



Newsletter

DECEMBER 2021

**COVER STORY: TREE-MENDOUS EFFORT!
SLSW FAMILIES CREATE DECORATIONS
FOR OUR CHARITY XMAS TREE**

**FEATURE: PAUL IS EXCITED TO MOVE ON
TO HIS OWN HOME**

**PHOTOS: STACEY DOOLEY RECORDS
PODCAST WITH HOLLY AND GEOFFREY**





SLSW couple Holly and Geoffrey are more excited than ever for Christmas this year as not only are they living together, but they are also the focus of a new Stacey Dooley podcast on BBC Sounds. Stacey Dooley: Fresh Starts shines a light on people doing something different in their life. The award winning documentary presenter visited the couple in Cornwall in the run up to Christmas to talk about them moving in together during lock-down as they couldn't bear to be apart. Pre the pandemic they were both living in separate Shared Lives households, but desperately wanted to live together. Their SLSW Carers talked, with Holly and Geoffrey included in the discussions,



and it was agreed they would live with Marlene and John Moore. To give the couple more space, the carers have created another living space for them- just in time for Christmas! Stacey, who also won BBC's Strictly Come Dancing in 2018, spent the morning with Holly and Geoffrey decorating their Christmas tree and talking about moving in together

during the pandemic. "It went so well, Stacey was so lovely and Holly and Geoffrey loved the whole experience," said John. You can listen to the podcast from December 21. **Please note when the podcast was recorded and when photos were taken, everyone involved followed government guidance at the time.*





Our Leadership Team and trustees met for a face to face board meeting at Roadford Lake in the Autumn. What a stunning location for a meeting. It is rare for so many of the team to meet up, due to the pandemic, but it is really lovely sight to see.

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We recently said goodbye to Funding and Benefits Officer Laura Crichton. She has been a really valued member of the SLSW staff team. We wish her well for the future. Her team presented her with a Hazel tree with truffle fungus around the roots representing faith and happiness. There was also a collection by the whole staff team. Laura, who is a keen gardener, says she will use some of the money to buy a nice pot to put the tree in.





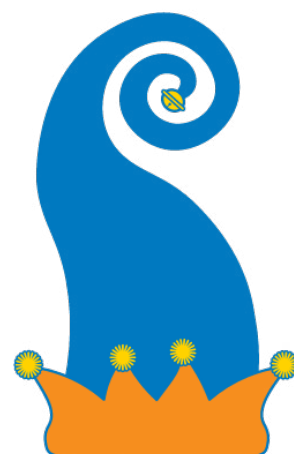
Fabulous festive photo! Couple Pam and Tony have decorated this lovely felt Christmas tree. They are supported the Wolstencroft family in Cornwall.



Adrian is definitely getting into the Christmas spirit! We love the outfit. Adrian is supported by SLSW Carer Pam Bowman.



Lovely hat Debbie! SLSW Carer Michelle Beasor walked in to find Debbie, who she supports, sporting this wonderful elf hat!





Jamie had a wonderful time in Tenerife by the looks of these great photos.
He is supported by SLSW Carer Susie Sowell.

Happy
holidays



Melissa made great memories taking in all the festive displays at Trevena Cross Garden Centre.
She is supported by SLSW Carer Julie Odgers.

SLSW

Village Lock-down Art and Craft Exhibition Weekend in Stawell, featured two SLSW Carers.

The small village on the Somerset levels, celebrated the talent of its residents with an art and crafts exhibition of works produced during the recent lock-downs.

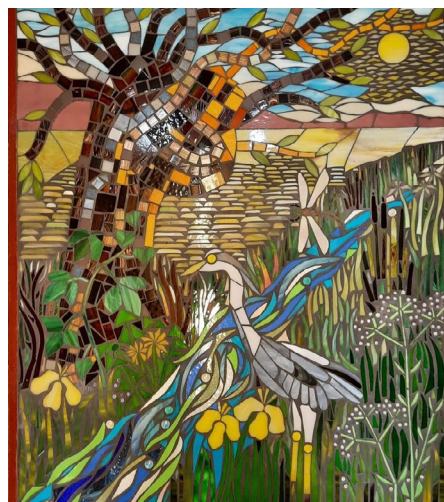
The event was an opportunity for the villagers to get together again, at last, over coffee and cake, in the village hall and to raise money for The Open House Project for the homeless and vulnerable people in Street and the surrounding areas.

The array of lock-down crafts was quite astonishing, from furniture, to music box making, from oil paintings to watercolour and pastels, from sculptures to mosaics, from knitting to needlework. There was even a children's author reading his own stories, in a kindly lent yurt, and a sugar pink hand built bicycle, made by SLSW Carer Mel Packham! SLSW Carer and artist, Kay McDonald, exhibited several oil paintings and watercolours and also a large garden mosaic, depicting a view across the Somerset levels, complete with heron. She was supported throughout by Roger and

Michael, who she supports through SLSW.

They helped enormously with clearing tables and washing up and also with clearing up after the event.

The event was planned and organised by Margaret Williams and Jackie Lusty, with help from Ailish Edwards and her husband, Giles, Sue Grey, who works for the Open House Project, and Brian Scowcroft, along with many others, who helped to set up, make cakes, serve cream teas and of course, made the exhibits! The enormous sum of £500 was raised for the charity.



Roger and Michael taking a well earned break at the event.



Tree-mendous Christmas Tree!



Our Christmas tree looks absolutely TREE-MENDOUS... A big thank you to the SLSW families who created the sweet decorations using recyclable paper plates and eco-friendly cellophane. You can see our tree at Princesshay, Exeter, over the festive season as part of the Charity Christmas Tree festival. Pictured are SLSW staff members Laura Maker and Jessica Parkes with her daughter Wren at the tree. Sally Smith SLC helped create the decorations and turn them into 'sweets'.



Pictured are Kenny and Laura making decorations. They are supported by SLSW Carer Karen West.





Laura is pictured enjoying a festive hot chocolate and Christmas lights at Bow Garden Centre with carer Melissa Boardman.



Laura enjoyed painting pottery at Paint Pots of Devon with SLSW Carer Melissa Boardman and her son Isaac Boardman. They then enjoyed coffee and cake. It sounds like a great morning out!





Wow! It looks like football fan Harrison had a birthday to remember. He enjoyed a tour of Anfield, Liverpool FC home ground, for his birthday. He was accompanied by his SLSW Carer Gina Mead. What a memorable day out!





What a great fun photo of SLSW Carer Lisa Dougal, Charlene (who she supports) and Charlene's boyfriend Matthew. They went Christmas shopping and couldn't resist having a photo at this photo point. Lisa and Charlene also visited Exeter Winter Wonderland and had a fantastic time!



Great work Laura!
Laura and her SLSW family
have been making homemade
cider for Christmas.
It looks good!
Laura is supported by SLSW
Carer Donna Perrin.



Here's a fabulous photo of Jen
at The Lost Gardens of Heligan
night garden display.
The enchanting lantern display
looks fantastic.
Jen is supported by SLSW
Carer Nicola Drewett.



This looks delicious!
Pictured is Chanroth making
blackberry and apple jam for
the first time.
She is supported by SLSW
Carer Tracey in Cornwall

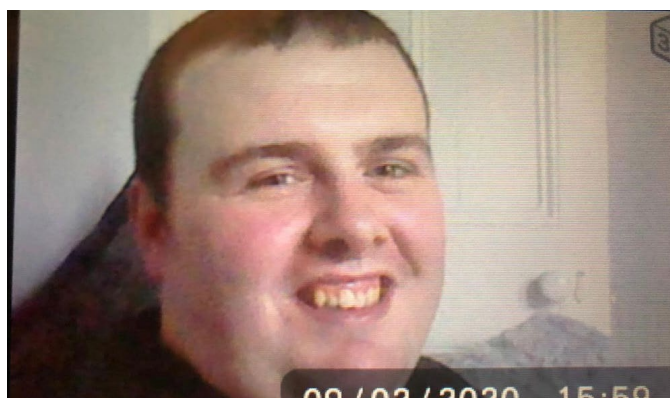




Jamie, who is supported by SLSW Carer Rachael Cowling, is celebrating after being awarded Mr Sleek 2021 after losing a staggering 7.5st.

He was voted for the award by other members of his local Slimming World group.

He lost the weight thanks to his own self-belief, support from his carer and his Slimming World group



Abby is celebrating after receiving a prize at the Shared Lives Plus national awards. Abby was Highly Commended in the Human Rights Award for Free Expression category after being nominated by her SLSW Carer, SLC, other SLSW Carers as well as people who use SLSW services.

Since moving in with her SLSW Carer Mel Thomas in Cornwall, Abby's life has transformed and she was so happy to see that her efforts have been recognised.

"I'm thrilled, I can't believe it," said Abby, after receiving the accolade.

"I'm so proud of Abby, she has come so far and this is testament to all of her own hard work," added Mel.

In recent times, Abby has celebrated the news that the child protection order imposed, when her daughter Isabella was born, was removed. Such orders are put into place when the local authority has concerns about a child's safety and well-being.

Abby constantly proved she is a great mum to Isabella 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 that Isabella has is great. It's also important to sit down and eat with her at the table while she is in her high-chair."

"She's also now in a local

nursery on 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!

"Isabella is reaching all her milestones."

During the last year, Abby



has also been working hard on losing weight and joined Slimming World. She has now lost 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, I 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 blossom 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 herself and say how she feels which is important. She is also looking to the future and now Isabella is at nursery more she has a voluntary job.

"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."





Tanya, who went on a break to SLSW Carer Sue Pavey recently, has been getting into the festive spirit by baking mince pies. "Tanya's confidence has grown so much she's thinking of entering Bake Off," said Sue. They look absolutely delicious!



On a recent break, Tanya has also been busy creating colour pumpkin drawings and helped SLSW Carer Sue Pavey make these wonderful poppies in time for Remembrance Day.



SLC Lesley Saunders has retired from SLSW after more than 15 years service. Based in the Cornwall office, she has seen the charity grow and evolve in that time. Along the way, Lesley's main focus has been supporting and monitoring SLSW placements. "I've enjoyed finding out about a person who wants to live with a carer/family and then being able to match with the carer they choose," said Lesley. "I've loved working with amazing carers and the people who live or stay with them. It's wonderful to see how people flourish with the support they receive."

Over the years Lesley has nominated the carers on her caseload for numerous awards and has enjoyed seeing them receive recognition and win the awards.

"It's been wonderful being there on the awards night with them," she said.

Lesley said she will miss working with an 'incredible team'.

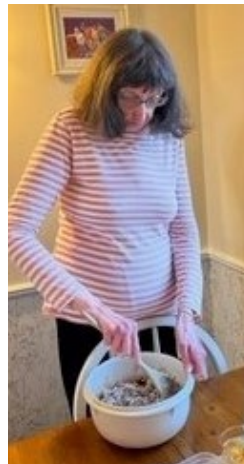
"I have been so lucky, The support from our team is invaluable. There has been laughter and tears, there has been a lot of both," said Lesley. Now with more time on her hands she said she is going to sit back and take stock before making any major plans.

"Time will probably involve more dog walking and training, coffee with friends and gardening," she said. "I've also been a marshall at the local



vaccination centre recently, so expect i'll be doing more with Cornwall Volunteering too. "I have also booked a lot of theatre tickets for next year." SLSW won't be saying goodbye to Lesley for good though, as she is becoming an Approval Panel member in the near future as her skills and experience will be invaluable. To mark her retirement SLSW CEO Dominic Spayne presented her with parting gifts at her last SLC team meeting recently (pictured above). Lesley we truly wish you all the very best in your retirement- from all of us at SLSW.





Anita, Lisa and Judith have been busy making Christmas cakes and puddings ready for the festive period.

They've also been enjoying Christmas films and Agatha Christie's Christmas talking book.

They are supported by SLSW Carer Sarah Ridley.

PAYMENT RUNS OVER THE FESTIVE PERIOD

Long term

Will be unaffected during the festive period

Personal Allowances

Payment due on 28/12/2021 will be received on 29/12/2021 due to the bank holiday

Short breaks

Payments processed on 23/12/2021 will not be received until 29/12/2021 due to the bank holidays

No payments will be processed on 30/12/2021

CHRISTMAS OPENING

MONDAY 20 DECEMBER OPEN

TUESDAY 21 DECEMBER OPEN

WEDNESDAY 22 DECEMBER OPEN

THURSDAY 23 DECEMBER OPEN

FRIDAY 24 DECEMBER OPEN UNTIL 2PM *ON CALL UNTIL 5PM

MONDAY 27 DECEMBER *CLOSED

TUESDAY 28 DECEMBER *CLOSED

WEDNESDAY 29 DECEMBER OPEN

THURSDAY 30 DECEMBER OPEN

FRIDAY 31 DECEMBER OPEN

MONDAY 03 JANUARY *CLOSED

TUESDAY 04 JANUARY OPEN

*AN ON CALL SERVICE WILL BE AVAILABLE. THE SLSW ON CALL IS AVAILABLE EVERY SATURDAY, SUNDAY AND BANK HOLIDAYS. PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE NUMBER 01626 360170 FOR ON CALL DETAILS WHEN NEEDED.

 **shared lives** south west
www.sharedlives^{sw}.org.uk

Richard worked for Numatics until the Covid 19 pandemic restrictions started in March 2020.

Richard enjoyed working, especially the opportunity to ensure that the job is well done and keeping the team cheerful with his jokes.

During lock-down Richard moved into Barleclose Farm to become part of the Dowding Shared Lives family.

He has deployed his skills to ensure the household has remained Covid safe by logging in and out visitors, ensuring visitors have a mask and by keeping hand sanitiser at the ready.

Richard turned his bedroom into an office to monitor and maintain standards.

Richard has also learnt to help out on the farm and plays an active part in the day to day happenings in the house.

He particularly enjoys working with the animals.

Richard has created a drinks list for all the members of the family and keenly organises cups of tea and coffee once the kettle has been put on.

Richard has welcomed new arrivals to Barleclose Farm this includes the Dowding's great grand-daughter in September 2020 closely followed by another Shared Lives house mate in October 2020.

Richard has proved to be welcoming, resilient and adaptable.

When not at home Richard loves to dance and enjoys



watching Tottenham Hotspurs play football. Recently Richard performed in a local production

at Kelly Leigh Dance School and loved the experience.



SLC Anne-Marie Carmichael has returned to SLSW in Somerset after 16 months off on maternity leave with her baby Edith.

We caught up with her to hear more about her return...

What have you enjoyed most about being off with little Edith?

I have enjoyed going out on our little adventures and meeting family and friends. Edith, Florence [older daughter] and I especially love being at the beach to build sandcastles and play in the sea, now Flo is at school and I am back I am definitely going to miss the flexibility of being able to just get up and go out where we wish.

Describe Edith?

Edith is very cheeky, she is her Daddy's double even though I grew her!

Now you are back how does it feel?

It has been very hard leaving Edith as she was born during the pandemic, so took a bit longer to get used to seeing people that were not our immediate family, even now she will only settle with very few people.

Will you have the same caseload as before or will you be supporting different SLSW families? I generally have the same caseload as before.



How is it juggling your lovely growing family and work?

Juggling is the right word to use for my ever growing family life! We now have 3 children and 3 dogs. Yes we are crazy, we have a puppy too.

How long have you been working at Shared Lives?

I have been with Shared Lives since 2015 when we were initially a part of Somerset County Council.

You haven't been a stranger over your time off and completed Keeping In Touch

days at SLSW didn't you?

I completed my KIT days when I was on maternity leave and completed the thank you parcels for all our lovely carers that helped so much during the very difficult pandemic.

These were quite a challenge to coordinate, but it was nice to do something that didn't involve nappies and milk!

Anything else you'd like to add? I'm trying to get myself up to speed on how everyone has been in my absence but feel free to give me a call if you'd like a catch up.



Michael White has joined our Board of Trustees. Here he tells us a little about his career history and why he decided to become a trustee.

Please tell us about the experience and skills you bring into the organisation.

I have worked in the charity and social enterprise sector since 1995. I retired from the Institute of Chartered Accountants in 2018. Increasingly my work and skills had less to do with accountancy and much more around sustainable growth and development. Work projects have revolved around charity/community business planning projects and turnaround, change situations, charity growth, board away-days, board skills audits, coaching, social enterprise, mergers and collaborations, trading, and organisational risk assessment.

We know you've worked with other charities over the years, can you tell a little about that?

I have been a charity employee (several times over), trustee, chair, consultant, trainer, mentor and volunteer in organisations ranging in size from an annual income of £15,000 to over £9m. I also spent four years with CAF (Charity Aid Foundation) on a panel of advisors



conducting “Health checks” on charities in the west of England and Wales. It was an insightful time.

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

I have been aware of Shared Lives for some time and while being very interested in the work, some of which I could identify with through family experiences, I was especially taken with where Shared Lives was going.

What will you bring to the board?

A focus on what next. A number of charity skill-sets. The “t-shirts I have worn” – practical anecdotes and tales – the humorous ones work the best. Duty and discipline.

What makes a good trustee?

Empathy with a desire to really understand. The ability to contribute and engage at all levels. The realisation that to be a sustainable trustee you have got to enjoy it.



In the run up to Christmas, David met up with his family and enjoyed dinner with them and his SLSW Carer Julie Hughes. What a great photo!



Julie, Clifford and Paul are seen here ready for elf day at day services.... Santa will be glad of their help we are sure! We love the costumes! You look brilliant. They are supported by SLSW Carers Dee and Tony Hill in Somerset.



Mollie, who is supported by SLSW Carer Mae Pleydell-Pearce, wrote this wonderful account of her sunny holiday in Madeira.

"We have just had our first holiday in Madeira. I was nervous and excited. I was very nervous about flying, but we saw lots of rainbows above the amazing clouds, this view helped me not to feel so anxious and look forward to my holiday even more.

We stayed in a hotel that was on the edge of the sea. Our room had a balcony that allowed us to sit and listen to the waves.

We walked into Funchal and there was a lovely park/gardens and I really like the tiled patterned pathways. It wasn't too hot for me, which was good.

I've tried some new food including clams, salmon, beef wellington, scallops, prawns and mango. I very much like

Sangria!

I learnt to swim in the pool and I'm really proud of myself.

We went on a catamaran that was really amazing!

We went far out in the ocean so we could see the island from afar and we also saw two massive sperm whales.

When we researched them later, we found out that there are only 300,000 left in the world. I feel lucky that we saw them.

We went out to a posh restaurant and had a five course meal. I learnt to use cutlery from the outside in- there was so many knives and forks!

I have really enjoyed relaxing by the pool under a palm tree and I have been reading, which I never do!

I've had a lovely time, it's been really nice. I feel relaxed and I feel I have met lots of my challenges and crossed a lot off of my bucket list."

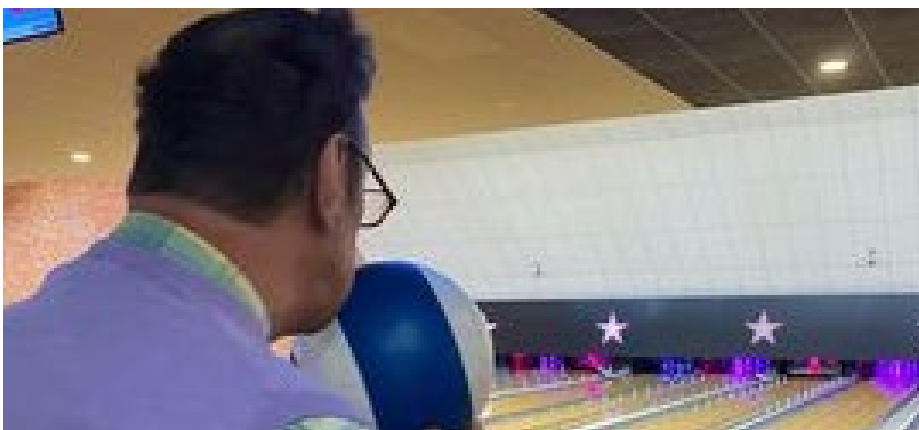
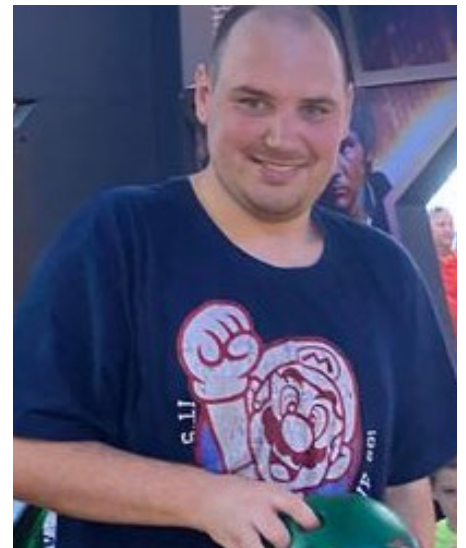




Mollie's story has featured as part of the White Paper on social care reform on the Department of Health and Social Care website. Mollie moved in with her SLSW Carer Mae Playdell-Pearce a few months ago and has transformed her life and is making huge strides forward. She is living her life, her way. She's already been abroad, working in a local store and has passed her driving test. A video with Mollie and Mae can also be seen on our Youtube channel. Just search Shared Lives South West.



SLSW Carer Nick Higgins sent in this photograph:
 “Here’s a photo of Kevin supervising the Jurassic Fibre team during their work in the village, he’s had a great week watch them work and supplying cups of tea, he’d like everyone to share his fun”



It looks like this SLSW household had a great time bowling!
 Tim, Christine, Rich had a great time with SLSW Carers The Fidler family- Lynn , Mike, Sam and Laura.
 Tim won! Well done to Tim!





Bob, who used to be a long distance cyclist in his youth, had a wonderful time being back on a bike!

He recently got to make a smoothie by pedal power. Bob is supported by SLSW Carer Caroline O'Sullivan in Devon.

In the last few months Bob has given up smoking with support from Caroline and is doing extremely well.



Wow look at that cake and lovely food!!

Leanne, who is supported by SLSW Carer Deb Spalding in Cornwall, had her very first birthday party.

She has recently moved in long-term with her SLSW Carer and loved the party.

We hope you had a lovely time.





Harrison enjoyed kayaking on the canal at Creech St Micheal near Taunton. it was a very nice day, just as well, as Harrison managed to get very wet. This was Harrison's second lesson and hopefully he will have many more He is supported by SLSW Carer Gina Mead.



What a lovely smiley picture! Wendy, is pictured with Sam Robertson who is her SLSW Carer and Sam's daughter Tegan.

"We always have a girly day. We went to Bernaville Nurseries for lunch out and a look around the shop," said Sam.





What a great picture of friends meeting up together for a walk!
Pictured are Helen, Pam and Charlotte who all use our services.
Helen is supported by SLSW Carer Dawn Jago, Pam by SLSW Carer Maria Wolstencroft and Charlotte by SLSW Carer Daphne Arthur.



Well done to Sharon!
She has been volunteering at a nursery and now has a uniform, which she wears proudly.
Sharon is supported by SLSW Carer Pam Bowman



Happy Birthday to Cara!
Cara is supported by SLSW Carer Sylvia Marsh.
It looks like you had a lovely day celebrating.





SLSW Carer Nicola Drewett took these lovely photo of Jenny enjoying a coffee at Portreath. "We are making the most of the evening sunshine," she said. What a lovely place to sit back and watch the world go by.





Adrian, Robert and Sharon had a great time in Blackpool and ran into some famous faces at Madame Tussauds! They are supported by SLSW Carer Pam Bowman in Cornwall.



Cheers Adrian, Robert and Sharon! They are seen here enjoying a drink at their local and enjoy being part of their local community. They are supported by SLSW Carer Pam Bowman in Cornwall.



A big happy birthday to Sharon, who celebrated with other SLSW households and her nearest and dearest..





After years of careful planning, Paul is finally moving into his own flat.

For a long time, Paul has been collecting items to furnish his new home for when it was time to move on from Shared Lives South West. His dream has now become a reality...

Paul, was fostered by Kim and Chad Chadfield when he was just nine years old and transitioned to Shared Lives South West when he was 18. Kim and Chad become SLSW Carers at the same time. Thanks to their support and laying the foundations to move on, plus Paul's own determination he now has his own flat around 20 minutes walk away from the home he shared with Kim and Chad. "I can't wait for him to move

out, It's been a long time coming," joked Kim, lovingly.

"I can't wait to have more freedom," Paul joked back. Kim and Chad have been helping Paul to get his new pad ready to move in and have been cleaning and painting it, with the hope of moving in very soon. His new home is overseen by Holywell Housing Trust.

To ensure he had everything he needed when he moves in, Kim and Chad have been helping him understand and work out finances and saving and he managed to save £5,000 to make sure he could kit out his new home with what he needs.

"Everything has been stored in hallways and all over the place at the house I've lived in with

Kim and Chad," said Paul.

"Paul has been planning this for so long, but because of Covid-19 it all slowed right down, then all of a sudden he got this flat," said Chad. Support from Kim and Chad won't stop overnight and they will continue to offer enabling support as he settled into his new home.

"They will carry on helping me with finances and cooking," said Paul.

"Paul has a bowel condition, so cooking is important," said Kim.

"I can do basic stuff, I do make a super special soup where I put loads of veg in a saucepan," added Paul. Over time, Kim and Chad have helped build Paul's confidence. He's attended





Maths and English classes to help grow his skills and also now works two hours a day cleaning the local post office. His hours were upped during the pandemic to help with deep cleaning.

Paul has grown into a confident and able person who is now comfortable and confident in his own skin and is open about his sexuality.

"I feel happy and I've accepted who I am," he said.

"Kim and Chad have also been brilliant about it and supported me with it."

The door will always be open at the Chadfield's for Paul, who is part of the family and he even changed his own surname to Chadfield to match Kim and Chad.

"I'll be back down there every day to see the pets," joked Paul.

"We won't be able to get rid of



him that easily," added Kim. Claire Bettinson, Shared Lives Coordinator at Shared Lives South West said: "SLSW has supported Paul since he transitioned to Adult services. It has been a pleasure supporting him and seeing him mature to independent man with a bright future ahead of

him. We wish him all the best luck in his new home.

"I know how excited Paul is about having his own home and how much he values the support he gets from his SLSW Carers Chad and Kim who will stay in touch with him and continue to support him during the next steps of his life."





It looks like SLSW families had a fang-tastic Halloween! Many got into the 'spirit' of things and dressed up, while others carved pumpkins. What a great effort everyone!





We've received these great photos of John and David on holiday with their SLSW Carer Anne Dowsing. It looks like they had a lovely time by the sea.



Shelley is seen here enjoying a respite break with SLSW Carer Viv Sullivan. She enjoyed a trip to Trethorne and to a fairy wood.



Thanks to the support of his SLSW Carers in the last year, N has turned his life around and has now moved onto into his own home.

In six months SLSW Carer Helga helped to transform N's life through encouragement and support.

"He isn't the same person he was when he first came here," said Helga.

N started the placement in January living in a self-contained annex. He had severe anxiety and lacked confidence and didn't even want to visit Helga's home on his own.

"I took a leap of faith," he said.

"I was worried about moving in, but glad I did.

"I had my own space and had Helga's support when I need it. Helga is a great laugh, talks a lot, is very sociable, very caring and understanding."

He moved from a city environment to a rural location with a small holding with Helga and found it calming being in such a quiet location.

"It's amazing to see someone change and grow in self-esteem and achieve what they want to achieve. You have to believe in that person," said Helga, who became a SLSW Carer three years ago.



N felt at home and he regularly looked after the animals on the smallholding and took orphan lamb Rambo under his wing, feeding him and made sure he was ok each day.

He also regularly walked him on a lead around the local village and became a bit of a local spectacle!

"I loved working with the animals, it's really good fun," said N.

"He's the best poop scooper around," joked Helga.

N's self-esteem grew each day and he even started a job at a local petrol station.

"I would never have had the confidence when I first moved in to do that. It's 100 per cent helped my confidence and I don't feel the anxiety any more.

"Helga supported me to get

the job and she has been so positive."

He is also learning to drive and hopes to be on the road soon.

"I have my theory test soon," he said.

"I keep telling him to revise for it as I have heard he is a good driver and ready for his practical test," added Helga encouragingly.

Helga helped prepare N to move on so he can move into his own home.

"He now knows he wants to live somewhere less rural than where we are, but not so busy as where he is from," said Helga.

"I want to live somewhere with a community," added N.

Helga is known for helping the people she supports to grow in independence.

She became a SLSW Carer



after working in retail for many years. She almost became a SL Carer in Bournemouth, but a move to Cornwall stopped her application.

One day a SLSW Carer popped into a store where Helga worked and they started chatting.

It was a catalyst for her to apply again and she hasn't looked back.

"Ella who used to live in the annex contacted me recently and popped over for takeaway," said Helga. She also did some great work with a man called Ross during the early part of the pandemic. Ross was on short breaks with Helga, but stopped when lock-down started.

She kept in contact with him, on her own back and was praised by a social worker who said that Helga's support made 'such a difference'.

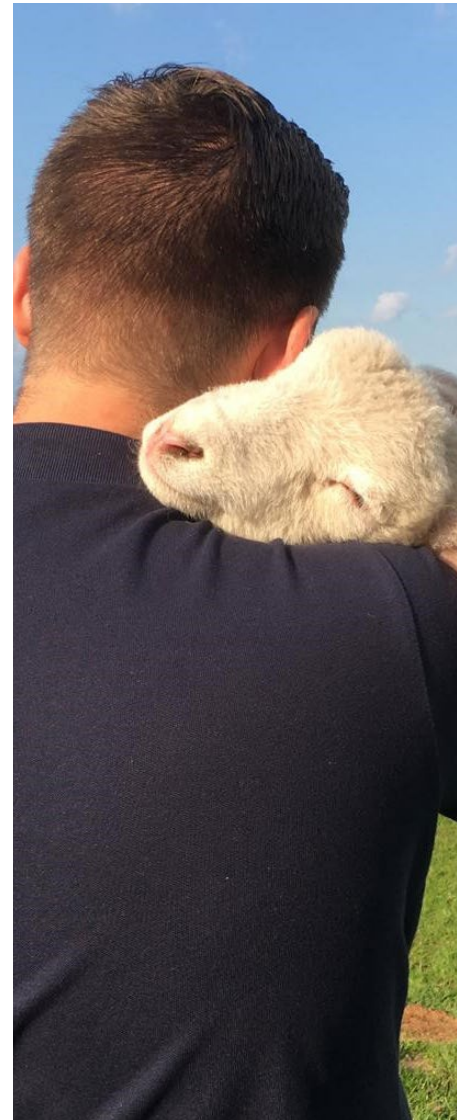
"I'd call him and video call him to see how he was and show him the animals," she said.

"Then he started coming to me more and more when restrictions lifted. Sometimes I'd get a call as soon as he got home to ask if I could come and get him again as he liked being with us," said Helga.

"The social worker said my contact helped him through the hardest part of the pandemic until he went off to university in the Summer."

N moved on from Helga's a few months ago to another

SLSW Carer Jayne Askew, before moving out at the beginning of November. His trustee Polly said: "Coming to Shared Lives has made a massive difference to N. He has been supported with work, running a home and dealing with paperwork. Probably the most important thing has been the warm, encouraging relationships that he has had with both of his hosts and the time they have spent listening to N, building his confidence and helping him work out what he wants to do with his life. N has been given the chance to make his own mistakes as well as have incredible success. It has been amazing to see the transformation in him."



Photos!

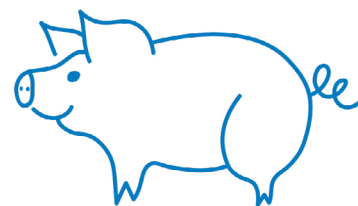
We love seeing your photos and hearing your news.

Don't forget to send photos to:
dgillingwater@sharedlivesw.org.uk





Andrew has enjoyed returning to the farm now restrictions have lifted. He was delighted to see baby lambs and piglets born. Andrew enjoys helping to mucking out to keep the animals clean and tidy. He is supported by SLSW Carer Fiona Bastable in Somerset.





Mark and his SLSW Carer Roger Helyar are seen here on a trip to Dawlish Warren on a bright December day. It also shows them playing Christmas music locally.



Ness is seen here all dressed up for Christmas. We love the sparkly fox jumper! Ness is supported by SLSW Carer Vicki Tweedle



What a lovely photo of Gillian. She is seen here at Trevena Cross garden centre, which has been transformed for the festive season with decorations and photo spots. Gillian is supported by SLSW Carer Tracey Chase.

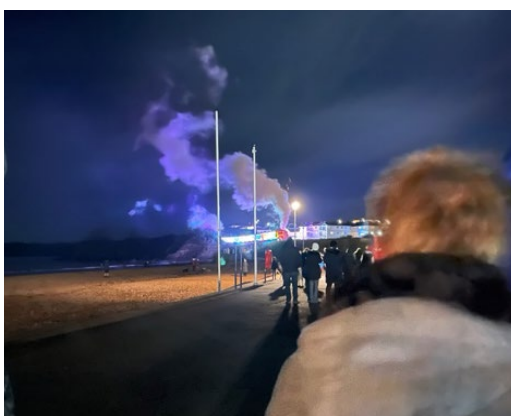
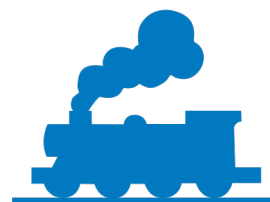


Cara is seen here ready for her Christmas party. Dressed in a festive dress and elf hat for the occasion. SLSW Carer Sylvia Marsh supports Cara.



One SLSW family donned their warm clothes to take a trip to see the Christmas Train of Lights.

Troy, Marina and Sarah- who are supported by the Kirkman family- loved the night out. Troy, who is also seen in the photo by the Christmas tree, particularly loved it as he is a big train enthusiast.





SLSW Carer Richard Holland and Neil, who he supports, are seen here enjoying sparklers on Bonfire Night. We hope you had a great night!

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We thought we'd sprinkle some festive cheer! Helen who has respite with SLSW Carer Tracey Chase has been busy creating this cross stitch reindeer during her stay. It looks fabulous!



The deadline for the March newsletter is February 22

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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