

Berkeley Banter Bulletin



MAY 2020

MICHELE'S MUSINGS

I hope you are all doing ok in the midst of these peculiar and uncertain times. Some of us are out of our normal routines and we have had to come up with new creative ways of doing all sorts of things. I'm sure many of us have explored new hobbies, **started new projects and done the DIY around the house that we've been putting off for ages!**

During this time I encourage you to continue to find ways to connect with your friends from the Berkeley. You can do this by making a call, having a video chat, connecting to our Zoom meetings that we host every week, where you can see friends and staff, and posting on our Face Book page. You could also send a friend a handwritten note, a picture you may have drawn, a small gift or whatever, and the Berkeley Booster bus will collect it from you and deliver it to them.

It's very important to take care of your physical and emotional wellbeing and talking with friends and family and taking gentle daily exercise will help you keep well whilst you are at home. When I go on my daily walk I'm certainly seeing and hearing louder birdsong, buzzing bees, squirrels, loads of rabbits and even a badger, less contrails and even the sky seems bluer.

To the dedicated, smiling Chepstow Mencap staff, whether you are out and about, working from the office or home, I would like to say a massive THANK YOU. Every single one **of you is doing brilliant work for us and your local community and I'm so proud of you all.**

Nobody knows how long we will be in this situation but Chepstow Mencap will support you if we can.

Above all, be safe and well and please stay in touch.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Management Team at Chepstow Mencap have been working in the background, ever since they were notified by Monmouthshire County Council on Friday 13th March 2020, that all day services in the County were to close due to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

13th March! It seems such a long time ago! But our role was to quickly plan and organise a new and different system of support, for the people we normally see, their families and carers, which would be useful in these strange and unsettling times.

KEEPING THE SERVICE MOVING

With The Berkeley closed, the Management Team have all been working from home; every morning at 09:00, we have a team video conference, and discuss work plans, any issues that have arisen or requests for support that have been made, and amend action plans as needed. We also regularly keep in touch, through video conferences and phone calls, with other important connections, such as our commissioners at the County Councils, National Mencap, and Social Work teams. By doing so, we are ensuring that our decisions are all made in line with national and local strategy, and that we are able to access resources, such as PPE.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

Working from home has been a challenge, but we are **so** proud of our staff and how they have adapted to this new way of working. We have a daily video call with our team leaders, and they update us on all the activity that has taken place, as they are the vital link for communication. Our staff are all individually responsible for staying in touch with three people that we support, and they are the contact person for them, and their families and carers. We are able to respond quickly to any requests for help should we be needed, and we have been able to pick up external requests (from Monmouthshire County Council) for support for individuals not known to us as well.

Who knows when we will be able to all be back together again? What we do know is that Chepstow Mencap is both a team **and** a family, and we are looking out for one another and will continue to do so for as long as it is needed.

Michele, Bev, Linda, and Dawn



(in their VE Day Land Army Girls outfits!)

Berkeley Booster Bus

The staff are really enjoying out on the Booster Bus and look forward to seeing all your smiling faces, and from all your feedback, you look forward to seeing them too. You have all worked so hard with the themes that we have set—from hats to rainbows and VE Day, you have excelled yourselves. Here are some that we thought you would like to see again.





The staff are happy to play postie whilst they are out on the Booster Bus. They would love to pass on any pictures or letters you would like to send to your friends that you are missing from the Berkeley. We will deliver them as soon as we can, either the same week, or the following week depending on the bus route.

Mounton Drive - VE Day Celebrations



For the last few weeks, Wayne, Richard and Paul have been very busy planning and preparing for the VE day celebrations. They all sat down with a staff member to discuss what they could do and how to get the local community involved.

They decided on a time for the party and with help from the staff, they made and posted invitations to the neighbours in the cul-de-sac for the social distancing street party. The gents decided between themselves on how and what their roles would be. Wayne decided that he would choose the food and help with the food preparation; Richard decided that he would help staff on decorating the house and where the decorations would be placed and Paul decided on making bunting, paperchains and designing VE themed colouring in picture sheets.

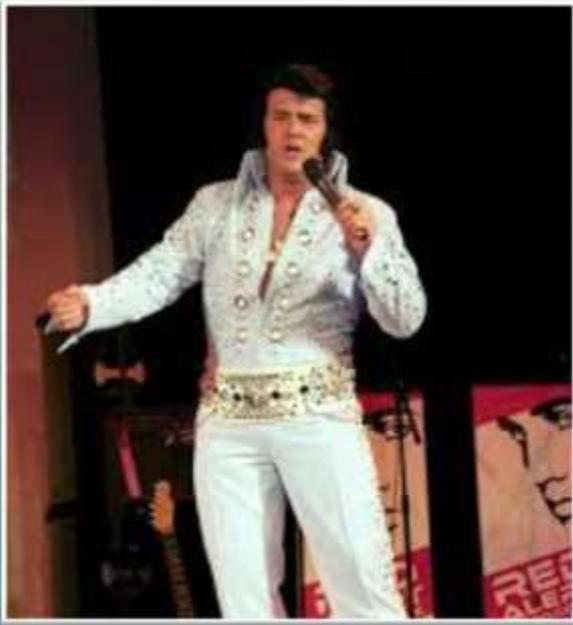
On the morning of the VE day celebrations the guys were up early, eager and excited to start decorating the house. The neighbours were also out engaging with the gents, and were overjoyed with the effort everyone had put in. One of the neighbours started to play music in the street and that started to get everyone in the cul-de-sac into the party spirit.

The party started at 2pm with music playing in the background and some of the elderly neighbours telling stories about the time when they were children during the war and the street party they had when Victory in Europe was actually declared. From around 3pm everyone started to **sing songs from the era such as Jerusalem, We'll meet again and Lambeth Walk with a lot of flag waving** going on. Paul also had a lovely surprise as someone he goes to church with and who lives around the corner, which neither of them knew, also came to join in the fun.

Around 5pm, Richard and Paul handed out some VE cake and cupcakes that they made the day before. Unfortunately Wayne missed the celebrations and by the time he returned, he was too tired to take part in the celebrations, but did enjoy a cupcake.

On the Saturday, Richard and Paul decided to throw another small VE day party in the garden as a surprise for Wayne as he missed out on the main event. Wayne was overjoyed with the kind gesture and all three guys spent the afternoon until the early evening sat in the garden.

Elvis



On Saturday, 9th March Chepstow Mencap and friends were lucky enough to have a live performance from the amazing Darren Graceland Jones.

An hour of high energy, fun and Elvis songs was such a feel good afternoon which left us all in really good spirits.

If you missed it, or want to see it again, you can catch up on the Chepstow Mencap home page (you may have to scroll down through other posts to find **it, but it's worth it!**).

Thank you Darren for giving up his Saturday afternoon to entertain us, completely free of charge. We look forward to a visit in person, once we are all able to get together again.



We have set up a private group on Facebook called **'Bringing the Berkeley Together'**, **This page is for you** to interact with your friends. Most of the staff are part of the group too and are constantly creating quizzes, cookery videos, recipes and starting chats for you to get involved in. **We are planning a 'Have Your Say Day' where you can take over this page** and staff will take a back seat. We will let you know the date soon so please get involved.

Staff Shenanigans

Any excuse for our staff to dress up and they're on it, so we thought you would like to see what they've been up to for your amusement.

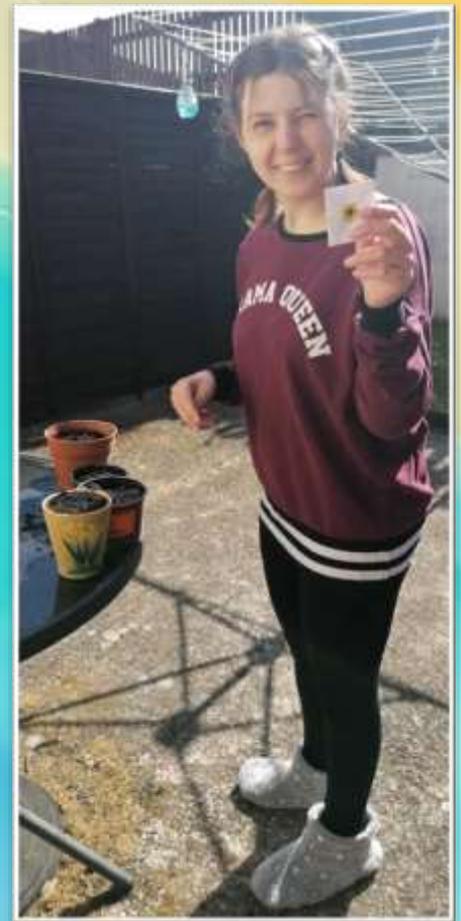


There are some that enjoy it far more than others—mentioning no names!

Sunflowers to Brighten Your Day

Many thanks to Emma and family who sent out sunflower seeds to everyone via the Booster Bus. The gentlemen at The Drive already had

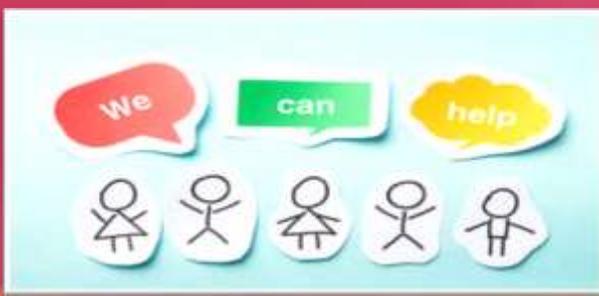
some and had a head start **with theirs but others aren't** far behind them.



Kelly loved receiving her seeds.

Stacey was first to post pictures of herself in the garden planting hers and Tash has also got hers in pots already.

Don't forget to show us how yours are doing!



Staff are providing contact and support for you during this unprecedented time. If there anything else we can help with, you can speak to staff directly, email us

at reception@chepstowmencap.co.uk and we will pass on your request to the relevant person, or alternatively, you can call the Berkeley on 01291 623216 and leave a message and we will return your call.

Our main way of communicating is through Facebook and we very much hope you will join us on our page. Please note, we have had requests to send video links etc to personal WhatsApp numbers, however, unfortunately due to limited resources and data protection, we are unable to do this.

‘Spot the Difference’ - there are 12 differences, how many did you find?



What have you been doing to keep busy whilst in lockdown?

Share pictures of your projects or write something to include in the next newsletter.

You can send your article via messenger on facebook or email reception on the address above.

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