

PARENT & CARER NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025



WELCOME FROM THE CEO

Dear Parent or Carer

Welcome to your spring edition of our newsletter which showcases some of the highlights of last term.

Last term was another busy one with lots of exciting developments and successes.

We've launched a brand-new Assessment Service, where people aged 13+ can access private neurodiversity pre-diagnostic screening and autism and ADHD assessments at competitive prices and without the lengthy waiting lists of the NHS.

Following the success of our new Forest Road West provision in Nottingham, we have accelerated our plans to continue growing in the city, and are in the process of purchasing another site where we will deliver specialist FE programmes from September for learners with complex needs.

We welcomed Ofsted for a 4-day visit to help them test out their new inspection framework. Although this wasn't a formal inspection, our Further Education team did us proud, showcasing our Outstanding provision and giving valuable feedback on the new framework which is being rolled out across the sector.

Our Pines residential development is on track for completion ready for its first residents in September.

Our annual Spring Fair returns on Sunday 18th May, this is a great day for all the family, and this year, we're excited to announce a special flypast from the RAF BBMF Lancaster.

I hope you enjoy reading the many wonderful examples of how our learners, citizens, volunteers and staff continue to shine.

Mark Dale
Group CEO



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JAY CONTINUES TO SPREAD THE WORD ON NEURODIVERSITY

Over the last few months, learner Jay has visited more organisations and delivered neurodiversity training sessions to a large number of people resulting in wonderfully positive feedback.

Back in October, Jay visited West Notts College and delivered a session to delivery staff. Sara Arnold, Organisational Development Manager there said: "I just wanted to take a moment to say a big thank you to Jay for all your hard work with delivering the CPD sessions to our staff yesterday. I have received extremely positive feedback from staff who attended your sessions - it's created lots of discussion, so I just wanted to say how much we appreciate you and Jay taking the time to come in and deliver. Jay was also fantastic so please pass on my thanks to him, he did brilliantly despite having a lot more staff turn up than anticipated!"

Then in January, Jay visited Fountaindale School where the Assistant Headteacher, Charlotte Adu, said: "Bia thanks again for coming into Fountaindale and delivering this **personal** and thought provoking presentation. Jay was brilliant and articulate. He really shined and the staff teams were so impressed by Jay's delivery skills and his motivation to talk on this topic. Please thank Jay on our behalf as a school."



EASTER FUN AT ROWAN!

Portland's Independent Living citizens certainly enjoyed the Easter weekend with lots of fun activities. A bake-off competition, crafts, egg hunt and Easter bonnet making, made the long bank holiday weekend a very busy one!



WILL'S JOURNEY AT CLUMBER PARK

Learner Will is currently on a Supported Internship with the rangers at Clumber Park, where he has become a valued member of the team.

Over the course of his placement, he has gained hands-on experience using a variety of tools, including leaf blowers, loppers, tree pullers, and grapple tools. His work has involved clearing paths, removing self-set trees, tackling rhododendron overgrowth, and feeding cut trees into the chipper. During the festive season, he even contributed to making the wooden snowmen sold at the park!

Working alongside a dedicated group of volunteers, Will's enthusiasm and strength have been greatly appreciated - especially when it comes to the more physically demanding tasks. Beyond his practical skills, his confidence and independence have grown significantly. Thanks to his travel training, he now commutes to his placement independently and has taken on responsibilities like feeding the birds each morning without needing prompts or support. Reflecting on his experience, Will shared: "It is very good to work with the team at Clumber Park. It makes me happy to work outside."

It's fantastic to see Will thriving in his role, developing his skills, and becoming a key part of the team at Clumber Park. Well done, Will!



HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE ALSO PRAISED WILL'S DEDICATION:

“It's great to see Will enjoying his work outside, no matter the weather. He's always keen to get involved and try new things. He has a fantastic sense of humor - once he starts laughing, he sometimes can't stop! His confidence and independence are really growing.

Shaun & Amy, Clumber Rangers

“Will has been an excellent addition to the team - hardworking, enthusiastic, and always willing to try new things. Plus, he's got a great personality!

Tony Hodge, Volunteer

WAZ TEAM ACCOLADE AND LAUNCH OF A NEW ACTIVITY

During March this year Woodland Adventure Team attended the Nottinghamshire Tourism Awards ceremony where they were shortlisted as finalists for the Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Award. Although they did not win this time, they were very proud to come away with the Bronze Award for the category and taking this opportunity to celebrate their overall achievements.

Earlier in the month, Mansfield Building Society visited Portland to celebrate the soft launch of the new bike trail that was fully funded by their charitable trust. Members from the trust, alongside some Pollytech students, got to try it out, and Tina from WAZ team gave a great presentation that highlighted the trail's journey from start to finish.



KINGSWAY HALL TIDY-UP

Our amazing Day Service group has been hard at work transforming an outdoor space into a vibrant, welcoming garden for everyone to enjoy! With sleeves rolled up and big dreams in mind, they've been clearing, weeding, and laying the groundwork for a colourful, thriving garden.

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR:

- Cleared and refreshed the space
- Built the foundation for beautiful flowers and plants
- Prepared planters for sunflowers and more

But this project is about more than just plants - it's a powerful symbol of inclusion, teamwork, and community spirit. Every person, regardless of ability, is helping to create a space where we can all grow, learn, and flourish together.

UP NEXT:

- Planting vibrant flowers and tall, sunny sunflowers
- Adding planters and garden features
- Growing our sense of connection and pride

Tia summed it up perfectly: "It's lovely being outside in the sun."

And if Kyle's beaming smile is any indication, we're just getting started - he was right at the front, leading the way!

Stay tuned for more updates as we continue this beautiful journey.



STRIVE TO 35

As part of the college's fundraising efforts for our charity of the year, Canine Partners, a group of FE learners organised and hosted a Strive to 35 event during the Enrichment Week at the beginning of April.

There were routes plotted around the woodland and learners were encouraged to complete the track as many times as they could within 35 minutes.

Learners and staff were encouraged to wear fancy dress throughout the day, and donate just £1 to take part.



LAUNCH OF PORTLAND ASSESSMENTS

April saw the exciting launch of our brand new service, Portland Assessments.

Portland Assessments offers anyone over the age of 13 find clarity with an autism or ADHD diagnostic assessment. We also offer a neurodiversity screening which will provide valuable insights into any neurodivergent traits, allowing clients to make an informed decision about whether to pursue a formal diagnosis.

Using our dedicated staff member's vast knowledge and skill in the area, plus her brand new ADOS-2 and ADI-R qualification and access to a Clinical Psychologist, the service will be able to provide a clear, compassionate assessment to give clients the answers, support and resources they need within just 13 weeks of first contact. A huge reduction in time compared to the traditional route of assessments.

Costs are fixed and at a very competitive price of just £2,000, and a basic Neurodiversity Screening if you don't want a full assessment is just £350.

For more information [click here](#)



A FULL HOUSE FOR BOOGIE BINGO!

In April, we mixed things up for our Friday Club Night by hosting our first Newstart bingo night. More than 50 participants took part and played along, with some lucky players taking home some special activity prizes. Bingo will return later this year and will be in rotation with our usual discos, karaoke nights and our new cinema screenings too.

Next club night will be a 90's and Noughties special on Friday 23rd May! Keep an eye on our Portland College Facebook or website events page for all the latest dates.



PORTLAND'S SPRING FAIR

Portland's Spring Fair is back once again in May! A fantastic day out for all of the family with over 60 brilliant craft and gift stalls as well as delicious food to enjoy!

Elphaba and Glinda will be singing, dancing and performing in two magical interactive live shows! Plus a fancy dress competition during the show, so come dressed as your favourite fairytale, fantasy, or totally wicked character for a chance to win a magical prize.

After an astounding success, Portland Dog Show is back again! Bring your furry friend and enter one or more of our seven categories, available for just £3 per dog.

Have a go at archery in the Woodland Adventure Zone, perfect for adventurers of all ages!

Plus the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Lancaster will be performing a flypast right at our Spring Fair at 12.14pm!

You can pre-book your gate, dog show entry and Totally Wicked party tickets by [clicking here](#)

Portland Charity

SPRING FAIR

SUNDAY 18 MAY • 10AM - 4PM

FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

- Shopping at over 60 craft, gift and food stalls
- Portland Dog Show with 6 fun categories
- Kid's entertainment with a 'Totally Wicked' Party!
- Portland Charity Pop-up Shop
- Have a go at Archery in our Woodland Adventure Zone

ENTRY: ADULT £2, CHILD £1 UNDER 2'S FREE

Pre-book all of your tickets here:

WOODLAND ADVENTURE ZONE

PPNUK
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