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Arena

Issue 129 • Winter 2024

**Our Christmas panto
is a beauty!**



Our priorities

New vision for the future

Christmas

Bin collection changes
and opening times

Volunteering

New year, new you!

RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL

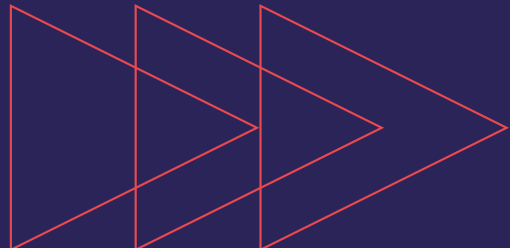




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- ▶ Wednesday 5 February 2025
 - ▶ Wednesday 18 June 2025
- 

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Vision for the future

by Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of Rushmoor Borough Council

Welcome to our winter edition of Arena, and the first column from me as your new Council Leader.

It was an honour to be appointed in May this year. To all Rushmoor residents, I promise that we will work hard to deliver a borough that you can feel proud of.

We already have a lot to be proud of in our area, but I know there are several areas where our towns fall short of your expectations. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to introduce your new council leadership and explain what we are doing to deliver on our promises to residents.

On pages 8 and 9 of this issue we set out our key priorities; making sure our thriving local economy is reflected in our town centres and in local job opportunities; decent local housing for local people; making sure our towns and neighbourhoods are clean and safe; and that you have the opportunities you need to lead healthy and active lives.

I'm pleased to say we have already made progress on these, including addressing antisocial behaviour in our town centres, and plans to address fly-tipping.

When we came into office in May, we were clear about the council's financial challenges. We are determined to protect essential services for residents but we will also make the tough choices on spending and charges to balance the budget for the long-term, to ensure the council remains financially stable.

The first of these is to be clear that the proposed leisure and cultural hub is not viable in its current form and will need to be revised significantly.

We are therefore working on plans to deliver the leisure centre Farnborough needs using the remaining funds from the £20 million Levelling Up government grant (page 7). With Union Yard about to open in Aldershot, we will also bring forward new proposals to reinvigorate Farnborough town centre that are affordable and contribute significantly to the revitalisation of our borough.

As we enter 2025, we are committed to engaging and involving residents and businesses in our plans and we want to create more opportunities for you to get involved (page 9). For the time being though, I wish you a very good Christmas and the best of health and happiness for the new year.

Arena Issue 129 - Winter 2024

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as an mp3 file and is available free. It is also available in large print. If you have any problems receiving Arena please don't hesitate to call Gill Chisnall on **01252 398 744** or email her at gill.chisnall@rushmoor.gov.uk

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Did you know that Arena is available as a talking newspaper? Each edition is recorded

www.rushmoor.gov.uk



nextdoor

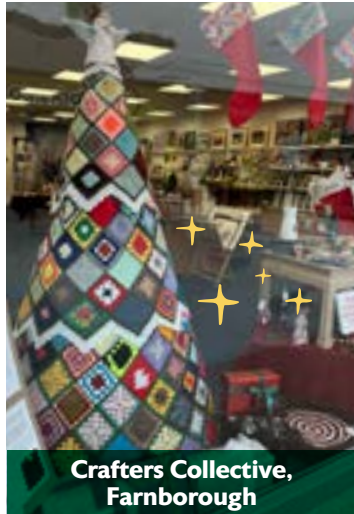




Support local businesses this Christmas

With Christmas just around the corner, we hope that you will remember to shop locally and support our small businesses.

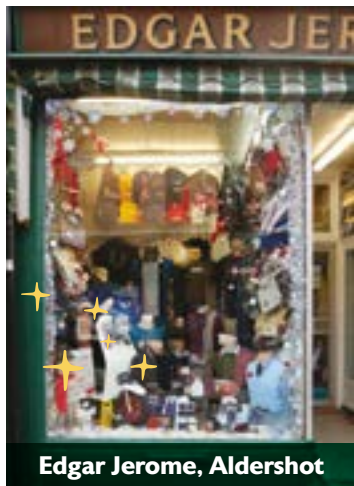
Whether it's grabbing some last-minute Christmas gifts, picking up some festive flourishes for your home or treating yourself to a gingerbread latte while you tackle the final Christmas shopping, there's lots on offer.



Crafters Collective, Farnborough

Our markets are a great place to hunt for a bargain and don't forget that our car boot sale has moved to a new home at the High Street multi-storey car park in Aldershot.

This month, businesses have been working hard on their entries for our yearly Christmas shop window competition and we popped along to visit a couple of the twinkling displays (pictured).



Edgar Jerome, Aldershot

Last year's winner, with 30% of the vote, was The Games Shop in Aldershot, which has won the trophy four times in the competition's 30-year history - will they be successful again? The results will be announced on social media very soon!

There's free festive parking in most of our council car parks on Sunday 22 December. To find out more (and check for exclusions), go to www.rushmoor.gov.uk/christmasparking

We've also extended our

free all-day parking offer in Napier Gardens, and one hour parking in Peabody Road, North Camp until the new year. Charges will be re-introduced on 1 January.

We hope that you've enjoyed our markets and craft fayres during the year. This year we welcomed a continental market which proved really popular, and we launched our children's pre-loved market at the Princes Hall. Look out for more events coming in the new year! Find out more at www.rushmoor.gov.uk/events



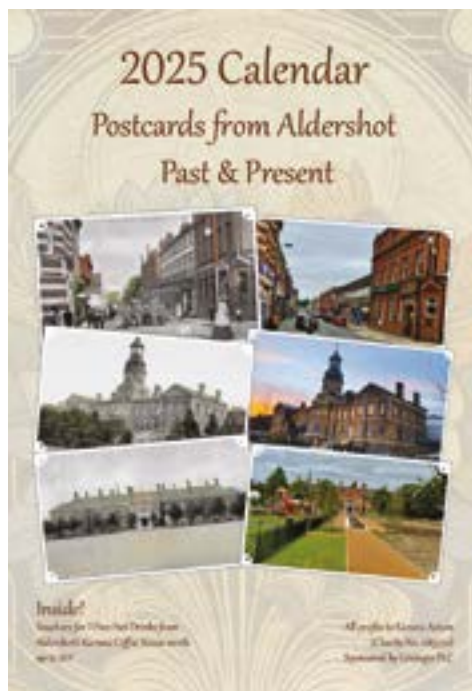
Turkish delight at the continental market in Farnborough

New calendar compares Aldershot's past and present

A new Aldershot charity calendar, which showcases a unique collection of historical postcards capturing the town's rich history, has just been published.

The beautifully designed past and present calendar offers a month-by-month journey through the town's past, featuring rare images of iconic landmarks and buildings that have shaped the town over the years.

Each month's page features a postcard from Aldershot's past, paired with modern photographs that capture the same locations today, highlighting both the changes and continuities in the local landscape – from the early days of the Cambridge



Military Hospital to the busy present of Queens Avenue.

Calendars cost £7.50 and are available from Karuna Coffee House in Wellington Street, the Princes Hall, and Smith-Dorrien House in Queens Avenue. With limited copies printed, make sure you get your calendar early!

Sponsored by Grainger PLC, all profits from the calendar sales will go directly to support community projects through Karuna Action, a registered charity which raises funds to improve education and healthcare.

As a bonus, the calendar also includes vouchers for three free hot drinks at Karuna Coffee House.

Recycle all you can this Christmas

With most of us having more time at home, Christmas can be a good time to have a sort out and think about the things that can be recycled or given a new home.

Whether it's wrapping paper tubes, biscuit tins or flattened delivery boxes, there's plenty that can go into your blue recycling bin.

When you're raising a glass with family and friends, don't forget that we want all your glass bottles too (in your basket, box, or purple bin).

Donating pre-loved items to charity shops or using our neighbourhood recycling facilities can help to give second-hand items a new life, but please dispose of things responsibly.

You can recycle festive food waste in your black caddy, but remember that leftovers can also be frozen or transformed into another meal. There are lots of ideas on the Love Food Hate Waste website, www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/recipes to inspire you.

Recently our crews have been noticing more food waste finding its way into the green rubbish bins, so please remember to recycle all you can this Christmas. You can recycle all types of food waste with your weekly collection, including food scraps, peelings, teabags, coffee grounds, and more – we accept it all.

To find out more about food waste recycling or to order a black outdoor

caddy, go to www.rushmoor.gov.uk/foodwaste. You'll also find tips there on how to keep pests away. One of the most important things is to keep your caddy in the locked position (with the handle down to the front).

And once you've packed away all the tinsel and baubles for another year, don't forget that you can also recycle your real Christmas tree. Our service is free of charge, although you do need to book your collection in advance.

The easiest way to do this is through our website, by going to www.rushmoor.gov.uk/christmastrees or if you can't get online, you can book by calling us on **01252 398 399** during opening hours.

Merry Christmas!

Christmas and new year bin changes

Your bin collections will change for three weeks over Christmas and new year, returning to normal on Monday 15 January.

Christmas and new year bin collections

Your normal collection day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
w/c 23 Dec	Monday 23 Dec	Tuesday 24 Dec	Friday 27 Dec	Saturday 28 Dec	Monday 30 Dec
w/c 30 Dec	Tuesday 31 Dec	Thursday 2 Jan	Friday 3 Jan	Saturday 4 Jan	Monday 6 Jan
w/c 6 Jan	Tuesday 7 Jan	Wednesday 8 Jan	Thursday 9 Jan	Friday 10 Jan	Saturday 11 Jan

To see full details of your bin collections, visit our website www.rushmoor.gov.uk/bincollections

Christmas opening times

We hope you all have a merry Christmas and a great new year!

The council will be **open until 3pm on Tuesday 24 December** and closed over Christmas including **Friday 27 December**. On Monday 30 December and Tuesday 31 December, the council offices will be closed to the public, but you will be able to contact us online or by phone. We will fully **re-open on Thursday 2 January**.

If you have any queries about our services, you will find lots of help on our website, www.rushmoor.gov.uk. In an emergency, please call us on **01252 398 399** and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.

Remembering a loved one at Christmas

Christmas can be tough when your loved one is no longer around, but if you are planning a visit to remember them, the grounds of Aldershot crematorium and our cemeteries will be **open every day from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**, and from **10am to 4pm on weekends and bank holidays**.

While the crematorium is undergoing refurbishment, the hall of remembrance is closed but our books of remembrance are still available online.

For more information, please see: www.rushmoor.gov.uk/bereavement

Shining a light on worthy causes!

You can support worthy causes across Rushmoor, by buying a weekly Rushmoor Community Lottery ticket for just £1.

The lottery has been helping community groups, sports clubs, good causes and charities to raise funds since 2017.

When you buy a weekly ticket, half of the money goes straight to a cause chosen by you, and 10p goes to the Rushmoor Community Fund.

For you, there is a chance to win prizes of up to £25,000!

All those 10ps in the community fund add up and good causes are invited to apply for grants of up to £1,000 for local projects.



Adventure pirate ship at Guillemont School

In the autumn, we were delighted to award more than £14,000 in grants shared between 17 local projects and presented at a special event hosted by Farnborough Bowling Club.

Among the lucky recipients, the Friends of Guillemont School received £1,000

towards the cost of an adventure pirate ship for children at the school.

The group, made up of parents and teachers, has been working tirelessly to raise funds for the adventure play equipment which is costing around £20,000. The finished ship

has clamber nets, ladders, tunnels and portholes as well as a mast, sails and a telescope - so that young pirate adventurers can keep an eye on the horizon!

“We were thrilled to receive this funding from the Rushmoor Community Lottery, which has helped us to reach our fundraising goal.

“The pirate ship is going to bring so much joy to the children and will be enjoyed for many years to come,” says Sam Miller from the Friends of Guillemont School.

To find out more about the lottery and to buy tickets, go to **www.rushmoorlottery.co.uk**

Going for gold!

With a silver award in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) once more secured, we are now ‘going for gold’ in supporting our armed forces community!

The council was recently re-accredited the silver award and has previously signed the Armed Forces Covenant as a pledge of support to our armed forces community.

flexible working arrangements for any staff who are, or will become, reservists in the armed forces, and to support those with a link to military life, including armed forces’ families and cadet forces.



This means that we are proud to be supportive of serving personnel and service families living locally, and to be a forces-friendly employer, with flexible working arrangements to support those with a connection to the armed forces.

Now we are aiming for gold in the employer recognition scheme.

Our new reservists policy makes sure that a reservist, who combines their civilian career at Rushmoor with their military duties in their spare time, will be treated fairly. The council has

We also have an armed forces champion, Councillor Nadia Martin, who is backing our involvement in the scheme and our activities to support and build connections with our armed forces’ families and veterans.

If you are part of an organisation or business that might also be interested in signing the covenant or applying for the award, you can get in touch with our south-east regional employer engagement director by emailing **se-reed1@rfca.mod.uk**

Union Yard latest

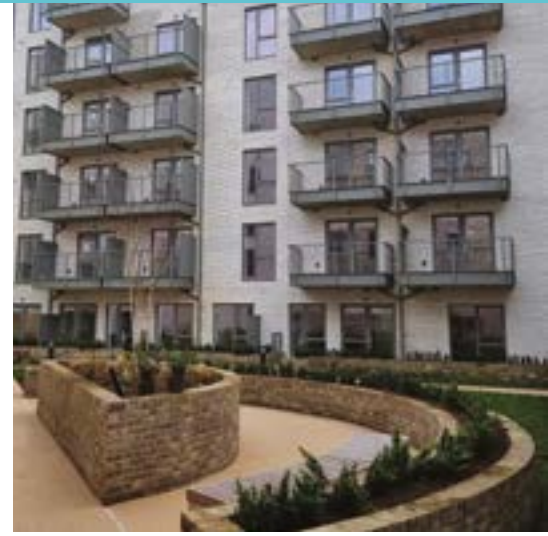
We were delighted to welcome 128 students to our new student accommodation in Union Yard, Aldershot at the start of the new college year.

The students are settling in well and bringing new footfall into the town centre, which is great to see.

As Arena went to print, the final work was nearing competition on the development, with landscaping work taking shape in the inner courtyard. The walkway from Union Yard to the High Street will be open in the new year.

We are looking forward to the first homes being occupied in the new year and are close to finalising the first legal agreements on the commercial leases, with several others in progress and further interest in our makers' yard units. Over the coming weeks, you'll start to see fit-out work under way, ready to welcome customers in February.

We're also planning an official opening and we'd love to invite you to come and have a look around as part of that. If you are interested in joining in, please let us know by emailing regeneration@rushmoor.gov.uk or calling us on **01252 398 401**.



To keep up-to-date with the latest, you can follow us on social media or sign up to receive our email news at [rushmoor.gov.uk/news](mailto:regeneration@rushmoor.gov.uk). To find out more on Union Yard, go to www.union-yard.co.uk

New plans for Farnborough leisure centre

We are drawing up new plans for a leisure centre and swimming pool in Farnborough that will be affordable to the council.

As you will have read in the Leader's column and below, the council is facing significant financial challenges.

Additionally, the costs of our earlier scheme for a wider leisure and cultural hub have increased significantly. This has confirmed our view that the scheme is not affordable to us.

Over the last couple of months, we've been looking at other leisure centre

schemes. We're also talking to the government about still being able to use the Levelling Up funding we received for the hub towards the cost of the new centre.

The government has invited us to share our plans and will need to agree them before we press ahead with more

detailed designs.

We will share these designs as soon as we can. You can also keep up to date with the latest on our website, www.rushmoor.gov.uk/farnboroughleisurecentre

On the road to financial stability

Our Cabinet has approved a detailed financial recovery plan following an independent review of the council's budgets earlier this year.

The plan outlines steps that we need to take to secure our future financial stability after an independent assessment confirmed we needed to take immediate action and to reduce our level of borrowing.

In addition, our Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), had identified in February that at this time, the budget was set using £5 million of financial reserves and that we would be facing a budget shortfall of more than £19

million over the next four years - more than the total available reserves.

The plan focuses on three main areas of action: to review spending and reduce budgets, saving more than £600,000 this financial year and at least £2 million annually by 2027/28; to reduce debt by selling £40 million of council assets over the next three years, including £5 million this year; and to strengthen the council's financial capability and capacity.

Our annual budget comes to more than £40 million, which includes debt interest of £8 million a year, so selling assets will help reduce this cost to protect essential local services.

Find out more at www.rushmoor.gov.uk/octobercabinet

Did you know that council tax makes up just 18% of the council's income, with the rest coming from business rates, commercial investments and fees and charges for our services.

And although we collect council tax, we keep just 11p in every pound, with most of it going to Hampshire County Council, and a share to the police and fire services.

Learn more at www.rushmoor.gov.uk/counciltaxguide

New priorities delivering change

Over the last six months the Cabinet has drawn up a new set of priorities for Aldershot and Farnborough based on your feedback – and these priorities are already beginning to deliver change.

Since being elected in May as part of a change of political administration, the Cabinet has set to work on developing five main priority themes, also making sure we continue to provide our core local services.

These themes will form part of a new council delivery plan, setting out our activities for 2025/26. We also want to engage more widely with you so we can develop a shared vision for the council and our area and a new council plan to deliver that vision.

You can read more about our new priorities on these two pages and on our website at www.rushmoor.gov.uk/priorities

Skills, economy and business

Making sure our towns meet the needs of businesses and our residents is really important to us. This means working with experts and with our partners to help transform and make the most of them.

We are working with businesses to boost local jobs, including encouraging new companies to set up in Rushmoor, highlighting the many benefits our area has to offer.

We also want to develop more training opportunities for residents, so you have the skills needed to benefit from a strong local economy.



Homes for all: quality living, affordable housing

We know how important it is for local people to have access to decent housing.

As part of this, we are actively engaging more with social housing providers, as we want to see an improvement in their performance locally. We are also looking at how we can provide good quality temporary housing to those in need.

If you rent privately, we want to make sure our local homes are of a high quality and we will take action where they are not. We will also make it easier for you to understand how we allocate social housing.

In the longer term, we will progress a new Rushmoor Local Plan that maximises the delivery of new homes and takes previously developed but unused council-owned land to provide new and affordable homes.

Community and wellbeing: active lives, healthier and stronger communities

At the heart of our desire to make sure everyone has access to opportunities to exercise and keep fit is the new Farnborough leisure centre. We know it needs to be affordable, and we are working hard to bring this forward as soon as we can (see page 7).

We will continue to increase our popular programme of community and cultural events for all, as we want Rushmoor to be a place where everyone feels at home.

We are also working with our partners to address health issues and improve access to mental health support.





Pride in place: clean, safe and vibrant neighbourhoods

We want our streets and town centres to be clean, safe and welcoming and the Cabinet has appointed a pride in place champion to encourage local people to get involved.

In our town centres, we have been working closely with the police to deal with issues of antisocial behaviour that are unacceptable to us and will continue to do so.

We are also tackling fly-tipping head-on and earlier this month, we trialled a mobile collection scheme, 'Walk this Waste', in the Cherrywood area of Farnborough. This gives residents who are unable to get to the tip the chance to get rid of their old household items. We'll be reviewing how this went before we decide whether to roll this out more widely.

Vision for the future and financial sustainability

We want to know what residents and businesses think about the area and how they'd like to see it develop in the longer term. We're expanding our opportunities for you to get involved in consultations and engagement events, so we have a shared vision for our towns.

The Cabinet is also committed to tackling climate change and we will be bringing forward a more ambitious climate change action plan.

At the same time, we need to make sure our services and activities are affordable as well as of a good quality. As well as continuing to look to improve what we do, we will be delivering against our financial recovery plan (page 7) and we will put in place clear ways to monitor what we do, so we can be accountable to you.



Get involved and make a difference

We want to expand our opportunities for you to get involved in the council and in your local area - we need you!

If you care about the future, why not join our new Rushmoor climate community group. The group meets every three months with updates on our work to tackle climate change locally and the chance for you to give your views and get involved.

We have a new community engagement group, Rushmoor Voices, aimed at bringing residents and local communities together to work for a better borough.

If you are passionate about making a difference in Farnborough, why not join the Heart of Farnborough group or in Aldershot, our Aldershot Community Together group. We also have Rushmoor Youth Voice for young people.

You can find out more about what we are doing and how you can have your say in any consultations by signing up to receive news from us. Or if helping us improve our services is your thing, our new user research group could be just the ticket.

To find out more about how you can get involved, go to www.rushmoor.gov.uk/getinvolved

Council tax bills straight to your inbox

You can now choose to receive your council tax bills straight to your email inbox, thanks to our new online service.

If you haven't already signed up, you'll need your council tax billing number which is at the top of your bill.

We'll also ask for your first name and last name (as it appears on the bill) along with your address. Your bill can be sent to one email address, and we will send you a verification code to register your account.

By switching over, you'll be helping us to save money on printing and postage costs that we can redirect into other services, and it's kinder to the environment too.

To find out more and sign up, go to www.rushmoor.gov.uk/ebilling. If you need some help, you can also call us on **01252 398 399**.



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Volunteering – the new you!

Want to do something useful with your spare time and looking for inspiration?

Why not give your CV content a real boost and take up volunteering!

Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS) has a huge variety of opportunities



Volunteer Paul at Victoria Day

to satisfy anyone's interests from volunteer drivers, gardeners and Cub leaders, to marketeers, park run helpers and befrienders. If you'd like to know more, please go to: www.volunteernorthhants.org

More than 50% of adults do some volunteering work these days. It can be a surprisingly satisfying and rewarding way to give back to your community.

You can see what some of our local heroes have been up to by visiting the RVS Volunteer Recognition Awards at: www.rvs.org.uk/news

Alternatively, if you're looking for bite-sized opportunities you could join the RVS team of responders.

This can mean stepping up to the plate in an urgent situation like the Ukraine appeal or taking part in a community event or cause, like Picnic & Pop, the Farnborough 10K or the Poppy Appeal. Find out more and how to sign up at: www.rvs.org.uk/volunteering/responder-team

When the responders recently got together at an RVS 'meet and mingle' social event among the things that they said they enjoyed were:

"Meeting new people and feeling part of the community"; "being connected to the community I live in"; "discovering things I never knew about Rushmoor"; "making a difference" and "feeling useful".

Go on - take that first step!

Save money and energy costs this winter

Although Christmas is a time of celebration for many it also means more pressure on tight budgets.

The good news though, is that help is available, and there is lots of you can do to save money and energy.

It's always worth checking if you can claim any benefits. You might be entitled even if you work, have savings or own your home.

If you are pension age, check if you can claim Pension Credit. If you are eligible, and do qualify, you may be able to get other money and help.



Sneha and Anoushka from Citizens Advice Rushmoor

If you're struggling to pay your energy bills, always contact your energy supplier. They can issue fuel vouchers or grants. You might also be able to

save money on your bills by switching to a different supplier or tariff.

Citizens Advice Rushmoor provides advice on energy, money and benefits, and can issue energy payments to help with bills worth up to £147. And don't forget the Community Grub Hub, which offers food and household items – as well as Citizens Advice help – every Tuesday, 10am to 4pm, at Windsor Way in Aldershot.

For more information call **01252 513 051** or go to: citizensadvicerrushmoor.org.uk

Free courses to help improve your mental health

If you're looking for help with tackling mental health issues, our new wellness hub is a great new free resource.

The hub, set up exclusively for Aldershot and Farnborough residents in partnership with SEEDL,

offers unlimited access to mental wellness courses.

The range of 60-minute webinars and 20-minute micro-sessions includes sleep and relaxation, mindfulness, and mental health first aid.

The webinars are live and

interactive - but you can also access them on demand.

The hub also offers courses to help you with your career or in the workplace, including interviewing with confidence and communicating effectively.

So, take control of your mental wellness, boost your career - and join a flexible, supportive learning community right from home!

For more information please see: www.rushmoorwellness.co.uk

HAMPSHIRE AND SURREY HILLS MEN'S CHOIR

HAMPSHIRE AND SURREY HILLS MEN'S CHOIR

Christmas Concert

with guest **Laura Sillett**

Thursday 19th December 7:30 p.m.
at High Cross Church, Knoll Road, Camberley

Supporting **PARITY**
For People With Multiple Disabilities

Tickets £15.00 from High Cross Reception or online at www.trybooking.com/uk/DYKQ

Book now! 

Hampshire & Surrey Hills Men's Choir. A charity registered with the Charity Commission No. 1106232. HampshireandSurreyHillsMensChoir.org.uk

Almost 6% of adults in Rushmoor are unable to read*

Read Easy provides free, confidential, one-to-one coaching for adults wanting to learn to read.



To learn to read, contact **Dickon Hutchings** on **07810 405519**
wsnehnetworker@readeasy.org.uk

To volunteer, contact **Ashley Nuttall** on **07874 020009**
wsnehrecruiter@readeasy.org.uk

www.readeasy.org.uk

*Government "Skills for Life" survey



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Our Christmas panto is a beauty!

We are inviting everyone to "be our guest" as we follow the story of Beauty and the Beast for this year's Christmas panto at the Princes Hall.

Belle is a beautiful young woman, and the Beast, a handsome prince who has been placed under an evil spell. If the Beast can learn to love and be loved in return, the spell will be broken. But time is running out.

Everyone's favourites Robert Hopkins and Donovan Christian-Cary are back. Beauty and the Beast will mark Robert's 30th consecutive pantomime at the venue as producer and director. It will also be Donovan Christian Cary's 20th consecutive show.

The panto runs until 31 December so make sure you don't miss out as many performances are already sold out or limited.

Looking ahead to next year, we start with a bang with four music shows, featuring the songs of legendary singers George Michael, Diana Ross, Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons (pictured), and Whitney Houston. Also look out for our popular tea dance and a visit from Farnborough Symphony Orchestra.



shows, dance and more! Contact the box office on **01252 329 155** or visit **www.princeshall.com** to see what's on and secure your tickets.

Plus top comedy, family

Where's Rudolph? Thursday 19 December



Join in the special Christmas trail, 'Where's Rudolph' at Queen Elizabeth Park in Farnborough, which starts at 5pm at the Cabrol Road car park.

The free event was a huge success last year, as children and their families hunt to find Father Christmas's reindeer with their flashing noses,

which are hidden along the paths of the park.

So, why not bring your torch and follow the reindeer footprints to find Rudolph, Dasher, Dancer, Comet, Donner, Blitzen, Prancer, Vixen and Cupid reindeer in the dark! Please wear wellies or suitable footwear as it may be muddy.

Carols by Lantern Light Saturday 21 December

Join us for a magical evening of carols in Aldershot town centre on Saturday 21 December at the community bandstand in Princes Gardens.

The popular event is hosted by Aldershot Churches Together from

5.30pm to 6.30pm, with cakes and free hot drinks to warm you up.

There will a Christmas message and opportunities to sing along with local musicians.

Find out more at **www.rushmoor.gov.uk/carolsbylanternlight**



Walking challenge Saturday 11 January

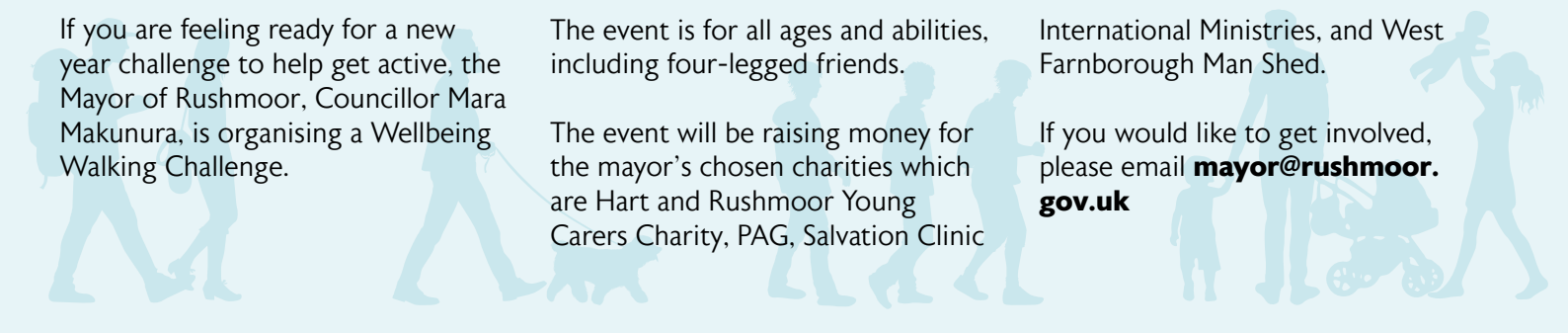
If you are feeling ready for a new year challenge to help get active, the Mayor of Rushmoor, Councillor Mara Makunura, is organising a Wellbeing Walking Challenge.

The event is for all ages and abilities, including four-legged friends.

The event will be raising money for the mayor's chosen charities which are Hart and Rushmoor Young Carers Charity, PAG, Salvation Clinic

International Ministries, and West Farnborough Man Shed.

If you would like to get involved, please email **mayor@rushmoor.gov.uk**





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