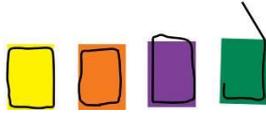


Style Acre

Supporting people with learning disabilities



STORIES **SPECIAL UPDATE** **AUTUMN 2020**

A message from Chris Ingram, CEO

Dear friend of Style Acre

We have again produced a shorter edition of Style Acre *Stories* as we move through autumn and continue our journey through the pandemic. This is the third attempt at writing this piece as things keep changing so rapidly and we have now entered lockdown 2.0 with new national restrictions returning. Having enjoyed some respite through the summer months we now know that winter will bring with it renewed challenges and limitations on what people can do, we just don't know how long for and when things will change again. I continue to be amazed by the resilience and creativity shown by the people we employ and support through this period, they have been truly amazing and we will do everything we can to ensure people have the support and resources to maintain this.

It was lovely to see people taking advantage of the summer weather to get out and about, work on their gardens and trugs and meet back up with friends and family where possible. Our focus on wellbeing has continued through this period and it great to see the benefits for so many. Our Miles and Smiles and StoryFest activities have built upon this in different ways and have really allowed people's creativity to shine through. Whilst Halloween was different this year everyone had just as much fun with their decorations, food and costumes. The Tea Room at Blewbury, with increased seating in a marquee, and our Charity shop in Wallingford fully embraced Halloween with some amazing decorations and fun activities. Unfortunately, both the Tea Room and the Shop had to close again on 5th November in line with Government guidance but they will be back up and running as soon as we are advised it is safe and legal to do so.

We have written to families about new restrictions on visits to houses/gardens and how we can help keep people in touch with each other during lockdown. We have had to make a number of changes to how we provide our day opportunity services to ensure everyone's needs are being met and people are kept safe but we remain open and have written to people separately about individual circumstances. We have now started planning for Christmas because whilst it is clear that it won't be a typical Style Acre Christmas it is essential for everyone that we make it as fun and inclusive as we can. We will distribute the full schedule of events and activities once they are finalised and I hope you can all find the time to join us in some of them.

In other Style Acre news, I am delighted that our new service at Challow Station, near Wantage has opened. The plot comes with a separate large 'barn' that will help us expand our social enterprise and work opportunities for people. We were also successful in the recent Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers awards winning the 'Care Employer' award and James Simpson (Acting Assistant Manager at Drayton) won the 'newcomer to care' award. Element 6 who have been a great supporter of Style Acre through our 'Project Carrot' campaign also won the Inspiration award having been nominated by us earlier in the year. More details are on our website, it is always lovely to be recognised by others for the work we do and a big well done to everyone.

Finally, I wanted to say a huge thank you to all our friends and supporters who have been so amazing during this difficult time, it is greatly appreciated. I wish you all the very best, keep safe.

Chris Ingram

Fundraising & Events News

Keep up with all our latest news - follow us on Facebook (@StyleAcre), Twitter (@StyleAcre) or Instagram (@styleacrecharity). Or read our latest news page on our website: <https://styleacre.org.uk/newsevents/news/>

Save the Date for the Big Give



One donation, double the impact! Tuesday 1st December to Tuesday 8th December is the Big Give Christmas Challenge Week. Thanks to our generous pledgers and a champion funder, online donations up to £5000 will be doubled during the challenge week. That means we could raise £10,000 for our Ways to Wellness Project! Will you help us? Save the date now and help us spread the word during the campaign week - keep an eye on social media, our website and your emails for the campaign link.



Join our Virtual Santa Dash This year the Santa Dash is going virtual! Walk or run a minimum of 3k, where you want and when you want during the week of the 29th November to 8th December. Sign up on our website: www.styleacre.org.uk/events/virtual-santa-dash (Just remember to adhere to government guidance and advice, particularly regarding social distancing and group numbers.)

Christmas Cards This year the people we support have designed a new set of Style Acre Christmas cards. We have also designed a 2021 calendar with images and quotes from across Style Acre, to reflect on 2020. Each pack has a selection of 10 cards, and each card is A6 size. Our Style Acre calendars are A4 in size. Order at <https://styleacre.org.uk/events/christmas-shop/>

Recent News

Coronavirus Community Support Fund



We've received a wonderful £30,000 grant from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund, distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund. This will help us cover core costs for our community hubs and we are incredibly grateful to have received this money at a difficult time. Thanks to the Government for making this possible.

My Marathon | My Way Back in the May edition of Stories, we were encouraging you to sign up to our My Marathon | My Way challenge. Well, lots of you did! And alongside the people we support and employ, you helped raise over £13,000. Thank you!

Style Acre Art Auction



Thank you for supporting the Style Acre artists. Our online art auction raised £390. The auction was set up to showcase the incredible artwork created by some of the people we support in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. A big thank you and well done to Mark, Marianne, Dick, Andrew and Daryl for their lovely artwork. The inspiration and force behind the art auction was Mark - his dream of becoming an artist and selling his paintings to help raise money for Style Acre is why we ran this auction. You can read more here: <https://styleacre.org.uk/style-acre-art-auction-raises-390/>

Dogs at a Distance We decided to run our virtual dog show as we couldn't run the face-to-face event at the Tea Room this year. It is normally part of our Summer Fete. A big thank you & well done to everyone who took part! The event raised over £200 and lots of the people we support enjoyed judging our entries.



Tea Room Crowdfunder Like many venues, the Tea Room is so reliant on outdoor space and good weather to help sustain income at the moment. Tea Room customers Jess and Caroline wanted to help, so they set up a Crowdfunder that raised £3890! We also had an incredible £2000 donation from an anonymous supporter. Thank you to everyone who donated. Keep an eye out at the Tea Room - there are some weatherproof additions to the outdoor space coming your way!

Day Opportunities Update



Over the summer our day services worked towards providing support at a similar level as before the April lockdown. We are now working in smaller groups or 1:1, with many activities being different. Before the November lockdown we were able to go on lots of day trips, and restart some safe activities. It was lovely to visit museums, wildlife parks and take trips in the countryside and parks, alongside restarting some activities such as horse riding, bowling and golf. It was really lovely to see people getting back out and meeting friends again.

In the November lockdown we are able to continue to offer a day service to those people who want support. People will be able to do activities in our buildings or go out for a walk. It is really great to be able to provide support for people's health & well-being, during what could be a very difficult time for people.

We have begun to offer more day opportunities support in some supported living houses, alongside the creation of a new project called 'Turnstyle Internal Group Support'. This is a team providing Turnstyle support to those people in supported living who would usually attend Turnstyle. After restrictions ease, support will be provided mainly in the community offering people the opportunity to meet up with friends and visit places of interest.



The Wantage garden has been a beautiful place to be over the summer and has been well used by regular groups, alongside new people using the garden. The garden remains open for some individuals during the new lockdown period. The Green Acre Garden team restarted gardening in June and have been working extremely hard over the summer and are now getting the gardens ready for winter.

We are still running some zoom sessions, which provide people with the opportunity to see larger groups of friends. T2 run a great live baking session and the Turnstyle Makaton group goes from strength to strength! SABRe ran a 'virtual Summer Fete' with a raffle, tombola, live shows including 'meet Farmer James', a magic show and a music performance.

Style Acre hosted the first ever Zoom Living Room Olympics on 9th November. Events included paper plane javelin throwing, indoor skittles and figure hoovering!



The charity shop reopened in June, gradually returning to a normal 6-day week. Work placements also restarted alongside some new placements. The range of placements on offer has increased – with people we support helping to sell items on eBay or Facebook Marketplace, cleaning and creating the shop window display. The shop has closed for the November lockdown, with some individuals still able to continue with work placements – selling things online and sorting stock in the closed shop.

The Tea Room reopened in early July as a takeaway only, on reduced days and hours. By the end of July we reopened, adding a marquee for extra seating needed due to social distancing. Our paid catering assistants with a learning disability returned to work. The Tea Room ran a great Halloween scavenger hunt around the village, and decorated the Tea Room in full spooky style. The Tea Room has closed for the lockdown period and hopes to reopen when possible.

The work team are back, and people have returned to work placements where possible. The team would be very happy to hear from anyone wanted to complete an ASDAN or work placement. The team are looking at new work placement ideas that can happen from home or safely in the community.

Michelle Staniforth has been working hard to ensure communication resources are readily available, creating some great resources such as Makaton signing videos. The service Communication champions have been able to meet via Zoom, which has been really positive.

Activities round up

All through the pandemic, people across Style Acre have shown such resourcefulness and resilience. They have continued to find interesting activities and ways to have fun whilst keeping safe. The easing of restrictions in the summer allowed some welcome trips out, and more recently Halloween crafts were in full swing. See below!



Fabulous Jack o' Lanterns were made. People used the scooped-out flesh in their cooking, preparing dishes like pumpkin soup.



T2 made spooky treats for the Tea Room. Meanwhile, Didcot tenant Tana made these Jack o' Lantern biscuits



Getting out and about: (L-R) Wantage tenants explore White Horse Hill, Daniel at Ashmolean Museum, Domenic, Jenny and Henry out walking at Thrupp, and Darryl playing golf at Cutteslow Park.



Geraint making apple pie, Martin's sweet potato-topped cottage pie, fun exploring all things French with Rachele, Henry and Laura at Slade Road; fresh-pulled carrots from one of the Style Acre trugs that each house plants and tends.



Storyfest crafts & activities, exploring favourite books & stories: Willy Wonka's golden ticket, the animals of Wind in the Willows, and Ashfield Road's telescope, ready for stargazing during space week.