFit' was one of 4 local projects put forward for the award and received 'runner-up' position.

"It was wonderful to receive recognition for this important project and it helped to spread awareness of the vital support 'BreatheFit' offers to those living with respiratory and cardiac conditions in Ipswich and East Suffolk. It was very encouraging to be considered for an award and I aim to continue to develop the reach of this project throughout my home county of Suffolk", said Frazier.



Frazier receiving the certificate at the Active Suffolk Awards

### Heartbeat donates to 'BreatheFit'



A £1000 donation from Heartbeat charity to support BreatheFit given by Terry and Lyn Osborne

Terry and Lynn Osborne came to ActivBowls with a lovely surprise for our ActivAgeing Development Officer Frazier.

Terry and Lynn are involved with Heartbeat, which is a local charity in Ipswich and East Suffolk providing much needed support to people in the community living with cardiac conditions.

Heartbeat generously donated £1000 to ActivLives 'BreatheFit' project, which supports people in the community of Ipswich and East Suffolk living with respiratory and cardiac conditions.

Thank you, Heartbeat for your generosity. These funds will help us to continue to deliver much needed support to our local community with our 'BreatheFit' programme.

### In remembrance of John Collins



Sadly, loyal ActivLives member John Collins passed away in November 2024.

John was a long-standing member of our Leiston 'BreatheFit' group, and had been in regular attendance since it first started.

Frazier first met John while working for the NHS Pulmonary Rehabilitation services.

"John was a huge supporter of my work in the community supporting people living with respiratory conditions. He showed such determination and grit and he was an inspiration to our members. He would share his wisdom and first-hand experience in managing his long-term condition with all whom he met at my sessions.

Even on the occasions John was admitted to hospital he would be searching for new recruits on the ward he was on and would help spread the word about the support available in the community to health professionals who cared for him, so that they could then refer other people into these sessions to access the support they need.

He demonstrated that you can still live life to the full, even with a life-limiting condition like Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis. His positive outlook and humour despite his challenging health circumstances is something I will always fondly remember about him," Frazier said.

### Tribute to Barrie Powell – Beekeeper extraordinaire

Unfortunately, Barrie passed on the 29/12/24. We are so glad that we were able to thank Barrie with a Volunteering Award at the AGM in November, for all the years he supported the ActivGardens Bee Project. Barrie inspired so many people to take up bee keeping. His knowledge, humour and passion will be greatly missed by everyone at ActivLives.

Ian Hirst, Operations Officer at ActivGardens wrote this tribute to Barrie, which was read out at the AGM.

"I would like to take time, to honour Barrie Powell, whose knowledge, generosity and dedication have been the heartbeat of our community apiary. Over the years, Barrie has shared not only an incredible wealth of experience – from hive maintenance to sustainable beekeeping practices – but also provided a number of his highly sort after queen bees in addition to general hive needs. His teachings and contextual stories have been essential to team, empowering many of us to start our own apiary journeys.

Through the years of patient instruction, Barrie has transformed beginners into skilled beekeepers, always emphasising the importance of watching and working with your bees and not getting stuck to old routines that no longer serve purpose.



John Collins (right) in one of our BreatheFit sessions

John and his family kindly arranged for charitable donations to ActivLives at his funeral, in thanks for the support he received as a member. Our thoughts are with John's family and we thank them for the support they have shown ActivLives.

With over 75 years' experience Barrie always reminds us there is always something new and different to think carefully about. Barrie's legacy buzzes through every hive we care for, and every jar of the delicious honey harvested is testament to his expertise and kindness.

Thank you, Barrie, for your unwavering support, your wisdom, and for sharing so freely the joy of beekeeping with all of us. Our community – and our bees – are richer for having you among us." RIP Barrie....



**TAKE**  
  
**& RAISE FUNDS FOR**  
**ActivLives**

**Sunday, 29th June 2025**

Every penny you raise will support local communities across Ipswich and Suffolk through our inclusive and accessible sports, gardening and exercise programmes and special hubs.

Please contact our office on 01473 345350 to know more on how to support this important cause.

**2025 ActivWalks schedule is out now!**

Come and walk with us in the new year at the Christchurch Park. Please see the flyer to find out the schedule of date. Enjoy the scenery while walking and having a laugh and good conversations with the members and volunteers.



**ACTIVWALKS**  
**CHRISTCHURCH PARK, IPSWICH**

*Walk for Health & Make New Friends*

Join our lovely walk at the park! Our meeting place is at the Soane Street entrance, down from the mansion and near the park benches.

Every Other Monday  
 11am - 12 noon

**2025 Dates**

|                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 6 & 20 January   | 7 & 21 July          |
| 3 & 17 February  | 4 & 18 August        |
| 3, 17 & 31 March | 1, 15 & 29 September |
| 14 & 28 April    | 13 & 27 October      |
| 12 May           | 10 & 24 November     |
| 9 & 23 June      | 8 December           |



**NEW venue and day for the ActivSingers - Ipswich Group!**

A new ActivSingers – Ipswich Group is being formed in 2025,

come along for the **FREE TASTER** session

Friday, 14th February, 10am - 12 noon

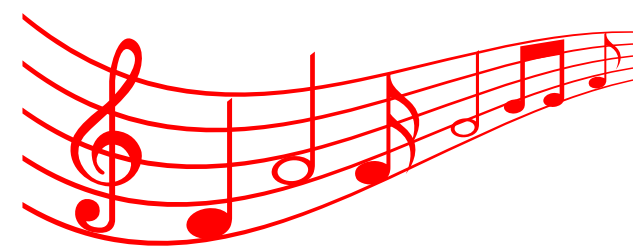
at Pinewood Community Hall

Laburnum Close

Pinewood, Ipswich

IP8 3SL

Call us on 01473 345350 for more information



**New Diabetes Prevention Programme for the Afro-Caribbean and other Ethnic Communities**



**NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme for the Afro-Caribbean Community in and around Ipswich**

A special Diabetes Prevention Programme is starting in early 2025 for the Afro-Caribbean community in Ipswich. The programme is free and open to eligible pre-diabetics and it helps prevent type 2 diabetes.

To find out if you are pre-diabetic, first take a simple on-line test at <https://preventing-diabetes.co.uk/know-your-risk/>

If your risk is high you can tell your GP and ask for your surgery to arrange a blood glucose test.

If the results of this test indicate you are diabetic the surgery will deal with this

If the results indicate you are pre-diabetic you will be offered a referral to the free, NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme. If you are happy, please accept this offer

Either wait for a call or phone 0333 5773010 to book yourself on. (Ignore any offers to sign up on-line.)

When you receive a call, which might not be for a week or two, please ask to join the programme running at the **New Wolsey Theatre Activity Space** in the new year

Health and Wellbeing coach Karl Hutchinson will be taking the NDPP at the New Wolsey Theatre in early 2025

**HEALTHIER YOU**  
 NHS DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAMME

**xyla**  
 Part of Acacium Group

Download our up-to-date Activities Programme in our website [activlives.org.uk](http://activlives.org.uk)

**The latest ActivLives timetable is available now!**



**Lots to do and join.....**

Edition 57  
 (from 1st January 2025)