



Bethphage

BUZZ



Welcome to Bethphage Buzz

Established in 1994 Bethphage is a charity that supports adults with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs in Shropshire and the West Midlands.

Welcome to our newest edition of Bethphage Buzz! Our quarterly newsletter aims to keep you updated with what is going on across Bethphage with both the people we support and our dedicated staff.



Blossom Barns Update

We were so pleased to share with you all recently that we have purchased "Lower Sutton Farm" in Chelmarsh near Bridgnorth to develop a day opportunity for adults with learning disabilities and autism.

We are proud to announce, after lots of brainstorming and discussion with the people we support, that a name has been chosen for our new farm. Introducing...Blossom Barns! We are so excited to watch this project grow and "blossom" into a fantastic place for people with learning disabilities and autism.

Lots has happened since our last issue!

We're in the process of getting things ready for Blossom Barns to open at the start of December.

We'd like to thank all of our supporters who recently helped us meet our first fundraising goal for purchasing three new polytunnels for the site. Contributions like this make such a huge difference to our work, these polytunnels will be pivotal in the everyday running of the farm and will enable the people we support to grow produce. We would especially like to thank our grant funders, which include The Basil Houghton Memorial Trust and the Boshier Hinton Foundation.



www.bethphage.co.uk

8 Longbow Close, Harlescote Lane, Shrewsbury, SY1 3GZ

01743 272880



We'd also like to thank Lydia, who donated two tortoises, Tommy & Tessa after hearing us on BBC Radio Shropshire! They've settled in really well and are already a big hit with everyone at the farm!

You may have seen us appear in the local press a few times discussing Blossom Barns, click [here](#) to read our feature in a recent edition of Shropshire Magazine.

We've also had some fantastic support from our brilliant volunteers over at Blossom Barns!

We'd like to thank Amanda and Will for their recent work in helping us knock down one of our stone walls and to Meisi, Harley, Owain and Elen for putting up fencing!



Happy retirement to our CEO Stef Kay and congratulations Helen!

In September our Chief Executive, Stef Kay announced that she will be stepping down as CEO from April 2025. In a heartfelt letter to staff, Stef explained the reasons behind her decision, stressing it was not as easy one to make, but after 40 years working in Social Care, 10 years as Bethphage's Operations Director and 5 years as CEO, she is ready to start the next chapter in her life and wants to enjoy her retirement. Stef thanked all staff for their support and said it was an honour to lead such a great team!

Since Stef's announcement and following a recruitment process, we are delighted to announce that our current Head of Operations, Helen Nickless, has been successful in her application to replace Stef as CEO. Helen joined Bethphage as Head of Operations in 2019 and steered our operations team during some difficult and unprecedented times, not least the global pandemic!

In addition to her 20 years of experience working in supported housing, Helen draws on her own experiences as a parent carer, ensuring that the parent/carer perspective is a crucial part of our work and informs decisions on our approach to support.

Please join us in congratulating Helen and thanking Stef for her service to Bethphage – Happy retirement Stef!

Hear more from both Helen and Stef on this announcement via our website at the link below.

[Find out more](#)

"I'm thrilled and honoured to take on the role of CEO. The values and mission of our charity are deeply meaningful to me, and I am incredibly proud of the work we do."

www.bethphage.co.uk

8 Longbow Close, Harlescott Lane, Shrewsbury, SY1 3GZ
01743 272880



What's going on? Day Opportunities



Oak Farm



Innage Lane



Our Space

This will mark our last newsletter update from Oak Farm, with our move to Blossom Barns set to happen at the end of November.

We'd like to take this opportunity express our heartfelt gratitude to the Ditton Priors community for their unwavering support throughout the years and we look forward to welcoming them to our new, exciting venture at Blossom Barns.

[Find out more](#)

We'd like to thank everyone who came to our jumble sale in September and helped raise valuable funds for us to purchase items for many of the sessions we will run in 2025, including crafting, gardening items and more.

We're also currently fundraising to purchase a "Tiny Tablet" from Inspired Inspirations. The tablet will be used to enhance the existing activity sessions at Innage Lane, including literacy and numeracy sessions, music sessions, group exercise sessions and more. If you would like to support us, please consider donating or sharing our JustGiving link below.

[Just Giving](#)

[Find out more](#)

We've also been enjoying Halloween season, creating bobbing pumpkins, wool pumpkins and celebrating with our Halloween party! We're now looking forward to Christmas, a busy time where we create a range of products to sell, you can find some at the Gateway in Shrewsbury and The Salon in Highley. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for more updates!

We were delighted to host the launch of Sally Poynton's book "Eglantyne" in September, you can read more about this in the article below! We are still regularly holding Tiny Tunes, Film afternoons, Memory Cafe, Teen Book Club and more, keep an eye on our Facebook page and Bethpbage's event's page for more information for next year's sessions.

We are currently seeking donations for our Christmas raffles and bingo for the people we support. Please get in touch if you have anything you would like to donate.

[Find out more](#)



Spotlight On : Our Fundraisers

We'd like to send our thanks to all the individuals and businesses that supported us this year through fundraising!

Sue F: Sue took on the "Three Peaks Challenge" earlier this year, raising over £1000. This money will be used to organise social events for Shared Lives Carers and the people they support. They are currently planning a Christmas party for Carers and people they support!

Lloyd B: Lloyd took on the Henley Triathlon earlier this year to raise money for Blossom Barns, contributing £250 to our brand new polytunnels. We'd like to thank Lloyd for his support and dedication!

Ceri B: Our service manager Ceri took on the Welsh Bog Snorkeling Competition in August! She took part in a 120-yard swim in a bog dressed as a goat to raise money for our new polytunnels at Blossom Barns! She raised £575 in total!



We'd like to send a huge thank you to local entrepreneur Helen Pugh, who has raised over £1000 for us throughout the year, through a fitness challenge and by organising a clothing sale. We connected with Helen in 2023 and she was recently shortlisted for Woman Who Solopreneur Special Recognition Award 2024, in part due to her charitable fundraising with us.

We would also like to take a moment to highlight the outpouring of community support we recently received following a theft from Oak Farm's stall at the Burwarton show. Thank you to every single person who donated to us and sent kind words of encouragement, in what was a very difficult and demoralising time. Thank you also to the following businesses and organisations that donated: Wrickton Hall Dog Boarding, St Peters Church Chelmarsh, Brown Clee Benefice, The Special Cider Company Bridgnorth, Cressage Social Club and Animal Assisted Education UK.

We are always grateful for every donation, large or small and if you would like support us or have any equipment to donate then please get in touch.



www.bethphage.co.uk

8 Longbow Close, Harlescott Lane, Shrewsbury, SY1 3GZ
01743 272880



The Serious Stuff - A comment on the budget

Bethphage is a not for profit care provider, dedicated to improving the lives of people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health. Like the majority of care providers in the learning disability sector, we are reliant on Local Authority Adult Social Care funding to provide support.



October's autumn budget was an opportunity for the new government to start the process of repairing the damage years of austerity have caused the care sector however instead, they have dealt another crushing blow with the increase in employer National Insurance contributions (NI).

These additional costs along with the National Living Wage increase will cost Bethphage £850 000 next year. As a medium size charity, it is crucial we address this which is why we are calling on the government to rethink this policy.

We urge you to support this call to action by either writing to your MP to advocate for fair funding and/or sign this sector wide government petition.

Support this call to action



Support Bethphage

Equally, if you would like to support us by fundraising on our behalf or donating then please get in touch with marketing@bethphage.co.uk or visit our website on the link below to find out more about the different ways you can support Bethphage.

Find out more



www.bethphage.co.uk

8 Longbow Close, Harlescott Lane, Shrewsbury, SY1 3GZ
01743 272880



Success of Eglantyne Jebb book launch!



After years of hard work and planning, Our Space's library assistant Sally Poynton finally revealed her intricate booklet on the life of local hero and social reformer, Eglantyne Jebb. To coincide with the 100-year anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the child which Eglantyne drafted, Sally officially launched her booklet in September at Our Space which hosts Ellesmere Library.

The book launch was well attended by the local community who are very proud of Ellesmere's connection to the Jebb family and included Eglantyne's great great nephew, Richard Jebb. Read more about the book launch [here](#).

This booklet is proudly supported by Bethphage and has been distributed for free in the local community. We are fundraising to print more copies and you can learn more by clicking [here](#).



Bethphage

We are always looking for businesses to sponsor us, get in touch to find out more.



Thank you you for reading

If you would like to get involved or support us, please contact marketing@bethphage.co.uk.



www.bethphage.co.uk

8 Longbow Close, Harlescott Lane, Shrewsbury, SY1 3GZ

01743 272880