

**Change Lives with ActivLives,
Please Support our Building Healthier,
Connected Communities Fundraising Campaign**

**DONATE
NOW**



Garden Coffee Morning

Monday, 8th June 2026
10am to 12pm

The People's Community Garden,
Maidenhall Allotments,
Halifax Rd,
Ipswich, IP2 8RE

Enjoy refreshments in our beautiful and relaxing community garden.

- Hot drinks and biscuits included
- Find out more about the community garden
- Meet our friendly volunteers and connect with your wider community

We can accommodate all abilities. Please contact Phoebe by email phoebe@activlives.org.uk or call 07756 533424 or ActivLives office on 01473345350

ActivLives Changes Lives

ACTIVLIVES 100 CLUB

Become a member of ActivLives 100 Club and win an exciting monthly cash prize
Open to people aged 18 years and over

JOIN NOW

HOW TO JOIN	WHY BE A MEMBER?	HOW TO REGISTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay £10 per month per entry subscription fee by standing order • Members are welcome to subscribe to more than one entry per month. 	<p>Win a cash prize every month whilst supporting our charity's inclusive health and wellbeing programmes and services in Ipswich and East Suffolk.</p>	<p>Please call us on 01473 345350 for more information or email jomel@activlives.org.uk</p>

For more information on ActivLives 100 Club membership, please visit our website: www.activlives.org.uk

Read me & Pass me on

ActivLives

Changes Lives

April - June 2026 Newsletter



Bringing more physical activities for springtime



Creating new friendly group with Woodbridge Men's Hub



Blossoming at the community gardens

ActivLives
Changes Lives

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

activlives.org.uk

Welcome Spring with ActivLives

Well, spring is here again! The sun has made an appearance, the daffodils are blooming, and blossom is returning to the trees...

2026 marks our 20th year of supporting thousands of people to improve their health and wellbeing—both physically and mentally—while reducing loneliness and social isolation by bringing people together through a wide range of fun and inclusive activities.

Our focus this year is to reach more older adults, increase participation, and ensure that the voices of older people are truly heard. We will be establishing a new co-production group to explore the challenges of Living Alone. In addition, we will be organising two events in Ipswich to showcase the organisations, community groups and resources available to support older people, while also listening to their experiences around the barriers and enablers to living a healthy, active lifestyle.

Our fundraising campaign continues, and we would like to thank everyone who has donated so far—we truly appreciate your support. We still have a long way to go, so please continue to donate and help us reach our target of £100,000. Donations can be made via our website, by cash, or by cheque. We are also launching the ActivLives 100 Club, which helps raise vital funds for the organisation—and 100 Club members could win up to £150 or £100 each month. To find out more, or to join, please contact the main office on 01473 345350.

Please help us spread the word about ActivLives and the amazing activities and services we deliver.



Julie Stokes
ActivLives CEO

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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.



Ian Hirst
ActivGardens Operations Officer

Over the past couple of years at the people's community garden, we have been trying to move away from a "traditional" monocultural style of planting towards a polyculture planting ethos. Planting plants that work well together has recently become a popular gardening trend; for us, it is a return to ecological common sense. The practice of growing a single crop in isolation does simplify management but it weakens resilience. It invites pest outbreaks, depletes specific soil nutrients, and relies heavily on chemical inputs, which we do not use. Companion planting mimics natural systems; polyculture planting imitates meadow, hedgerow, and woodland edges, all layered ecosystems that are all around us in the beautiful Suffolk countryside. By combining diverse plants that support one another, we can create gardens that are more productive, more resilient to Suffolk's changing weather, and more beneficial to wildlife.

In a county like Suffolk — with its sandy soils, heavy clay in places, salty coastal winds, and increasing summer drought — diversity is not just helpful; it is strategic. In your gardens, flowers are not ornamental extras, they are structural, medicinal, protective and nourishing. Below are a few examples of how to add "depth" to your own ecosystems at home.

Roses, Alliums and Pollinator Underplanting

- Roses thrive with aromatic companions.
- Lavender, Nepeta (catmint), and chives help deter aphids
- Early flowering alliums attract pollinators before roses peak

This layered planting improves air circulation (important in East Anglian summers) and creates continuous nectar flow for insects.

Fruit trees with Flower Guilds

- Under apple or plum trees suited to Suffolk gardens:
- Comfrey mines nutrients and provides mulch
 - Calendula and borage attract bees and beneficial insects
 - Wild strawberries or creeping thyme form living groundcover

The flowers increase pollination rates and biodiversity while protecting soil from summer drying.

Sweet Peas with mixed borders

- Sweet peas climb through shrubs or woven supports
- Nasturtiums act as trap crops for aphids
- French marigolds (Tagetes) deter soil pests and brighten beds

This mixture supports hoverflies, lacewings, and bees — key allies in organic systems.



Brassicas surrounded by Flowers

Instead of netted monocrop rows:

- Plant dill, chamomile, Calendula, and Nasturtium among kale and cabbages
- Flowering herbs attract parasitic wasps and hoverflies
- Nasturtiums draw aphids away from crops

The result is a bed that looks like a meadow — and functions like one.

Meadow Strips and Pollinator Corridors

Even in small gardens, integrating strips of:

- Cornflower
- Oxeye daisy
- Red clover
- Field scabious

creates habitat continuity for bees and butterflies. In coastal Suffolk, these hardy species tolerate wind and poorer soils.

Why do it?

- Builds healthier soil through varied root structures.
- Increases pollinator habitat across seasons with year-round nectar sources.
- Improves resilience to Suffolk's increasingly erratic rainfall patterns.
- Creates gardens that feel alive, dynamic, and interconnected.

Ultimately, shifting from monoculture to polyculture recognises that no plant thrives alone. In embracing diversity — in beds, borders, orchards, and allotments — Suffolk growers can cultivate not just crops, but ecosystems.

From the seed of an idea ... ActivGardens celebrates big birthdays!



Celebrating success on BBC Radio Suffolk



Young children get close to bees in our specially designed viewing apiary

This year ActivLives celebrates the amazing achievement of reaching its 20th birthday. Within the charity, ActivGardens is proud to be celebrating significant birthdays across all its projects. From a one-year grant in 2008 to set up a community garden on an abandoned area of allotment, this year we reach an astounding...



18 years of the People's Community Garden
 15 years at Chantry Walled Garden
 15 years of beekeeping at ActivHives
 10 years at ActivSheds
 10 years of Grow Your Community – Sudbury



To mark our success, and to champion the dedication and commitment of all our staff, volunteers and participants, we are planning a series of events all throughout the year...

Please come and join us to celebrate the greatness of gardening, nature, bees, creativity, woodworking, fresh veg, beautiful plants, a healthy environment – but most of all being healthy, happy and active together! ActivLives changes lives!

In this newsletter, we turn the spotlight on our two projects celebrating a whole decade....



Fay helps ease the load at Chantry Walled Garden



Team work at the People's Community Garden

Ten years strong - our journey in woodworking with a heart



ActivSheds members support each other in a friendly environment

As some of you may know, the Men's Sheds movement started in Australia many years ago, back in the 1990s. Its mission was simple – to keep men happy by providing a place for them to do "stuff" with other blokes - make, repair, build, renovate, recycle, pursue your own project, or do something for the community. Above all – make friends.

Since it started up, Men's Sheds have sprung up all over the world... Here in Ipswich, we are lucky to have one in the heart of Maidenhall - run by ActivLives.

ActivSheds started as a small group of men who set about repairing a dilapidated shed in which to operate. Ten years on and some of the original founders are still there, others have come and gone, but we are proud to say we have a strong core team of around 8 people who show up every Friday, come rain or shine, and who have formed close, supportive ties and friendships.

Almost out of nothing, the Sheddars have built an amazing work space, with work benches for people with a disability, shelving for project work, rafters to store bird boxes and garden trugs... as well as a tea bar to make the all-important cuppa.

In response to demand, we also run a second day to work with people who need a level of support to build their skills and confidence – including older people living with stroke or dementia, young people with autism or other learning disabilities, people living with severe mental health needs, people on probation to help them in their rehabilitation journey, and refugees and asylum seekers to enable them to integrate into the local community.



ActivSheds caters for all abilities

Members vote with their feet. Every Thursday and Friday you will find groups of people quietly working away at everything you can think of – not only bird tables, nesting boxes and the usual sorts of things you'd expect to find, but the most creative ideas you can think of – planters in the shape dogs, cats and peacocks, a hot air balloon taking off with an image of a member's wife drinking champagne in the basket, a stick for an Irish drum, and even a character out of Star Wars!

Members have completed projects big and small both for the community garden and for other community projects - building gardening bays for people with a disability, raised beds, signage, trellis and planters, and renovating benches and garden furniture, as well as building bee hives and crafting a giant bee sculpture!



Mark's garden pagoda is a popular line

Over the years, we have talked to many of the people who come to the Shed, and have heard heart-warming testimonies to how it helps them –

"It's the highlight of my week."

"It's a family of sorts."

"It's my support bubble."

"Like many men, I don't have any real friends – and I rely on this place."

Because it does help... Men's Sheds have a very serious side – they are set up to tackle loneliness and social isolation in men of all ages, which has a huge detrimental impact on their mental health, giving rise to many other health problems.

We are grateful to everyone who has supported us in ActivSheds over the years – including Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk County Council, East of England Co-op, and Suffolk Community Foundation. Special thanks must go to Councillor Bridgeman and Councillor Cenci.

Turn over to find out how we are celebrating...

Volunteering blossoms in Sudbury's park



Volunteers raise their tea mugs to 10 years of growing their community!

Our Sudbury project has its roots in a small park where anti-social behaviour was making life difficult for local residents. ActivGardens worked with volunteers, park users and various agencies to improve the park and inspire a sense of local pride.

The project gradually rippled out throughout the town, working with volunteers, residents and young people in housing estates and community green spaces, with the town's main park becoming our base and main area of focus.

Ten years on, an amazing group of up to 18 people meet each week to tend the flower beds, prune, weed and water, and keep Belle Vue Park blooming for the benefit of the whole community.

Some joined after taking part in Grow Your Wellbeing 12-week courses – helping people to gain skills and confidence and find a sense of community through gardening and therapeutic activities.

Our work this year has included designing and planting up new areas of the park, which has given us all a huge sense of satisfaction.

As part of a new project, 'Starting Point', in partnership with other charities, we are encouraging more young people to enjoy the benefits of gardening and horticulture.

Volunteers say -

"It helps you to mix with people. It gets you out of the house."

"I joined because I like gardening. Just the friendship – it's been marvellous."

"I love gardening – and liked the idea of meeting people with the same interests, getting out in the fresh air. It's been a very welcoming group and I feel I fit right in. It's especially nice when we sit down and have a cup of tea and a chat."

"I knew there wasn't a park keeper here anymore and I thought - what a great thing. I started when I finished at work and I've loved it ever since. Everyone's so friendly, and I enjoy the fresh air!"

Thanks to Suffolk County Council Public Health and Communities for initially funding the project and Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council for offering year on year support. Particular thanks to Councillors Laura Smith and Jessie Carter.

Grow Your Community Sudbury is part of Sudbury Open Gardens this year on Saturday 13th June – come and see our great work and find out more about what we do. We'll be raising our mugs of tea to celebrate 10 years of volunteering!



UPCOMING EVENTS



ActivSheds Open Day and 10-Year Celebration – find us next to the CRESS Pavilion on Halifax Road, Ipswich IP2 8RE Friday 8 May 11am to 2pm

Please come and meet members, look around at our facilities, find inspiration for your own project, view our wonderful products, and enjoy a cuppa and food....

Please contact Susannah for further details susannah@activlives.org.uk Mobile 07530 407302

Spring Adventure at the People's Community Garden Maidenhall Allotments, Halifax Road, Ipswich IP2 8RE

Wednesday 8th April 11am to 2pm

Fun for all the family - follow the egg trail, share fun and food, explore the community garden.

Book your place with Phoebe phoebe@activlives.org.uk 07756 533424 or call ActivLives 01473 345350



Coffee Morning at the People's Community Garden Maidenhall Allotments, Halifax Road, Ipswich IP2 8RE

Monday 8th June 10am to 12 noon

Enjoy a cuppa among our friendly volunteers, connect with your community, and find out more about what we do.

For more information - contact Phoebe phoebe@activlives.org.uk 07756 533424

A 12-week success on Strength & Balance programme



Ray, one of our Strength and Balance programme members in Woodbridge, has completed the 12 weeks strength and balance sessions. The programme is run by ActivLives and funded by East Suffolk District Council.

He wanted to show his appreciation to Jemma the instructor and Jenny, our volunteer with some lovely flowers. Ray said the sessions have really helped him to improve his balance and he enjoyed meeting new people.

New update on Strength & Balance programme in Suffolk

We have spaces available in our Strength and Balance sessions in Saxmundham, Holbrook, East Bergholt and Woodbridge. If you are aged 65 or over, you maybe able join our **FREE 12 sessions** at these different locations:

SAXMUNDHAM

Every Monday, 12pm -12.45pm,
The Fromus Centre, Street Farm
Road, Saxmundham, IP17 1AL

HOLBROOK

Every Monday, 1:30pm-2:30pm,
Holbrook Village Hall
The Street, Holbrook, IP9 2PZ

EAST BERGHOLT

Every Tuesday, 11.45am – 12.45pm,
Constable Memorial Hall
Gandish Rd, East Bergholt, CO7 6TP

WOODBIDGE

Every Friday, 11:45am – 12:45pm,
Fred Reynolds Centre, Churchill
Close, Woodbridge, IP12 4UU



[CONTACT US](#)

Call us on 01473 345350
for more information

Keeping local people active and connected with
ActivLives ReBalance programme



Keep on Moving sessions at East Bergholt with our members. The session is led by Instructor Jemma.

Our Keep on Moving sessions continue to be a fantastic way for people of all abilities to stay active, boost their wellbeing, and connect with others in a friendly and supportive environment. These sessions focus on gentle, accessible exercise designed to improve mobility, strength, and confidence, while also offering a great social space to meet new people. Whether participants are returning to activity after a break or simply looking to maintain a healthy lifestyle, Keep on Moving provides a welcoming and encouraging atmosphere where everyone can move at their own pace and feel the benefits of staying active.

IPSWICH

Monday, 10.30am -11.30am and 11.45am -12.45pm, **Goldcrest Court**, Goldcrest Rd, Ipswich IP2 0SF

Tuesday, 10.30am -11.30am, **St Mary at Stoke Church Hall**, Stoke Street, Ipswich IP2 8DA

Tuesday, 9.30am -10.30am and 11am – 12 noon, **Rushmere St Andrew Village Hall**,
Humber Doucy Lane, Ipswich IP4 3PD

Thursday, 10.30am -12 noon, **All Hallows Court**
Raeburn Road, Ipswich IP3 0EH

Friday, 9.30am – 10.30am and 11am -12 noon, **Rushmere St Andrew Village Hall**,
Humber Doucy Lane, Ipswich IP4 3PD

HOLBROOK

Monday, 12 noon – 1pm, **Holbrook Village Hall**
The Street, Holbrook, IP9 2PZ

FELIXSTOWE

Tuesday, 9.30am – 10.30am and 11.15am – 12.15am, **Walton Community Hall** High Street, Walton Felixstowe
IP11 9DS

Wednesday, 10.45am -12.15pm and 1.15pm - 2.45pm, **Old Felixstowe Community Centre**,
Ferry Road, Felixstowe IP11 9NB

EAST BERGHOLT

Tuesday, 10am – 11.30am, **Constable Memorial Hall**
Gandish Rd, East Bergholt, CO7 6TP



Kirton Keep on Moving members doing different routines in one of their sessions with instructor Laura

LEISTON

Wednesday, 9:30am – 11am, **Waterloo Centre**, Waterloo Ave, Leiston IP16 4HE

MARTLESHAM

Wednesday, 10.30am-12noon, **Martlesham Community Hall**, Felixstowe Road, Martlesham, Woodbridge, IP12 4PB

NEEDHAM MARKET

Wednesday, 10am – 11am and 11.30am -12.30pm, **Needham Market Bowls Club**, Barretts, Lane, Needham Market, IP6 8BX

SHOTLEY

Wednesday, 2pm – 3.30pm, **Shotley Village Hall**, The Street, Shotley, Ipswich, IP9 1LX

WOODBIDGE

Thursday, 10am -11am and 11:30am -12.30pm, **Quay Church**, Quay Street, Woodbridge IP12 1BX

Friday, 10am – 11am, **Fred Reynolds Centre**, Churchill Close, Woodbridge, IP12 4UU

KIRTON

Thursday, 10am -11.30am, **Kirton Church Hall**, Church Lane, Kirton IP10 0PU

SAXMUNDHAM

Monday, 10:15am-11:15am at **The Fromus Centre**, Street Farm Road, Saxmundham, IP17 1AL

WICKHAM MARKET NEW VENUE!

Thursday, 2pm – 3:30pm, **The George Pub**, 95 High Street, Woodbridge IP13 0RA



ActivFriends a warm welcoming space, kickstarted in 2026



ActivFriends is a very friendly and welcoming group, so you can be sure of a warm welcome, plenty of lively discussions and friendship, love and support, and a lot of laughter, because that is key to what ActivFriends is all about.

We meet on Fridays from 10.30 am until 2 pm at Whitehouse Baptist Church Hall, 8 Waterford Road, Ipswich, IP1 5NW. It is a weekly opportunity to make new friends, take part in fun activities and enjoy a freshly cooked 2 course meal, supported by regular volunteers.

ActivFriends had a lot of fun in the first quarter of 2026, we had Dance East with their “Love to Move” programme, lots of music, props, really good for everyone, and above all else it is a really uplifting and enjoyable session.

The lovely Gina sang us into Burns Night with a tartan clad musical session, with props, very Scottish, funny and very entertaining.

Phil Jackson, a wonderful local musician, composer and singer got everyone singing along to songs for the 50’s and 60’s, lot of singing, clapping and foot stomping.

The fun didn’t stop there we had Simon Goldsmith known as “Elvis” who came along and we had a fantastic session. He has the voice of an angel, very dubious wig and costume choices, and brilliant jokes. With showstopping songs, wisecracks and high kicks he made everyone smile, sing clap and laugh, sometimes all at the same time!!

So, if you are caring for a loved one who is aged 60+, are a former carer or feel isolated at home, this may be the group for you and we do have some limited spaces available now.

To find out about attending the Hub, please call Alison Pearson on 01473 345350 or email alison@activlives.org.uk for more information.

ActivLives Ipswich Men's Breakfast Hub – 4-year anniversary

With Spring now on its way, everything is coming into bloom, as is our Ipswich Men's Breakfast Hub as it celebrates its 4th year Anniversary and it's been a very enjoyable 4 years for everyone involved.

In our first quarter of this year we have explored the abandoned air bases and runways from WW2, looked at local river conservation, wildlife in Suffolk Rivers, discussed a variety of health issues, looked at garden chores to kickstart Spring and celebrated Charles 80th Birthday, cake and candles, with lots of stories and laughter.

We have enjoyed some lovely sessions, reminiscence discussions about life events and farm life in Suffolk, hobby discussions and recently a wonderful presentation from Dr David Norman. David is a well-known, local historian with a passion for Military items and in-depth research, and also is an avid collector. This particular session was all about the helmets of WW1, WW2, and those from the 1950's through to the 1980's. He brought a selection of UK battle helmets, also those from auxiliary and support services, ceremonial helmets and helmets from other countries. Everyone had an opportunity to have a thorough look at them all and in the end we all were able to try them on for size, very much history in action.

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, Andrew and our wonderful volunteer Mary, there is plenty of laughter and banter on the day, we always have a lot of both at all our sessions.



Woodbridge Men's Hub – Wonderful Musical and Art Session



Woodbridge Men's Hub is up and running and looking for more members to join us on a weekly basis.

We meet on a Monday Morning from 10 am until noon at Whisstocks Room at Grove Court Residential Home, 15 Beech Way, Woodbridge IP12 4BW. There is plenty of parking on site and it is also on a regular bus route and near the train station.

The sessions cover all sorts of subjects and we have plenty of discussions around local news topics, health, hobbies, events coming up and offer signposting to all of ActivLives activities and any other local events. We have local links with many support charities and agencies and will be inviting them along to showcase the services they can offer on a local basis.

Teas, coffees and soft drinks are readily available and we are able to offer freshly cooked sausage rolls, bacon sandwiches, fresh fruit and assorted biscuits, something to suit everyone's dietary requirements.

Recently we were delighted to host the meeting at Carlow's Room at The Bull Inn on Market Hill, Woodbridge, thanks to the hospitality of the Owners.

Katie Bicknell, a locally based, internationally renowned flute player, came along to give us a brilliant visual presentation about the life of a flautist in the UK and on the worldwide stage, interspersed with wonderful musical pieces, which was simply amazing.

In addition, Katie is an accomplished painter and she brought along some of her beautiful canvases and we were able to see more during her presentation.

At this particular session we invited some other local members to enjoy the session as well. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed it and here are some of the comments from that morning.

"Thank you for this morning, it was very interesting to listen to and I enjoyed it very much, especially the description of her time in India and her charity accomplishments. She is a very genuine and talented person who it was a delight to meet."

"The music was just breath-taking, simply wonderful"

"Many thanks for organising this morning, we really enjoyed it"

So, if you want to join us in 2026 in Ipswich, and are interested in our Woodbridge Men's Hub on a Monday Morning, call Alison Pearson, Project Lead on 01473 345350 or email alison@activlives.org.uk.

What's On with ActivSport

There will be a few changes during April to our ActivSport programme. We are currently recruiting a new Sports Development Co-ordinator and there are some changes to the activities we deliver. Please check out the new listings below.



Ping Pong & Short Tennis

Wednesday, 10:30 am – 12 noon
Gainsborough Sports Centre, Ipswich IP3 0SP
and Thursday, 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM
Whitton Sports Centre, Ipswich, IP1 6LW
£6.00 per session

ActivBowls – Short Mat Indoors

Tuesday 10:30 am – 12:30 pm from
September to April at the Gainsborough Sports
Centre, 5 Braziers Wood Road, IP3 0SP
£6.00 per session

Activ Lawn Bowls

Tuesday 10:30 am – 12:30 noon from June to
August at the Kesgrave War Memorial
Community Centre, Twelve Acre Approach,
Kesgrave, Ipswich, Suffolk IP5 1JF
£6.00 per session

FREE New Age Kurling Sessions in Leiston
Tuesdays 10:30 am – 12 noon at the Waterloo
Centre, Waterloo Ave Leiston IP16 4HE

Walking Football

Thursday 10.30am-12.00pm at
Gainsborough Sports and Community Centre,
5 Brazier's Wood Road, Ipswich, IP3 0SP
£6.00 per session

ActivBoccia Ipswich

Thursday from 10:30am – 12:30 pm at the
Whitton Sports Centre, Ipswich, IP1 6LW
£6.00 per session

ActivKurling & Boccia Group

Monday 11:30 am – 1:30 pm at the
Felixstowe Leisure Centre, Seafont,
Felixstowe, IP11 2AE
£7.00 per session

ActivWalks

FREE healthwalks Every other Monday
11.00am-12.00noon (excluding Bank Holidays)
at the Christchurch Park. Ipswich



Call us on 01473 345350
for more details and
how to register



Inclusive boccia shines again in Ipswich



ActivLives held another very successful Inclusive Boccia Tournament recently in Ipswich. The tournament which attracted 40, mostly Suffolk-based competitors, included four divisions of athletes with a variety of disabilities. The standard of boccia played was excellent, although, as ever, it was the great atmosphere in the hall throughout the day which will last longest in the memory. This event provided some of the competitors an opportunity to help prepare for the Special Olympics GB National Summer Games, being held in August in Birmingham.

Many thanks to all of the great volunteers from ActivLives and Special Olympics Suffolk, who made this event such a success.

ActivLives are very grateful to their delivery partners Special Olympics Suffolk, and to Special Olympics GB, Sport England and Ipswich Borough Council, for their continued support with these events.

From April onwards, Special Olympics Suffolk will take on the lead from ActivLives in delivering these inclusive boccia (and badminton) events. ActivLives will however, continue to support Special Olympics Suffolk in helping to promote and develop inclusive sport in our county.

If you would like to find out more about how to get involved with boccia, the world's most inclusive sport, please contact ActivLives on 01473 345350 or email mike.inclusivesport@btinternet.com



**Saving, Sustainability and Style
by Maxine Dalrymple, a Lunch Club Member**

I started buying clothes and accessories in charity shops when money was tight but now I buy from choice. I like the variety and the challenge to try and be smart on a budget. I also like the sustainability aspect. If you're tempted to try it too, I've got some tips:

Don't be restricted by size. Look at 2 sizes each side of your "usual". Brands vary enormously and sizing is anything but standard.

Check the care instructions. You don't want to buy a garment for less than the Costa a coffee then triple it with dry cleaning. I suggest don't wash "dry clean only" items. Although friends have had success I reduced a size 10 jumper to fit a 6--12 month baby and turned a lovely black dress into a camouflage patterned lump.

Check it's intact - Zip the zip, button the buttons and study the studs. You don't need the hassle of replacing these - they can cost more than the garment.

Don't fall for that "knock 'em dead" ball gown if you're never likely to go to the ball (cue violins). Sounds obvious but it'll hang in your wardrobe reproaching you forever - or is that just me?

If you've got a special event like a wedding coming up look for occasion wear. Modern fabrics mean these dresses are often washable. Also look for hats and fascinators or "frighteners" as my late husband insisted (pertronophobia, fear of feathers - who knew?).

Look out for unworn items with the original labels. People increasingly shop online and the goods come from China. They make it well nigh impossible to return these.



Don't um and ah. If you like it, buy it. Don't go away and think about it. I guarantee it will be gone, or is that just me?

Check out shoes. People buy them on line and wear them once and "Ouch - Never Again" - we've all been there! You have the advantage to try before you buy

If you're a Magpie like me and can't resist a sparkler, pick sequins rather than stuck-on glitter. I washed and tumbled, in a laundry bag, a sparkly top (Xmas 2024). Glitter spread everywhere. Despite sticky-taping and Hoovering for Britain, its legacy lives on. Gone but not forgotten and when the sun shines.....

Mistakes aside, if you're like me, you'll get a kick out of finding a designer label at a fraction of the original price.

I hesitate to recommend one shop as I've shopped in all of them but I do favour St. Elizabeth's Hospice. It's local, does an incredible job and needs every penny it can get. I also favour Cats Protection as I'm mad about cats. Happy hunting!



Goodbyes



Colin (left) in one of his radio guestings at Suffolk Sound promoting ActivLives and Mike (right) receiving the BBC Radio Suffolk Make A Difference Active Awards 2025

Unfortunately, we have to say goodbye to two valued members of staff: Colin Baldwin, who is retiring, and Mike McCarthy, who is moving on to follow his passion for developing opportunities for people living with a disability to take part in inclusive sport.

Colin joined ActivLives last year as Partnership and Fundraising Officer, where he played a key role in raising the profile of the organisation with local businesses and companies. He also helped to develop important fundraising initiatives, including legacies, the 100 Club, and the £100,000 campaign, as well as supporting the organisation at fundraising events. We thank Colin for his contribution to ActivLives and wish him a long, happy, and active retirement.

Mike has been with ActivLives for nearly 12 years and has made a significant impact during his time with us. He developed the ActivIpswich Project, funded by Sport England in partnership with Ipswich Borough Council, and more recently has focused on engaging both younger and older people with disabilities in inclusive sport.

Mike introduced activities such as New Age Kurling and Boccia across many areas of Suffolk, and trained volunteers and staff from a range of organisations in leadership skills to ensure sessions could continue beyond the life of the project. He also initiated inclusive tournaments in inclusive Badminton and Boccia, attracting between 50 and 100 participants, and developed a wide-ranging inclusive sports programme including indoor and outdoor bowls, walking football, table tennis, short tennis, health walks, badminton, and Boccia. Participants have also had opportunities to try activities such as archery, golf, and gymnastics.

Mike will continue to deliver inclusive badminton sessions in partnership with Special Olympics Suffolk (SOS). Inclusive Boccia sessions in Stowmarket will now be delivered by Everyone Active at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre, led by Evie Edwards.

The rest of the programme will continue as planned, and we are currently recruiting a new ActivSport Development Co-ordinator to further develop these sessions.

We will miss both Colin and Mike and thank them for their dedication and hard work. We wish them all the very best for the future. We are pleased that we will continue to work alongside Mike and Special Olympics Suffolk to support badminton and Boccia tournaments, and Mike has kindly agreed to provide session cover as and when required.



Fun, Friends and Music at the ActivLives Social!

Our recent ActivLives Social was a fantastic success, bringing members together from our sessions in Ipswich, Felixstowe, Kirton and Woodbridge for a wonderful afternoon of fun and friendship. Guests enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea while listening to great live music from Coast Buskers, with some members taking to the dance floor!

The room was full of laughter and conversation as members enjoyed the chance to socialise and meet others from different ActivLives groups in the area. The afternoon also featured an exciting raffle, a lively game of music bingo and a quiz set by Angela Pratt – many thanks to Angela for putting this together.

We were delighted to raise an amazing £802. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the afternoon so enjoyable, and a special thank you to those who were unable to come along but still supported us by purchasing raffle tickets.

A huge thank you goes out to Trimley Sports and Social Club for hosting us so warmly and helping the event run smoothly.



Deputy Mayor Visit



Deputy Mayor Pat Bruce-Browne very kindly visited ActivLives on Tuesday 3rd February to see some of the activities we deliver across our programmes.

During her visit, she met staff and volunteers at Chantry Walled Garden, where she was given a tour of the site and learned more about the amazing work taking place there. She then visited the Short Mat Bowls group at Gainsborough Leisure Centre, where she spoke with members, staff, and volunteers, including Alfie. The visit continued at Rushmere, where she observed part of an exercise session and again had the opportunity to engage with staff, volunteers, and participants. And then on to Chantry Walled Garden meeting staff, volunteers and was shown around the site.

The tour concluded at St Mary at Stoke Lunch Club, where the Deputy Mayor enjoyed a hot two-course meal and spent time chatting with members and speaking with volunteers about their experiences.

ActivLives would like to thank the Deputy Mayor for giving up a morning of her very busy schedule to come and meet people involved with ActivLives.

Rainbow Tea Room Donation



If you haven't visited the Rainbow Tea Room in Felixstowe on 7, Beach Station Road, IP11 2DR, then I suggest you do. It's open from Thursday – Sunday 10am – 3pm each week and serves hot meals, light snacks, Sunday Roasts & lovely desserts. Carol Bennett who opened the Tea Room eight years ago, very kindly picked ActivLives to receive a donation from her Christmas Raffle in December 2025 and raised £155 for the charity.

Carol not only provides lovely food but a safe social space for people to enjoy a homemade and homegrown meal and welcomes new customers, people on their own and her regulars.

The Tea Room also has an array of antiques and curiosities for you to purchase as well.

ActivLives would like to thank Carol Bennett for her support and donation.



The ICare Connect Project - Living Alone Initiative



KatarzynaBialasiewicz from Getty Images with Canva



Nes from Getty Images Signature with Canva

This year, the project will focus on supporting carers and former carers, as well as developing the new Men's Hub in Woodbridge. We will be also exploring opportunities to establish a second hub in East Suffolk to support more men in the community.

In addition, we are developing a new initiative called "Living Alone." This will be aimed at former carers, carers whose loved ones are now in care, and individuals who live on their own.

Drawing on peoples lived experiences, the project will explore a wide range of issues that can arise when living alone. These include boredom, loneliness and social isolation, bereavement and grief, as well as practical challenges such as financial management, accessing benefits, employment, health and wellbeing, transport, safety and security, and digital inclusion. We will also look at access to social activities, practical help at home, emotional and mental health support, recovery after hospital admissions or operations, medication management, exercise, and even support around caring for pets.

While many services already exist, knowing where to go and how to access them can often be difficult—particularly for older adults who find themselves living alone for the first time after many years with a partner.

We are putting the call out for people who live alone to come and join us to look at the issues people face. If you live on your own and would like to be involved, please contact the main office on 01473 345350 and ask for Alison or Julie

ActivAble Project Update



Picture from Suffolk High Sheriff

Alana led the boccia session at Live Well Hub Leiston

The ActivAble Project funded by Sizewell C Community Fund started a new FREE Kurling session at Leiston, every Tuesday from 10:30 am – 12 noon at the Waterloo Centre, Waterloo Ave Leiston IP16 4HE. The session is led by Alana Sewell, Activable Project Officer.

On 26th March, Social Prescribing Day, Alana had a stand and also led a boccia session at the Live Well Hub Leiston.



ActivLives staff participated in the Fundraising and Marketing Workshop with Lauren Shand on 23rd March. It was a fun session that will help the charity move forward with a new plan on raising more funds and promoting its programmes more effectively.

A free healthwalk at Christchurch Park in Ipswich on 16th of March. The health walk is led by experienced volunteers walk leaders. The schedule is every other Monday 11.00am-12.00pm (excluding Bank Holidays).



Boccia with Mike at The Foxhall Centre, Lavender Trust on 25th of February (Picture from Lavender Trust Facebook page)



ActivGardens team of volunteers and staff are preparing for the Spring Plant Fair on 7th April at the Chantry Walled Garden in Chantry Park.



“A credit to the ActivLives volunteers and our grounds operatives who work hard to keep all the plant beds and green spaces blooming.”
-Babergh District Council (Statement & picture from the council’s Facebook page)

The Suffolk East WI invited ActivLives to their AGM held at Trinity Park. CEO Julie Stokes led a seated exercise session with all attendees enjoying movement to music.

