

The Community Magazine for the
Sudbury Court and Pebworth Estates

December
2022

The Courier

92nd
Year



Photo: Stan Bysshe

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The Courier



December 2022
Number 242 (1,082)

The official publication of the Sudbury Court Residents' Association.

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Dear Neighbours,

I don't know about you, but this year seems to have flown by, and here we are in the run-up to Christmas! I do hope you're going to enjoy some quality time with family and/or friends .

With your wallets in mind, I've found some free local events for you to drop into your diary— if you go along to any, let me know how you enjoyed it.

I received late notice of a Christmas Street Party (pg 21) not too many details, but go and wish some neighbours a Happy Christmas while you're out and about.

Apologies for the absence of Councillor's Comments this month, but I was unable to make contact with either of Councillors—hopefully we'll have an update next month.

I was really saddened to hear that the Sudbury Neighbourhood Centre will be closing it's doors before Christmas—such a loss of a much-loved local resource. This may become a familiar story—please do go and support our local resources, shops, businesses, high streets whenever you can.

And, as ever, please do send in your pictures, stories so we can share.

Keep safe, warm and well.

Until next time,

Kaye

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Courier deliverers

We'd like to take this opportunity to say a HUGE 'thank you' to our residents who, once a month, whatever the weather, deliver our Courier magazine to every doorstep on the Sudbury Court and Pebworth Estates.

And to Noura, who oversees the deliveries and fills in when people are away—always above and beyond.

I think it's true to say that we wouldn't have a magazine without your commitment.

If you don't have email and you would like to contact the SCRA, please call:

07933 958 166

(available weekdays 10am-2pm; 4-6pm, or send a text and we'll get back to you)

Northwick Park Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)

PCSO Charlie Charalambous 7271NW

PC Finn Kennedy 2621NW (author of this article)

PC Ben Bareham

Sergeant Sophia Adams



Dear Residents,

Please read the crime stats below; as far as I am aware the couple of males that are going around on bicycles stealing mobile phones are still at large, so please be aware. These robberies are happening at commuting times in the vicinity of commuter locations, such as tube stations and bus stops. Beware of your surroundings as you commute to work, do not keep your phone in your hands as you walk and don't have your music too loud that you can't hear noises behind you.

Also, if someone asks you the time, don't take your mobile out to answer – this is a common ploy that robbers say in order to get someone to take out their phone so they can snatch it. If they take it from you, they will threaten you to unlock it so they can use it/sell it on.

Avoidance of dangerous situations and awareness of your surroundings is advised at all times rather than being the victim of a robbery, or being confronted by robbers who are threatening to assault you. If you are in such a situation, your safety is always paramount and I would urge you not to fight in any way in case any of the robbers have weapons. Try to take a mental note of the description of the robbers including clothing, direction of travel, as many details as you can.

Ensure that you:

- have note of the 15 digit IMEI number of your mobile phone, preferably on www.immobilise.com or similar service
- have a 'Find My Phone' app installed on your phone so that the police could possibly track it if stolen.
- Ring police as soon as possible on 999 if you are the victim of a robbery/attempted robbery as there might be a chance that

police can deploy officers to search for the robbers.

Also, in winter, burglaries are most likely to occur in the hours of darkness when residents are at work.

Ensure that you:

- keep your house alarms on
- lock those porch doors
- keep a car on your driveway
- leave a radio on, near the front door.

Burglars frequently knock on doors to check if anyone is at home; please be aware of this, especially if you are not expecting any callers, and check who is at your door before thinking about opening it.

If you believe someone is about to break into a house please ring 999.

Suspicious Tow Truck:

In a previous Courier, I recorded an old car stolen on the ward. Following further enquiries, a month later, this car was found to have been scrapped.

The theft of old cars is most likely conducted by thieves using tow trucks; new cars are generally stolen by using signal booster technology.

On 4th November I stopped a tow truck in Blockley Road—the driver, who had a young boy in the cabin, said he was a scrap merchant looking to see if there are any cars in the area that residents want to scrap. Although he didn't have a vehicle on his flatbed winch, his presence in the area was of concern.

On 6th November, this same vehicle was seen by a resident towing a car.

Sometimes it can take a few weeks before a resident notices that their car is gone, especially if it is not in frequent use.

- Please be aware of this if you are the owner of an old car.
- Please report to me if you have had any leaflets put on your car about scrapping it, as this too might be a ploy to see if the car is in frequent use.
- Please consider getting a wheel lock if you are the owner of an old car.

Scooter/Moped Theft Prevention:

On 27th October two stolen scooters/mopeds were found abandoned by police—dumped in the old tennis court in Vale Farm, opposite the Veolia depot there. One of the scooters was stolen from the top end of Sudbury Avenue near East Lane and the other from Eton Avenue, both peds were stolen from the confines/gardens of the dwellings; neither had any external locks fitted, just the factory fitted wheel lock.

- Please, if you own a scooter/moped, could you lock it with a substantial chain lock to a secure object or ground anchor.

Cannabis Factories:

On 9th of November I assisted in a raid of a cannabis factory in the Tokyngton Area of Wembley. This resulted in the arrest, charge and remand of the male who was on the premises, a person we refer to as the “gardener” - a person who is there to take care of the plants.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight these criminal enterprises and the tell-tale signs of ones.

You really do not want a cannabis factory in your area for a number of reasons, including being a fire risk as well as a target for attack from rival gangs. We have had incidents where gangs have attacked the wrong address by mistake.

What is a Cannabis factory?

It is the term given to a residential property or commercial unit that has been made into a greenhouse for the cultivation of cannabis plants. It is obviously an illegal enterprise and is frequently connected with Organised Crime Networks who are involved in large scale distribution of cannabis and human trafficking.

Cannabis factories are dangerous set ups for many reasons, one that many might not appreciate is the large scale energy consumption required for the strong lighting/heat sources and ventilation, which means that the mains electricity is frequently hacked into and the meter by-passed. It is not unknown for cannabis factories to catch fire due to overloading of the electricity.

Please read some of the telltale signs below, and if you have any suspicions that an address near to you is a cannabis factory, please email us: p199114@met.police.uk

- They are normally rental property.
- In the case when the new occupants are setting up a cannabis factory you will hear a lot of construction work, banging and hammering etc the electrics is being hacked into, ventilation ducting erected, lighting erected. Lots of deliveries, perhaps you have noticed compost or plant pots being delivered but this will generally happen at night time.



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- The windows will be constantly covered and the property appears unoccupied. In cannabis factories the windows are blocked up with sheeting to stop you from seeing what is going on inside, the powerful lights used in the cultivation process.
- Sickly smell of cannabis, constantly coming from an address. A lot of cannabis factories are discovered by passers-by who catch a whiff of cannabis smell and then notice other signs indicative of a cannabis factory.
- In some cannabis factories, there is a high level of condensation on windows from the numbers of plants growing inside.
- Property always in darkness but visitors coming and going, particularly at night time or in hours of darkness.

- Buzz of ventilation – cannabis factories have various ducting and use ventilation systems and sometimes filters to filter out the smell. The buzz of a ventilation system on an apparent unoccupied property is an indication of a cannabis factory. The ventilation system is to regulate the temperature, the condensation and the smell.
- Cannabis factories are significantly warmer than neighbouring houses, because the plants need to be kept at a higher temperature to promote the growth. In cold or frosty weather, the roof of a cannabis factory will not have frost or very little snow on it.
- Occasionally, if the persons involved in a cannabis factory haven't sealed the windows enough you might get a glimpse of bright lights from inside which will be on all day and night.

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Report to police or not bother?

I would always urge residents to report when they have been a victim of crime as it alerts the local police (the Safer Neighbourhood Team) - it informs priorities and may also influence resourcing to the police in your local area.

Overview of offences 8th Oct—8th Nov:

Attempted Residential Burglary: (i) The Fairway (in 30s odds) 01/11 2130hrs – 2145hrs, occupier was at home with no lights on the front of the house, heard noises at the front door and turned on hallway light, figure seen in doorstep, small dark grey metallic car seen driving off, the following morning, tool marks were noticed around the lock mechanism on front door.

Robbery / Snatch: (i) Northwick Ave (in 50s odds) at 1443hrs on 13/10 a delivery driver was delivering a phone to an address, a male outside the address said the parcel was his, when driver asked to see proof of him living at the address, the driver was put in a headlock by the male who then made off with the parcel. (ii) East Crt between 1955hrs – 2004hrs on the 14/10, male victim in his 30s was walking when two males accosted him and asked him for the time, they then came around him took his phone, made him unlock it and demanded cash from him, both males had their faces covered.

Theft from Motor Vehicle: (i) Nightingale Ave – 19/10 1900hrs – 20/10 1045hrs, 2021 Ford Transit broken into and tools & equipment stolen from inside; (ii) NP Hospital (NPH) – 21/10 2000hrs – 22/10 0745hrs, reg plates stolen from 2013 Mercedes AMG; (iii) St. Andrews Ave (in 10s odds) 15/10 0001hrs – 21/10 2200hrs CatCon stolen from 1997 BMW 323i; (iv) NPH – 05/11 1500hrs – 1600hrs, reg plates stolen from 2012 plate Polo.

Theft of Motor Vehicle: (i) Arcent Crt 96 Sudbury Ave 2019 Piaggio scooter stolen 27/10 0100 – 0630hrs, subsequently found by police dumped in the old tennis court Vale Farm on the morning of 27/10 with another stolen scooter; (ii) The Fairway (in 60s odds) 27/10 2200 hrs – 27/10 0800hrs 2016 Mitsubishi Outlander stolen without the keys.

The reporting methods: **999 for an emergency situation** – immediate risk to personal safety or that of property, if a suspect for a crime is still there and likelihood that police could effect an arrest (not always possible due to call volume). **101 for a non-emergency situation** where a crime has been committed and the suspect no longer on scene or nearby, non-emergency incidents may also be reported online via the Met Police Website – www.met.police.uk

OWL—Online Watch Link

We use the OWL to send out alerts to residents about local crimes and other information of benefit. Please register at www.owl.co.uk or download the OWL mobile app (search for "OWL crime alerts") - this is a FREE service.'

The various residents' WhatsApp groups receive the same alerts. (please email: membership@the-scra.co.uk for details)

Please consult the websites below for more crime prevention tips or if you do not have

access to the internet, perhaps speak to us and we might be able to arrange that you obtain a crime prevention pamphlet.

Your team would welcome any information on anti-social behaviour or criminal offences occurring in the area—please contact us:

020 87212 969 or 07920 233 752

northwickpark.snt@met.police.uk

Useful numbers:

Dial **999** in an emergency—where a crime is in progress or life is in danger.

For non-emergencies, ring **101**

To give information anonymously call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**

Useful websites:

Find a whole host of useful info: e.g. crime prevention, crime statistics, identity theft!

www.met.police.uk

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

www.cifas.org.uk

www.direct.gov.uk

Getting out n about . . .

On **Saturday 3rd December** the Friends of Sudbury Neighbourhood Centre will have a Christmas Sale.



Some of you will know that after 43 years of care in the community the Centre is closing before Christmas so this will be our last sale. We appreciate the loyal support of so many local residents during this time and hope you will join us again on the 3rd from 10.00am. until 2.00pm. Father Christmas is due to arrive at 11.00am to wish the children a Happy Christmas, refreshments will be available and we look forward to seeing you at the Centre, behind the Methodist Church in Harrow Road, Sudbury.

phone 020 8908 1220.

Find us at 809 Harrow Road, behind the Methodist Church HA0 2LP

Thursday lunch-time concerts at St John's, Harrow

Thursday 1 December, 12.30 pm: The Nonesuch Orchestra

Thursday 15 December, 12.30 pm: Christmas Music with Adrienne Walters (soprano)

Admission **free** – collection on the way out to cover expenses.

St John's Church, Greenhill, Harrow (corner of Station Road and Sheepcote Road).

www.stjohnsharrow.com



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH by Alan Ayckbourn

Martin and Miriam, a brother and sister innocently set up a Neighbourhood Watch group following a petty crime from a nearby estate. Matters escalate and the group starts to go out of control.

This is a darkly comedic play by a master British storyteller exploring the dangers of leaving law & order to volunteer vigilantes.

Fri 2nd, Thur 8th, Fri 9th, Sat 10th Dec @ 7.45pm

Matinees Sat 3rd, Sun 4th @ 3pm

Doors open 30 minutes before curtain up

BOOK ONLINE

www.eastlanetheatre.co.uk

SCRA Update—Pareet Shah, Chair

Hello all, I hope you're all looking forward to Christmas and some time with family and friends.

This is a brief update from our committee meeting on 2nd November:

1. Mumbai Junction/231 Watford Road

At time of writing, there were over 500 comments, mainly objections, regarding this proposed redevelopment. We are extremely grateful to the volunteers who distributed leaflets to the entire area at such short notice, raising awareness and encouraging people to comment on the proposals at this local landmark. We would also like to thank the residents who took the time to offer their feedback to Brent Planning. We expect to hear about the decision in the New Year and will update everyone when we have news.

2. East Lane collision

We learnt that on the morning of 26th September, the school crossing patrol lady (aka 'Lollipop Lady') was struck by a car driver who failed to stop whilst she was assisting children to cross at the Zebra crossing outside Wembley High Technology College. Fortunately, she was not seriously injured, and the driver stopped after the incident. The

Council are investigating, and we hope they will produce recommendations to improve safety here. We have received numerous complaints of inconsiderate parking during the school run and hope that this can also be addressed.

3. Volunteering opportunities

The SCRA relies on the good will of local residents to volunteer to keep functioning and we are always looking for help. Fortunately we have been approached by several pupils at Wembley High Technology College who are helping with distribution of The Courier as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award. We regularly need help with this and other tasks like taking meeting minutes, so if you or someone in your household can spare some time, we would really appreciate it. Please get in touch.

4. Christmas Lights competition

As the nights draw in, the estate always looks fantastic when houses are illuminated during the festive period. Our Secret Santa judges will be out during December for the annual Christmas Lights competition. There will be £50 (1st), £30 (2nd) and £20 (3rd) prizes awarded to the best displays. We look forward to seeing the area lit up.



Christmas Lights Competition

Judging will take place during the third week of December. Winners will be published in the February issue of The Courier.

If you'd like to nominate your favourite display for consideration by our Secret Santa, please email:

chair@the-scra.co.uk before 17th December.

(the decision of the Secret Santa is final)



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'Carol of the Bells' is a Ukrainian folk Christmas song and is now one of my favourite Christmas carols. For me it captures and creates an atmosphere of Christmas like no other carol.

Christmas is here
Bringing good cheer
To young and old
Meek and the bold

Ding-dong, ding-dong
That is the song
With joyful ring
All carolling

I wonder what creates for you a heartfelt atmosphere of Christmas, an indulgent joy of expectation and peace? This carol entered our culture after it was used in the film Home Alone in 1990 – a haunting melody of joy.

Although this carol says nothing about Jesus's birth, it sums up the Christian Christmas message of joy - a joy that leads to hope in the darkest places of our world. This song of joyful hope is being sung across Ukraine

this Christmas 'bringing good cheer to young, old, meek and bold' alike.

The carol's use in "Home Alone" creates a paradox of joy and sadness, of love and loss. However, the film promises that this journey will end with a Joyful conclusion - with peace and Love restored.

This is the promise we receive when we enter a life with God at the centre, when we place our trust into the hands of our heavenly father and draw on the rich history of God's love and his promises throughout scripture. In Luke's Gospel the angel says to the shepherds:

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. A permanent, forever saviour has been born, Jesus Christ the Lord." Our Christmas story is very important it reminds us we have started on a journey that also will end with a Joyful conclusion. So may we keep travelling on and 'Be of good cheer, Christmas is here'

Happy Christmas
Rev Trevor Goddard

St Cuthbert's Church Christmas dates 2022.

Saturday, 3rd December—10am to 1pm. St Cuthbert's annual **Christmas Fair**.
A time of fun, food, and festive activities.

Sunday 18th of December—5:30pm Christmas **Carol Service**.
Led by our wonderful Community Choir. This is a joyful occasion of traditional and contemporary music followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Thursday, 22nd December—11am to 1pm. **Memory Café Christmas** together.
Come and celebrate Christmas at the final memory Café of 2022.

Sunday 25th December—10am. Christmas day family service, all welcome.
Come and celebrate Christmas together at our Christmas day service.

For full details please visit www.stcuths.org

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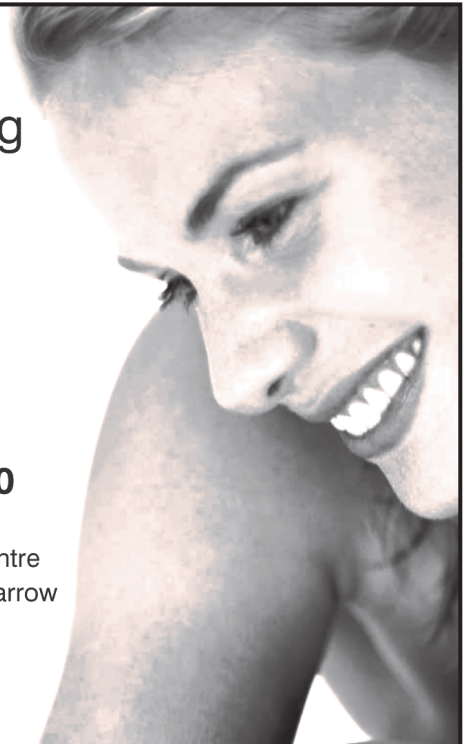
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Free Events in Brent

With many people keeping an eye on their wallet at the moment, and Christmas being a particularly costly time of year at the best of times, here are some things that you can do for FREE this month.

Check booking details online where necessary www.brent.gov.uk/events



3rd December
10.30-15.30
Wembley Library
Brent Civic Centre
Dr. Laptop

If you're having problems with your device and don't know what's wrong, our friendly IT experts are on hand to help answer all your questions. Don't despair - choose repair!
Book a slot to come down and receive a free diagnostics check and repair advice on your laptop or tablet. Our expert volunteers will need the full hour so don't be late!
You can also donate an unwanted device.



Dec 10th, 11th
12-7pm
St Johns Road HA9 7JG

Wembley Christmas Market

Get into the festive spirit with our community Christmas Market in Wembley, as part of Culture Splash

Join us over two days for carol singing, face painting, children's rides and plenty of market traders with festive food and more!



Up to December 10th
The Gallery
Willesden Green Library
95 High Road, NW10
Exhibition

V E S S E L S: Emma O'Rourke



13th Dec—2nd January
The Gallery
Willesden Green Library
Exhibition

Think first, then shoot: ArtFullFrame

"You don't take a photograph, you make it"
Ansel Adams



16th December
11-11.30
at Wembley Library
Story and Rhymetime

The last in a special week of Christmas-themed Story and Rhymetime sessions (see website for other venues through the week). There will be festive stories and crafts, plus a special VIP visitor!



17th December
Online: 11.30-12.30
In person: Ealing Road Library
Ages: 5-11 yr olds
Workshop

Dingle Dangle Triangle - Maths on Toast!

How many shapes can you make from a triangle?

See Brent website for booking online session
Drop in: no need to book for Ealing Road Library



21st December
4-5pm
Ealing Road Library
STEM Club
Ages: 8-11yrs
Workshop

Festive Christmas DIY workshop
Join us for this special festive DIY STEM Club session. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics workshops for children aged 8-11 years old.



Up to 20th January
The Exhibition Space,
Second Floor, The Library
at Willesden Green
Exhibition

Brent Museum and Archives presents an exhibition celebrating the diversity of Brent's communities and heritage.

Being Brent will explore green spaces, faith and religion, and identity and home.

Rolling back...

**Greetings, salaam, shalom
and namaste to you and all.
I trust you're safe, well and in
good spirits.**

Over the past 3 years, we have faced Covid and come out of it only to find inflated prices which never come down. This has not been helped by the rise in energy prices and the economic uncertainty as we head into winter, Christmas and the New Year. So today I would like to keep it nice and simple. I'd like to say that we understand the challenges everyone is facing and we would like to do our bit to help.

So for most of our general foot care services including nail cutting, hard skin and corn removal, **we are rolling back our prices to pre-Covid**. If you are an existing patient or indeed a new patient who is putting off having treatment because you're struggling financially, call and find out how we can help.



Thanks for reading and on behalf of everyone at the Foot Comfort Centre, we hope you have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, *Firoz*

For foot care tips visit our website
www.footcomfortcentre.co.uk



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The festive season is fast approaching, meaning we can spend quality time with family, be indulgent and enjoy celebrations! Despite these challenging times, where food prices are going up by the day, and though it may look different this year, this can still be an opportunity to enjoy ourselves with our loved ones.

Christmas is a time you may find it challenging to manage your diet as there will be plenty of tempting sweet treats and many festive foods around you that are not healthy! However, we have plenty of helpful tips and information to help you. Look out for delicious recipes, handy tips and advice that show you how you can still cook and enjoy delicious foods and treats, without compromising your diet!

Healthy Eating Tips

Portion sizes- You can enjoy all of your Christmas favourites without feeling guilty and keeping your weight in check by keeping to the right portion sizes, choosing sensible serving sizes, and having smaller amounts of high carbohydrate and sweet treats. Try to stick to one portion of your favourite dessert!

Rainbow of vegetables- Fill your plate with as many non-starchy vegetables as possible! This includes leafy vegetables such as Brussel sprouts and root vegetables such as carrots, turnips, squashes, stalk vegetables, courgettes, broccoli etc.

Shopping- While shopping, keep an eye out for your Christmas essential items and try not to be tempted by all the special offers on high fat, high sugar options. Also buy a variety of vegetables to complement your delicious meals, or these can be used to make winter soups and stews.

Eat slowly- Try to eat slowly as this will allow you to savour and enjoy your meal and will help you to avoid overeating.



Reduce overeating- After you have eaten, try to keep food items away from sight, as it is harder to resist tempting food that is left out. Avoid buying too many snacks, as when in the cupboard, you will want to eat it all.

Healthy Buffet choices- Buffets can be challenging for some people where too many choices can be difficult to pick and choose. A tip is to fill half your plate with salad and vegetables, and the rest with protein-based canapés like salmon, chicken, humus and tofu. Take your time selecting and eating the food varieties. Try to move away from the table as soon as your plate is full.

Diabetes and festive foods- Festive periods for people living with diabetes can be challenging but it's a good idea to keep an eye on your glucose levels over the festive periods as well. Indulging in occasional Christmas treats shouldn't have a long-term effect on your overall diabetes management, as long as you make an effort to get back on track afterwards and avoid continuous high readings. Perhaps take a walk if you feel like you have eaten more than usual.

Be kind to yourself- It is likely your dietary habits will change over the Christmas period because your diet is likely to change, but try not to stress. If you get back on track soon afterwards, think about some long term health goals and try to write these down.

(cont'd on pg 21)

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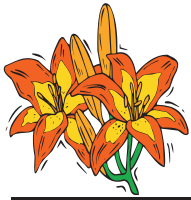
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CALLING ALL GARDENERS

Sudbury Court Horticultural Society Your local gardening club



Membership : Robert Smith - rts8904@gmail.com
Follow us on Facebook - Sudbury Court Horticultural Society

It seems a while ago now, but it was really lovely to meet society members at our Annual General Meeting late October. A very good turnout, with Susan, Diana and June on hand to serve a wonderful selection of refreshments. Congratulations to J Harding for winning the Fowler Cup with the highest points in horticulture, J Brackley for highest points in fruit and veg, Bernie Woodman for highest points in flower arranging and J & N Bhatt for winning the HC Rowan Cup for the highest young persons points.

Reports were delivered by the Treasurer Gayatri, President Bernie, Funding Secretary Sonal and Outgoing Co-ordinator Christine. What a brilliant year we've had. The books balanced well, several events have been organised and new friendships were formed. Robert Smith retired from active roles at the meeting. Without Robert the society would have struggled to

survive over recent years and we are thankful to him for his dedicated service. As such we have offered him a nonexecutive role as Vice President. This will allow him to keep abreast of the society's activities and guide us at his leisure.

Pat, Lynn, Christine, Susan, Diana, June, Valerie, and David Friend were all invited to become honorary members for their selfless support to the society. They have been volunteering on many occasions and we are very grateful for their contributions. In other news, a few great initiatives were mooted at the meeting, one of which was to increase youth members. Do get in touch if you have some ideas or thoughts on how to best

increase youth engagement or if you would like to lead this side of the society. We also have a Society Secretary and Diversity and Inclusion role to fill and would really recommend volunteering with us if you can. We are a small team but it's a great opportunity to connect with your neighbours and learn a little along the way.

And so to horticulture. In preparation for the colder months ahead you can consider raising your planters from the ground to avoid them becoming waterlogged. If you are planting Tulips, wait until the night temperatures are consistently below 10°C and the air is cool. It's also a good time to move plants before the ground freezes and if you are able to, possibly hang out some bird feeders.



Christmas will of course soon be upon us and for the horticulturalists in your

family a good book, a handy tool or a new pair of wellies will I am sure be welcome. There is always the RHS annual membership to consider which has many benefits and good publications.

Finally, it was a treat to have a hedgehog rustling at the back of our garden recently. It's the first I've seen in our area for over 6 years. If you have any pictures to share we would be happy to receive them and consider for inclusion in this feature.

Tim Manson, SCHS Chair
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We are writing this during a very wet and warm month where it's been difficult to get into the garden although our volunteers have been braving the rain to keep it tidy. This unseasonable weather has meant that many of the plants are still performing well and there is always something colourful and beautiful to spot in the garden, including Marigolds, Penstemons, Salvia, Autumn Olives, and Chokeberries.

The Trustees and some of our garden volunteers have begun attending the Permaculture Design Course where we have been learning how to prepare a climate survey and how to adapt our gardening spaces to the lack of rainfall in the summer months. It wasn't all theory as we had a practical session on wicking beds and how to make a wicking planter that uses capillary action to draw moisture into the soil. Here's the method if you want to try this for yourself.

Materials

- Plastic box (you could also use a big plastic plant pot)
- Flexible tubing - enough to cover most of the length of the bottom of the box and the height of one side
- Cable ties
- Grit
- Compost
- A piece of membrane that is a bit bigger than the bottom of the box
- a drill or a heated skewer

Method

- At the top of one corner of the box, drill two holes at the opposite sides
- Drill a hole for overflow drainage at about ¼ way up the side of the box.

- Drill/create some holes in the sides of the flexible tubing at regular intervals
- Attach one end of the flexible tube securely with cable ties to the corner you have pre-drilled then lay the rest of the tube along the bottom.
- Cover with a good layer of grit
- Add the membrane and make sure all the area is covered.
- Add your compost to almost the top of the box making sure that the top of the plastic tubing doesn't get covered over.



Now you have a wicking planter. You might want to cover the top of the hose when you are using it to make sure snails or soil don't find their way in there

The planters we made in class have gone to Josiah Braithwaite Community Garden for growing some winter salads.

An ideal Christmas present for those who love to garden might be some wicking reservoir systems from

www.green-tech.co.uk/ that you can put in the bottom of your house plant or garden pots or bury in the soil around newly planted shrubs and trees. These ensure that the water goes to the area that the plant needs it most – the roots.

We wish you all a wonderful December and a festive holiday season to all



Eleri, Jo, Rishil and Iris

[Check our website \(see header\)](#)
[Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#)

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Get some fresh air- Include some additional movement over this period. A walk outdoors after your meal is a great way to keep your weight in check and stay active.

Healthy tips for Christmas favourites!

Here are a few examples of traditional Christmas favourites with a few adjustments or healthier alternatives without compromising on taste.

Roast potatoes: Use a cooking oil spray to reduce the amount of fat. Oil sprays make potatoes just as crunchy with much less fat. Be mindful of your portion size or even replace those potatoes with vegetables if you're following a low carb diet.

Grilling rather than frying: Try grilling the sausages, rather than frying or baking, which allows excess fat to separate from the sausages, meats, and potatoes.

Stuffing: Try to avoid prepared high-fat stuffing. Vegetarian stuffing is just as delicious!

Vegetables: Along with your delicious roast, a variety of vegetable side dishes will complement the meal perfectly. Try carrots, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, kale etc. If possible, try to steam, boil or bake the vegetables, or add in plenty of colourful side salads.

Desserts: A Christmas meal isn't complete without some sweet treats! Enjoy your desserts but try to limit your portion sizes. Also make healthier snacks available, such as a cheese board, or vegetable platter, or a portion of nuts as an alternative option. But why not serve your berries, with crème fraiche or Greek yoghurt and roasted hazelnuts and seeds.

Drinks: Try not to drink on an empty stomach. Stay hydrated! If you will be drinking alcohol, try to alternate between alcoholic and soft drinks so that you don't become dehydrated. Try to go for sugar-free or diet soft drinks rather than fruit juices, as juices are generally high in sugar.

Salma Mehar
NHS Consultant Dietitian

The Star of Christmas

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Christmas carols sing along. 'Share the Joy of Christmas' by Mr. Rico Tice.
Polish dancers. Some items for sale. Music.



The *time* is now!

It's a tricky conversation suggesting to a relative that maybe they can't quite cope and they need help. Sometimes the way to approach it is not head on but gently using another angle.

For instance you might say: "I hear there's a local service where you can get a little more company and a bit of help. It sounds really interesting. Have you come across Home Instead?" Once you are into a conversation, you can explain that it's rather like having a friend call to bring shopping. Or help with some household tasks. Or just enjoy a cup of tea. The important thing is to start the dialogue if possible well before any help is needed. You may even find that they suggest when it's time to get in touch with us. At Home Instead, we know that having these conversations early and putting in place suitable care plans helps to prevent crisis situations. All our clients are matched with a care professional to create a longlasting relationship. We try to pair people who have similar interests and we are passionate about employing people that are caring and empathetic. Care plans are tailored to individuals. It might be that your loved ones just need a friendly face every day to check they are up and about. Or maybe they have recently been in hospital and need post-operative support. When you can't be there, we can. A recent testimonial sums up the relationships our care professionals have with our clients. "There is a real feeling of assurance that the person you love and care for is being taken care of in your absence. That's what Home Instead does.

“ Take little steps, there is a way of reducing anxiety as you gradually move back to normality “

My aunt hates to see her care professionals go. There are times she probably would like to see them more than me!" According to Age UK, more than a million older people in England say they go for over a month without speaking to friends, neighbours or family members. This alone is heartbreaking but what is often overlooked is the consequential gradual decline of their physical and mental wellbeing. Our care professionals might notice, when visiting regularly, small changes like confusion, mood, behaviour, memory, diet, physical ailments. These can all be key indicators of something much more concerning and are much harder to spot if you are not able to be a frequent visitor. Given the choice, most older people would prefer to stay in their own home rather than a care home. We know from experience that having a care plan in place keeps them at home and happier there for longer. So start that conversation today. Just ask: "Have you thought if you would like a little more help yet?" Make it a question and not a statement and you'll find that this difficult conversation may not be as uncomfortable as you thought. **Don't wait... do it now.**

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- An estimated 70,000 people per year have to sell their homes to **pay for care**.
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Kids' Page



Hi,
Merry Christmas to you all, From US

We enjoy putting this page together for you—we hope you like it.

If you have a favourite joke—send it in to us and we'll share it.

Faizan (aged 10) and Saniya Zaidi (aged 6)



Jokes

What do you get if you cross Santa with a detective?
Santa Clues!

What do cakes and baseball teams have in common?
They need a good batter!!

Knock, Knock!
Who's there?
Tank.
Tank who?
You're welcome

Where do fish get their money from?
A river bank!

Why did the lamb go to the river?
To get a BAA-th!

Do you know who I think is the most beautiful person in the world?
Look at the 5th word.

Why did the rancher name his ranch "Peanut Butter"?
It was a great spread.

Riddles

I shave every day, but my beard stays the same. What am I?
A barber

What has one eye, but can't see?
A needle

What word has 'e' at the start and end but has 1 letter?
Envelope

Facts

- Wall-e (Disney, 2008) won the 2009 Oscar for Best Animated Feature Film.

- The most recorded Christmas song in history is Silent Night, with over 700 renditions of the song existing today.

- The word 'Christmas' comes from the Greek words 'Cristes Maesse,' meaning Christ's mass.

- The Heart-shaped candy box was invented by Richard Cadbury for Valentine's Day in 1861.

- Did you know that myxophobia is a fear of slime?

Did you spot the deliberate spelling mistake?
'barbar' should be 'barber'.

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