

Newsletter

DECEMBER 2020

**FEATURE: JOY AND BOU RETIRE AS
SLSW CARERS AFTER MANY YEARS**

**COVER STORY: ABBY MAKES GREAT
CHRISTMAS PLANS WITH HER
DAUGHTER**

**PICTURES: SLSW FAMILIES HELP US TO
DECORATE OUR CHARITY TREE IN
EXETER**



CHRISTMAS NEWS

Merry Christmas from everyone at Shared Lives South West. There is no doubt that 2020 has been challenging for us all. Let's stay positive and hope for a brighter 2021.



CHRISTMAS OPENING

*AN ON CALL SERVICE WILL BE
AVAILABLE FOR EMERGENCIES

MONDAY 21 DECEMBER OPEN
TUESDAY 22 DECEMBER OPEN
WEDNESDAY 23 DECEMBER OPEN
THURSDAY 24 DECEMBER *CLOSED
FRIDAY 25 DECEMBER *CLOSED
MONDAY 28 DECEMBER *CLOSED
TUESDAY 29 DECEMBER OPEN
WEDNESDAY 30 DECEMBER OPEN
THURSDAY 31 DECEMBER OPEN
FRIDAY 01 JANUARY *CLOSED
MONDAY 04 JANUARY OPEN
TUESDAY 05 JANUARY OPEN

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lives south
west
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SLSW

Innovation Award celebrations!

Shared Lives South West is celebrating winning a national award for its innovative work at the Shared Lives Plus Awards.

It took home the Sheme Innovation Award at the online ceremony, which celebrated the Shared Living sector.

It beat off strong competition at the awards, thanks to diversifying and growing the services it offers.

Not only does it support people with learning disabilities to get the support they need, it has also developed to help people with mental health issues, the older generation in rural communities, parents with additional needs, those coming home from hospital as well as victims of domestic violence.

Award judges were also impressed with how Shared Lives South West has adapted and revolutionised its assessment process for new carers coming into SLSW during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The SLSW team has worked tirelessly to adapt the lengthy

six month process to around five weeks, while maintaining high standard. It worked with local authorities and with] guidance from the Care Quality Commission to scrutinise the process and ensured best practice continues.

Much of the process, due to Covid-19, now takes place online and new carers can still be assessed thoroughly.

“Shared Lives South West is thrilled to win this award and it is testament to the whole staff team,” said Laura Maker, Team Leader.

“We never rest on our laurels and continue to evolve our services and feel proud to fly the flag for the care sector.

“We now offer a wide range of services and always strive to grow to support those needing a Shared Lives service.”

The scheme has seen a rise in people enquiring to become carers during the pandemic, with a big draw factor of being able to work from home.



SLSW Christmas Tree



Shared Lives South West was selected for this year's Charity Christmas Tree Trail at Princesshay, Exeter. In total, 30 trees are all decorated by local charities.

A big thank you to all SLSW families who decorated wooden trees for our tree. SLSW Communications Officer Dawn Gillingwater and her son Albie (pictured) went to decorate it.





This made us smile!
Helen and Gillian, who both live in SLSW households have been on a little holiday. They won a dancing contest two nights on the trot and were awarded a bottle of wine! You can see how chuffed they were to win! Well done from all at SLSW!



Tanya, who enjoys short breaks for SLSW Carer Sue Pavey, wrapped up warm, drank hot chocolate and enjoyed wave watching recently! It looks great fun!



Pam and Tony, who are supported by Maria and David Wolstencroft in Cornwall, have been busy making rice crispy cakes! We bet they were delicious.

Tony also made this wonderful present for Maria and David to remember their late pet dog Barney, who Tony adored. How thoughtful. Kindness is king!



Cracking carrot cake Paul! Paul, who is supported by SLSW Carer Sue Pavey, made this wonderful carrot cake. It looks incredible.

Jen who uses our services, enjoyed a short break with SLSW Carer Sarah Ford recently. She enjoyed cooking, painting and time with the dog! Now back at home, Jen has become a whizz at creating homemade pizzas. She also enjoyed some painting ceramics at Cornwall Gold.





How fabulous are these pumpkins created by Michelle and Tracey who are supported by SLSW Carer Karen Miles! We think they are brilliant



Wendy and Kevin who both use our services visited Darts Farm and also picked up some pumpkins along the way. Wendy is supported by SLSW Carer Sam Robertson. Kevin was on a break with Sam and usually lives with SLSW Carer Nick Higgins.



Lynn got into the spirit of things for Halloween and helped carve these fabulous pumpkins. She lives with SLSW Carer Jo Crocker in Cornwall. Don't they look great? Well done Lynn.

We got sent these wonderful photos from SLSW Carer Karen West.

“Kenny and Laura in Plymouth joined in the family annual pumpkin carving competition ready for Halloween pumpkin spotting,” said Karen.

“We also grew the pumpkins in the garden this year.

“Kenny made Frankinpump, Laura’s of course had to be a cat.”

Aren’t they fabulous!



Bruce and Kat who both use our services got dressed up for Halloween! They both look super spooky!



Gillian who lives with SLSW Carer Tracey Chase enjoyed a Halloween tea party!



We have a new team member at SLSW

We have a new team member at Shared Lives South West. Penny Smith has joined our admin team and will be based in our Somerset office in Ilminster.

Here we find out a little bit about Penny...

Where do you live?

I live in Ilminster but originally I grew up in Seaton, Devon and spent many hours on the beach.

What made you apply to work for SLSW?

I applied for the role as I enjoy providing a caring service and it looked so rewarding.

Its been so interesting so far and everyone has been so welcoming.

I have been a keyworker throughout the pandemic anyway, but glad I am keeping busy and not stuck at home.

What are you enjoying most about it so far?

I think it's a brilliant service and so individual to each person's needs.

What do you enjoy doing out of work/hobbies etc?

I enjoy walking in the countryside where I live with



my dog. I also have a cat, chickens and some quails. I like to see my family as much as possible under normal circumstances!

Tell us a little bit about what you were doing before SLSW?

All sorts! Mainly I've worked in admin in the NHS and at a funeral directors. I've also been involved in two businesses, one selling outsized menswear

and the other animal feeds!

If you could take three things to a desert island what would they be and why?

I should say I would take my fiance as he would be good at making fires and hunting for food! But really I would like to take an endless supply of teabags, a soft pillow and some tools to make a boat to escape!

Ivor and Peter's artwork recognised in list

Ivor and Peter are celebrating being selected as winners on the Coronavirus Learning Disability and Autism Leaders' List after their artwork helped 'spread joy around the world' during the pandemic.

Judges were impressed and inspired by their work, which they are selling to help raise money for the NHS.

With their friend, Carol, they love to paint and have created some fantastic pieces of art, which they are now selling to raise money for the NHS and Covid-19 appeal.

The special list celebrates those with learning disabilities and autism who have made exceptional efforts to make communities better for themselves and others during the Coronavirus pandemic, challenging stereotypes and entrenched social prejudices. Ivor and Peter, who are supported and live with Shared Lives South West Carers Fran and Rachel Bunce near Bridgwater, developed their skills during lockdown. Both are proud of their achievements.

"I like using bright colours to paint. I like printing with leaves too," said Peter.

"I like drawing with a pen and enjoy drawing animals and buildings. I like putting patterns into my drawings. I prefer straight lines to curvy lines. I have enjoyed using different



paints and inks," added Ivor. Their work is sold online through 'The Blue House Makes' Facebook and Instagram pages and they have been overwhelmed with the success.

Artist Harriet Popham, who is a support carer for Shared Lives South West, has helped Ivor and Peter excel in their work. She says: "I'm incredibly proud to introduce the work of Ivor, Peter and Carol.

"My mum Rachel and stepdad Fran are carers to these three adults who live with them. Carol is my Mum's amazing sister who usually lives independently but spends a great deal of time at Rachel and Fran's house, which is known as the Blue House. She moved in for lockdown."

Harriet says: "Anyone who has encountered my mum, Rachel, will have experienced her incredible enthusiasm and encouragement, it's like

a fuel. She gets such genuine excitement about people doing anything creative and her encouragement with these three individuals throughout lockdown has led to something really special.

"Their beautiful paintings and drawings are spreading joy to people all over the world online. The pandemic and lockdown has been horrendous for everyone, but this has given them something to smile about, be proud of, do something extremely positive and raise money for two incredible causes."

Sarah Walters, Campaigns Manager at Dimensions, added: "We're incredibly proud to be celebrating Ivor and Peter who, despite the challenges faced this year, continued to work tirelessly to ensure people with learning disabilities and autism can look towards a brighter, more inclusive future."

SLSW CARERS JOY & BOU RETIRE

After working more than 42 years in the care sector, Joy and Bou Roodenburg are finally retiring and taking time out for themselves.

The couple, who live at Torpoint, currently support Karen and have done so for the last ten years as Shared Lives South West Carers.

They have known her for 30 years and she used to stay with them for respite breaks.

They have helped Karen to live her life her way and thrive.

"It's the end of a very long era, it's bitter sweet," said Joy.

"We've loved being Shared Lives Carers but the time has come to spend more time with our children and grandchildren.

"We are getting older and don't have as much energy, we've said to Karen she should trade us in for a younger model of carer."

They couldn't be prouder of how they've watched and supported Karen to grow her independence.

"A highlight for me is seeing how much Karen has come on leaps and bounds, it has been wonderful," said Joy.



"We've supported Karen to be more independent and she'll now be going to stay with my daughter Morwenna until she finds another permanent home."

Karen talks fondly of her time with Joy and Bou and the memories she has made while living with them.

"I wanted to skydive and they supported me to do that. That was on my bucketlist and was amazing," said Karen.

"I also wanted to see whales in the wild and they supported me with that. We went to South Africa for a month and they were so close to us in the sea. It was a dream come true.

"We also went to Gran Canaria and I've always wanted to try scuba diving and I did it. It was fantastic.

"I've also had some amazing birthday parties, one where we hired a boat and my crew came along and also had a great beach party."



Karen is passionate about rapping and DJing and Joy and Bou have helped her develop that love. During the pandemic she has kept busy and wrote her latest composition Lockdown Blues.

Under her stage name DJ Dolphin, Karen has performed at the Funky Llama Festival, Port Eliot Festival and on stage at the Royal Festival Hall.

"Without their support I wouldn't be where I am today, they are like a second family to me," said Karen.

"Performing has been amazing for me. Joy has been like a manager to me too."

"When Karen is famous, she had better remember me," Joy joked.

"I am more independent and have my independence and freedom. I have what I call my

safe phone and it has Joy and Bou's number on. I call them and they can call me to make sure I am ok and let them know where I am and that I'm ok," added Karen.

Despite winding up their career in care, Joy and Bou didn't let up on helping those who need support and offered to support two young people with mental health issues during the first lockdown on emergency placements.

Both were staying in a mental health unit that was closing.

"They were quiet and we gave them space," said Joy.

"Over time they became slowly more involved with us and we'd go for walks, do some cooking and baking and talked more. We also bottle fed some local lambs regularly and that was an icebreaker.

"They both ended up staying for six months and made so much progress.

"We are extremely proud, as their doctor said he couldn't believe how well they were doing and both have now gone on to live independently.

"It was also said that others who were cared for in the community from the unit had also progressed and the care during lockdown had such a positive impact."

Joy and Bou's swansong was winning Gold in the Supported Living category in the Devon and Cornwall Care Awards last year.

"Winning that was great a really nice way to leave and bow out," said Joy.

The couple will have so much more time on their hands now and have already started making plans.

"We've bought a canal boat and plan to live on that six months of the year and then live in France as our youngest son lives there and will help him with the gardening," said Joy.

A big thank you for your commitment and hard work Joy and Bou- we wish you well!





John, Bob and Ann enjoyed a lovely trip to Rosemoor Gardens and had a picnic. The Trumper Scooter was also a success for Bob. They are supported by SLSW Carer Caroline O'Sullivan.



SLSW Carer Caroline O'Sullivan sent in this lovely photo of Ann, who she supports. Ann recently celebrated a milestone birthday. She was 50! A big happy birthday from us.



Ann has been busy getting into the festive spirit and has been making advent bakes, colourful Christmas cards and this wonderful Pudsey cushion from an old T shirt. She has renamed it Doris!

The Best Christmas present ever!

There's no doubt about it, 2020 has been a challenge and tough year, but Mum Abby has the best Christmas wish she could ever hope for.

Abby, who uses our services and lives with SLSW Carer Melanie Thomas in Cornwall, has seen the child protection order, imposed when her daughter Isabella was born, removed.

Such orders are put into place when the local authority has concerns about a child's safety and well-being.

Abby has constantly proved she can be a great Mum to Isabella, almost 2, and now the order has lifted.

"It feels amazing and I feel so proud of myself. I love being a Mum," said Abby.

Since Isabella was born, Abby has stepped up to the challenge of being a Mum and put her daughter's needs first.

"I go out with Isabella in the afternoons, we play with her toys; she's loving her baby doll and nursing her. We also love drawing, colouring and painting together," said Abby.

"Isabella's bedtime routine is good and the healthy food Isabella has is great. It's also important to sit down and eat with her at the table while she is in her highchair.

"She's also now in a local nursery every Tuesday and



Thursday and it's really nice for her and really important for her. "She certainly isn't a baby any more and is into everything, the biggest challenge is keeping up with her!"

Abby has said there's no getting away from it being a hard year and it's been difficult

at times for them to see Martin, Isabella's Dad as much as they'd like due to Covid-19 rules.

"We can't go and see him now because of the lockdown again and we are just sticking to the rules," she said.

"It's not been a nice this year

with all the restrictions.”
 “It’s been a rollercoaster, hasn’t it Abby,” added Mel.
 During the last year, Abby has also been working hard on losing weight and joined Slimming World.
 She has now lost almost five stone thanks to her own self belief and encouragement from Mel.
 The weight loss helped her win Slimmer of the Year at her local group.
 “I eat healthier, prepare more food and walk more,” said Abby.
 “I look at old photos of me and think wow I’ve done well.
 “I was awarded Slimmer of the Year and got a certificate and I cried as it meant a lot to me.
 “My food choices will also have an impact on Isabella so I want her to see me eating healthily. I do my own breakfast and lunch and Mel does the tea.”
 “It’s a team effort really, Abby helps me prepare it and we work together,” added Mel.
 As a support arm for Abby, Mel has seen Abby’s confidence grow hugely in the last year.
 “It’s wonderful to see Abby not only grow as a Mum, but her personal growth too,” said Mel.
 “She will now stand up for her self and say how she feels, which is important. She is also looking to the future and would like to volunteer or work now Isabella is at nursery more.
 “Abby is part of our family and we embrace life together. Even my son recently said to me it would be weird without having



Abby with us as she is one of us.”
 Christmas is around the corner and the whole family is looking forward to it.
 “We are Christmas people and love it,” said Mel.
 “I hope to be able to go to Martin’s for Christmas Day

and New Year but will also celebrate with Mel.”
 “We will do Christmas here before Abby goes to see Martin and do another celebration for New Year too. It’s important to mark it together and we love to celebrate in any way we can.”

SLSW

We have welcomed new Trustee Christian Jenkins to our SLSW Board of Trustees. Here we find out more about him...

Firstly can you tell us a little about your career background?

My career started at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, where I was commissioned into the Royal Irish Rangers. This was followed by a lengthy spell as an Executive Head-Hunter working with some of the UK's leading search firms, as well as a period running my own practice. More recently I was Director of Operations at the Plymouth Science Park during which time I became involved in voluntary roles within the not-for-profit sector.

We know you are trustee with other charities, can you name the charities?

I have held roles in local government, arts centres, heritage and environmental charities and I currently sit on the Boards of Connect Multi Academy Trust, Wave Multi Academy Trust, Lifeworks and the Marine Biological Association. I am also an Academic Mentor with the

University of Exeter Business School.

Why did you decide to become a trustee on our board and what sparked your interest?

I have a strong sense of civic duty, non-more so then towards helping the most vulnerable in our society. I also enjoy working with people who share the same beliefs and passions as I do and that is so evident with the team at Shared Lives.

What will you bring to the board?

Shared Lives has a very strong Board and I hope that my breadth of knowledge and skills can be put to good use to support its growth and success.

What makes a good trustee?

I believe a Trustee needs to have an emotional connection with the charity because this is what drives our dedication and motivation.

With the pandemic, board meetings take place via Zoom rather than face to face etc. How have you found that as an introduction to SLSW?



I was able to meet the Board face to face during the gap between lockdowns which was really useful. The induction has been very smooth and efficient.

Where would you like to see SLSW in five years?

I believe in what SLSW is all about and I want to widen our reach so that we can help more disadvantaged people and provide a wider choice of opportunities.

Where do you live?

I live in Tavistock.

What do you enjoy doing when you aren't working or being a trustee? Cycling, paddle boarding, kayaking, tennis, skiing, cross-country running, hiking, fishing. I have just started wild swimming.

Jean's Jamaican Christmas Cake



Here SLC Jean Harper shares her lovely recipe for Jamaican Fruit Cake.

It's also known as Jamaican Christmas Cake, Wedding cake, Jamaican Black Cake. It is the cake of choice for weddings, parties or any formal occasion in Jamaica. This fruit cake is usually made by soaking dried fruits in alcohol. It is soaked for as little as a few days to years, usually, the latter is the norm. I like using rum and experimenting with a cocktail of spirits. Making this cake brings back childhood memories. My mum kept a huge jar that she filled with mixed fruit and poured alcohol on throughout the year leading to the seasonal baking in early December. She made several cakes and shared them with our neighbours and friends. The smell of our home was amazing as she baked them. This is a vegan version and equally as yummy!

To make the cake:

No time to soak your fruits - put the fruits in a saucepan and boil them in grape juice for ten minutes. Should you want to use the alcohol, place the fruit with the alcohol bring to the boil then stew the fruit for ten minutes on a medium heat using the spirit of your choice.. Reserve a small amount to add to the wet cake mixture as is for the texture. For sweetener, use coconut sugar to help with a deep rich colour. You can substitute with a dark brown sugar. Any dried fruit combination can be used but traditionally, its raisins, cherries, mixed peel, prunes, currants.

Ingredients

- 1 pound dried chopped mixed fruits, (raisins, cherries, prunes, mixed peel)
- 2 cups red grape juice
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1/2 cup non-dairy butter, softened
- 2 teaspoons almond extract
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 grated lemon zest
- 1 cup Gluten-Free all purpose flour
- 1 cup almond flour
- 1 cup cane sugar, (I used coconut-sugar)
- 2 tablespoons ground flax seeds
- 2 teaspoons baking powder

- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Instructions

1. Preheat oven 350F/ 180C or mark 4. Grease your 9-inch round baking tin and set aside. Place grape juice and dried fruits in a large saucepan on medium heat and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer for ten minutes. Allow fruits to cool.
 2. Place 1 1/2 cups of the fruits and remaining liquid in a blender or food processor and puree. Pour in a medium bowl, add molasses, softened butter, almond extract, vanilla, and lemon zest, mix well.
 3. In a large bowl, combine, gluten-free flour, almond flour, sugar, ground flaxseeds, baking powder, allspice, and salt
 4. Mix dry ingredients into wet ingredient and stir well to combine. Add remaining dried fruits and stir. Pour cake mixture into the prepared round baking tin. Bake for 60-90 minutes, or when fork is inserted in the centre it comes out clean.
- If you have a go, please send in pictures. Don't be afraid to experiment with the ingredients share you ideas...

Happy Christmas and happy baking.

WELCOME TO SLC SHARON TO THE SOMERSET TEAM

Sharon Button has joined our Somerset team as a SLC. Here she took some time out to chat to us...

What were you doing before working at SLSW?

Most of my working career has been in the health and social care sector. I have been fortunate to have gained knowledge and experience from my various roles, working with children and adults with learning disabilities, mental health, autism, and addictions. My previous post was with the Transport Team at Somerset County Council.



Had you heard of SLSW before?

Yes - I firstly heard about the Shared Lives scheme through a friend of a friend, that became a carer. Also, through working with the arranging care and support team at Devon County Council. Plus two of my lovely ex-work colleagues got roles with SLSW in the past and are still happily here.

What made you apply to work at SLSW?

I was really excited when I saw the post, as I thought, that is a job I would really like to do. I personally think that the Shared Live model of care is how the future of care will look.

How are you finding it so far?

Firstly, I must thank everyone for the warm welcome and support. As it is only my second week, I am still at the beginning of learning all that needs to be learnt! I am slightly frustrated, that I still know a lot about 'nothing' but must remember to be patient with myself.

Why do you think Shared Lives works so well as a model of care?

Because it is all about the individual's tailored needs of support and care. Always promoting and pushing for independence and personal growth, in all areas of life.

Plus, exploring and developing new ways to support individuals, carers, volunteers and staff to succeed with their aspirations.

What makes a good SLC?

Knowledge of the role, friendly, honest, adaptable, reliable, enthusiastic, open minded and being able to work as part of the SLSW team.


What do you enjoy doing outside of SLSW?


I love to socialise with my fabulous family and friends. I enjoy walking, swimming, musical theatre and pottering in my garden. I adore eating. cake, chocolate and fruit!


SLSW Carer Fiona Bastable sent in these fabulous photos. The SLSW family has been busy during lockdown helping with decorating, created an art wall and enjoyed a birthday. Great photos all!



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Throughout the Covid-19 crisis we have emailed carers weekly with information, updates and resources which maybe useful and of interest. We will continue to do this and

really hope that you may find them informative and helpful. Please check your inbox on a Friday morning if you get the chance.



The deadline for the March newsletter is February 14

If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter or any stories you'd like to share with us, please do get in touch - we would love to hear from you!

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