

BRIDGING SOCIAL ISOLATION



Photo by Daniel Henderson

Welcome to edition number 91 of Bridging Social Isolation, a bumper festive special! In this last edition of 2022, we have taken some time to reflect on all that has happened at the centre this year. On page 3, we have shared some facts and figures with you, it certainly has been a busy year!

We couldn't do it without our fabulous team of volunteers and we pay tribute to them on page 2. We would also like to thank everyone who has contributed articles in this newsletter, not just in this edition, but also throughout the year.

We are aware that, whilst this is a time of celebration, it can be a challenging time of year for many. We will have the kettle on for a brew and a chat for three days between Christmas and New Year. We have also included details of organisations providing further support for anyone that may need it over the festive period.

From the team at Bridgend, Merry Christmas to you all!



Celebrating our volunteers



Volunteers are the life-blood of the Bridgend Centre, which is illustrated by the amazing statistic that in 2022 111 people took the opportunity to volunteer for us, working 4,183 hours for the Centre.

We have a number of varied and interesting roles that people can volunteer in such as working in our eBay shop, leading walks or working in our charity shop. This year we have also developed a new role of 'Hospitality Volunteer', which is working in our kitchen café and basically being a fabulous host to our visitors. We have already recruited a number of people to this role, but we are looking for more to help us in this really important role.

We also have some ad-hoc volunteer roles such as working in our workshop, organising the walking festival and hand-delivering newsletters.

Volunteering is a win-win situation for both the Bridgend and the people who volunteer.



We gain their time and hard work, and volunteers tell us that they benefit from the opportunity to gain new skills, make new friends, give something back to the community to name but a few.

We want to take this opportunity to thank all our wonderful volunteers, we really couldn't be the place we are and deliver the services we do without them!



Bridgend is a warm PLaCE

The Bridgend Centre is proud to be part of Cheshire East Councils Warm PLaCE scheme. The scheme was launched in response to the cost of living crisis in a bid to help ease the unprecedented financial pressure caused by ever increasing costs.

The ethos of the Bridgend Centre is to continue to create and promote a safe and welcoming environment, to help to bring people together, this fits perfectly with the Warm PLaCEs scheme. Our community café is open Monday-Friday 10am to 4pm and on a Saturday from 10am-1pm. You can enjoy a cup of tea or coffee for 50p. The kettle is always on so if you want a welcoming place to come and have a cuppa and a chat please call in and see us.

If you need further advice in respect of the cost of living Cheshire East Council have set up a telephone helpline 0300 123 5024 or email costoflivingsupport@cheshireeast.gov.uk

2022 at the Bridgend Centre

The festive season is a time for reflection so we thought we would look back on 2022 at the Bridgend Centre. It has been a very busy year at the Centre with unprecedented visitor numbers and lots of change, as ever. During the period 1st January 2022 to the present day (8th December):

- Bridgend Centre open for 304 days (1,662 hours) to the public providing a brew and a supportive ear to those in need
- Based on this figure we estimate that this means we make 30,400 hot drinks per year
- Total footfall (number of people walking through the door) - 21,287
- 1080 different people registered with us
- 117 people accessed 1:1 support from a community worker on 364 occasions
- 348 people attended 110 guided walks
- 157 people attended 369 activity, group or educational sessions
- 150 people accessed information
- 111 people took the opportunity to volunteer, working 4,183 hours for the Centre
- 15 people teamed up with a Buddy
- We set up new structured woodcraft classes, delivering 27 sessions to 20 people
- 24 editions of Bridging Social Isolation were produced and distributed, both on paper and online. This provided Bridgend and Bollington news, information and gossip to a community of around 500 people. 100 copies of which are delivered by hand to people's homes by volunteers every fortnight.
- Two Vintage Fairs raising over £3,200 in sales for our charity
- One huge fabric sale which raised over £2,200
- 9 trips out on the Rainow community bus
- One walking festival with nearly forty guided walks
- One sponsored walk with over 40 walkers



- 713 cars were washed at 45 car wash sessions at the Recreation Ground, providing low cost car washes for the community, whilst raising valuable funds for the Bridgend Centre and the Rec. Working in partnership with Cheshire & Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company.
- Two new members of staff; Bev Henderson replaced Avril Corbett who left us for pastures new in Cumbria and Sam Davies joined the team as a flexible community worker to support us when we are particularly busy.

These amazing statistics clearly illustrate the value our services are to our community. A huge THANK YOU goes to everyone who supports us to achieve this.

Father Christmas to Santa Claus: **Green** Man Changes to **Red**

By Jim Kennelly of the Bridgend Creative Writing Group

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Beyond that all bets are off; nobody knows the exact date or year for the Nativity.

The Romans were religiously omnivorous; eventually adopting Christianity as the state religion. Formerly, Romans had the Saturnalia midwinter festival, anticipating new life with the return of the light. A popular adopted god was Mithras, product of a virgin birth, born on the 25th December. These are suggestions why the early Church set the feast of the Nativity on this date, aligning with traditions of their recent European converts. As a consequence, Christmas (originally from the Middle East) has garnered cultural barnacles from various European winter festivals.

Christmas images are of snowy wintery weather. Lying snow on 25th December is a given in Norway and Russia, but less so in, say, Britain and France. This is due to the change from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, reluctantly adopted by Britain in 1753; the Julian 25th December was equivalent to 8th January now, a significantly colder period. How come we do not celebrate Christmas Mud, Fog and Drizzle in Britain? As with many things Cultural, the answer is DICKENS. Charles Dickens was born in 1812 and 1810 to 1820 winters were exceptionally cold; 1814 saw the last recorded Frost Fair on the frozen Thames, so young



**Dreaming of a Green
(Father) Christmas**

Charles's formative memories of snowy Christmastimes in southern England permeated his later writings.

The lack of Biblical justification for the 25th December holiday (plus the excessive feasting and drinking involved) posed problems for Protestants.

The festival was branded pagan, or even worse, Papist. Christmas was banned in Civil War period



Bishop Nicholas

England by the Puritan-dominated Parliament and not recognised as a religious holiday by the Scottish Kirk. Indeed, until 1958 Christmas Day was

nominally still a working day in Scotland. Disapproval of Christmas was responsible for the emergence of Hogmanay as Scotland's principal public holiday. Justification of Christmas traditions in England cited the spirit of the festival, personified as "Nowell", "Sir Christemas" and "Lord Christemas". Eventually he became Old Christmas or Father Christmas. Associated with adult communal feasting and drinking, a muscular man in his prime, dressed in **Green**, garlanded with holly, the original Father Christmas does appear a pagan figure, along the lines of the Green Man – perhaps those Puritans had a point after all? The best depiction of the traditional British Father Christmas is in Dickens's (Him Again!) *A Christmas Carol* as the jolly Ghost of Christmas Present.

In Catholic Europe, Christmas gift giving is ascribed to St Nicholas, the young Bishop of Myra (now in Turkey) during the 4th Century. Nicholas was dedicated to helping the poor, anonymously gifting dowries to impoverished girls and nocturnally depositing coins or treats in the shoes of children. St Nicholas is depicted as a bearded man, as were most clergy in Eastern Rite Churches, but neither old nor portly. He wears bishop's robes; often, but not always, in red. St Nicholas is Sint Nikolaas in Dutch, Sankt Nikolaus in German. More familiarly he is known as St Nick, Sinterklaas or Sankt Niklaus.

Continued on next page...

Father Christmas to Santa Claus continued....

In USA areas with significant Dutch and German populations, Sinterklaas or Sankt Niklaus was anglicised to Santa Claus during the 18th century and became a local folklore alternative to Father Christmas. Clement Clarke Moore’s 1822 poem "The Night Before Christmas" gave Santa his reindeer-drawn magic sleigh and a sackfull of toys. The transformation to the current Santa Claus is yet incomplete; he is still called St Nicholas and is of miniature stature and dressed in fur.

In 19th century depictions of Father Christmas or Santa Claus he varies in height and weight, although he is now generally shown as a white haired old man. He might be dressed in the original colour green, but also in furs, or white, blue, yellow and, increasingly, red clothes. By 1870 Thomas Nast is credited with visualising the definitive Santa Claus as a larger-than-life, rotund and red-robed Merrymaker. This image was solidified worldwide by an immensely popular

series of paintings during the 1930’s by Haddon Sundblom for Coca-Cola adverts - it also helped that Santa’s red and white livery was in the company’s colours.

The British Father Christmas is reconciled with his Dutch-American alter ego; he has changed into red and will answer both to Santa Claus or Father Christmas. We do hope, however, that he keeps his old suit handy – there are moves to recover the pre-commercial traditions of Christmas and who better to lead those celebrations than the original Green Father Christmas?



Red of cheek and Red of coat –
Coca Cola’s Santa Claus

Bollington Town Council—Carols round the tree

Join the community for a festive sing along accompanied by Bollington Brass band. Gathering round the Christmas tree outside the town hall, 6pm on Christmas Eve. It is always a fantastic community event. The road will be closed from 5pm..





Bridgend Centre
at the heart of our community

Christmas Opening Hours
2022

Thursday 22nd Dec—we will be closing at 12:30pm for our Christmas Party. You are welcome to join us at the Civic Hall! Please just let us know if you would like to.

Friday 23rd Dec	10am - 4pm
Saturday 24th - Tuesday 27th Dec	CLOSED
Wednesday 28th Dec	10am - 4pm
Thursday 29th Dec	10am - 4pm
Friday 30th Dec	10am - 4pm
Saturday 31st Dec	CLOSED
Sunday 1st Jan 2023	CLOSED
Monday 2nd Jan	CLOSED

A wintry Bollington

The last couple of weeks has brought some icy and snowy conditions to Bollington, which of course has meant some lovely photos as a result!



Delilah and Ferris get their bums wet—Jo Maitland



Bruce Kendrick



Up on the Nab—Gemma Allen– Muncy



The Ridge by Terry Heathcote



The canal beyond Sugar Lane by Hal Westhead



From Cow Lane by Bruce Kendrick



Fog under Nancy by Kay Stevenson



White Nancy by Daniel Henderson

A clear moon by Bruce Kendrick



A wintry Bollington



The view from Blaze Hill by Andrew Heathcote



The view across the Happy Valley
by Jon Weston



Daniel Henderson



Daniel Henderson



Daniel Henderson

Festive Recipe—Leftover Turkey Fricasee

Ingredients

50g butter
100g chestnut or button mushrooms, quartered
1 tbsp plain flour
100ml white wine or dry sherry
200ml chicken or turkey stock
150ml double cream or crème fraîche
800g leftover boneless cooked turkey, chopped into chunks or shredded
small bunch of parsley, chopped (optional)

Method

Heat the butter in a deep frying or sauté pan until sizzling, then add the mushrooms and fry for 4-5 mins until softened. Sprinkle over the flour and stir until a paste forms. Cook for a few more minutes.

Splash in the wine or sherry and let it bubble for a minute, then stir in the stock and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and stir in the cream. Season, then stir in the turkey. Simmer until the turkey is heated through, then remove from the heat and stir in the parsley, if using. Serve with pasta, mash or rice.



What a Pantomime! Dandini's Dilemma

By Jim Kennelly of the Bridgend Creative Writing Group

Prince Charming – the world's most eligible, handsome and desirable bachelor, aka His Royal Hunkyness to the tabloids. I prefer to think of him as Charming, the Priapic Present Participle.

To be frank, Charming wasn't first in the queue when good looks were doled out. As Miss Jane Austen remarked; perhaps he would not be so handsome were he not so rich. I saw a picture of him snapped at the beach titled "Here's a slab of Royal beefcake to set the girls hearts a-flutter!". Were they looking at the same picture? The sun sparkled on his spindly arms and bounced off his spare, rib-contoured torso. Under his greasy lank hair, the gravitational union of his beady eyes was only prevented by the redoubt of his bulbous snout. Still, as that wise Dane Hans Christian Andersen wrote, an Emperor might walk naked through the streets of his capital without comment, if people were deluded into believing that he was clothed in a magic garment, visible only to the wise or worthy.

Me? Dandini's the name, wingman to the Prince, bodyguard, fixer, purveyor of excuses and alibis. The only man in the Prince's orbit who doesn't flatter and lie to him for personal gain. In our world of undeserved, unearned, inherited incomes for the few, marriage to the Prince is the *prix d'or*. Unfortunately, the Royals apply the same principles to their succession as they do to breeding their Labradors. With one important difference, although both Royals and Labradors have pedigrees and heredity, Royals are without selection. Generations of diamond-encrusted dullards are the result. Prince Charming's alternative moniker ought to be Prince Gullible, as sadly, he actually believes the inflated reports of his charisma and intellect. Hence my role.

Last year we had the dilemma of Cinderella, or Slippergate as it came to be known. The devastatingly attractive Princess Cinderella rocks up to the ball and the Prince Charming is smitten. How come no one (including me) had ever heard of this stunning aristocratic beauty? I had been unable to attend the



Being a Princess may not be Perfect, but I'll never have to do anyone's housework!

ball myself whilst away on the Prince's business, but I was ordered to investigate after the event. Suspiciously, at the ball, boorish Baron Hardup, known for his penury, ugliness, and a brace of equally ill-favoured daughters, had suddenly revealed a third, younger, daughter of unparalleled grace and loveliness.

Wearied by the long journey to see the baron at his ramshackle pile, I was kindly given welcome refreshment by a woodcutter and his wife at their home, Slipper Cottage. A remarkably handsome couple and very striking, both with violet eyes. I went to the ruinous Castle Hardup and had my first meeting with the captivating Cinderella. Under fluttering eyelids,

deep violet eyes transfixed me – The same eyes as the woodcutter and his wife!

Under questioning (and a thumbscrew) Baron Hardup admitted that as his daughters would have no chance with the Prince, he plotted to pass off his comely serving maid, Cinderella Slipper as his daughter, in order to dip his bread in the royal gravy at the Palace. He did get royal bread eventually, served with water in the Palace dungeon.

Back at the Palace, I gently explained to the Prince that Princess Cinderella was actually a low-born peasant girl, but still the graceful beauty he had fallen in love with. Now away from the baleful influence of the Hardups, she would be a wonderful choice for a wife. Did he take my advice? Was he contemplating the Happy Ever After with Cinderella by his side? No chance - His putty-coloured face turned a vein-throbbing flushed puce - "What? Me, a Prince Royal, marry a wood cutter's daughter? A ghastly Pleb? Have you finally taken leave of your senses?"

"Fetch the horses Dandini, saddle up, we are going on a quest – I hear that in Mirrovia there is a cracking Princess... Snow White!"

But in Mirrovia, Snow White had disappeared! Do something Dandini! My enquiries pointed to the royal

Dandini's Dilemma continued....

huntsman. Crossing his palm with a few sovs, he revealed that Princess Snow White was in hiding, working as a domestic for seven diminutive brothers mining in the mountains. We galloped up to their cottage and were brought up short (no pun intended) by the sight of the 7 stocky brothers kneeling around a glass coffin perched on a bier. In the coffin was the corpse of the lovely Snow White laid on a bed of flowers. One blubbing bewhiskered brother came to us "She was so beautiful - we could not bear to put her into the cold ground". What?! You dwarfish dolts, you can't leave that body up there! After a few days rotting she won't look so pretty nor smell so fragrant - you must bury her! I tried to ease the coffin down but was hampered by a scrum of punching, kicking and biting dwarfs. In the melee, the coffin crashed from the dais. The lid sprang open, Snow White's body catapulted forward and a scrap of apple(?) flew from her mouth. She gasped and fell into the embrace of the Prince. Opening her eyes, "My hero, my saviour" she gushed. Seizing his chance, Charming kissed her, saying "Fate has thrown us together - loveliest of princesses, be my wife?". "Oh, Yes, Yes, Yes!".

In halting tones, Snow White explained that her appearance of death was due to her mother poisoning her with an apple laced with a paralysing drug. At this moment, the cackling cruel Queen was expecting that

Snow White would now just be awakening to find herself buried alive! Oh my God! Well Prince Charming, you're marrying into a family of real charmers now!

Horried and trembling, I hauled myself back into the saddle. Prince Charming, with Snow White simpering by his side, asked "where are you off to now, Dandini?"

"Oh, my Prince, I must haste back to the palace to bring this glad news to your father the King. Besides, the wedding of the century uniting two dynasties and two nations will require some serious organisation."

I resolved, however, to take a detour to Slipper Cottage on my way back to the palace. I had just realised there was a particular violet-eyed beauty staying there, now at a loose end. I decided that if there were to be one happy ending to this story, it would be mine!

Yours for ever after,
Dandini

Festive Brainteaser



Christmas Crossword

DOWN

1. Alternative word to 17 across
2. Christmas drink
4. Christmas dinner centerpiece
5. Dec. holiday
7. Christmas warmer
8. "Jingle _____"
10. Christmas tree
11. O. Henry's "The Gift of the ____"
12. What carolers do
15. French Christmas.
16. Snow glider

ACROSS

1. Pumpkin or mincemeat
3. Santa's ride
6. Celebration
8. Newborn
9. Northpole crew
13. Word of praise
14. Words on a Christmas card
17. It's opened on Christmas

A Christmas Ramble up White Nancy—a circular walk of 2.1 miles with a steep climb

What better walk to do at Christmas time than up White Nancy? The following describes the route from the Bridgend Centre up to the famous landmark where you will hopefully find wonderful views of surrounding countryside. Wear sturdy footwear and allow 1.5-2 hours.

1. **Starting at the Discovery Centre** Turn left out of the door and walk to the end of Clarence Mill. Turn right down Clarence Road to the traffic lights. Cross the road at the traffic lights at the Aqueduct.

Starting at the Bridgend Centre. Turn left and walk along Palmerston Street to the traffic lights at the Aqueduct.

2. At the traffic lights by the Aqueduct walk up Water Street and walk to the end. Turn right up High Street and walk up the hill. At the top of High Street turn left and walk into Chancery Lane. After a very short distance you will come to a two-way junction, look on the right hand side for some stone steps leading to a stile in the wall.
3. Cross the stile to reach a stone flagged path. Follow this path uphill until you reach a metal kissing gate. Go through the gate, turn left and climb a few stone steps to another gate. After passing through the gate, you will have a choice, the easy route or the strenuous route.

Easy route

- 4a. Follow the path leading diagonally uphill to your right until you come to a gate leading to a concrete

paved track. There are fantastic views here over Bollington as far as Manchester, the Wirral and beyond. Turn right and follow the track until you see a cattle grid. Just before the cattle grid turn left and follow the signed path up the steps. At the top of the steps you will have reached White Nancy.

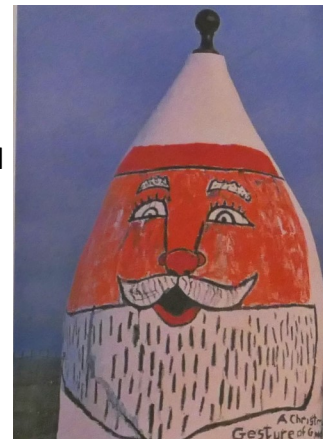


Photo by Terry Heathcote

Hard/Strenuous route

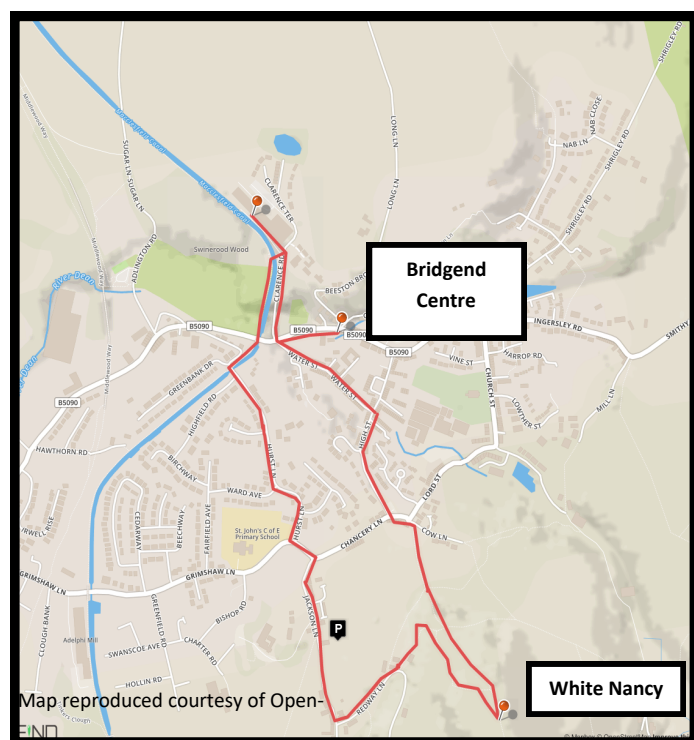
- 4b. Turn right after the gate and follow the steep path uphill with the drystone wall on your right. This path can be muddy and slippery in wet weather. Go through the gate at the top, turn left, go up a few stone steps to another gate which leads to a concrete surfaced track. Look for a signed footpath opposite leading up stone steps.

Climb the stone steps up to the top of the hill where you will find White Nancy. Take some time to get your breath back and admire the panoramic view.

Return either by the same route or the alternative route:

5. With your back to White Nancy, walk back towards the top of the steps you came up and look for a metal kissing gate diagonally on your left. Go through the gate and follow the steps downhill through the woods. The path ends at a concrete paved track. Turn left and follow the track downhill until it meets a road. Turn right and take the pavement along the front of a row of cottages. The road ends at a T junction with the Bull's Head pub on the corner.
6. At the T-junction turn right onto Oak Lane which after a few yards becomes Jackson Lane. Continue along Jackson Lane, passing the entrance to Hollin Hall hotel on your left. At the junction with Chancery Lane continue along Jackson Lane to the left. After a few yards turn right into Hurst Lane.
7. Follow Hurst Lane downhill until you reach the canal bridge. The road crosses over the canal and then bends to the right.

Continued on next page...



A Christmas Ramble up White Nancy continued.....

To return to the Discovery Centre. Shortly after the canal bridge, look for a gate on your right leading to the towpath. Go through the gate and turn left. Follow the towpath until you reach a footbridge. Cross the bridge to reach Clarence Mill and the Discovery Centre.

To return to the Bridgend Centre. Take the path which leads downhill in front of Aqueduct Cottage. This path leads to some steep steps down to Wellington Road. (To avoid the steep steps continue to the end of Hurst Lane and turn right). Turn right onto Wellington Road, and walk under the Aqueduct to the traffic lights. Cross Water Street and continue ahead along Palmerston Street. The Bridgend Centre is on the right hand side. *With thanks to Walkers are welcome and the Discovery Centre for the directions in this leaflet.*



Bridgend Winter Prize Draw 2022

The great Bridgend Winter Prize Draw is being held next Thursday (22nd December) and we have some fabulous prizes donated to us by local organisations and businesses so we thought we would celebrate them here. Top prize is £200 to spend at the Love Bollington Market. The market provides a fabulous regular shopping event which is a vehicle for local artisans and small businesses to sell their wares right in the heart of the community.

Conduct IT have donated a Garmin Vivomove Sportswatch for this year's draw. Conduct have provided high-quality IT and telecoms services for their clients since 2006 and are based in Bollington. Bolly B&B is in a traditional stone cottage on Cocksheadhey Road which has two lovely guest rooms and new this year, the secluded Chimney Pots cabin up the hill behind it. You can always be sure of a warm welcome and a tasty breakfast here.

The Poachers is a wonderfully warm and snug pub on Ingersley Road, providing excellent value and delicious food together with a wide range of real ales. Evaya Beauty is a friendly and relaxed salon on Wellington Road which provides a range of high-quality health and beauty services which will make you feel pampered and special.

Our friends at Broadheads Garage are right next to the Bridgend Centre and have donated the unbeatable prize of a free MOT for your pride and joy. Belfields Village Bakery is a Bollington institution providing delicious and filling baked goods, including cakes, bread and pies, including the unbeatable meat and potato.

We are Rootstock is another of Bridgend's close neighbours which is a 'good, green livin' refill and whole foods shop'. They have given us a lovely 'self-care' goodie box for one of our lucky winners. No 74 Deli provides really tasty locally sourced produce alongside a selection of speciality goods.

Finally, Mark Fearn of Wonky Bolly Art has donated a commission of someone's house or a favourite building. Mark's signature style is a little bit wonky but altogether charming.

So if you would like to be in with a chance to win the wonderful prizes on offer donated by these hugely generous local people, please go to our website www.bridgendcentre.org.uk for more information on how to purchase your ticket. Thank you, every ticket sale goes towards funding vital services Bridgend provide for the community.



Help and support over Christmas

Christmas can be a difficult time of year for many people for lots of different reasons. It's a time of year that puts extra pressure on many of us; you may find it very stressful on top of other responsibilities in your life, you may feel pressure to feel happy because everyone else is or you may find it difficult when shops and services are shut for long periods. However there is support available out there if you need it, you don't need to suffer alone.

If you feel that you may seriously harm yourself, you need urgent medical help. You can:

- Call 999 or go to A&E if you can
- Call your local crisis team. For Cheshire East, the contact telephone number is 0800 145 6485 (it is open 24/7 and open to people of all ages, including young people)
- Alternatively, the Shout text messaging service is also available if you are unable to call. Text 'BLUE' to [85258](https://www.shouttext.co.uk/) to start a conversation, via text, with a trained volunteer, who will provide free and confidential support.
- The Weston Hub Crisis Café is in Macclesfield and is open 10am to 10pm every day of the year. The Weston Hub provides a safe space for people struggling with emotional distress who consider themselves to be in a self-defined crisis. It offers a welcoming environment for people over the age of 18 to connect with others who are experiencing similar problems. On Christmas Day they offer one-to-ones on a walk-in basis between 10am to 2pm.
- Samaritans are a national charity who aims to support you whatever you are going through. Open 24 hours, 365 days per year. Call 116 123 free of charge
- CALM are a charity that exists to raise awareness of the issues around suicide and to reduce it in the UK.

Their helpline is open from 5pm until midnight every day and you can call it by dialling 0800 585858.

- Hopeline UK is a confidential support and advice service for children and young people under the age of 35 who are experiencing thoughts of suicide or are concerned that a young person could be thinking about suicide. Call them on 0800 068 4141, they are open 9am to midnight every day.

- In Macclesfield, the United Reform Church (ROAR) will be holding a Christmas lunch and coffee on Christmas Day at 2pm.



Thank you to our sponsors and supporters

I am Print printed the paper copies 'at cost', which are delivered to the homes of isolated and vulnerable people in Bollington. Thank you so much to I Am Print, it means the world.



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