

News and views from the Engage Befriending team



engage
befriending

May 2026

www.engage-uk.org

Engage Befriending Drop-In

The Engage team would like our volunteers and Engage friends to come to our Engage Befriending drop-in



Thursday 14th May
in the Atrium Café

Thursday 11th June
in the Atrium Café

Thursday 9th July
in the Atrium Café

From 10.30am to 12 noon
Pop in for a cuppa, say hello and meet other volunteers, Engage Befriending friends, and the team.

We'd love to see you there.

The **Atrium Café** is at Greyfriars Church, Friar Street, RG1 1EH

Engage Befriending May Drop-In - Get Berkshire Active

At the May drop-in we will be visited by Kate from **Get Berkshire Active**.

Get Berkshire Active run wellbeing sessions at various times and places across Reading. All of their sessions are perfect for complete beginners, those struggling with mobility and those who have not been active for a prolonged period of time. The sessions are social, friendly and welcoming.

Join us in the Atrium Café on 14th May to meet Kate and find out more.



MONDAYS 14.15 - 14.45 Hexham Community Centre, 1A Bamburgh Close, RG2 7UD. (FREE)

TUESDAYS 10.15 - 10.45: St John's Church, St Johns Road, RG4 5AN (£1 charge pp)
11.30 - 12.00: Wesley Church, Queens Road, RG1 4BW (£1 Charge. Bi-weekly class, 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month)
14.15 - 14.45: Cornerstones Extra Care Housing, Halcyon Terrace, RG30 4XR. (FREE)

THURSDAYS 10.00 - 10.30: Chimney Court, Shilling Close, RG30 4EN (FREE)

To find out about the regular sessions contact Kate:
07706357801 or kate.wiggins@getberkshireactive.org

Meet the team... Rebekah



Rebekah has worked in administration for many years, first as a civil servant and later running a small business with her husband. She enjoys streamlining processes and improving efficiency, and is passionate about supporting The Mustard Tree to reach as many people as possible

In her spare time, she enjoys reading, baking and going on long walks.

Contact the Engage Befriending team

Main number: 0118 995 2102 | Email: engage@themustardtree.org

Jackie Curtis: 07887 395115 | Jo White 07437 011764 | Sheila Cox 07516 254916

If you would like a large print version of this newsletter, please let us know.

Engage is part-funded by many organisations including:



Singing is good for you!

Helen is a member of the Silver Tones Choir. She was bereaved of her partner in 2013 and was looking for things to help with her grief, so she joined the choir in 2016. A friend invited her to join and offered to give her a ride. They have performed at care homes and Broad Street Mall.



“I enjoy going, it gets me out of the house. Its having company and leaning songs together. Being community. It’s a variety of songs we learn but not opera!”

Singing is one of the simplest and most enjoyable ways to look after your wellbeing — especially as we get older. You don’t need musical training, a “good” voice, or any experience. Just joining in brings real benefits.

- **Lifts your mood** Singing releases feel-good chemicals in the brain that help reduce stress and brighten your day.
- **Keeps your mind active** Learning songs, rhythms and harmonies gently exercises memory and concentration.
- **Supports breathing** Singing encourages deeper, steadier breathing, which can help with relaxation and lung health.
- **Builds confidence** Singing in a group helps people rediscover their voice, often in more ways than one.
- **Strengthens social connection** Choirs offer companionship, laughter, and a sense of belonging - powerful protectors against loneliness.
- **Encourages regular routine** Weekly rehearsals give structure and something positive to look forward to.

Most importantly, singing is fun. It brings people together, lifts spirits, and reminds us that joy is something we can make with our own voices.

A few of the Community Choirs in Reading

Warm, friendly, low-pressure groups that welcome older singers, including beginners.

Take Note Community Choir (Tilehurst)

<https://takenotetilehurst.co.uk/>
takenotemembership@gmail.com

Monday evenings from 7.30 – 9.30pm at St Joseph’s Church Hall, Berkshire Drive, Tilehurst

A lively, very welcoming local choir with a strong community feel. No auditions; very inclusive; great for confidence-building. Style: Pop, show tunes, light contemporary

Silver Tones Choir

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/berkshire/activities-and-events/singing-groups/silvertones-choir/>

Every Monday, 12pm - 2pm
St Catherine’s Church, Wittenham Avenue, RG31 5LN

A choir specifically designed with older adults in mind. Ideal for beginners or those returning to singing. Style: Popular classics, golden-oldies, uplifting favourites

Rivariate Community Choir (Caversham)

<https://rivariate.com/>

Caversham Heights Methodist Church
Tuesday evenings in term time 7:30pm to 9:00pm

Small, relaxed, and community-centred. Welcoming to all abilities. Style: Mixed repertoire

Reading Community Gospel Choir

<https://rcomgos.co.uk/>
info@rcomgos.co.uk
Palmer Park Avenue, Reading

Uplifting, joyful, and very friendly. No auditions; very supportive atmosphere. Style: Gospel, soul, contemporary

Reading Lunchtime Choir

<https://www.readinglunchtimechoir.org.uk/>

Wednesdays from 12 noon until 13.30, at Park United Reform Church at the junction of Palmer Park Avenue and Wokingham Road . Style: secular, sacred, modern, traditional and ancient

A Trolley Bus Treasure at the April Drop-In



At our April drop-in, Sheila brought along a remarkable piece of Reading's transport history: a beautifully crafted model of one of the last trolley buses to run in the town - Route 159 that travelled along Wokingham Road.

The model was made by Roger, a member of St Luke's Church, who sadly died recently. His wife kindly allowed the model to be shared with our coffee-morning group, and it was received with great interest and affection.

Roger was an apprentice coach builder and joiner at Reading Corporation. The model is built entirely from matchsticks and made to scale and took nine months to complete. A friend later added the lighting, under Roger's careful supervision.



The model sparked many happy memories among those present. Several recalled travelling on trolley buses in both Reading and London, including one member who rode the trolley bus to school each day. Others remembered the familiar pause while the conductor re-attached the overhead poles to the wires.

Walks for WELLBEING

Join Nature Nurture for 6 gentle walks exploring The Cowsey. We'll slow down, notice nature and enjoy being outdoors together.

explore... create... discover

Free event

Fridays
11.00am-12.30pm

20th March, 27th March,
3rd April, 10th April,
17th April, 24th April

Free and no need to book - just come along and even bring a friend
Refreshments provided

Meet in the South Reading Leisure Centre car park, Northumberland Avenue, RG2 8DH
What3Words: ///spider.swung.jazzy Nearest bus stop: 5 Emerald, Stockton Road
Wear wellies or old shoes - we have a few spares to lend

Scan here for more information
nature-nurture.co.uk/events/walks-for-wellbeing-connecting-with-the-cowsey/

WALK TOGETHER ON A WEDNESDAY
1:15PM TO 2:30PM
MEET AT HEXHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE

ALL AGES AND ALL ABILITIES WELCOME
TERM TIME WALKS STARTING WEEKLY
MARCH 4TH 2026 TO JUNE 10TH 2026

HEXHAM.ROADCC@READING.GOV.UK
0118 937 3352

FOUR REASONS TO GO ON A WALK

- MOVING YOUR BODY FEELS NICE
- CONNECT WITH NATURE
- VITAMIN D
- ACT OF SELF-LOVE

greenhealth THAMES VALLEY

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Reading Borough Council

FUNSA

☺☺ She tiptoes in, pretending all's sunshine and grace,
But half her days still wear a chilly face.
She promises warmth, then changes her mind each day,
Yet we love her anyway. That's just May. ☺☺



Tony is eager to hear from you! He is a member of the Engage team responsible for assembling this newsletter. Feel free to share any local happenings, suggest content ideas, write an article, or ask a question that we can address for you—just reach out!

You can contact us via email at engage@themustardtree.org or send your thoughts to: Engage Befriending, 4 Sackville Street, Reading, RG1 1NT.

PUZZLE PAGE

The Merry Month of May

V V B Y B H N S X H W O Y H C
 H M E Z P C E D U L H P I L W
 Q G A R D E N P J Q U Z O J G
 F C O Y D R L B S P G S S F H
 S E O S P A L U J H E J T L M
 C P S L N O N T B L O S S O M
 Q S P T O J L T D D M W W W N
 A U I M I U J E S A J I E E I
 Z N C S R V R R Y H N Q H R Y
 G S N D P F A F O G A C A S S
 B H I G L R L L U B T F I X G
 M I C O F Y I Y F L U K V N G
 S N W J G D K N W A R M T H G
 H E F J A I A X G I E M G E Y
 R M A Y D A Y H D S T U L I P

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| Bloom | Mayfly |
| Blossom | Mowing |
| Butterfly | Nature |
| Colourful | Picnic |
| Dancing | Planting |
| Elderflower | Seeds |
| Festival | Showers |
| Flowers | Spring |
| Garden | Sunshine |
| Holiday | Tulip |
| May pole | Verdant |
| Mayday | Warmth |

Words

How many words of four letters or more can you make from the letters in:

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | P | R | I | N | G | |
| F | L | O | W | E | R | S |

E.g, ENROL, FINGERS, LIONS, ...

How many more words can you find?

Say What You See

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| ① M I Y L I I I F I E | ② Get it Get it Get it Get it | ③ Try $\frac{\text{stand}}{2}$ |
| ④ $\frac{\text{TRAVEL}}{\text{CCCCCCC}}$ | ⑤ FAST | ⑥ T O W N |

APRIL ANSWERS

A C E D W A R D P Y F F O G
 K A L E X A N D R A D G H B
 L M I V I C T O R I A E D M
 C I Z R N S Y H F N N O A X
 L L A W I R A V E R E R Q C
 M L B I W C T B Y L G G F J
 A A E L N A H A E A S E O F
 R C T L N C H A R L O T T E
 Y S H I A N N E R T L X A A
 K M N A L O T A E D H A L N
 D S H M R D P H E D M U N D
 D H G V L L A E L O W I R W
 G E Q A L B E R T F A I O K
 C R H A Z V F S H E K H N L

Words in Reading Berkshire UK

Ten letter words: airbrushed, aubergines, brigadiers, disbarring, grenadiers, harbingers, krugerrand, rehearsing, subheading

Say What You See

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Making up for lost time | 3. Caveman |
| 2. The lesser of two evils | 4. Spread too thin |
| | 5. New Zealand |
| | 6. Illegal |

Old words

Forsooth: indeed, truly (often used sarcastically even in its own time)
Nary: not a single one
Erelong: before long
Betimes: early, promptly
Hither / Thither / Yon: here / there / over there
Rapsallion: mischievous person
Flummery: nonsense or empty flattery