

"I'd love to help; but I'm not sure how"

The Harpenden Trust needs your time & talent – here's how you can help. Join us as a volunteer to support neighbours in need, strengthen community bonds, and keep the spirit of kindness alive.

From a friendly chat to a helping hand, you can make all the difference. In Harpenden, we're lucky to live in a place where kindness is more than a word and where community spirit runs deep. The Harpenden Trust is a local charity powered almost entirely by volunteers who give their time, skills, and compassion to be that good neighbour, supporting local people in need, making life for those who seek our support that little bit better.



Volunteers on a trip to the Zoo

From supporting families and individuals in need, to funding local projects, to bringing joy to the elderly at Christmas, our work touches thousands of lives every year. But here's the truth: none of it happens without our amazing team of local people. Volunteering with the Trust isn't about filling hours - it's about filling lives. Yours included. Whether you have a few hours a week or just a couple of days a year, your contribution can make a real difference.

You might find yourself managing our community café, taking calls in our small office, delivering Christmas parcels, organising events, driving our community minibus, visiting someone who's lonely, or helping behind the scenes to keep our operations

running smoothly. Every role matters. Every person counts.

No experience or special qualifications required - just a willingness to help and a belief that small acts can create big change. Along the way, you'll meet like-minded people, learn new skills, and become part of a team united by a shared purpose: making Harpenden a place where no one is left behind. We're always looking for new volunteers to join us. Maybe you're recently retired and want to stay active in the community. Maybe you're a student looking to gain experience. Maybe you're simply someone who wants to give back. Whoever you are, there's a place for you here.



A busy day in the Well Bean Café

If you've ever wondered how you could make a difference, this is your moment. Step forward. Lend a hand. Be part of something bigger.

Become a volunteer with The Harpenden Trust and weave warmth and care into the lives of our neighbours in need - and help keep Harpenden's heart beating strong. A Community of Togetherness.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer see page 19 of the newsletter or contact us by email: admin@theharpentrust.org.uk.

**Be the Warm Welcome
Someone Needs**

CHRISTMAS APPEAL UPDATE

The 2025 Christmas Appeal launches December 1st – please watch for our envelopes coming through your door. This vital Appeal funds our year-round support for Harpenden residents facing hardship, providing emergency utility grants, food vouchers, wellbeing services and practical help when life takes unexpected turns. Your donation, whatever the size, directly transforms lives in our community.



CAROLS ON THE COMMON

Join us Christmas Eve, by the Harpenden Arms and Snowman, to sing Christmas Songs & Carols 6pm-7pm (more details on the back page).

And join us for the lovely Lea Singers Christmas concert 19th December, St.Johns Church, Southdown.

IN THIS ISSUE

The Film Club (Page 3)

Read about the amazing early successes of our new Film Club and plans for 2026

Harpenden Trust AGM (Page 8-13)

Read some of the inspiring stories from this year's AGM including the Mayor's poem!

What's On at the Community Halls (Page 15-17)

A guide to all the activities in our Community Halls - a huge variety covering all ages and many interests.

INTRODUCING THE HARPENDEN TRUST



Supporting the Harpenden community for over 75 years.
Now with over 500 volunteers.
Helping adults, families & young people;
Providing financial support for community projects;
all thanks to the generosity of the people of Harpenden

Since its foundation in 1948, the Harpenden Trust has provided support for local people in need, whatever their age or background. It is funded by and managed by Harpenden people to benefit Harpenden people.

The Trust can help you with practical support, activities and signposting. It has a range of core services available such as befriending and community transport and can provide financial aid through the Care and Community Funds. The Trust aims to be your good neighbour – and this was made clear when over 700 local people stepped forwards to help out during the COVID pandemic.

Since the pandemic, the Trust's work and activity levels have increased. In 2024, it responded to over 600 calls for Home Visits, organised family and senior outings, assisted local pupils with school trips and courses, and launched the Harpenden Wellbeing Hub in partnership with the Harpenden PCN, and more! This shows the Harpenden Trust is still very relevant and much needed in 2025 and beyond.



The Harpenden Trust's Values



Supporting our local community with.....

Care & Kindness

- We aim to support any Harpenden resident in need.
- Warm, approachable, compassionate and respectful in every interaction.
- Committed to meaningful, positive community impact.



Supporting our local community with.....

Community Spirit

- We act as the good neighbour Harpenden can rely on.
- Volunteering with professionalism, generosity and mutual support.
- Building positive partnerships with local organisations.



Supporting our local community with.....

Creativity & Commitment

- Valuing all input, continuously improving our work
- Committed to excellence and expanding our impact
- Acting with honesty and integrity in all relationships

The Harpenden Trust has a clear set of values which publicly define what the Trust stands for. These reflect our beliefs and guide our thinking and activities. They define what is important and worthwhile in the work we do.

With Care & Kindness - Whether we are supporting a client or working with a fellow volunteer, we always treat each other with respect and thoughtfulness, showing care and kindness in our actions towards others.

With Community Spirit - As a good neighbour, we give our time for the good of our community because we truly care about it. We partner and collaborate with many local organisations to support our local residents.

With Creativity & Commitment - With input and ideas from everyone, we do our best to solve any issues we are presented with. Our volunteers show commitment in abundance to their roles, clients and the Trust as a whole.

HARPENDEN TRUST NEWS SUMMARY

In Remembrance: Roy Brimblecombe



It is with great sadness that we note the passing of Roy Brimblecombe, former Chair of the Harpenden Trust.

Roy supported the Trust for over 22 years. He led the Care Fund from 2005 before handing over in 2016, then served as Vice Chair, Chair, and Vice President of the Trust, stepping down only at last year's AGM.

His long and devoted service touched many lives in our community, and his contribution to the Trust's work has been immeasurable.

Our thoughts are with his wife Diana and family at this sad time.

Activities Club: Helping Our Community Reconnect

The Harpenden Trust Activities Club is the successor to the seniors' outings and teas run by the Trust for many years. It's mission: to offer more things to more people more often and help people, who have become isolated and lonely, feel part of something again.

Volunteer Robin Barrett has been building a booking system to aid our 40+ volunteers to organise the 7 activities currently running. He says, "I had no idea how much social isolation existed in our wealthy town... helping build the Activities Club has been truly rewarding."

By October this year over 250 clients signed up for the Club and 90 of these have registered for more than 3.

One member a 90-year-old lady, hasn't been out for 4 years, except to medical appointments, has attended two Afternoon Teas and two Seated Exercise sessions; the impact is clear – as another member shared,

"I can't wait, it's so lovely to get out and about. Friends have said they can see a change in me, so thank you very much".



The Harpenden Trust Film Club A Welcome Addition to Our Activities Programme

Let's go to the pictures" – a phrase that once meant a night out with friends or joining the queue at the local cinema. Going to the movies is one of those simple pleasures we take for granted. But as we get older, and social scenes shrink, watching a film alone at home just isn't the same.

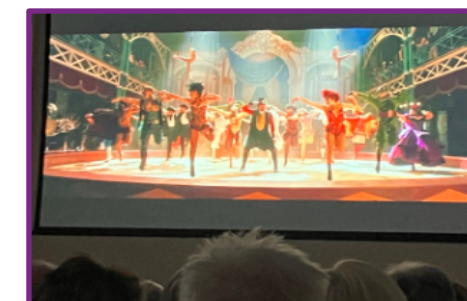
Following the old Public Hall's closure as a film venue, we saw an opportunity to use the Trust's halls for our film club, to bring back the magic of cinema for the older more isolated members of our community. Updating Abbeyfield Hall's facilities, with new LED lighting, acoustic panels, blackout blinds and audio systems, made this possible.

Early Success

The Film Club launched in autumn with "The Greatest Showman," attracting over 60 attendees – an encouraging start. We've since shown a mix of classics and recent releases including "Mamma Mia," "Downton

Abbey," "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," and "Mrs Harris Goes to Paris." Our Christmas screening of "Elf" rounds off what has been a successful first season. The response has been really positive. As one client put it, "Suddenly the coming winter doesn't seem so dreaded as we look forward to more movies that really cheer us up!"

We've been pleased to see friendships forming, with several regular attendees now arriving early to chat over tea. One gentleman mentioned it



The Greatest Showman

was his first social outing in several months – a reminder of why these community activities matter.

Looking Forward

As we plan our 2026 programme, popular requests include more musicals, British classics, and perhaps themed seasons. We're also exploring whether additional screenings might work. The Film Club has become a valued addition to the Harpenden Trust Activities Club. It's another way we're helping Harpenden residents stay connected and engaged with their community – and like all our Activities Club offerings, it's open to everyone there is no charge for attending but donations are welcomed to help us expand our programme.

Next Screening

Our 2026 season begins in January. For details and booking, please contact the Harpenden Trust office on 01582 460457.

THE WELLBEING HUB

Celebrating the Harpenden Wellbeing Hub, our partnership with Harpenden's 3 GP Practices and Mind in Mid Herts

We continue to develop our wellbeing work with the guidance and support of our Primary Care Network's local health professionals and by funding the Mind in Mid Herts Harpenden support project. We've built something powerful yet simple: people to talk to, places to go, and things to do, creating connection, building friendships, and helping people take that first, often difficult, step to join in.

Our partnership with the PCN means we're trusted to provide the right support for the right people. When patients are referred by the social prescribers both professional and patient are reassured, they are in safe hands.

Much of what we do does not need a social prescription, so to celebrate our partnership and make sure as many people as possible benefit from what is on offer, we have installed display boards, like the one shown here, in the GP surgeries. You can also find out more about some of the support on offer throughout this newsletter.

We like to feel that the beating heart of wellbeing is the Well Bean Café. More than just a café, it's a safe, welcoming space with a "donate what you can, if you can" model. Citizens Advice hosts sessions there and when it is closed to the wider public, Compassionate Café, the Ribbon Cancer Support Group and Frazzled Café host their groups there.

Many who join us are facing challenges—bereavement, illness, anxiety, or loneliness. Our aim is simple: to ensure everyone feels heard, supported, and included. And the impact is clear—our GP partners tell us fewer patients now seek social or emotional support because they're finding friendship, understanding, and belonging through us.

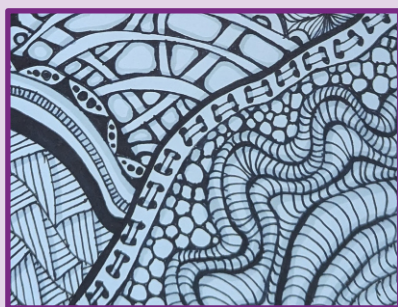


Socially prescribed Art for Wellbeing adds classes at the Harpenden Trust Halls

Arts on Prescription, funded by the Harpenden Trust, is run with the support Everyone Active who host it at the Eric Morecambe Centre. It is a creative and uplifting way to support emotional wellbeing and is an important part of the portfolio of wellbeing support for patients referred to the Harpenden Wellbeing Hub by the PCN's social prescribers.

Designed for adults experiencing stress, anxiety, or social isolation, referred by the PCN, the sessions use art as a gentle form of therapy and connection. Participants can explore painting, drawing, collage, and other creative activities in a relaxed, supportive environment—no prior art experience needed. Led by artist Sharon Nativ, with support from volunteers, each session encourages self-expression, confidence, and mindfulness through creativity. The classes have helped reduce loneliness by bringing people together in a friendly community space; creativity nurtures mental and emotional health and many rediscover joy through art.

New from September this year, Zen Doodle art for wellbeing courses started at the Trust Halls easing the waiting list for the larger art on prescription group and catering for those for whom a smaller group is suitable. It offers a simple, creative way to relax. This practice combines mindfulness with drawing, using repetitive patterns and shapes to quiet the mind and encourage self-expression. No artistic skill is required; it's all about focusing on the process rather than the outcome. The aim is that as you doodle, breathing slows, tension eases, and thoughts become more centred. It's a gentle reminder to pause, breathe, and be present in the moment.



THE WELLBEING HUB

Frazzled Café: A Safe Space to Feel Heard

FRAZZLED

Feeling overwhelmed or just a bit "frazzled"? Frazzled Café Harpenden offers a warm, welcoming space where you can pause, breathe, and share — or simply listen.

In partnership with the national Frazzled Café charity this Harpenden Trust funded local group meets face to face in the Well Bean Café and Charles Hill Lounge. Our volunteer facilitators say 'the space to share thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment is what keeps people coming back....it's a wonderful community which has visibly made a difference to many.' For our attendees feedback such as '...the sessions have been a lifeline and I am amazed about how much my feelings resonate with others here...I don't feel alone in this anymore'.

Visit: www.frazzledcafe.org/harpenden to learn more or join the next meeting.

Dance Together, Thrive Together with our new Belly Dancing Classes

This is a fabulous a new initiative funded by the National Lottery. This gentle, fun, and uplifting belly dance programme is designed to improve cardiovascular and bone health, enhance posture and flexibility, boost mood and memory, and build confidence—all while making new friends! It's for women 50+ and it may sound daunting, but it's done in normal exercise clothing and easy to learn.

Participants will enjoy six free weekly classes every Wednesday from 5 November 2025, 12:30pm to 1:30pm.

Places are available by invitation only so we can keep the classes to a reasonable size so please do reach out to find out more or request an invitation.

Email: wellbeing@theharpendentrust.org.uk
Call: 01582 363133 (voicemail only)



A Warm Welcome at Memory Lane Café

For those living with dementia — and for their families and carers — Memory Lane Café offers a comforting and friendly space to relax, meet others, and take part in gentle activities. Run collaboratively by the Trust, the Salvation Army, and the Town Council, the café has become a much-loved part of our community.

We're always looking for new ways to make our guests' visits enjoyable and meaningful. Recently our robotic pets were put aside as we welcomed Therapy Dogs Nationwide; their visit was popular with guests and volunteers as these photos show.

A welcome addition is the presence of a professional carer, who now works alongside our dedicated volunteers. She's there to lend a hand whenever someone needs help — whether that's getting in and out of chairs or taxis, finding their way to the toilet, or offering prompt support if anyone feels unwell.



For caring partners, who are often on constant alert at home, the café provides a rare opportunity to rest and recharge. While we can't offer day care support that allows them to leave the premises, we do aim to create a space where they can enjoy uninterrupted time, relax with a cup of tea and a slice of cake, and chat with others who truly understand their situation.

At Memory Lane Café, it's all about connection, comfort, and companionship — small moments that make a big difference.



THE CARE FUND

What Is The Care Fund?

The Harpenden Trust Care Fund, established in 1948 and funded entirely by Harpenden residents, supports local people in need regardless of age. 75 years on, this mission continues through specialist teams offering valued services from weekly coffee mornings to financial aid with school uniforms and essential appliance breakdowns for struggling families.

Can We Help You?

If you know someone that might need help, encourage them to

Call: 01582 460457

Email help@theharpendentrust.org.uk, and our caring team will be delighted to help.

How have we helped

We pride ourselves on providing welcoming social activities for our local community. Each week, around 60 seniors enjoy our friendly coffee mornings — on Tuesdays at the Harpenden Trust Centre (opposite the Plough and Harrow) and on Thursdays at the Salvation Army, Leyton Green, from 10.00am to 11.00am. These gatherings offer warmth, laughter, and connection.

Recently, we held a special celebration when our regular attendee Patrick Kenny marked his 100th birthday — a perfect excuse for extra coffee and plenty of cake!

Alongside these events, our Well Bean Café is open weekdays from 10.30am to 12.30pm, ensuring there's always a place to meet, chat, and enjoy good company. There's truly no shortage of places to socialise!



Supporting Our Neighbours Through Difficult Times

Despite Harpenden's relative affluence, many local residents struggle financially, whether through ongoing hardship or sudden crisis.

Families on tight budgets have no reserves when faced with unexpected expenses like replacing essential appliances. Rising utility bills, food costs, and children's needs outpace wages and benefits. Changes in circumstances can halt benefits for six weeks during reassessment, leaving families in desperate situations.

The Harpenden Trust Home Visits Team has supported residents facing financial difficulties for many years. Our trained volunteers visit clients confidentially in their homes, providing rapid, practical help through supermarket vouchers, food bank referrals, uniform vouchers, utility bill

assistance, and essential furniture or appliances. We work closely with Citizens Advice, Harpenden Money Advice Centre, James Marshall Foundation and St Albans Old People's Trust, signposting clients to additional support when needed.



Whilst we aim to help clients through specific crises, they know they can return if circumstances worsen. The difference this makes is profound. Recently a client going through an extremely difficult time wrote:

"Thanks for everything you've done. You've been there at the lowest point in my life and I will forever be grateful. I am determined to come back from this stronger."

Another said,

"Huge thanks for the vouchers which meant I could give my kids a decent packed lunch for their school outing."

Sadly, demand continues growing. We make over 600 home visits annually, with new clients contacting us monthly.

This vital work is only possible through your generosity via our Christmas Appeal. Please help us continue supporting our neighbours in need this Christmas.

Thank You

A Great Day Out at the Zoo!

On Tuesday 29th July 14 happy families plus 4 Trust Volunteers boarded the coach for our trip to the Hertfordshire Zoo (formerly Paradise Wildlife Park). Several of the children had seen the zoo on television as it features in a programme called One Zoo Three, so were very excited to see it in real life. Our youngest guests were 5 month old baby twins who took it all in their stride and the oldest child 15.

The Zoo offers two distinct areas — a wonderful animatronic dinosaur park with a small gauge train running through it, and on the other side a lovely clean well organised zoo area where you can get up close and personal with a wide range of animals — penguins, camels, tigers, a snow leopard, lions to name but a few.

Throughout the day you could attend talks about the different animals, try Crazy Golf or take in a dance show on the small

stage. There are ample picnic spots and play areas for the children.

We ended the day with ice creams all round before boarding the coach for a rousing chorus of 'Happy Birthday' to one of the mothers. The coach driver was endlessly patient and helped to stow buggies, picnic bags and car seats.

Many thanks to the Family Outings Team — Nikki, Paddy and Claire — for helping to make this happen, and to the families for joining us and having such a great day out!



THE CARE FUND

Harpenden Trust's Library Support Project celebrates its 3rd birthday!

Since September 2022, the Trust and Hertfordshire Libraries partnership has kept Harpenden Library open roughly 150 Wednesday afternoons when it would otherwise be closed.

Twelve Trust volunteers cover two shifts weekly: 1-3:30pm and 3:30-6pm. That's roughly 1,500 volunteer hours over three years — representing 9% of the library's total opening hours.

The Express Library Service averages 200 visits each Wednesday. Library Manager tells us this results in an estimated 5,200 extra loans yearly — a big impact! The team was recently nominated for the Partnership Award in the Hertfordshire Inspiring Libraries Awards 2025. The judging panel wrote:

"Your nomination is testament to your outstanding work and contribution to Hertfordshire Libraries. We received huge nominations for the Inspiring Libraries Awards (the most in award history), and the panel found it incredibly difficult selecting winners. You narrowly missed out on winning."

We want to say thank you for all your hard work for our Hertfordshire communities and Library service.

Working with such a great team of volunteers has been wonderful.



Heather Allen, Team Leader

Christmas Parcels

Every December the Trust delivers around 140 bags of Christmas goodies to the elderly in Harpenden. Those that receive them maybe struggling financially or perhaps they are lonely or even recently bereaved. They are always much appreciated, and our lovely team of deliverers enjoy giving them out. The bags contain some cupboard essentials such as tea and coffee but also some Christmas treats to make them special such as mince pies and a box of chocolates. We have worked with the Co-Op over the last three years, and we always make sure we are buying items that on promotion and the team there kindly store everything for us until we are ready.



Our team pack it all into bags for life and we add a handwritten Christmas card in each one. We have this down to a fine art after all these years and we can do this in about an hour and a half! Then, over the following few days our team of 25 head off around Harpenden delivering to those who need a special treat to let them know someone cares at Christmas time.

Help with Utility Bills available here!

Although lovely seeing autumn colours, it's a reminder that winter's coming. Many start thinking about heating homes and feel anxious about the rising costs of Fuel, Gas, Electricity and Water.

Maybe the Harpenden Trust can help? From the funds generously donated to the Trust, we can provide an Annual Utilities Grant — a lump sum to low-income pensioners within AL5. Recipients must be state pensionable age and receiving a state pension.

We conduct financial assessments through friendly home visits, confirming eligibility yearly. Grant payments are usually made in January, giving Harpenden pensioners peace of mind when heating homes throughout winter.

It's one way the Trust supports individuals and families using Christmas Appeal donations to provide accessible, practical help.

If you don't receive the Grant but think you're eligible, or know a pensioner friend, relative or neighbour who would benefit, please contact the Harpenden Trust office 01582 460457 admin@theharpendentrust.org.uk



SENIORS FAIR

Wednesday 1st April 2026
10.30am-1.00pm

Eric Morecambe Centre
Rothamsted Park

FREE ENTRY

Showcasing
Local services
and activities
for Seniors

Come and discover what is available for yourself, a family member, friend or neighbour.

Over 30 local organisations will attend including

- * Charities
- * Voluntary and commercial organisations
- * Social activities
- * Health and Medical

Refreshments Available
(Donations to the Rennie Grove Peace Hospice)

The Harpenden Trust: Quietly and Consistently Supporting the Residents of Harpenden for Over 75 Years

The Harpenden Trust's Annual General Meeting on 14th October brought together residents, volunteers and civic leaders at Harpenden Golf Club to celebrate another year of community support. The following excerpts from the evening showcase our volunteers' stories and the breadth of help provided to Harpenden residents in need.

Opening Statement: Richard Nichols, Chair

It is my privilege to reflect on another remarkable year for the Harpenden Trust. A year in which the generosity, commitment, and kindness of our community have shone through.

For over 75 years, the Trust has quietly and consistently supported residents across Harpenden, responding to need with compassion, dignity, and discretion – as a trusted community neighbour, powered by over 500 volunteers' kindness and a whole lot of heart.

What is it we do?

From financial aid to companionship, from wellbeing support to our community café we're here for any Harpenden resident in need, who seeks a helping hand or a good cup of coffee, reaching thousands across our community.



Our ethos is simple: we seek to be that good neighbour, meeting people where they are without judgement, offering practical help, connection and kindness that makes a real difference to daily life.

Our Well Bean Community Café

Above the Co-op in Southdown, open weekday mornings, serving homemade cakes and fresh coffee – no prices, free of charge, with donations only.

It's a welcoming space where local residents can find refreshments, connections and kindness. Over 150 visitors a week come through the café's doors – pensioners finding company, parents needing a break, people attending support groups. Everyone's welcome.



Our Transport Team

Offering mobility, independence, and access to community life for those who might otherwise be left behind.

In addition to our regular team of drivers, our new 16-seater minibus has been a game-changer – taking seniors to organised events, families on outings, and groups to wellbeing sessions. For those facing mobility challenges, it's not just transport – it's inclusion.



Our Care Fund and Wellbeing Hub

We offer connection, consideration and community – all designed to promote resilience and reduce isolation. Our work has two distinct strands:

The Care Fund - Practical Help When It's Needed Most

The Care Fund is our longstanding, confidential support service for Harpenden residents facing financial hardship or urgent need. It's about practical, tangible help when life takes an unexpected turn.

This year, through the Care Fund we have:

- Taken calls every weekday morning, signposting where appropriate, with over 600 home visits this year
- Provided emergency grants to help with essentials such as utilities, rent, and food.
- Supplied white goods and other household items to families in crisis.
- Issued school clothing vouchers and funded educational trips so children are not excluded from opportunities.
- Delivered over 130 Christmas parcels to bring comfort and joy during the festive season.
- Continued popular initiatives like the Seniors' Tea and Coffee mornings and annual Seniors' Fair;
- Kept the library open Wednesday afternoons thanks to our volunteers!



The Care Fund is often the first door people knock on when they don't know where else to turn – and we make sure it's always open.

One thing that really makes us different is the Home Visits team. Every month they handle around 60 calls and everyone that calls gets a visit and advice. Here's Ann's reflections from her experiences as a Home Visitor:



Reflections of a Home Visitor



No two calls are the same for a Home Visitor – someone without money for food, a mum whose washing machine has broken with three young children. Some clients we see regularly, others when school uniform costs tip them over the edge, and some need intensive support before finding their feet again.

Recently, a professional couple with a baby arrived with nothing, sleeping on hospital mattresses. With our help providing essentials, I've watched their empty flat become a home. They're progressing brilliantly and rebuilding careers.

These heartening outcomes reinforce how worthwhile being a Home Visitor truly feels.

The Wellbeing Hub – Connection, Activities, and Specialist Support

Working with local GPs, the Wellbeing Hub is our front door to social connection and emotional support. Residents are welcomed, listened to and linked with the right people or activities to improve their wellbeing.

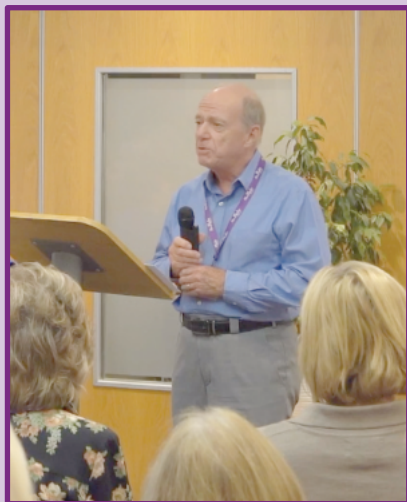
This year, the Wellbeing Hub has:

- Managed Befriending services for around 100 residents, offering valuable companionship.
- Received over 150 GP referrals, matching residents with trained Wellbeing Friends for regular contact and encouragement.
- Connected people to specialist partners such as Mind in Mid Herts, Youth Talk, Citizens Advice and other local services.
- Hosted a wide range of structured activities – from yoga and walking groups to life coaching and young people's support, from specialist exercise classes to dance groups
- Run specialist cafés including the Memory Lane dementia-friendly café Men's Mornings, the Compassionate Café with Rennie Grove Peace, the Frazzled Café, the Ribbon Cancer Support group for anyone impacted by cancer, a Parkinsons' Support group and more - each providing a safe, welcoming space to share experiences and find community.
- Continued longstanding initiatives like the Pottery Group and Arts on Prescription.



The Wellbeing Hub is about prevention, helping people build resilience, friendships and a sense of belonging before problems escalate. As Sarah Holmes, Director of Wellbeing explains "Thanks to the continued guidance of our primary care network, support from community partners and the energy and commitment of our volunteers, we have built something powerful yet simple – creating connections, building friendships, making it easier for people to make that first often difficult step – to join in. And we are making an impact. Our GP partners tell us they now see fewer patients coming in for social or emotional support—because they're getting that support from us and the social prescribers."

Robin Barrett – Volunteering at the Activities Club



"I can't wait, it's so lovely to get out and about. Friends have said they can see a change in me, so thank you very much."

This quote from an Activities Club client captures the transformation we witness daily. When I began volunteering two years ago, I had no idea how much social isolation exists in Harpenden, often following bereavement, illness, or other life changes.

Our Activities Club changes lives. A 90-year-old gentleman who hadn't left home in four years except for medical appointments now regularly attends Afternoon Teas and exercise sessions. An 82-year-old lady who wouldn't even answer her door to her Befriender has, with gentle encouragement, enjoyed multiple events.

At a Men's Morning, a gentleman arrived apprehensively. When I asked about himself, tears welled up – it was two years since his wife died, and he was desperately lonely. He's now a regular, part of thriving friendships that extend beyond Trust events.

Similar stories unfold across all our activities. A widow, terrified of going out after losing her husband, now laughs with new friends at the Chatting Café. Clients with learning difficulties feel included in our Trust family.

"I've been at home for so many years without setting a foot outside. Now it's amazing, I'm thrilled."

Our Community Fund

Over £1.3 million invested in 260+ local projects since 2008 – supporting youth initiatives and mental health projects, local care homes and all our local primary schools, local football and cricket teams, the local First Responders medical team, and many more.

As Steve Pryor, Director of the Community Fund says "This last year we've provided grants of almost £130,000 which is almost the most we've ever invested'. Our key driver is how many people in Harpenden are we going to help, one great example of which is our contribution to the renovation of the Rothamsted Park play area for children.

One of the Trust's volunteers, Emma Deutrom spoke of the support granted to the Hornbeam Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary.



"I volunteered in 2019 and it's been a genuine privilege to work alongside people that genuinely care about Harpenden. For example Martin and his team at the Sanctuary have rescued 2,300 hedgehogs and welcomed 10,000 local children for educational skills over the last 10 years."

The Community Fund proudly supported their growth by funding an education centre and volunteer shelter. It's been wonderful watching them save more hedgehogs whilst teaching local children about wildlife conservation.



The Christmas Appeal A Record-Breaking Year

Everything we do is funded by the people of Harpenden for the people of Harpenden. The 2024 Christmas Appeal was a record-breaking £79,167 - a staggering increase over the previous year.

This was more than a fundraising milestone: it was a clear signal that our community believes in what the Harpenden Trust does and wants to be part of it.

We thank every donor, every business who acted as an envelope drop-off point, every volunteer who supported the Appeal, and those who organised events – from the Hertfordshire Chamber Orchestra Concert to the stunning Festive Lea concert, to the Christmas lights at Westminster Fields and the launch of Carols on the Common.



Our Community Halls

Six modern spaces hosting everything from youth groups and exercise classes to support networks and civic events – from Zumba to Girl Guides, from musical drama to martial arts – all fostering inclusion and engagement across generations.

If it moves, crafts, sings, or chats – we've probably got a hall for it.



Our Volunteers The Heartbeat of the Trust

All volunteers make a difference. If you've ever thought, "I'd love to help, but I'm not sure how" - the Trust will find a way to turn your good intentions into real impact. If you've got time and kindness, we've got a place for you.

Pat Ring, the Trust's People Director, explained: "Why do we volunteer? I believe kindness moves us to help others - that's what brings us to the Harpenden Trust."

Once you start, you discover the Trust's incredible breadth of work, opening opportunities you never imagined. Watching people grow, contribute and shine is one of the great joys of this community.



Beyond frontline roles, many work behind the scenes - promoting the Trust, managing halls, maintaining premises, handling governance, and recruiting volunteers. Nidhi Agarwal shares her experience:

Nidhi Agarwal My Personal Experience Volunteering at The Trust

When I joined Harpenden Trust's IT team last year, I discovered something extraordinary. We were implementing a new internal system - a huge project requiring planning, data migration, and troubleshooting. But what made it special was how everyone pulled together with patience, humour, and real teamwork.

Volunteering here differs from any work I've done before. It's driven by goodwill, not personal achievement. You give time because you want to, bringing a completely different motivation and quiet satisfaction.

I started volunteering ready to give back and reconnect with community. I've found far more: new skills, friends, and renewed purpose.

The Trust runs on invisible acts of generosity - greeting café visitors, organising events, solving tech issues. Each contribution matters, making this organisation steady, kind, and strong.

If you've considered volunteering, try it. It doesn't take much time to make a real difference.

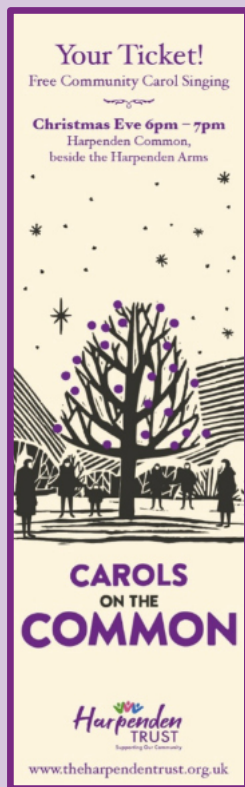


Carols on the Common

At 6pm on Christmas Eve 2024, over 3,500 local residents gathered on the Common outside the Harpenden Arms - by the Snowman - to sing together.

It was magical; it was inclusive; it was a perfect expression of community spirit. A new Harpenden tradition was born. Local people - individuals, families, couples and friends - of all ages. For an hour together, we sang everyone's favourite carols and Christmas songs, from Hark The Herald, to Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer. It was also great to see local pubs doing a roaring trade before and after the event. A crowd of people at a concert.

This Christmas Eve we'll return, completely free of charge (thanks to the generosity of our local sponsors), keeping the community feel, boosting the band and sound system to welcome everyone back for a Christmas singalong. Put it in your diaries now!



A Heartfelt Thank You to all that Volunteer at the Harpenden Trust

To help us celebrate the Trust's continued community support and thank the volunteers, the Trust were delighted to welcome the town's Mayor Cllr Beth Fisher, who surprised and delighted the audience, with a poem, called The Harpenden Trust!



The Harpenden Trust Poem Written and Read by Mayor Cllr Beth Fisher

Pat called out from behind the urn,
'Come on Richard, it's your turn!'
The minibus driver was getting quite stressed
As Doris got on without being dressed!

A phone call was taken about Frazzled café,
The caller reassured that no-one is turned away.
Befriending, referrals and so much more,
130 Christmas parcels go out of the door.

Connections, activities all arranged for our locals,
There's yoga and Youth Talk and practice for the vocals,
Grants and vouchers to help those in need,
Trustees move to assist in lightning speed.

When you think they're down to the last idea,
They start to do screenings of Mama Mia!
From funding great spaces, groups and nice trips,
They've now started Belly Dancing - that's
good for the hips!

But we should all thank you, the helpers, the crew,
They simply could not do it without you!
You organise, you tidy, you help and you pour,
You open the halls and you lock every door.
You do it with humour, with kindness and grace,
And keep this whole Town a wonderful place.
So, thank you to everyone that helps volunteer,
I'll see you in December to sing about famous reindeer.

To all at The Trust, I hope it is fair,
To have the Note of Thanks as a poem, by The Mayor.

Our Partnerships are Key

We team up with our local GPs, Mind, Youth Talk, Rennie Grove Peace, our Harpenden Town Council, Macmillan, Parkinson's UK, the Salvation Army, and more - because collaboration multiplies impact.

We're not interested in duplicating, just amplifying. And we seek to make sure no one in Harpenden feels alone. As a single example, our expanded Citizens Advice drop-in at the Café is now a weekly fixture, growing in numbers every quarter, offering face-to-face help on benefits, housing, and more.

Looking Ahead

Into 2026 and beyond, we will:

- Expand the Harpenden Trust Activities Club for residents over 60 - with more activities, for more people, more often - including regular events with Bennetts in town and our new Film Club already up and running.
- Deepen collaborations with local health services, growing our Wellbeing Hub and team of Wellbeing Friends.
- Increase outreach to younger adults and families.
- Increase collaboration with local sporting clubs, including the new padel court facilities.
- Look to expand our reach into Batford.
- Explore the opportunity to create a new community garden, hosting new activities and widening connections.

In Closing, Richard Nichols, Chair of the Trust said:

"None of this would be possible without the generosity of time, spirit, and resources from volunteers, donors, and partners. In a world of headlines and hashtags, the Harpenden Trust simply seeks to deliver real impact - quietly, consistently, and locally.

People may not always remember exactly what volunteers at the Trust said; People may not always remember exactly what volunteers did; but People will always remember how volunteers made them feel.

To all that support the Trust thank you. It remains my great honour to serve as your Chair and I look forward to continuing on our journey, together."

THE COMMUNITY FUND

What is the Community Fund?

The Harpenden Trust Community Fund was established in 2008 and relies entirely on the income from a substantial capital donation made by the Abbeyfield (Harpenden) Society. None of the monies received from the annual Christmas Appeal are used. We provide financial support for community projects in the Harpenden area with grants for specific projects designed to develop, improve or enhance their work or for facilities for their members. Since 2008 the fund has provided over £1,300,000 to over 260 projects.

Can we help you?

To find out more about the Community Fund or if you would like to apply for a grant from the Harpenden Trust, please visit:

www.theharpendentrust.org.uk/how-we-can-help/community-fund

How have we helped

During the first six months of this financial year, the Community Fund approved five grant requests. Spending remains within budget, though several applications in progress should bring the total close to our annual target. We continue to support a wide range of Harpenden residents and community initiatives.

Resident Support

Citizens Advice: The Trust works closely with the Citizens Advice to support local residents. A grant was provided for new laptops to help improve the provision of advice.

Can Thrive: In partnership with the Well-being Team, the Community Fund is supporting a new initiative offering exercise rehab sessions at the Trust for residents diagnosed with cancer.

Community Groups

Hornbeam Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary: This extremely popular local centre has welcomed over 10,000 visitors since 2015 and now has more than 100 volunteers. The Fund

contributed towards a new shelter for volunteers, which will also be used by children's groups for practical exercises and crafting of items that benefit the charity.

Homedell House: A well-established home for elderly residents in Harpenden. Until recently, those with disabilities were unable to access the communal garden. The Community Fund was delighted to contribute towards the construction of new facilities to make the space accessible for all.

Youth and Schools

Harpenden Rovers Youth Football Club: Please see the separate article below about the club's return to Acres Corner.

We also extend our congratulations to **Roundwood Park School**. A team from the school entered the national Young Enterprise competition with their project Food From The Roots, reaching the national final and winning an award for building strong community and business links - a fantastic achievement!

WHAT'S ON IN THE COMMUNITY HALLS



HARPENDEN TRUST COMMUNITY HALLS FOR HIRE

We have a fantastic selection of five well equipped halls, ranging from 32 sqm to 146 sqm, offering the perfect venue for regular:-

- * CLASSES
- * MEETINGS
- * GROUPS

Also for one-off events such as:-

- * CHILDRENS PARTIES
- * LECTURES
- * CHARITY FUNDRAISERS

Currently we have plenty of availability across all halls for Summer holiday clubs. Halls can be hired individually or together and kitchen facilities are available. Available to everyone, the halls are conveniently situated at our two Southdown locations: the existing Harpenden Trust Centre (90 Southdown Road) and the new Harpenden Trust Halls (130a Southdown Road).

Visit our website for information or contact us to arrange a viewing.

Email: halls@theharpendentrust.org.uk
Web: www.theharpendentrust.org.uk Tel: 01582 460457

New Hirers Welcome

Whether you are launching a new class, hosting a club or planning a one-off event, we would love to have you! Our Halls are flexible, affordable and perfectly suited for both regular hires and special occasions.

Get in touch today to view the halls and check availability - email: halls@theharpendentrust.org.uk

Senior Ballet



Ever dreamed of dancing with grace, strength and style?

Senior Ballet is all about fitness, fun and flow, perfect for keeping active, improving balance and feeling fabulous at any age!

Every Friday 4pm to 5pm in the Renwick Hall at the Harpenden Trust Centre (opposite the Plough & Harrow).

To register your interest email: stalbandscommunities@everyoneactive.com or bookable via the Everyone Active website: www.everyoneactive.com.

Please see pages 16 & 17 for details of other activities that take place at our halls.

Bookings Team Update

We thought we might get to put our feet up over the Summer months but our halls have been the busiest holiday period we can remember - that's a testament to our wonderful hirers. We did find time to get the Renwick Hall floor sanded and polished, it looks amazing!

Upcoming Events

Friday 28th November 2025

'Southdown Lights Up'
5.30pm to 7.30pm
Father Christmas will be visiting the Trust Halls. The Well Bean Café will be open, serving mulled wine, hot chocolate, tea and coffee plus delicious cakes! There will be crafts for children while they wait to visit Father Christmas.

All are welcome to join in the festive fun!

Saturday 29th November 2025

'Party Ain't Over' - back by popular demand!
7pm to 10pm
Fancy a night of 60s, 70s and 80s music and a bit of dancing? Tickets are £25 and include a fish & chip supper. Bring your own drink and enjoy a fantastic evening.
To book email: partyaintover5@gmail.com

Activities

The Halls continue to serve as a vibrant hub for a wide range of activities. Regular community sessions including fitness classes, arts and crafts classes, theatre troupes and educational groups are always popular and remain a key part of our weekly schedule.

Birthday parties for children 11 years and younger are welcome in our Halls and have been especially popular, often reserving peak time slots well in advance - we are already taking bookings months in advance so be sure to book early to avoid disappointment.

These events not only highlight the Halls versatility but also demonstrate their importance as a valued space for the community.

Drama Tots



Step into a magical world of make-believe. Each week these drama & music classes, for children aged 18 months to 5 years, explore a new theme - from fairy tales to outer space. Through props, puppets, instruments, and plenty of giggles, your little one will explore storytelling, music, movement and imaginative play in a warm, nurturing space.

Winner of a 'What's on 4 Kids' award eight years running!

Thursdays 9.45am to 10.30am at the Trust Halls.

Christmas Special

Saturday 13th December

Including:

A festive Drama Tots adventure

Christmas disco

Christmas hunt

Festive craft/colouring

A free gift for every child

For more information please contact:

www.dramatots.co.uk/st-albans-and-harpenden
zara@dramatots.co.uk
Tel: 07816 084246

Football's Coming Home!

It's the Rovers Return! Football has been played at Acres Corner on Harpenden Common for over 100 years, but the site had not been used since COVID and had become severely overgrown. The Club has over 250 members aged from 5 to 15, with a waiting list of over 100. The children are supported by 85 FA-accredited or qualified volunteers.



Jeremy Finch, Chair of the Football Club, said:

"Thanks to significant financial support from The Harpenden Trust, we've been able to renovate the pitches at Acres Corner - bringing the space back into use for football. Works have included 150 tonnes of sand to improve soil condition and drainage, plus scarifying, aerating and seeding with almost half a tonne of grass seed. We've now got three fantastic pitches in use every week by our young players, with all pitches hosting a 'double-header' each Saturday morning. The Trust has also contributed towards new goals for the site, for which the club is very grateful."



Saving Kinsbourne Green Common for Nature and Future Generations

The land at Kinsbourne Green recently came up for sale, with the possibility of being used for housing development. Local residents were keen to preserve the Common, which supports a wide diversity of flora and fauna. With help from the Community Fund, they were able to purchase the land and plan to encourage even greater biodiversity such as planting more trees. The Common is also a valued community space, regularly used by local schools, scout groups and many walkers.

Sue Archer, Chair of Trustees said:

"The Friends of Kinsbourne Green Common were so delighted and grateful for the grant from the Harpenden Trust. We have a very special area of land now for us to nurture and cherish for future generations."



WHAT'S ON IN THE COMMUNITY HALLS

WHAT'S ON AT THE HALLS – WINTER 2025

Below is a list of activities which take place at the Harpenden Trust Community Halls. For information regarding timings, fees and availability please use the contact details shown

Harpenden Trust Centre – 90 Southdown Road (opposite The Plough & Harrow)
Harpenden Trust Halls – 130a Southdown Road (above The Co-op)

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Hurst Children's Theatre Group Theatre and Streetdance classes for children 3-18 years www.hurstchildrenstheatregroup.com hctg@live.co.uk Tel: 07568 363104 Wednesday & Friday afternoons/evenings	Girlguiding Southdown & Wheathampstead District https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/southdownguidingwaitinglist@gmail.com Brownies 7-10yrs Thursday evenings
Mini Professors Science Classes for Pre schoolers 2-5 years www.miniprofessors.com/stalbans stalbands@miniprofessors.co.uk Tel: Professor Tash 07921 172382 Monday & Friday mornings	Ballet with Zoë Fun and friendly ballet classes for all children 2-5 years Watch from the side or join in with your little one balletwithzoe@gmail.com Friday afternoons
Little Kickers Fun filled football classes for 18 months - 3.5 years www.littlekickers.co.uk / jlustigman@littlekickers.co.uk Tel: 020 8440 6195 Monday mornings	Acro Dance Class NEW Acro Dance is the perfect blend of dance and gymnastics. No experience needed — just come ready to move! Ages 6 – 13 years www.harpendendance.com Thursday afternoons
Drama Tots NEW Award-winning music, movement and drama classes for children aged 18 months - 5 years. www.dramatots.co.uk/st-albans-and-harpenden zara@dramatots.co.uk Tel: 07816 084246 Thursday mornings	

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN & ADULTS

Penny Waterman School of Dance Ballet, Tap & Street Dance classes. Ages 18 months + www.pennywaterman.com admin@pennywaterman.com Tel: Penny 01727 858632 Monday afternoons	The Dance Studio Ballet, Tap, Modern, Jazz & Acro dance classes www.thedancestudioherts.co.uk miriam@thedancestudioherts.co.uk Monday and Thursday afternoons/evenings & Saturday mornings Tues & Weds evenings & Saturday mornings
Qi Kwan Do Harpenden Learn self defence techniques Ages 8+ adam@qkduk.com Wednesday evenings	Jado Kuin Do Harpenden Martial Arts classes Ages 3+ www.jadoherts.uk / info@jadoherts.uk Monday evenings

EXERCISE & DANCE CLASSES FOR ADULTS

Movement for Memory - Imagination Dance CIC Gentle dance-based sessions for those living with memory loss or cognitive impairments www.imaginationarts.co.uk / info.imaginationarts@yahoo.com Tel: 07394 934911 Monday mornings	Keep your Fitness - for ladies 50+ Low impact exercise classes www.harpendenfitness.com susie.odell@live.com Tel: Susie 07958 921291 Tuesday & Thursday mornings
Flow & Ashtanga Yoga Flow Yoga Monday mornings & Tuesday afternoons Ashtanga Self Practice Wednesday mornings celiacaplan@gmail.com Tel: Celia 07952 525297	Zumba Harpenden with Jennifer Davies Latin inspired cardio dance workout jen_papple@me.com Tel: Jen 07825 892890 Tuesday evenings & Saturday mornings

WHAT'S ON IN THE COMMUNITY HALLS

Push Me Fit Pilates Small group classes pushmefit.herts@gmail.com Tel: Marta 07769 661177 Wednesday mornings	Clement Pilates Matwork Pilates for all julieclementpilates@gmail.com Tel: Julie 07801 967369 Wednesday mornings
Classes with Rachel Body Tone & Pure Stretch classeswithrachel@gmail.com Tel: Rachel 07855 946555 Tuesday & Friday mornings	Zumba Gold with Andrea Zumba Gold class for active older adults boggo1@mac.com Tel: Andrea 07816 916756 Monday mornings & Tuesday Mornings
Vinyasa Yoga Flow Transformative dynamic classes imogen@lunalondonyoga.com Tel: Imogen 07980 575454 Monday evenings	Vinyasa Yoga A dynamic and rhythmic style of yoga Tel: Julie 07525 051829 Friday mornings
Adult Jazz Dance www.harpendendance.com info@harpendendance.com Tel: 07842 580868 Thursday mornings	Awareness Yoga Yoga classes available for men and women of all ages and abilities www.awarenessyoga.co.uk Tel: Frances on 01582 769368 / 07896 294243 Thursday evenings
Line Dancing Line Dancing for Improvers www.berniejes@icloud.com Tel: Bernie 07850 160294 Friday mornings	Senior Ballet NEW All about fitness, fun & flow; perfect for keeping active, improving balance and feeling fabulous at any age stalbandsactivecommunities@everyoneactive.com Friday afternoons
EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS	
Harpenden German Class For adults wishing to improve their German brianwebb5nr@btinternet.com Tel: Brian 01582 713985 Friday mornings	Bridge for Beginners Learn to play bridge richard@templeandco.com Tel: Richard 01582 762727 Monday & Thursday afternoons
Harpenden Learning for Leisure Daytime, adult educational courses www.harpendenlearningforleisure.org.uk enrol@harpendenlearningforleisure.org.uk Wednesday mornings & afternoons Tuesday mornings & Thursday afternoons	Harpenden u3a A variety of activities for individuals https://u3asites.org.uk/harpenden/home Tel: Roger on 07523 031454 Tuesday afternoons Tuesday mornings & Thursdays afternoons
Guitar Group Guitarists simply enjoying the experience of playing together with acoustic, electric and bass guitars. Contact 07598 956976 Monday evenings	
OTHER ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS	
Creative Sewing Come and join in the wonderful world of sewing email: shani.vermaak@gmail.com / Tel: 07543 876992 Tuesday mornings	Southdown Marquetry Group Make a masterpiece with wood veneer Tel: John on 07981 142099 Wednesday mornings
FREE COMMUNITY DROP-IN CENTRES	
Citizens Advice St Albans & District Free, confidential and independent advice www.citizensadvicestalbans.org.uk Wednesdays 11:30am - 1:30pm	Computer Friendly Drop-In Find a solution to your Windows, Apple or Android issues. Appt or just Drop-in admin@cfsta.org or Tel: 01727 617359 Thursdays 10:00am - 12:30pm

WELL BEAN CAFÉ

Well Bean Café Gets an Upgrade and a Fresh New Look

After nearly two and a half years of proud service, the Well Bean Café has had a well-earned upgrade and is looking better than ever.

When we first opened, our furniture was re-purposed from all sorts of places, including a pub in Hitchin and a farm shop in Slip End. It had plenty of character and helped us get started, but as the Café grew into a much-loved hub that plays an important role within the Trust, we decided it was time to give it a well-deserved makeover.

So began the fun part: planning our new look. We went through an extensive process, aiming for something both comfortable and practical - a mix of chairs with and without arms, and tables that were easy to move and clean. Jo and Grant took on the challenge with enthusiasm, doing plenty of window shopping before settling on the perfect combination for this brand-new look.



The transformation was instant. On the first morning the new furniture arrived, there was a real buzz of excitement. We wondered if customers would notice and whether they would like the change. We need not have worried. "It looks like a proper café now!", "These chairs are so comfortable!" and "It looks so nice in here!" were just some of the lovely comments we heard. Volunteers also appreciated the update, finding the new tables easier to keep clean and the smaller layout more flexible for different groups.

The Café continues to be open Monday to Friday, 10.30am to 12.30pm, and hosts several community groups each week. There is always a warm welcome waiting. One regular visitor told us she can always find someone to talk to, which is so important for people who live alone. If you have not been in for a while, do come and see the new look for yourself, and stay for a coffee and one of our delicious homemade cakes and bakes.

Chocolate Orange Shortbread Recipe by Pat Ring

Totally buttery, totally moreish, totally easy to make!

Ingredients:

- Zest of 2 large oranges
- 200g good-quality milk or dark chocolate
- 295g unsalted butter, softened
- 145g caster sugar
- 340g plain flour

You will need:

Rectangular baking tin (267mm x 164mm x 40mm) or equivalent

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 170 °C (fan 150 °C, gas mark 3).
2. Grease and line tin with baking paper.
3. Zest the oranges and chop the chocolate into small pieces. Set aside.
4. Put mixing bowl on scales and weigh in the softened butter. Run the mixer to break the butter down.
5. Put the mixing bowl back on scales and weigh in sugar, flour and zest. Run the mixer on medium speed for a few minutes until mixture is combined.
6. Add the chopped chocolate and run mixer briefly. You will see several large lumps of mixture, similar to pastry.
7. Tip into tin. Spread initially with clean fingers, then even it out, pushing well up into the corners with the back of a dessert spoon, levelling, smoothing and firming as you go.
8. Bake 40 minutes. The shortbread will smell beautifully buttery, look lightly golden and still be slightly soft on top.
9. Leave on wire rack to cool. Run knife around the edges, turn out, remove tin and base paper, then put another board over the top and turn it back up the right way.
10. Use a long, sharp knife to portion it up. The shortbread is quite deep, cut into 18 or 24 pieces. Freezes well.



OUR VOLUNTEERS

From Law to Local Service: Mike Kelly's Journey with the Trust

I was born and raised in Luton and am a long-suffering supporter of Luton Town FC. My wife, Ann, and I moved to Harpenden with our family over 40 years ago, and I was a partner in a local law firm before retiring in 2019. Having lived and worked in the area for so long - and through my time with Harpenden Lions Club - I'd long been aware of the Trust's work in the community before deciding to get involved myself.

My first role was as a Collector for the Christmas Appeal in 2019, followed by helping at the Covid vaccine clinic. I was very impressed by how the Trust rose to the challenge of providing such a vital local service at a difficult time - it also did a great deal to raise the Trust's profile in the community.



In 2022, I was invited to become a Trustee and Non-Executive Director on the Trust's Board. Almost immediately, my services were called upon when the opportunity arose for the Trust to acquire the former Methodist Church Halls in Southdown Road. I was able to assist with the negotiation and completion of the deal, which I particularly enjoyed as it mirrored the type of work I had undertaken during my legal career. This acquisition has greatly benefited the Trust, enabling it to expand the range of services it provides to the Harpenden community.

I now help organise the Trust's various insurance arrangements and am a member of the Audit and Risk Governance Committee. I'm proud to play my part in the Trust's valuable work, which I've found both worthwhile and rewarding. It fits naturally alongside my busy but enjoyable family life. When we're not volunteering, we enjoy travelling and spending time with our eight grandchildren. I also try to improve my golf!

Getting to Know Shin: Discovering a Hidden Gem in Harpenden

My name is Hsing-Chiung, and I'm from Taiwan. If my name feels tricky to say, please call me Shin.

After 25 years in England and more than ten living in Harpenden, I thought I knew my town well. That changed one afternoon when I took a Taiwanese friend on a tour of Harpenden. We stopped by the Well Bean Café, and to my surprise, I discovered this wonderful local gem: a warm, welcoming space full of conversation and connection.

That visit made me realise how much I had overlooked. Every day I'd walked past the Harpenden Trust Hall and chatted to the ladies who came by my house to collect donations, thinking I knew what the Trust was about, but I didn't. There was so much happening right on my doorstep, from friendly café sessions for anyone who enjoys a chat to opportunities for people who might feel lonely, anxious or isolated to connect through home visits or befriending. There was far more to the Trust than I had ever imagined.

Since then, volunteering has become an important part of my life. My roles include befriending, helping at the chatting café and driving those who need a lift to the sessions. Along the way, I've met many fascinating people: a gentleman who's lived in Harpenden all his life and shared stories of how the town has changed, and a 97-year-old lady who inspired me to learn knitting.



Volunteering with the Trust is flexible, rewarding and full of warmth. The teams are friendly and supportive, and it's easy to fit volunteering around my counselling work and family life. I only wish I'd started this journey earlier.

Are You Interested In Joining Us As A Volunteer?



Put your spare time to good use

Even a little of your time can make a big difference. Whether it's an hour here and there or something more regular, your help brightens someone's day and keeps our community spirit thriving.

Make use of your existing skills

Whether you enjoy chatting, organising, writing, designing or helping behind the scenes, there's a role for you - from talking to clients to supporting events, fundraising, or admin.

Meet people and make new friends

Volunteering connects you with friendly, like-minded people, often leading to lasting friendships.

Feel valued, appreciated and useful

Every contribution counts, whether front-line or behind the scenes. Your effort makes a real difference.

Build confidence and take on new responsibilities

Learn new skills, step into new experiences and gain a sense of achievement.

Give something back

Help make Harpenden a warm, welcoming community.

Gain a sense of pride and achievement

There's satisfaction in knowing your time helps others and keeps things running smoothly.

IF YOU HAVE KINDNESS AND A LITTLE TIME, WE HAVE A PLACE FOR YOU

No qualifications needed - just a willing heart and some time.

CAROL SINGING THIS CHRISTMAS

Christmas Eve - Carols on the Common How to join in and support The Harpenden Trust

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without carols. What's on in Harpenden this Christmas? Our little town is full of carols at Christmas. There are carol concerts and church carol services galore, with great local choirs and welcoming congregations. Last year, a new tradition was born.



What exactly is Carols on the Common? Led by wonderful local musician Tim Sutton and his band, Carols on the Common is a chance to get together with local friends to sing carols and Christmas songs to welcome in Christmas. Last year over 3,500 local people joined in!

When is it? It's on Christmas Eve, 6pm to 7pm. Early enough to bring little ones to tire them out before bedtime, not too late for senior residents, and a great start to the traditional Christmas Eve pub crawl!

Where is it? Look out for a roped off area surrounded by twinkly lights, next to The Harpenden Arms and right by the Snowman.

What's the best way to get there? On foot if you can!

Do we have to pay? This is a free community event. We'll be collecting for The Harpenden Trust Christmas appeal and would love you to throw in a few pennies (or pounds!) to support our amazing community work.

What if it rains? If the weather is really bad, we'll have to cancel. We'll notify you via local social media.

Is there disabled access? There will be limited disabled parking around the old Public Halls and the event area has step-free access at all entrances. Last year, some wheelchair users watched from Southdown Road rather than risk the grass on the Common.

What if we don't know all the words? Don't worry! We'll have digital song sheets available via a QR code on the ticket you'll get when you arrive – and a few paper song sheets too.

Can we bring drinks in? There's no food or drinks in the venue, but please support our lovely local pubs and restaurants before or after the event.

And what if we want to enjoy listening to carols in more comfort? The lovely Lea Singers will be fundraising for The Harpenden Trust at FestiveLea, their Christmas concert on Thursday 19 December at St John's Church, Southdown.

**We Look Forward to Welcoming You
On Christmas Eve**

CONTACT US - WE'RE HERE TO HELP



www.theharpentrust.org.uk



admin@theharpentrust.org.uk
halls@theharpentrust.org.uk
minibus@theharpentrust.org.uk



01582 460457



Harpenden Trust Centre,
90 Southdown Road,
Harpenden, AL5 1PS.

For donations
please scan this
QR Code



To give £5, £10, £20, simply
text HARPT5, HARPT10 or
HARPT20 to 70085

Call in at the Trust Centre
(weekdays 10am-12pm)



Registered with



FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

Company Number 5951591

Registered Charity Number 1118870



Need help or want to help? Please get in touch

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY