



Winter 2025 edition

With gratitude and appreciation to our supporter The Worshipful Company of Innholders for making this newsletter possible.



**Hospitality
Action**

Golden Friends Newsletter

Dear Golden Friends,

The run-up to Christmas is always an intense, high-pressure period if you are planning for gifts, food, and decorations to get everything ready at home in time for guests to arrive.

And no less the case here in the office where from the beginning of September we begin designing our annual Christmas card. Once printed and received at the office we are joined in the office by some of our wonderful volunteers, each one eager to help us prepare each card and make ready for for posting by early December, in time to reach you before the big day.

This year, I was fortunate to be joined in the office each week by several truly wonderful people – all with connections to the industry - who have been volunteering with us each Friday. All were engaged in either making

calls out to Golden Friends to check in on them, preparing birthday and other cards for upcoming birthdays and other occasions, and more recently helping us with the preparations for our big annual Christmas mailing.

One volunteer in particular has brought with her a burst of colour and vitality that I will miss, as she leaves this month to head back to her native Australia with husband Rob. We wish Penelope the very best for what comes next as she begins a new chapter, and can't thank her enough for her hard work and dedication during her time with us.

Wishing you all a wonderful time this festive season and until we meet again in the spring, keep well.

Cathie

Mention in the Golden Friends Newsletter does not imply support or recommendation by Hospitality Action

Scheme Co-ordinator: Cathie Brennan

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A message from CEO, Mark Lewis



Today feels like the perfect day to be writing a festive note to you all. Though it's still November, there's snow in the air in South London, and my wife Susie is downstairs mixing a Christmas cake.

'Tis (nearly) the season!

Susie's maternal grandparents emigrated in the 1880s from Wurttemberg in Southern Germany to Manchester, where they opened one of the many German pork butchers that made faggots, sausages and pies for the local mill workers. (In a sense, they were one of the first industrial caterers.)

Her childhood Christmases included Teutonic treats like lebkuchen biscuits and stollen cake, so the recipe on page 8 will no doubt have her drooling.

My Christmases had their own food traditions. Christmas Day morning, my mum would break up monster bars of Cadburys fruit & nut and put them out in a couple of glazed brown bowls that were kept back all year specifically for this moment.

My brother and I would have eaten our own body weight in chocolate, by lunchtime ...

And, on the 27th, dad would, with much fanfare, make turkey soup – his only culinary contribution all year!

You'll no doubt have your own Christmas treats, traditions, and indulgences.

Whatever you get up to, please know that the whole team at Hospitality Action will be raising a toast to you and sending you Christmas cheer.

Happy Christmas!



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P4-5: Social prescribing; connecting health and happiness

P7: Competition Time!

P8: Stollen – a light, fruity, festive pastry

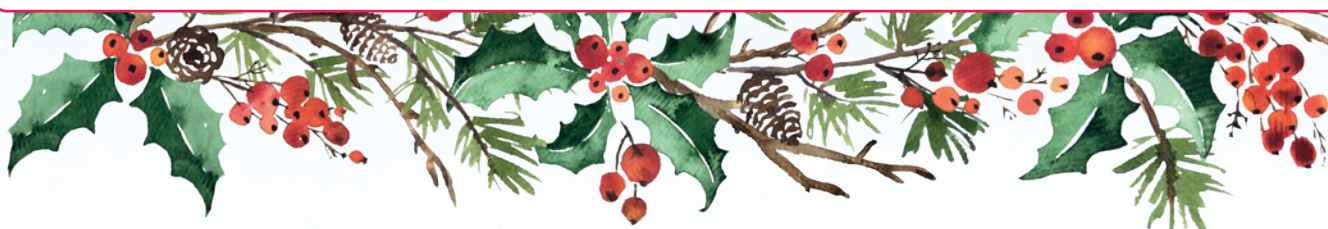
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Golden Friends News

Keeping hale and hearty this winter

As we get older it is vitally important for us to keep warm and maintain good physical health, even in the colder months of the year.

In this edition we look at some of the key benefits of low-impact exercises and ensuring we building a gentle walk into our daily routine during the colder months to help keep us physically fit and ward off the winter blues.



Hospitality Action's Warmth & Wellbeing Grant
Applications for our new annual Warmth & Wellbeing grant are open until **31 March 2024**. This £200 grant will be paid to you in two £100 instalments, one to help with winter fuel costs and another for social participation in the warmer winter months.

To apply, simply complete and return the cut-off slip below along with a recent full month's copy of your bank statements for **all bank accounts you hold**.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are currently in receipt of a regular monthly grant from Hospitality Action, we have written to you separately to explain your eligibility.

To qualify for a Warmth & Wellbeing grant you:

- Live in your own home (owned or rented – not a care home)
- Have no non-dependent members of your family living with you (other than your spouse/partner)
- Receive an income-related benefit, such as Pension Credit, Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, OR have a total weekly income of no more than £227.10 per week for a single person or £346.60 per week for a couple
- Have limited savings (below £5,000 if you are a single and below £8,000 if you are a couple)

PLEASE NOTE: If you do not provide a recent statement for your bank accounts when you apply this will delay your application.

Please tick each of the statements below to confirm your eligibility and complete your name, address and contact details. Send this slip together with a recent full month's bank statements to:
Hospitality Action Grants Team, 40 Brunel Street, London EC2M 6UY

☐ I live in my own home (owned or rented – not a care home) (other than your spouse/partner)

☐ I have no non-dependent members of my family living with me (other than your spouse/partner)

☐ I receive an income-related benefit, such as Pension Credit, Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, OR have a total weekly income of no more than £227.10 per week for a single person or £346.60 per week for a couple

☐ I have limited savings (below £5,000 if you are a single and below £8,000 if you are a couple)

☐ I have enclosed a full month's bank statement for all accounts I have held.

Full Name _____ Post Code _____
Address _____ Email address _____
Telephone number _____

The Warmth & Wellbeing Grant is a grant kindly sponsored by the Wardslip Company of London.

Warmth & Wellbeing Grant

Judging by the number of applications received to date, the new Warmth & Wellbeing Grant has been well received. If you are unsure if you qualify for this grant, read more about it on page 6 before turning to the back page to complete the application slip.

HA's festive greetings

To coincide with our final newsletter of the year, the charity's annual Christmas card will be posted out in early December. Look out for your card arriving!



A very BIG thank you!

We have been so very fortunate to have had the support of some wonderful people from around the industry this year who have dedicated their time to volunteer with us in support our Golden Friends, not least Penelope, who has been an amazing support to Golden Friends.

On behalf of myself and everyone on the team, we send our collective best wishes to you all for a happy and joyous festive season, and for the incoming New Year!

Social Prescribing: Connecting Health and Happiness

There are many things that affect our health which can't be treated by medicine alone, like loneliness, debt or stress, financial pressure or poor housing.

In recent years, the phrase “social prescribing” has become more common in GP surgeries and community health centres across the UK. But what does it mean, and how can it help us live happier, healthier lives?



What is social prescribing?

Social prescribing is a way for healthcare professionals to connect people with non-medical sources of support within their community. Rather than focusing only on medical treatments, social prescribing looks at the whole person, their interests, environment, and sense of connection. This approach is intended to support wellbeing in a more holistic way.

How does social prescribing work?

In social prescribing, local agencies such as local charities, social care and health services refer people to a social prescriber link worker who helps them navigate through a series of steps to enable the individual to take control of their health and wellbeing.

The stages involved:



1. Referral:

A GP, nurse, or other health professional refers an individual to a social prescribing link worker.



2. Consultation:

The link worker arranges to meet with the individual to discuss their needs and talk through what matters most to them.



3. Personalised plan:

The link worker helps the individual to create a personalised care and support plan covering each of the areas discussed in the consultation.



4. Connection:

The link worker helps to connect the individual to local community groups, services, and activities that meet their needs.

Social prescribing is for everyone whatever their age regardless of where in the UK they live and works particularly well for those who:

- **have one or more long term health conditions**
- **who need support with low level mental health issues**
- **who are feeling lonely or isolated**
- **who have complex social needs which affect their wellbeing**

With the help of a social prescribing link worker, you can be helped to be connected to local groups and services to address non-medical needs like loneliness, social isolation, financial worries and hardship to help towards improving their physical and mental well-being.

A social prescribing link worker can help you connect with activities in your local community such as gardening groups, exercise classes, or advice services that are tailored to your needs and they can help match you with suitable activities or support services in your local area run by local councils, charities, churches, or even volunteer groups.

Do I need to have a diagnosed medical condition to ask for support?

No, you do not need a diagnosed medical condition to access social prescribing. Social prescribing is a non-medical approach that focuses on a person's holistic health and wellbeing needs, many of which are social, emotional or practical rather than strictly clinical. Social prescribing is open to anyone who feels they might benefit from community engagement or support.

Why social prescribing matters

Social isolation is one of the biggest health challenges facing older adults. Research shows that loneliness can increase the risk of heart disease, depression, and even cognitive decline. Taking small steps to build social connections can have a huge positive impact.

Many older people who take part in social prescribing programmes report better mood, improved fitness, and a renewed sense of purpose. For some, joining a local group has even led to new friendships and hobbies that enrich everyday life.

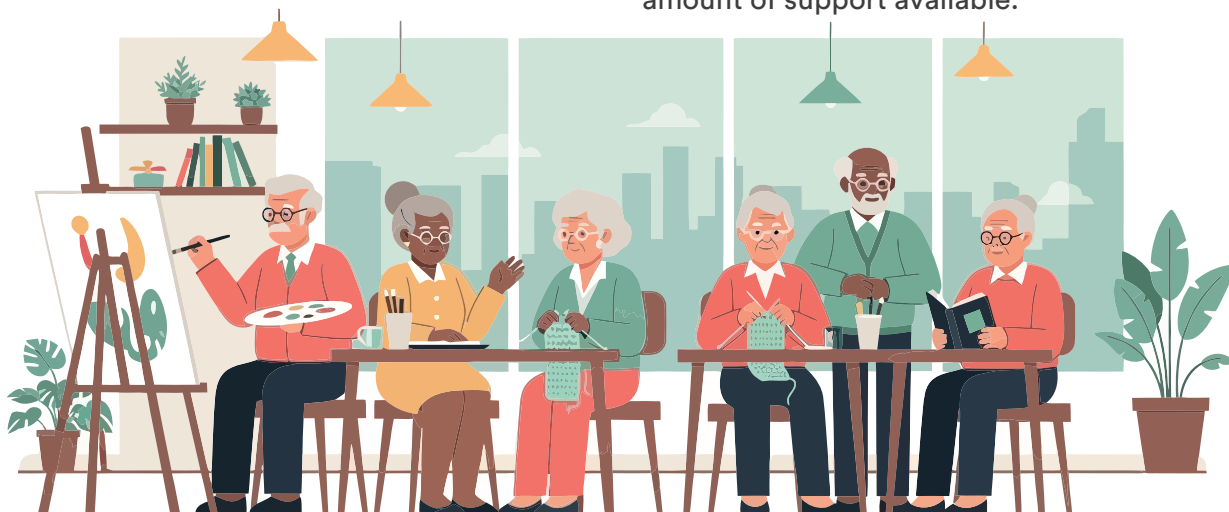
How to access support

If you are curious about what is available locally, start by speaking with your GP practice or community pharmacist. Ask if they have a social prescriber or link worker on their team. You don't need a medical diagnosis to access the service;

You can also look out for local listings at your library, community centre, or branch of Age UK. Many activities are low-cost or free, and some even provide transport assistance for those with mobility issues.

It can feel daunting to try something new, especially after retirement or following a period of ill health or after a bereavement. The first step might simply be making a phone call or attending a taster session. Many community groups are friendly and welcoming to newcomers, especially those who haven't been out and about in a while.

So, the next time you visit your GP or community pharmacist, ask about your social prescribing service. You might be pleasantly surprised by the amount of support available.



Grants and Grant Giving



Hospitality Action's Warmth & Wellbeing Grant

We are delighted to share with you that the new Warmth & Wellbeing Grant, which replaced the previously offered Winter Fuel Grant, has been well received.

As reported in the autumn edition of the newsletter, the Warmth & Wellbeing Grant is a means-tested grant being made available annually to eligible beneficiaries. The total annual grant is worth £500 and will be paid in two instalments of £250 each in January and June each year.

Whilst the January payment is to help Golden Friends pay towards the cost of their winter fuel bills, the additional instalment of a further £250 is intended to help Golden Friends stay connected in the warmer months with family and friends and used towards the cost of social participation with family and friends or out in the community.

Eligibility

The Warmth & Wellbeing Grant will be available to those in receipt of a means-tested* government benefit (e.g. Pension Credit, Universal Credit, Housing Benefit). For more detailed information on eligibility turn to the back page where you will also find the application form to apply.

***Means-tested benefits are those available to people who can prove that their income is below a certain level.**

Please note – The standard rate for Pension Credit is £227.10 for a single person and £346.60 for a couple. If you are above pension age with an income below this amount and you do not already receive Pension Credit, you will qualify for further support from the government.

There are also additional amounts that you may be entitled to if you have an illness or disability. Disability-related benefits are disregarded for a Warmth & Wellbeing grant application.

Eligibility for government benefits

Eligibility for government benefits can be complex and confusing so if you are struggling with your health or mobility, you may qualify for certain disability benefits that are not means-tested but based on your daily care and mobility needs.

If you are in doubt about your eligibility for government benefits, or would like to receive further information and advice on eligibility to receive government benefits please contact **Hospitality Action's Welfare Benefits Advisor, Suad Hersi** on **0208 1879 056**, or email Suad at **shersi@hospitalityaction.org.uk**.



Competition Time!

FIRST PRIZE winners of our autumn wordsearch competition are **Mrs J. M. Strangeway (Hants)** and **Mrs E. Perkins (Derbyshire)** who each receive M&S gift cards worth £30. £15 M&S gift cards go to our SECOND PRIZE winners, **Mrs Pestridge (Hampshire)**, **Mrs M Davies (Redcar)**, **Mrs Sesbreno (London)**, **Mrs Rhodes-Butler (Lancashire)**, **Mrs S. Taylor (Leicestershire)** and **Mr R. Coombe (Shropshire)**. Congratulations!

In a change to our favoured seasonal wordsearch competitions, here we challenge you to correctly label our list of 22 common collective nouns. Competition entries need to reach us no later than **FRIDAY 30TH JANUARY 2026!** Good luck everyone!

Collective nouns	Your answer	Collective nouns	Your answer
A group of friends		A group of fish	
A group of players		A group of bees	
A group of musicians		A group of keys	
A group of singers		A group of grapes	
A group of sailors		A group of flowers	
A group of workers		A group of tools	
A group of experts		A group of papers	
A group of people		A group of clothes	
A group of lions		A group of judges	
A group of wolves		A group of monks	
A group of birds		A group of voters	

Entries should be marked '**GF competition**' and posted to Hospitality Action, 62 Britton Street, London EC1M 5UY to arrive no later than **FRIDAY 30TH JANUARY 2026.**

Your full name _____

Your address _____

Postcode _____

Your telephone number _____

Your email address _____

Seasonal Recipes

Stollen – fruit bread with marzipan, nuts and candied peel

History does not tell us where the stollen recipe originated or who invented it. However, it was first mentioned in a document in Naumburg an der Saale, Saxony, as early as 1329 – making it the Christmas pastry with the longest tradition in Germany

What you will need:

- 250g plain flour
- 180ml apple juice
- 100g mixed dried fruit with peel
- 75g cold marzipan cut into small pieces
- 30g whole almonds (blanched)
- 10g melted butter
- 7g dried yeast
- generous pinch of ground cinnamon
- generous pinch of ground aniseed **or** allspice
- small pinch of ground cloves
- 1 tbsp icing sugar

Prep time	1 hr and 25 mins
Cooking time	1 hr and 15 mins
Serves	enough for 10 slices
Difficulty	easy



Kcal	Fat	Saturates	Carbohydrates	Sugars	Fibre	Protein	Salt
190	4g	1g	34g	15g	1g	4g	0g

Method

Step 1

Soak the dried fruit in 100ml of hot water. Gently warm the apple juice for a few mins in a pan, then add the yeast and leave to activate for 10-15 mins (until it starts to bubble).

Step 2

Put the flour in a bowl. Stir in the yeast and apple juice mixture to form a smooth dough, then cover and leave to 'prove' in a warm place until the doughy mixture increases to roughly double in size, (this will take about 1-2 hrs). The dough can also be placed in the fridge to rise slowly overnight if preferred.

Step 3

Drain the fruit and add to the dough along with the nuts, spices and marzipan. Squish everything together, then turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead until the fruit stays in the dough.

Step 4

Shape the dough into a sausage shape and put it on a baking tray lined with baking parchment. Cover with a clean tea towel and leave to 'prove' in a warm place for a further 30 mins–1 hr until it has risen by about a quarter.

Step 5

Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas mark 4. Bake the stollen for 20 mins before reducing the oven temperature to 150C/130C fan/gas mark 2 and bake for 25-30 mins more until golden brown and firm to the touch.

Step 6

Remove the stollen from the oven and brush all over with the melted butter. Dust with the icing sugar and leave to cool completely before slicing. Store any remaining stollen, well wrapped, in an airtight container. Enjoy!

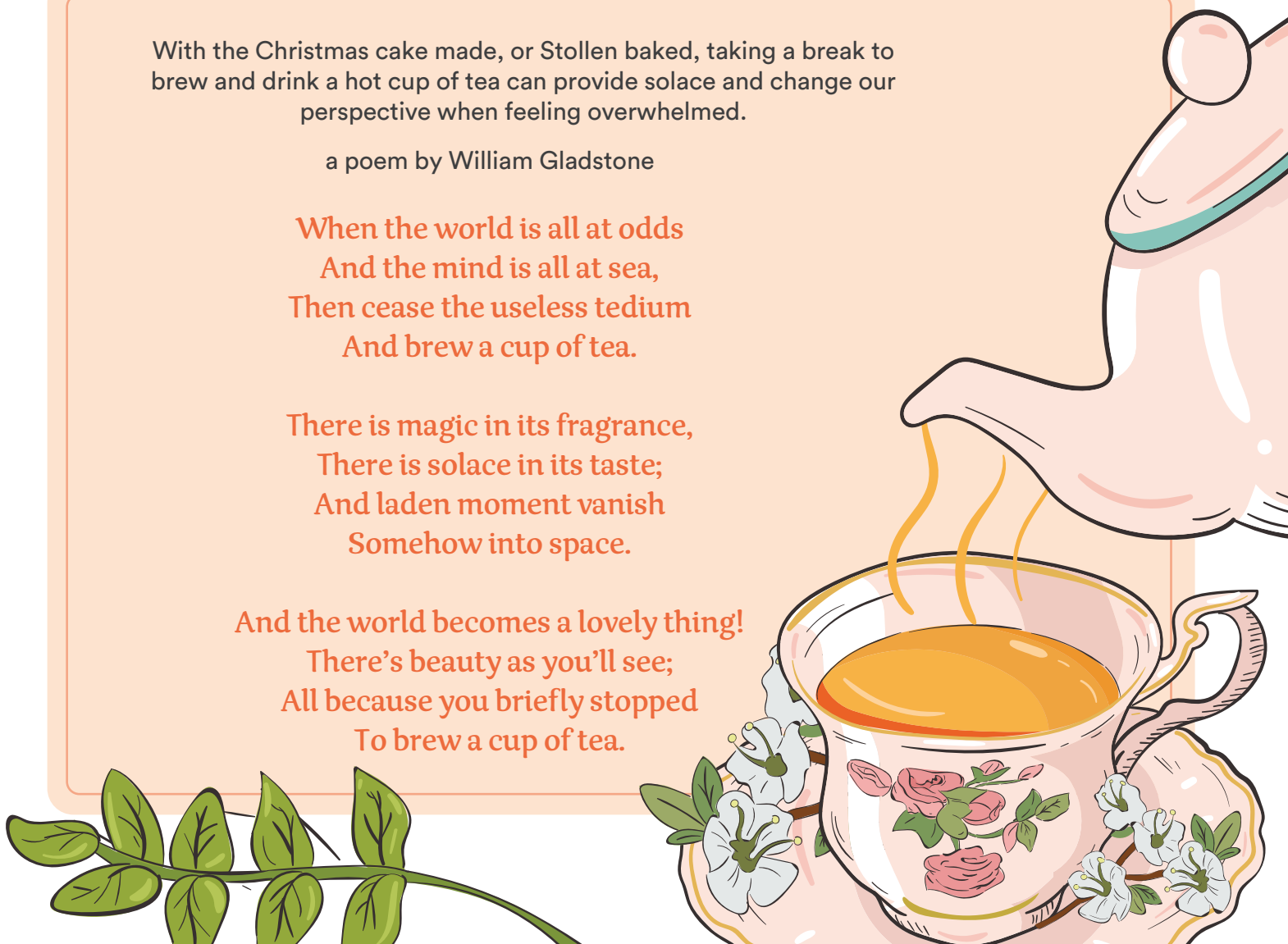
With the Christmas cake made, or Stollen baked, taking a break to brew and drink a hot cup of tea can provide solace and change our perspective when feeling overwhelmed.

a poem by William Gladstone

When the world is all at odds
And the mind is all at sea,
Then cease the useless tedium
And brew a cup of tea.

There is magic in its fragrance,
There is solace in its taste;
And laden moment vanish
Somehow into space.

And the world becomes a lovely thing!
There's beauty as you'll see;
All because you briefly stopped
To brew a cup of tea.



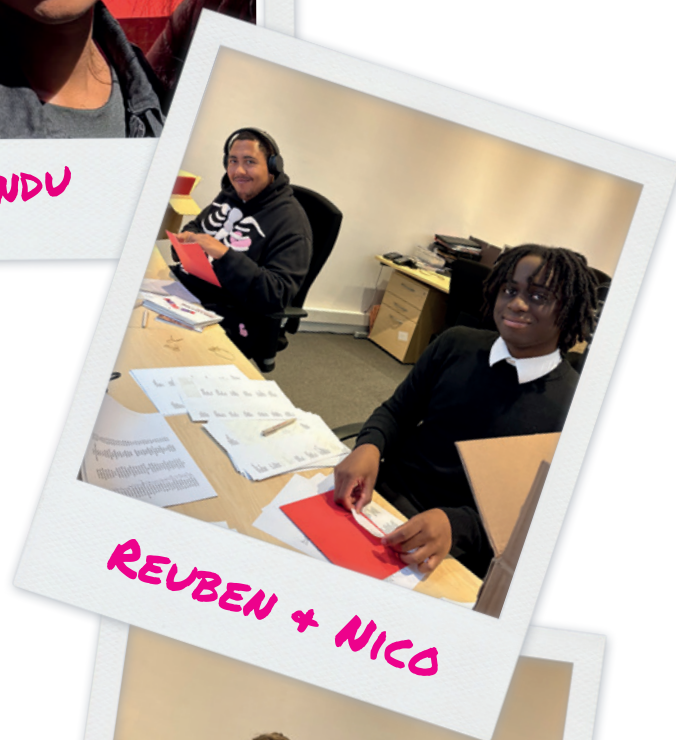
Thanks to all our volunteers

Those who choose to volunteer to support our work do so in a variety of ways, not just in support of Golden Friends, but as Trustees, Patrons, Ambassadors, Committee members, event hosts.

Throughout the year volunteers have given so generously of their time either to assist with fundraising and promoting our events, assisting with charity governance, providing essential support to the Golden Friends making 'check-in' calls out to them, preparing personalised birthday and other cards ready for posting, preparing mail to go out to prospective new members and, more recently helping with preparing for our annual Christmas mailing.

Each volunteer has made an incredible and invaluable contribution to the work we do.





We cannot thank our volunteers enough for their generosity and dedication. We simply couldn't achieve our goals without them all. Their hard work, energy, passion and commitment has been inspiring.

And so, as another busy year draws to a close, we offer our heartfelt thanks to each and every volunteer who has supported us throughout the year!



Regional festive pastries

Christmas and midwinter celebrations around the world come with a rich array of festive bakes from different cultures and regions. Here are some enjoyed by our near neighbours in Europe:



Pepparkakor – thin, crisp ginger biscuits.



Bûche de Noël – a classic French Yule log often filled with coffee or chestnut cream and decorated with meringue mushrooms.



Galette des Rois (served at the Epiphany on January 5th). Puff pastry filled with almond cream frangipane.



Bolo Rei (“King Cake”) similar to Spain’ s Roscón de Reyes, with crystallized fruit and nuts.



Turrón – almond nougat, either soft or hard.



Roscón de Reyes – a ring-shaped sweet bread decorated with candied fruit, eaten on the Epiphany.



Lussekatter – saffron-flavored buns shaped into S-curves for St. Lucia's Day (December 13th).



Stollen
(Christstollen) a rich, yeasted fruit bread with marzipan, nuts, and candied peel, dusted in icing sugar.



Lebkuchen – spiced honey cookies similar to gingerbread, often glazed or covered in chocolate.



Makowiec – rolled poppy seed cake, often glazed and served at Christmas Eve (Wigilia).



Piernik – gingerbread loaf, rich with honey and spices.



Pandoro – a golden, star-shaped sweet bread from Verona, usually dusted with icing sugar.



Panettone – an airy sweet bread from Milan with raisins, candied peel, and a buttery aroma.



Struffoli – small fried dough balls coated in honey and sprinkles, traditional in Naples.



The history of Christmas cake

The story of Christmas cake begins in medieval England, when Christmas food was rooted in religious observance and practicality. During the Advent fast, people refrained from rich foods. When the fast ended on Christmas Day, they celebrated with a special dish called plum porridge — a hearty mixture of oats, meat broth, dried fruits, honey, and spices.

This dish symbolized both nourishment and festivity after the long fast. As trade routes expanded and ingredients like sugar, dried fruits, and exotic spices became more available, the recipe gradually lost the meat and grew sweeter.

From porridge to plum pudding

By the 16th century, plum porridge had transformed into a sweet, spiced pudding made with suet, eggs, breadcrumbs, dried fruit, sugar, and brandy. Despite its name, “plum” referred to raisins or currants, since those were known as “plums” in old English.

Plum pudding became a popular dish not only at Christmas but throughout winter. Over time, however, it gained a firm association with Christmas, particularly by the 18th century, when families would prepare it on Stir-Up Sunday (the last Sunday before Advent) and let it mature until Christmas Day.



The birth of the Christmas cake

The transition from pudding to cake came with the rise of home baking in the 18th century. As ovens became more common, cooks began baking their rich fruit mixtures instead of boiling or steaming them. The result was the Christmas fruit cake — a dense, dark, and rich cake with dried fruits soaked in brandy or rum.

This baked cake symbolized luxury and abundance, as its ingredients (sugar, alcohol and spices) were expensive and exotic at the time. It also lasted well through the winter, thanks to the preserving effects of alcohol.



The Victorian golden age

In the 19th century, during the reign of Queen Victoria, Christmas became the family-centered festival we recognise today. Many modern Christmas customs including decorated Christmas trees, cards, crackers, and special cakes flourished in this period.

The Christmas cake evolved from an earlier tradition known as the Twelfth Cake, which was baked for Twelfth Night (January 5th).

Twelfth Cakes were large, iced confections often decorated with figurines or containing hidden charms. As Twelfth Night celebrations fell out of favour, the decorated cake moved to Christmas Day itself and becoming the Victorian Christmas cake covered in marzipan and royal icing, and often richly ornamented.



Modern Christmas bakes

Today, while the Christmas cake remains a beloved symbol of the season, tastes continue to evolve and lighter alternatives like chocolate yule logs, gingerbread houses, and spiced loaves are often preferred. Yet, the traditional fruit cake endures as a reminder of Christmas's deep culinary and cultural roots.



Health and wellness

Low impact exercises

As winter creeps in, due to reduced daylight hours and fear of injury from slippery conditions, there is a natural decrease in our motivation to be outside. However, regular low-impact exercise can help us stay active without putting our bones and joints at risk.

Gentle exercise helps us to maintain strength, flexibility, balance, as well as cardiovascular health, while reducing the risk of injury and promotes our overall well-being.

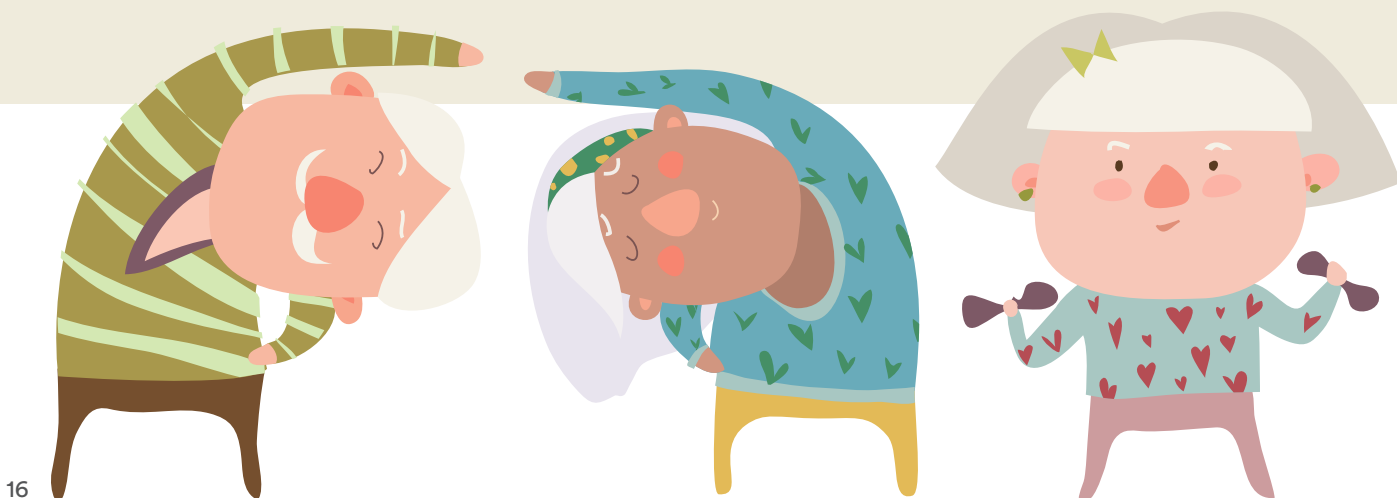
Less stress on joints

Low-impact exercise place less stress on the body and reduces the risk of injury, improves joint function and flexibility, prevent stiffness, builds bone density, and strengthens muscles.

Low impact exercises recommended for older people include activities like walking, swimming, cycling, yoga, Pilates, and strength training with resistance bands.

Benefits

- **Improved cardiovascular health:** Many low-impact exercises like walking, swimming, and cycling can help improve heart health.
- **Increased strength and muscle mass:** Resistance training, including using bodyweight, bands, or light weights, can help maintain or increase muscle mass and strength.
- **Better balance and coordination:** Tai Chi and balance exercises can help prevent falls.
- **Increased flexibility and range of motion:** Yoga, Pilates, and stretching exercises can improve flexibility and joint mobility.
- **Reduced risk of injury:** Low-impact exercises are less likely to cause injury compared to high-impact activities.
- **Improved mental well-being:** Exercise can help reduce stress, anxiety and improve mood.





Tips for getting started:

Before starting any new exercise regime, it's important to speak with your GP to ensure the exercises are appropriate for your individual needs and limitations.

Start slowly and increase intensity gradually. Don't try to do too much too soon. Begin with low-intensity exercises and gradually increase the duration, frequency or intensity as you get stronger.

Listen to your body and if you feel any pain, stop the exercise immediately and rest. Don't push yourself beyond your physical and medical limits.

Always choose activities that you find enjoyable, as this will make it more likely that you will continue.

Remember to always drink plenty of water before, during and after exercise.

Ensure your clothing and footwear are appropriate for the activity and provide support and comfort.



Walk this way...

A low-impact exercise that is beneficial for overall wellness is walking. Stepping out for a daily constitutional can not only improve our joint health and flexibility but improve our mood too. Here are just a few ways in which a daily walk can help us improve overall wellness:

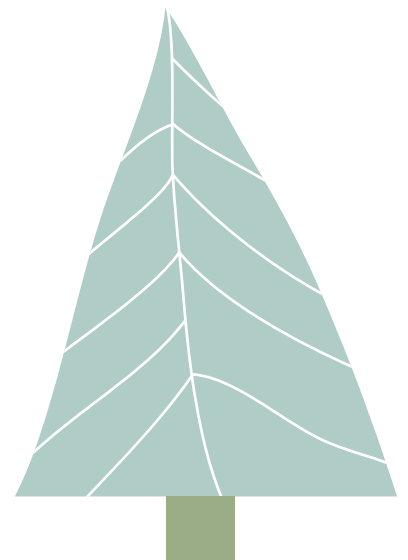
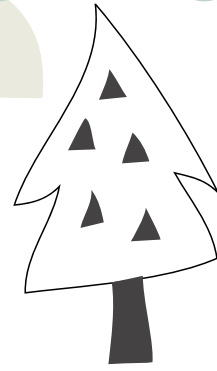
Fitness levels

- Regular, low-impact exercise like walking can help us build and maintain bone density and muscle mass which helps to reduce the risk of osteoporosis and arthritis.
- The cooler air in winter provides an additional, gentle cardiovascular challenge, as walking helps to raise the heart rate and improve circulation, which can lower blood pressure and helps to decrease the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Prolonged periods of sitting can, over time, cause muscle and bone loss, poor posture, and joint stiffness, especially during the colder months when we are less likely to want to head outdoors. Breaking up the time spent sitting with regular burst of movement is crucial to maintaining joint flexibility as the action of gentle movement helps to lubricate joints and is particularly beneficial for those who experience increased joint pain in colder weather.

Balance and stability

- Walking requires the brain to coordinate the movement of the legs, arms, and core muscles. By strengthening these muscles stability and balance is improved.
- With each step, the action of a regular daily walk teaches our bodies to adjust its centre to maintain balance. This continuous activity improves their levels of endurance, making muscles more fatigue-resistant and better at responding to small shifts in our body's position.
- The steady motion of walking encourages our bodies to maintain spinal alignment (good posture). Having a stable upright posture is essential for good balance and prevent falls.

From around age 65, there is an increasing risk of falls due to a natural decline in muscle strength and bone density as stiffness creeps in and balance is affected. The risk of falls increases significantly with every passing year.





Improved mood

- Spending time outdoors increases our exposure to natural light, which helps boost mood and ward off the 'winter blues'. Even a short daily walk can help reduce stressors and increase feelings of happiness and optimism.
- The combination of physical activity and exposure to natural light can contribute to the release of 'feel-good' chemicals, which lead to a reduction in stress hormones and an improvement in cognitive function, memory and quality of sleep.
- A daily walk, whether alone or with others, helps to overcome the feelings of loneliness and isolation that can become more prevalent in the colder months as well as create opportunities for meeting and interacting with others.

Tips for winter walking



- Dress in layers: Wearing several layers of clothing allows you to adjust to temperature changes so that you can remove a layer if you begin to feel too warm and put it back on if you cool down.
- Wear appropriate footwear: Sturdy, non-slip, and well-insulated shoes or boots with good traction will help minimize the risk of slips and falls on wet leaves or on icy surfaces.
- Think about your route: Consider keeping to well-lit, well-maintained, cleared, and flat surfaces and head out during the brightest, sunniest part of the day to ensure better visibility and minimize exposure to icy patches on pavements and other surfaces.
- Leave plenty of time: Avoid rushing and take smaller, deliberate steps. Doing so will help to maintain stability, especially when navigating uncertain surfaces.
- Use a cane or suitable mobility aid if needed for added stability and to help prevent falls.



Most importantly, going for a daily walk provides us with a change of scenery as well as an opportunity to maintain social connections, feel more mentally alert, physically invigorated, and emotionally positive.

Don't forget to wrap up warm!

Fundraising news



An evening of exquisite food at our annual Winter Chefs' Dinner and helped raise a spectacular £120,000!

Held at The Chancery Rosewood and hosted by Sabrina Ghayour, the evening brought together some of the UK's most renowned chefs; Daniel Clifford, Marius Dufay, Cherish Finden, Sabrina Gidda, Karan Gokani, Henry Harris, Tom Kerridge, and Thuy Diem Pham, for an unforgettable night of exceptional food and generosity.

Delicious dishes prepared on the night included treacle cured fillet of beef, braised portobello mushroom with bacon ragu, pomme puree, red wine sauce by Tom Kerridge and potato and chickpea chaat by Karan Gokani.

Huge thanks were offered to our headline sponsor GGM Gastro, gold sponsor American Express, silver sponsors San Pellegrino, All Safe and Sound and mum, and to all our incredible drinks partners, suppliers, and guests who made the event possible.



The evening also celebrated three annual award categories. Our 2025 Supporter of the Year Award honours an individual who has shown exceptional dedication to Hospitality Action, going above and beyond in their support. We were delighted to present this award to Mark Calver of Hatch Mansfield. As a South West Board Member and Ambassador, Mark is a true Hospitality Action champion.

The Corporate Supporter of the Year Award was presented to the wonderful team at The PIG Hotels. Always ready for a challenge, The PIG team actively show their support and have raised £30,961 this year alone via £1 on the bill fundraising.

Meanwhile, the William Baxter Outstanding Contribution Award was presented to Northcote. The award recognised Northcote's extraordinary commitment and generosity towards the charity, having raised over £500,000 since 2009 through its renowned Obsession Food Festival.



We are deeply grateful to everyone who has supported our work in 2025. Your generosity has helped to bring hope and practical support to thousands of hospitality households in crisis, and we can't thank you enough.



Supporter news

At Hospitality Action we are fortunate to have amazing supporters spanning the entirety of the UK, who never fail to outdo themselves with innovative and adventurous ways to fundraise. Among these inspiring individuals is Maya Gilbert, who embarked on the 2,700 mile England Coast Path walk in our honour.

Maya set off from the Royal Albert Dock in her hometown of Liverpool at the end of May. Travelling anticlockwise along the English coast, Maya averaged an astonishing 22.5 miles a day, walking through sunshine, showers, and even Storm Amy.

Before she began, Maya said: “I decided to walk the English Coast Path to reconnect with my home country. In doing so alone I hope to rediscover some of my own passions and independence after a really difficult period of mental health in my 20’s. Hospitality is woven into every aspect of my being and Hospitality Action not only supported me during my most difficult time but continues to be a much-needed life line for everybody in the industry.”



Maya’s connection to Hospitality Action began during the pandemic. At 25 Maya had just opened her own catering business when the crisis struck. Unable to access furlough or government aid, Maya found herself struggling to stay afloat. Our COVID-19 Emergency Grants Programme offered crucial support and was part of a wider effort that saw just under £1,000,000 awarded to more than 3,700 hospitality households.

Knowing that she wanted to give back Maya decided to walk the England Coastal Path in aid of Hospitality Action, and she set herself the challenge of doing so in 120 days. Maya’s path took her past beaches, bustling harbours, seaside towns, and hidden coves. Maya returned to Liverpool in early October, raising £15,000 along the way!

Reflecting on the experience, Maya said: “The last four months have been some of the most challenging and rewarding of my life. I’m over the moon to have completed my journey and to have raised funds for Hospitality Action.



Photo credit: Liverpool Echo

"I want to say a huge thank you to Caterite and Barlounge Chester for helping me to fund my equipment, and to The Inn Collection Group for their incredible donation of £2,700, one pound for every mile I walked, along with every single person who sponsored me. The rest of the project was completely self-funded, and I set myself a strict budget of just £10 per day for food and accommodation. As you can imagine, that didn't stretch far, especially when trying to eat more than 3,000 calories a day just to keep my energy up.

"The kindness shown by people in hospitality and beyond has been overwhelming, from meals and hotel rooms to sofas, spare beds and generous donations through my 'Buy Me a Coffee' page. They kept me warm, fed and dry right around the coast and I'll never be able to thank them enough. This journey has reminded me how powerful kindness and community can be and I'll carry that with me for a long time."



Heartfelt thanks to Maya for her extraordinary support. Not only has she raised vital funds, but she's also reminded us of the remarkable impact and strength of the hospitality community.



Photo credit: Liverpool Echo

Hospitality Action's Warmth & Wellbeing Grant

Applications for our new annual Warmth & Wellbeing grant remains open until **31 March 2026**.

This £500 grant will be paid in two £250 instalments: one to help with winter fuel costs and another for social participation in the warmer summer months.

To apply, simply complete and return the cut-off slip below along with a recent full month's copy of bank statements for **all bank accounts you hold**.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are currently in receipt of a regular bi-monthly grant from Hospitality Action, we have written to you separately to explain your eligibility.

To qualify for a Warmth & Wellbeing grant you must:

- Live in your own home (owned or rented – not a nursing/residential care home).
- Have no non-dependent members of your family living with you (other than your spouse/partner).
- Receive an income-related benefit, such as Pension Credit, Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, OR have a total weekly income of no more than £227.10 per week for a single person or £346.60 per week for a couple.*
- Have limited savings (below £5,000 if you are single and below £8,000 if you are a couple).

*Disability-related benefits, such as Attendance Allowance or Personal Independence Payments, are disregarded for Hospitality Action's Warmth & Wellbeing grant assessment.

If you meet all the above criteria and would like to apply for the grant, please complete and return the cut-off slip below and send with a recent, full month's bank statement(s) showing all your income and savings.

We will contact you once your application has been assessed. If you qualify for a Warmth & Wellbeing grant, you will be notified of the payment dates in writing and the award will be paid into your bank account.

Please note, if you do not provide a recent statement for your bank account(s) when you apply this will delay your application.

The Warmth & Wellbeing Grant is kindly sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Innholders.



Please tick each of the statements below to confirm your eligibility and complete your name, address and contact details. Send this slip, together with a recent full month's bank statements to:

Hospitality Action Grants Team, 62 Britton Street, London EC1M 5UY

- ☐ I/we live in our own home (owned or rented – not a nursing/residential care home).
- ☐ I/we have no non-dependent members of our family living with me/us (other than our spouse/partner).
- ☐ I/we receive an income-related benefit, such as Pension Credit, Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, OR have a total weekly income of no more than £227.10 per week for a single person or £346.60 per week for a couple.
- ☐ I/we have savings below £5,000 (single)/below £8,000 (couple).
- ☐ I/we have enclosed a full month's bank statement for all accounts I/we hold.

Full Name _____ Signature _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Telephone number _____ Email address: _____