

Spring 2025 newsletter

Stunning murals at Gowlands

Gowlands has had a colourful makeover, thanks to renowned artists Dan Kitchener and Karl Sims! From a striking sunset cityscape mural to a vibrant new welcome sign, their stunning creations have turned once-plain spaces into uplifting havens for our people to enjoy.

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Welcome

Welcome to the spring 2025 edition of Hamelin's newsletter! We're so excited to share some of the inspiring things that have been happening across the charity.

This issue is vibrant in every sense - from the incredible murals now brightening up our Gowlands centre in Rochford (p. 6), to Gaynor, one of our supporters, who is taking part in this year's London Marathon in support of Hamelin (p. 10). We welcomed Richard Holden MP to our Billericay site for an important conversation about the future of social care (p. 4), and we've been out and about with some sunshine-fuelled seaside trips (p. 5).

A lot has been going on in fundraising too - from the success of our Christmas tree collection raising £2,000 (p. 12), to the amazing support from Maggio Lounge and Savills, who continue to go the extra mile for our charity (p. 13-15).

We hope you enjoy this snapshot of what your support is helping us achieve. With your generosity, we're building a future where autistic adults and people with a learning disability in Essex have the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for being part of the Hamelin community.

There are more than 40,000 autistic adults and people with learning disabilities in Essex. Only around 10% of these people get regular funded support, leaving many thousands unable to lead full and meaningful lives. A lot of what we do to address this unmet need is down to your continued support and generosity.

Thank you.

Hamelin communications team
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Hamelin hits the airwaves



Members of Hamelin visited a number of local radio stations to step into the world of broadcasting.

The visit was arranged so some of the people Hamelin supports who have a keen interest in IT and music, could see first-hand how the equipment functions and even try it out for themselves.

These visits not only provided valuable insights into broadcasting but also highlighted the importance of community involvement and accessibility in the media industry. Hamelin continues to champion opportunities that empower the people we support and broaden their experiences in line with their interests and life-goals.

Groups visited **Gateway 97.8**, **BBC Essex** and **Basildon Hospital radio** where they were given comprehensive tours of the stations. During the visit to Basildon Hospital Radio, they were invited to take part in a one-hour programme. This special segment provided an opportunity for the group to talk about the incredible work that Hamelin does in supporting autistic adults and people with learning disabilities and how people can get involved with the charity through volunteering and fundraising.



MP visits Hamelin

We were proud to welcome Richard Holden MP to our Billericay site for a powerful conversation about the future of social care.

With demand soaring and funding under pressure, we shared how Hamelin is stepping up and developing bold, innovative programmes that put autistic adults and people with learning disabilities at the heart of everything we do.

Mr Holden, who represents Basildon and Billericay in Parliament, met with members of our senior leadership team to hear first-hand how we're tackling sector-wide challenges with creative, person-centred solutions.

Chief Executive Ru Watkins said: "The care sector is facing real challenges, but at Hamelin, we believe innovation and collaboration are the keys to making a lasting difference.

"We are developing pioneering programmes and working with partners in the charity and public sectors to put the needs of autistic adults and people with learning disabilities first. This will ensure they have the support, opportunities, and independence they deserve.

"It was valuable to share our vision with Richard and explore how we can all work together to drive real change in what are uncertain times."

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Hamelin does so much in our community, which is why meeting and listening to them is so important.

The brilliant team are focused on what matters – the people in need. Hearing their experience and expertise is invaluable information for me to take back into Parliament.

Richard Holden
MP, Basildon and Billericay

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Sunshine, sea air & smiles

How nice is it to finally get some sunshine?! We've been loving seeing some of the people we support getting out and about to enjoy the joys of spring.

Recently, some of our people and support workers took a lovely day trip to Southend by train, where they enjoyed some fresh sea air and a visit to the pub.

The best bit? These trips come from our people themselves. It's important that we understand what they want to do, because it's their day out, their choice. Whether it's the seaside, a park, or somewhere new, we're all about making those things happen.

Here's to more good weather, good company, and great days out!



Stunning murals at Gowlands

Two renowned artists have brought a burst of colour and creativity to Gowlands, transforming areas into welcoming and visually stunning spaces for guests.

Dan Kitchener spent the day revamping the communal indoor area with a striking graffiti-style sunset cityscape mural, designed to make the space a more inviting place where guests can relax. Karl Sims created a vibrant new sign at the entrance to welcome visitors, as well as transforming an area in the garden.

Before the transformation, the communal room was plain and uninspiring. The people we support said they wanted to see more colour – Dan and Karl certainly delivered!

We are incredibly grateful to them for their generosity and talent. Through the power of art and community spirit, they have created stunning works which have completely revitalised the spaces and created a vibrant and uplifting atmosphere for our guests.





Queen's Nursing Institute visit

It's really important that we increase understanding of learning disability amongst our colleagues in the health and social care sectors, so that we can effectively advocate for the people we support.

As part of this drive, we mentor student nurses, health care assistants and other clinical colleagues. We're also delighted to play a part in the induction for new colleagues in commissioning and procurement teams.

Most recently, Natalie Fedden, new recruit to **The Queen's Nursing Institute (QNI)** communications team, spent the day with our Director of Care Shoenagh, understanding the role of a Queen's Nurse with a learning disability specialism.

If you or colleagues work in health or social care in Essex and would like to understand more about learning disability and neurodiversity services, please get in touch www.hamelin.org.uk/contact-us

You can read Natalie's blog about her visit on the QNI website here:
www.qni.org.uk/spending-the-day-with-an-extraordinary-queens-nurse

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It was clear to me that Shoenagh and the Hamelin team treat each person they support with personalised care, and cater to their diverse personalities and interests in the activities on offer. It felt like a welcoming and truly inclusive environment.

Natalie Fedden
The Queen's Nursing
Institute

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New trustees join Hamelin

We are delighted to welcome Laura Marshall and Steve Nightingale to our board of trustees who are passionate about driving the charity's vision forward.

With a wealth of experience and a deep passion for reimagining health and social care, Laura brings an inspiring and transformative vision to the sector.

With over 20 years of expertise spanning children's nursing, management, and commissioning, Laura offers a powerful and compassionate perspective on how to deliver meaningful, sustainable change in the system.

Her areas of specialism include quality improvement, children and young people's nursing, out of hospital care, service redesign, resilience planning, commissioning, senior nursing and quality leadership.



Laura Marshall

With a distinguished background in finance and investor relations, Steve brings a wealth of knowledge and a broad, strategic perspective that will greatly benefit Hamelin.

Steve is an experienced finance and investor relations professional with a strong track record across commercial finance functions and capital markets communication.

He has significant experience in equity raising, mergers and acquisitions, and has worked closely with regulatory bodies such as the OFT and Competition Commission. Steve is also highly skilled at building strong relationships across all levels of an organisation.



Steve Nightingale

Gaynor's marathon challenge

After a ten-year hiatus from marathon running, Hamelin supporter Gaynor Walton is lacing up her running shoes to support the charity.

This April, the 51-year-old will take on the iconic London Marathon, driven by her passion to make a difference for autistic people and adults with learning disabilities.

This will be Gaynor's fourth marathon, having previously completed the London Marathon in 2009, the Loch Ness Marathon in 2010, and the Stratford Marathon in 2015.

Her personal best stands at an impressive 4 hours and 9 minutes, and while breaking the 4-hour barrier remains a dream, she would be thrilled to finish under 4 hours and 30 minutes.

Speaking about her motivation, Gaynor said: "We take things for granted, so it's good to do it for people who need the support. Running for a charity makes so much sense, not only am I giving something back, but it's a real incentive for me to get up and train – I don't want to let anybody down!

"I chose to run for Hamelin because it's important that local charities get support and recognition; they do fantastic work which often goes unnoticed.



DONATE HERE



"I'm ready for the challenge – it's been a decade years since my last marathon, so it'll be good to put myself through the paces once again."

Hamelin is extremely grateful for Gaynor's dedication and wishes her the best of luck.

You can make a donation online by visiting www.justgiving.com/page/gaynor-walton-1735887141537 or scanning the QR code. Thank you.

Rotary Club donation

It was a pleasure to be invited to the **Rotary Club of Billericay** recently and have the opportunity to talk to its members about Hamelin and the work we do in the community.

Thank you to the club for the extremely generous donation of £2,340, which will help fund our training programme which supports people with learning disabilities and autistic adults get into employment.



Movement for Good Awards

This year, we are giving
over £1 million

**Nominate
now!**

movementforgood.com




Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc is the promoter

The Movement for Good Awards is an annual platform for giving, set up by all the businesses that make up the Benefact Group, and this year £1million is being donated. Please take just 30 seconds to nominate Hamelin, thank you!

Each nomination Hamelin receives is one entry into the £1,000 draws held throughout the year, so the more nominations we get, the better chance we have of receiving a donation. You can nominate at any time.

There is also a separate special £5,000 health and wellbeing draw - please nominate Hamelin between 28th April and 4th May for this draw.

You can nominate via www.movementforgood.com thank you.

Christmas tree collection success

A huge thank you to everyone who supported Hamelin's Christmas Tree Collection fundraiser in partnership with **Just Helping** this year!

When people registered their trees for collection they were asked to make a donation to our charity. Events like this are critical to ensuring that we can continue supporting autistic adults and people with learning disabilities across Essex. The event raised a fantastic £2,000!

Thank you also goes out to our fantastic team of volunteers from **World of Spice, Ford, Skye Cloud, Marlborough Highways, Keltbray, and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service**, plus individuals who gave up their time to collect and recycle trees.



Maggio's making a difference

Since opening in August last year, **Maggio Lounge** in Billericay High Street has been a regular supporter of Hamelin, hosting various events to raise funds and awareness.

During the first month of opening, Maggio donated a proportion of its burger and coffee sales to Hamelin - a fantastic £1,485.10. They also held a mulled wine stall at the Billericay Christmas Market, a 'design your own pancake' station on Shrove Tuesday, and have started hosting monthly quiz nights. All of this has raised an additional £187.

Thank you to the Maggio team for their continued support. Our people love popping in for a coffee, having a chat with the friendly staff and enjoying the vibrant decor!



Let's get quizzical - save the date!

Maggio Lounge in Billericay High Street is hosting monthly quiz nights in aid of Hamelin.

The next quiz is taking place on **Thursday 24th April, starting at 6.30pm**. It's £2 per person to enter with half of proceeds going to the winning team and the other half being donated to Hamelin.

Quiz Night

Come along, bring your friends, and put your knowledge to the test. We thank Maggio Lounge for their continued support.

Corporate supporter focus - Savills



savills

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Hamelin is a wonderful cause and we were delighted to have an opportunity to show our support. The charity provides vital services to so many local families and we look forward to helping again in the future.

Karl Manning

Head of Office, Savills Chelmsford

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Property agent **Savills** is a keen supporter of Hamelin with members of its Chelmsford team taking part in fundraising events and volunteering their time to make a difference to the lives of the people we support.

A group spent the day at our Sutton Farm site in Rochford, helping to refurbish a cabin for Gowlands guests to use by giving it a new coat of paint.

The team also helped to dismantle two other sheds which had reached the end of their useable life.

It's a delight to welcome the Savills team to Hamelin - their generosity, kindness, and genuine enthusiasm to make a difference in their community is exemplary. We're looking forward to exploring other ways we can work together in the future!



Contact

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Members of the **Savills** team in Chelmsford took part in a five-a-side football tournament in aid of Hamelin.

The Business Fives Tournament in Colchester saw 15 businesses from across Essex and Suffolk take to the pitch to raise funds for their chosen charities. The tournament began with a group stage before the top teams battled through the knockout stages, with Savills making an impressive run to the quarter-finals. The team raised a fantastic £335, smashing their initial goal of £250.

Tom Sharman, associate in the planning team at Savills Chelmsford, said it was a fantastic event.

He said: “It was a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon playing football. As an Essex-based charity that provides such a valuable service, Hamelin was an obvious fundraising choice for us. We very much look forward to supporting the charity again in the near future.”

The team’s top goal scorer, Kanoa Sato-Smith added: “The tournament was a great day out for the team, and we all enjoyed the opportunity to run around and get through to the quarter finals, better than any of us were expecting!”



 Hamelin*



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