



**Kent and Medway**  
NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust



Your news bulletin from KMPT Voluntary services

## Welcome to Volunteer Voices...

May is a very busy month for us in Voluntary services as it's Mental Health Awareness Week and Dementia Action Week - both awareness weeks that are very close to our hearts. We have been travelling around the sites and making the most of the lovely, sunny weather we've been having to raise awareness and spread some joy.

This month has also been special as we've welcomed back our lovely Kirsty, the Voluntary services coordinator for north Kent. You can read more about her return below and remember to drop her a line if you have any questions or just want to say hi.

A huge thank you to everyone who has already been in touch and been flexible, understanding and patient while we all try to move forward as a service. It's been great getting to see more of you and be able to return to running small, outdoor events.

With the restrictions in England set to be relaxed further on Monday 17 May, we hope that we will be able to host more events over the summer months and be able to invite more of you back into your positions. You can find out more about the KMPT roadmap, which is in line with the government's own journey [here](#). If you have any questions please do [contact the team](#).

Don't forget to keep in contact with us and let us know if you have any new, volunteering ideas or if there's anything you've been doing in your spare time that you think your fellow volunteers would be interested in.

Keep staying safe.

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## Welcome back Kirsty!

Kirsty Newton, our Voluntary services coordinator for north Kent has returned from maternity leave and is eager to continue with the work she started with various services on the Dartford (Green Acres) site.

Kirsty has been reflecting on the roles that she helped to develop on this site prior to being on leave.

"My time at Dartford got off to a slow start as there was not much awareness of Voluntary services. Since then, staff have been really eager to have volunteers assist them and are seeing the benefits of using our service to better the experiences of our patients. I'm looking to expand the service at Dartford in the near future, by offering staff and patients extra support through the service and showing them what we as a team can offer. I also hope to recruit more dedicated volunteers so we can continue to grow."

Helen Collins, Voluntary services manager said: "We are delighted to have Kirsty coming back, we've missed her and can't wait for north Kent to have their coordinator back!"

If you have time for a cuppa then Kirsty would love to meet with you.

If you would like more information, please contact Kirsty on 07717 580279 or email: [kirsty.newton2@nhs.net](mailto:kirsty.newton2@nhs.net)



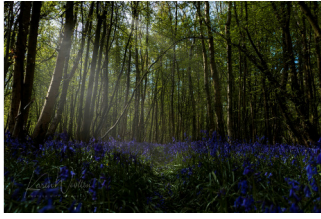
## Mental Health Awareness Week

As a team we have been very busy celebrating all things Mental Health Awareness Week. This year's theme is nature and so we've been finding ways to connect our staff and patients with the environments that surround them. We've been travelling with an art show, walking around Maidstone and even visiting Elmley Nature Reserve. Here's more on our adventures...

### **Nature art show**

We asked staff, patients, carers, volunteers and the general public to use this week as an opportunity to get creative. People have been submitting their artistic interpretations of nature to our Communications team which we have been displaying throughout the week in various ways. As well as having an art gallery on our intranet and sharing pictures on social media, we have been travelling to the three main KMPT sites with an outdoor art gallery for staff and patients to view. Everyone has loved seeing the artwork and it's brought a smile to lots of faces. A huge thank you to everyone who has taken part.

Below are just some of the amazing pieces we have received.

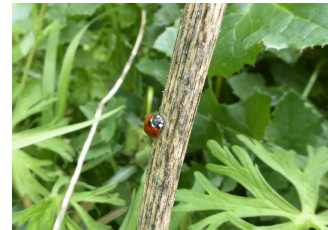


### **Birds, bugs and butterflies walk**

The Voluntary services and Chaplaincy teams joined forces to provide some passionate and knowledgeable wildlife walks for staff and patients.

The Rev. Ruth Bierbaum, Chaplain, and Stephen Tucker, Voluntary services coordinator ran 'Birds, Bugs and Butterflies' on 13 May 2021. The guided walk provided staff and patients at our Maidstone site, with an understanding of what fauna and flora were around them; and gave them the opportunity to take time to appreciate the natural world and the relaxation, peace and joy it can bring.

You can see some pictures from the walk below.



### **Trip to Elmley Nature Reserve**

The Voluntary services team worked with our Forensic outreach and liaison services to organise a trip for patients to Elmley Nature Reserve on the Isle of Sheppey on the afternoon of 13 May 2021. They were given a guided tour of the reserve so they could experience the tranquillity of being in nature and the amazing wildlife that live at Elmley including hares, marsh harrier, egrets, lapwings and redshank.

Elmley Nature Reserve is a family-run farm full of trails, wildlife, a cafe and 3,300 acres of breathtaking marshland to explore. The team at Elmley run tours - both walking and safari style in a truck, but also encourage visitors to find their own adventures by following the trails (by foot and car)! The reserve is open to the public, but you must book a ticket to enter.

Stephen Tucker, our Voluntary services coordinator, is a 'friend of Elmley' and has been talking to the team there for a while about ways we could collaborate. They are incredibly pleased to have found a date, particularly during Mental Health Awareness Week, for our patients to visit. We hope they had an amazing time.



Photograph (c) Rebecca Douglas

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## Time for a Cuppa

Last week was Dementia UK's 'Time for a Cuppa' week, which aims to raise awareness and have us talking with friends and colleagues about dementia.

As part of the celebrations, Clare Streeter, our Engagement and liaison coordinator met up with volunteer Jonah in Dane John Gardens, Canterbury for a socially distanced coffee and a croissant.

Jonah is a student at Kent University studying Psychology and was a previous placement student at KMPT, supporting the Forget-Me-Nots. Jonah has worked tirelessly during the pandemic to support the Forget-Me-Nots as an IT buddy and a befriender. He also helps with administration and is responsible for the 'keeping in touch' newsletter that we have been sending to the Forget-me-Nots during the pandemic. He has also volunteered on the 'Time and Place' project.

Jonah has worked as a volunteer way beyond his role description and we are extremely grateful. He is hoping to start safe face-to-face support for those living with dementia when the social restrictions allow.

Thank you Jonah for all your support, from us



and the Forget-Me-Nots.

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## Clare, Louise and Zoe are taking on Stonehenge to support those living with dementia

Clare Streeter, Louise Blackwood and Zoe Young from Voluntary services are all taking on a walking challenge to support those living with dementia.

Our three intrepid staff members have been taking part in the Virgin Pulse destination GO challenge, to promote fitness and wellbeing amongst NHS staff. Having got the walking bug, they are now going to take on Stonehenge and walk its 13 mile perimeter this September, to raise money for those currently living with dementia and support research into finding a cure.

They would love your support, so please go to their fundraising page to donate towards this good cause: <https://www.justgiving.com/team/TeamKMPT>

Good luck Team KMPT!

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## Webb's Garden Open Day

On Tuesday 27 April, Voluntary services held an open day at Webb's Garden in Canterbury, to mark National Garden Week.

It was open from 10am to 2pm with a variety of activities. We had plants and produce for sale, a raffle, a book trolley and an information stall about volunteering with KMPT. Refreshments were available and as we were blessed with lovely, sunny and warm weather, it meant our guests were able to enjoy their refreshments outside in the glorious sun. This was a wonderful opportunity for developing links with the local community as some families from the new housing development across the road from the hospital came to join us; mums and their children enjoyed sitting on the grass with their tea and cake, lapping up the ambience, peace and tranquillity.

Helen, Zoe, Stephen and Louise were on hand to talk to guests about the garden and volunteering within KMPT, as well as offering tours of the garden. A special thank you to our volunteers Stuart, Jonathan and Janet who also helped out on the day.

This was a very successful open day, we enjoyed meeting everyone and we look forward to holding more events at Webb's.

Want to get involved in garden/horticultural and maintenance opportunities? Contact Zoe Young on 01227 812137 or 07717 586320 or email [zoe.young4@nhs.net](mailto:zoe.young4@nhs.net)



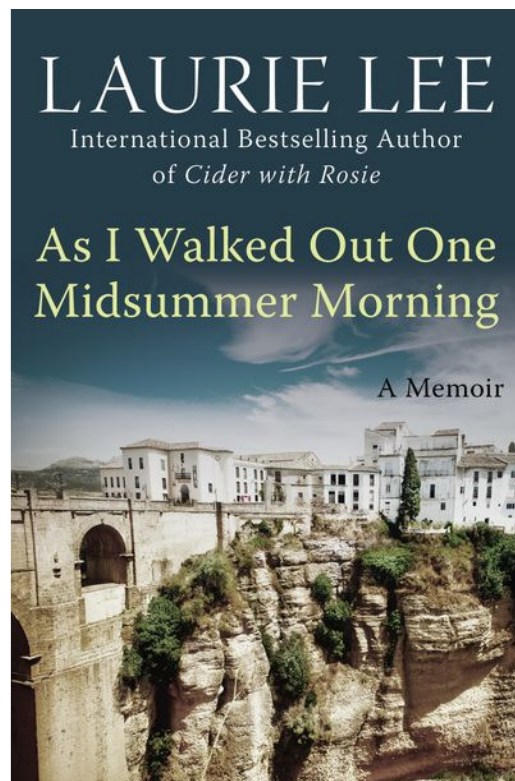
## Book club news

In our book club, last month we read '*As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*' by Laurie Lee.

Here is a review from book club member, Eleanor:

"I loved it and can't wait to read the third book '*A moment of War*'. I loved the autobiographical approach. The story was great. I loved the characters he met along the way and his way with words was superb. It made me want to follow his route along the South of England. Such an easy enjoyable read. Had originally read '*Cider with Rosie*' at school and I had forgotten what a breath of fresh air Laurie's writing is. Some very moving bits in it too which brought a tear to my eye."

Many thanks Eleanor. If you would like to join our book club, then please email [Louise Blackwood](mailto:Louise.Blackwood).



## We love animals here in Voluntary services

National Pet Month in April was one of our favourite events in the calendar as everyone in our team loves animals and we know that lots of you do too!

As one last celebration of all things pets (for this year), we thought we'd share some pictures of volunteers and their pets...

- Sue and her PAT dog, Grace (with Zoe and Clare, and Clare's lovely dog Flora). Sue and Grace hope to return to the wards soon.
- Debbie, our Crisis team administrator and her PAT dog Reggie, who is coming in to spend

time with the crisis team to provide therapeutic support to staff.

- Sheila, one of our wonderful Webb's Garden volunteers and her wonderful Maine Coon cat, Ronnie.



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## And don't forget...

It's Volunteers Week from the 1 to 7 June! We will be celebrating all things volunteers during the week, and we will keep you posted on plans! If you would like to send us an account of your volunteering experiences, a story from a favourite day at KMPT or something special you have done as part of our one of our groups, then let us know! Email [kmpt.communications@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.communications@nhs.net) with your tales.



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

We'd love to hear what you think.

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