



Spring

Edition



To all staff and volunteers
Happy Easter
Welcome to the season

Our local heroin Keely Hodgkinson from Atherton has been voted BBC Sports Personality of the Year for 2024. A bonus to her Olympic 800m gold medal.

Back in the Olympic Games in Paris, Keely Hodgkinson won Gold in the 800m. All the people of her hometown of Atherton, and of Leigh were ecstatic to observe Keely achieve her feat, and so proud for her.

In her interview Hodgkinson told BBC, "I am in a bit of shock. I am more excited for my coach as I would not be here without his guidance. This year has been incredible, and I achieved everything I set out to do on the outdoor track. I hope you loved watching Paris."



Hodgkinson is the fourth successive woman to win the award after Mary Earps (2023), Beth Mead (2022) and Emma Raducanu (2021).



Furthermore: The Leigh athlete's coaches, Trevor Painter and Jenny Meadows, were recognised with the Sport's Personality [Coach of the Year award](#) which they shared after guiding our girl from Atherton to Olympic gold at Paris 2024. Hodgkinson also retained her European title and became the sixth-fastest woman in history over the two-lap event with a new British record of one minute 54.61 seconds.

Darts sensation Luke Littler came second, with England cricketer Joe Root third.

The young prodigy from Warrington reached the World Darts Final last year. Sure, the guy has an exciting career ahead of him with victories and stardom to come. Luke has caused a profound effect on the place where he purchased his darts: The St Helens Dart Shop Ltd.



The proprietor will move his store, St Helens Darts Shop to St Helens Town centre after sales began to rocket ever since Littler reached the World Championship final in January 2024 at the age of 16. The new store will open in the new year and is expected to quadruple in size at the new premises.

There is also a waiting list of 40 youngsters for the proprietor's local darts academy.

What do these stories tell you? It says there is a wealth of talent among our local folk!

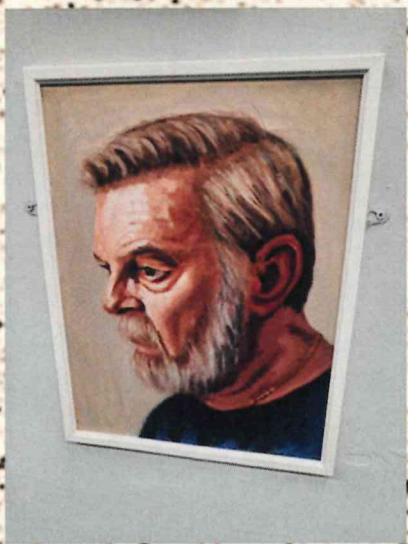
ART EXHIBITION

MEMBERS ART WORK

SHOWCASE

At The Derby Room, Leigh Library
Last January

Members of our Arts & Crafts Group were delighted to showcase their superb artworks at the exhibition. Testament to the effort the group has dedicated. Here are three of those pieces





Gail	Susan	Lesley
Celia	Eunice	Pauline
Jackie	Irene	Frank
Anthea	Susan	Carol
Dawn	Elaine	Kenneth
Sue	Teresa	Vic
Janet	Joseph	Anne

Art Group members work on their art pieces during an arts & crafts session (above left). List of artists' names (top right). People at the Arts Exhibition at Leigh Library socialise while observing these wonderful pictures our artists produced (centre)



Another photo of people at the Exhibition (bottom left). Last, but not least: Deborah the Art Tutor (bottom right), how Deborah has inspired her group.



The days are getting longer as the dark winter relinquishes its grip. Spring is taking over. That means more daylight than nighttime, bringing warmer weather. How's about a nice walk in fresh air with the Pensioners Link Walking Group! The group meets every Thursday, 11:00 am at Charles Street. You get to meet and converse with great people as well as to reap the rewards of a healthy spring walk.



Walking in springtime stimulates blood circulation. Good blood circulation is essential for a healthy body and a functioning mind. Your heart, muscles, and blood vessels are responsible for vital blood circulation. Walking is a good activity to support all these parts of your body. According to many sources, sufficient exercise can reduce your risk of heart and vascular disease by 20-30%. Aim to walk briskly so that your heart rate increases, so more oxygen can go to your


muscles, cells, and tissues. This will give you more energy, and your brain will benefit as well. Research shows that regular walking also promotes blood flow to your brain. Cue you will feel fitter and more clear-headed when walking in the spring, especially if you suffer from fatigue. So, step over that threshold and get out into the fresh air!

For each spring walk you get vitamin D. Since sunlight is a major provider for vitamin D, people may have experienced feelings of lethargy and fatigue during or after a dark winter, owing to vitamin D deficiency. Now that the sun is shining longer in the spring, it's wise to go for a walk in daylight. Even on cloudy spring days, you can get a significant boost from this. Your body will slowly come out of hibernation mode.

A spring walk is good for your mood. Feeling rather sluggish and lack motivation to do anything? Overcome your reluctance and go for a half-hour walk outside! Studies have shown that walking can have a positive effect on poor mental state. Walking may counteract your tendency to withdraw and boost your self-confidence. Out exploring nature helps to distract you from negative thoughts and focus upon your surroundings. It gives a spacious feeling and clarity in your mind. Moreover, walking, together with observing nature, can promote the release of endorphins in your body, which, as we all know, benefits mind and body positively. If you cannot walk continuously for half an hour, try walking for 10 minutes 3 times a day. One study suggests that even a ten-minute brisk walk can work wonders for your mood.

Walking in springtime is good for your sleep. Walking is a good remedy for sleep problems, according to research. Participants of studies experienced improvements in their quality of sleep, sleeping longer and more comfortably in numerous cases. It is believed that walking in daylight has a positive influence on your biological clock that governs the sleep-wake cycle.

A spring walk supports your immunity. A study shows that outdoor walks can possibly improve your immunity and make you less susceptible to winter bugs that are very much still around into the early part of spring.

A photograph showing a man in a blue and red plaid shirt and glasses, identified as Nick Hodlin, standing and speaking to a group of people seated at tables in a dining room. The room has patterned wallpaper and framed pictures on the wall. The text is overlaid on the top portion of the image.

The Volunteers' Annual Celebratory Meal held at the Bowling Green was a success

The Pensioners Link Annual Meal is a reward for volunteers to celebrate all the hard work they have devoted for their cause, giving the chance to meet, rejoice in one-another's company, share their stories and chill out.

Nick Hodlin gives a speech of appreciation for the success achieved by the combined efforts of the Pensioners Link team.

Groups and activities at Pensioners Link, Leigh

I/T Drop-in Group
10:00 – 12:00



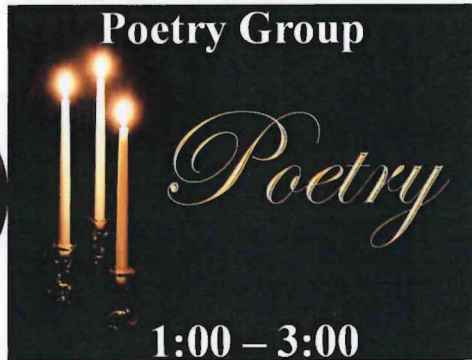
Exercise Class
11:00 – 12:00
1:00 – 2:00

Monday

Coffee Club



10:00 – 12:00

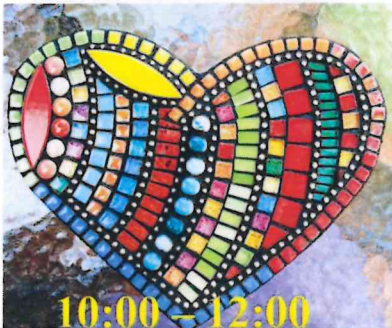


Poetry Group

1:00 – 3:00

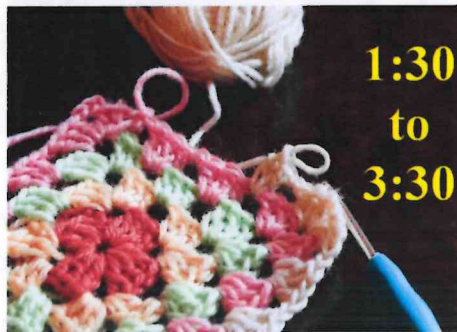
Tuesday

Arts and Crafts



10:00 – 12:00

Knit and Crochet



1:30
to
3:30

Coffee mornings
at Elmridge Court,
Lowton meet on a
fortnightly basis.
Tel: 01942 261753
for details

Wednesday

Art Gang

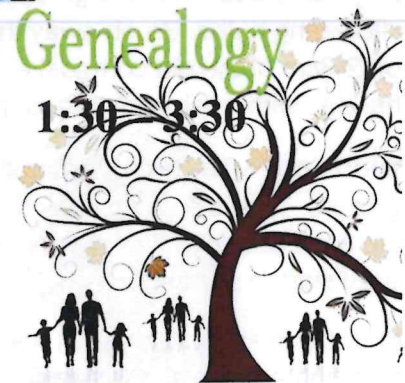


10:00 – 12:00

Movement and Balance



1:00 – 1:45



Genealogy
1:30 – 3:30

Thursday

Walk-and-Talk Group
Thursday at 11:00



Meet at
Pensioners Link



Coffee mornings here
Fridays 10:00 – 12:00

Other

Springtime: nature wakes up, garden is inviting

Here are some belting ideas for the garden

There's a great deal to do in your garden between now and the summer. Enjoy observing nature come back to life as you prune, add fresh compost to plant pots, and plant bulbs and seedlings. This is an opportunity to start fresh, design your ideal haven.

Create a little spring garden. Baskets and pots brighten up even the smallest of spaces. Whatever size and location, create the perfect place to potter this spring, with hanging baskets, pots and planters. The flowers will change month-on-month, with hyacinth, crocus and daffodils in early spring. From March to May, tulips give way to wallflowers, roses and azaleas. Create an arrangement of mismatched and textured plant pots and enjoy an ever-changing display.

Prune, deadhead and rescue. Your garden needs to be underpinned by maintenance and care. By doing some diligent pruning, planting and organising now, you will reap the benefits of a blooming beautiful garden. Use sharp secateurs to prune water-damaged evergreen plants.

Get roses to bloom: Snip off twiggy branches and cut main stems back by one-third for a healthy bud feed with rose fertiliser, which contains high levels of potash to give blossoms a boost, as well as trace elements to keep leaves healthy and help prevent diseases.

Rein in forget-me-nots: These dainty autumn blooms are a delight in spring - but take care as they naturally self-sow and you could end up with more than expected. To prevent spreading, dig up some of the plants once the flowers fade.

Prop up peonies: They may only be small now, but they'll soon need support to stop them from flopping. Stick branches or wooden stakes into the ground next to your plants. As they grow tie them on using string. Obelisks, metal stakes and woven willow structures are good too.

Keep azaleas blooming: the flowers of deciduous azaleas are superb. Cut azaleas short as soon as the flowers fade to encourage new shoots and buds to grow next year, and to avoid long, bare stems.

Care for your pots – As the garden bursts into new life, now's time to give pot plants a boost and plant summer flowering bulbs. Brush away the winter cobwebs, revamp planters. Remove grime with warm water. Scrape off 2-3cm of the old compost and sprinkle on Miracle-Gro All Purpose Continuous Release Plant Food. Then top with fresh compost to give roots a boost for the best summer growth.

5. Get planting – Taking advantage of a sunny day for vitamin D, plant a joyful bonanza of summer-flowering bulbs. This is a cheap way to fill your plot with blooms. Calla lilies, or Zantedeschia, are one of the simplest to grow and look fine in pots. Plant them in bulb compost and feed them weekly with a liquid plant food as they start to appear.

Potted shrubs can soon run low on water and nutrients, so start watering them daily from now until the end of summer, adding a general-purpose feed a week. Collecting rainwater in a butt is eco-friendly and gives your plants a chemical-free drink. Rainwater can be used for all plants apart from seedlings because the water may contain bacteria or fungal spores, which can lead to problems.

Delightful dahlias – For a spectacular display of dahlias, you can plant tubers indoors now for longer blooming and healthier plants. Place in pots of multipurpose compost. Water well and keep the compost moist. Place on a windowsill and plant out in a sunny spot in May. Water on a high-potash tomato food. This will give them an energy boost so you'll get the best display.

Pep up with groundwork - Imagine stepping out into your flourishing garden and picking raspberries, strawberries, figs and cobnuts straight from the plant and tree to eat for breakfast. By doing the groundwork now, you can reap the rewards throughout summer and early autumn. Give berry bushes a high potash feed such as Levington Tomorite.

6. Look after your lawn, grasses and flowerbeds. These parts provide important habitat for insects. For thriving flora and fauna this year, there's a little maintenance that needs to be done to revive your lawn. For flowerbeds and borders that have become unkempt, leave the foliage to die back naturally, then lightly rake in some rose fertiliser. Grass can easily creep out into your flowerbeds during the winter, making springtime the perfect time to pull it up whilst the soil is damp. Repair any bald patches on your lawn by scattering some lawn fertiliser. Additionally, remove moss from lawns by raking after applying moss killer.

7. Look after the birds and the bees Slugs and snails are waking up after the cold months and they will happily munch their way through most plants. Leave fresh orange and lemon peel around the garden to tempt them away. In the morning, collect up the pests and rehome them on a patch of waste ground or drop them in a bucket of hot salty water.

Feed the birds: Create a biodiverse habitat by hanging bird feeders or installing a feeding station or bird table. Insects need looking after too; wildlife-friendly crab apple trees are nectar-rich and provide spring blossom for pollinators. Leave a few dandelions on your lawn for bees and butterflies. Additionally, Thyme *Serpyllum* is full of pollen and insects love them.

8. Tidy your shed and check your tools. From giving your garden shed a lick of paint to installing shelving and wall organisers - creating extra storage and sprucing up feels rewarding. As the garden is an extension of our homes it's good to divide your outdoor areas into zones. The same applies to your shed or greenhouse: group similar items together so you always know where they are and how much you have. For example, put all your tins of paint on a low shelf that's not in direct light and use old biscuit tins for storing nails, screws and Rawlplugs.

It's a good idea to check the condition of power tools, electrics and outdoor lights to make sure they still work. If you've been noticing more and more neighbours opting for solar lights, this might be the perfect time to switch to solar. Finally, if you have an outdoor hose pipe, check the condition of the tap as the icy winter weather may have affected it.

9. Tend to the veggie patch. Watch the weather, sometimes spring can yet still surprise us with frost and snow. So, it's best to let the initial Ides of March pass before pricking out seedlings. It's time to think about your garden veg crop - broad beans, carrots and summer cauliflower will get a good start in your conservatory, greenhouse or cold frame. Once your seedlings have developed one full set of leaves it's time to transplant them.

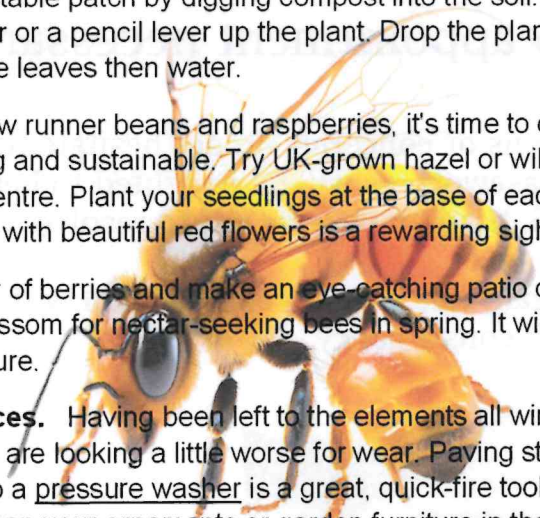
Firstly, prep your vegetable patch by digging compost into the soil. Then, hold the young plant gently by the leaf and using a dibber or a pencil lever up the plant. Drop the plant in a pre-made hole in the compost, bury the stem just below the leaves then water.

Additionally, if you grow runner beans and raspberries, it's time to construct wigwams out of hazel or willow sticks. Fasting growing and sustainable. Try UK-grown hazel or willow. Look out for 'coppiced stem bundles' at your local garden centre. Plant your seedlings at the base of each stick and train the runners up. A leafy tower of runner beans with beautiful red flowers is a rewarding sight in June.

Plant a tempting tower of berries and make an eye-catching patio centrepiece such as 'Navaho', which produces plenty of blossom for nectar-seeking bees in spring. It will be berry-ready by July, so grow in a pot for easy picking pleasure.

11. Clean your surfaces. Having been left to the elements all winter long, no doubt your patio or outdoor furniture or ornaments are looking a little worse for wear. Paying stones can collect moss and become muddy over winter months, so a pressure washer is a great, quick-fire tool to wash surfaces down and sweep excess dirt away. You can clean your ornaments or garden furniture in the same way, ready for you to start using them more come the summer.

12. Springtime houseplants. Spring is the ideal time of year to repot houseplants. This is when plants are at their strongest and in a period of growth. Be sure to invest in spacious plant pots to transfer rootbound plants into roomier containers. Also, add some good quality compost to the new pot, so the plant benefits from a burst of nutrients. Making bright windowsill displays is easy in spring with an abundance of blooming flowers. Primroses, tulips and daffodils can bloom indoors, albeit for a shorter period of time than outdoors. For inspiration and to take the effort out of sourcing plants for your window box, take a look at Plants Club, who sell ready-made seasonal collections.



Drop-In Advice
with constituency
caseworkers of Jo Platt
MP's team

benefits
NHS allowances
complaints
Education



immigration
asylum
HMRC tax issues

The last Friday of each month at
Pensioners Link, Charles Street
2pm - 4pm (no appointment necessary)

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to raise them. Jo Platt's caseworkers will be delighted to hear from you and will work hard on your behalf to resolve.

Please note that Jo's team can help anyone resident within the Atherton and Leigh constituency



RECEPTION TLC

TELEPHONE CONTACT

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Giving a small amount of your time can make a big difference

Come along to join our friendly team of volunteers.

Be it, one hour, or a couple of days, you would make a valuable contribution to our services and activities.

You can register your interest by calling Pensioners Link on 01942 261753, or complete the online form that can be found on our website:
www.pensionerslink.org

BOOKS AND MORE
AND MUCH MORE!

Here's a little quote: Did you know?
Arithmetic is being able to count up to
twenty without taking off your shoes

Support Pensioners Link

Donate today

As a registered charity we rely on public funding to aid our cause to help and support older people. Please click on "Donate Now" to offer a donation.

Support your local Charity
Donate now,
scan the QR
code

QR code

Pensioners Link

Your donation can really make a difference.

Many thanks to Greenmount Projects for the superb job they have done on fixing out roof as part of their community work. We are most grateful for the time they have devoted to doing this essential work for free, ensuring the centre remains open for all our clients and volunteers.

