

Providence Row GAZETTE

• COMMUNITY MAGAZINE •

INCLUSIVENESS

Sabotaging baubles and Christmas trees, Leo the scoundrel cat is looking like he might want to postpone 2020 festivities.

Despite Leo's protests, our Christmas issue of the Gazette brings good wishes for the season to all our readers.

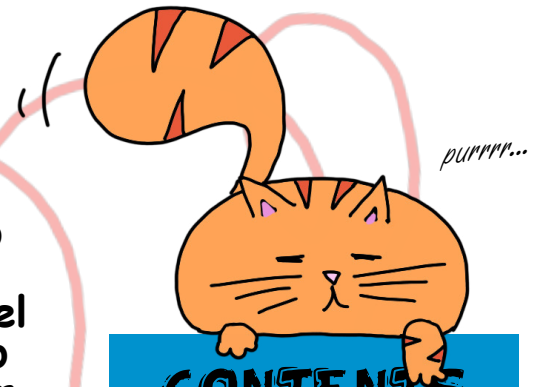
We are delighted to announce that this year's final issue of the Gazette is the first to feature on Providence Row's social media channels. From today, you can reach us on Facebook, Twitter and our website.

But first, many congratulations go to Kelly, Ivo and Alessio, Providence Row's three impressive students who have gained their well-earned Level 2 qualification in peer mentoring. Kelly spoke to the Gazette about the course and her plans for her future. We wish all three the very best.

It's not only street sleepers who need care and support, so too do their companion pets. For Street Vets, dogs are certainly not just for Christmas as volunteer vets and nurses work on the street to treat beloved pets and advise owners about their wellbeing.

Providence Row chief executive Tom O'Connor marks our festive issue by explaining how, despite the pandemic, services have continued in unexpected ways. Tom also has some valuable advice for people feeling vulnerable about their circumstances.

And finally, head to the best back pages in town for silly jokes, a seasonal crossword and puzzles with Leo.



CONTENTS

- 1, 2 Becoming a Peer Mentor at Providence Row
- 3. Community Post Box
- 4. Tales from Tails
- 5. StreetVets
- 6, 7, 8. Providence Row Christmas Crossword
- 9. Whizzoo Jokes Page!
- 10, 11. Adapt in a Crisis
- 12. Art & Fun!

Becoming a Peer Mentor at Providence Row



By
Volunteer
Hannah!



On December 4th, Kelly qualified as a Peer Mentor. Hannah talks to Kelly to find out about her experience on the course, juggling parenting and study, and her plans for the future.

How did you find out about Providence Row?

I heard from locals who were using the services, then due to my own mental health and personal issues, I used another project in Tower Hamlets who pointed me towards Providence Row.

What is a 'peer mentor'?

A peer mentor has lived experience of homelessness, substance use or mental health issues, and is in recovery.

How would you describe the role?

A 'peer mentors' role is to be friendly - without being a friend. You need boundaries. You support clients within the services by sign posting, making appointments, with the added bonus of having lived experience.

How does having lived experience play a part?

Anyone can go on a narcotics training course, read the books, that's useful of course. However, in my opinion unless you've experienced something, you might not have the same understanding.

With my life experience, managing anxiety - along with formal training - I can say to someone: "I get you, I've been there myself, there is hope"

When did you begin your training?

I started in person before lockdown, then we began online in September.

How did you find training online?

We've made the most of it. Our trainer is great, and we study from home. I'll be honest - I prefer real life, talking, picking up on body language. Our trainer is good at keeping energy levels up. I suffer with dyslexia, concentrating can be tough. At times I was quite poorly, but I stuck with it.

What's your learning style?

I have a whiteboard to help plan, and my workbook. My dyslexia affects my learning, and the way my brain works. I try different

What is it like juggling parenting and studying?

It's tough, I have three children, two are teenagers, the eldest is 21, they live at home. I manage, I find time.

What topics did you cover?

All sorts; safeguarding, case studies, the course is put together well. Our trainer is supportive. I found it fascinating learning about the effects of drugs and alcohol. I've lost friends to heroin. By studying I realised there's more to learn.

What did you find most challenging?

The case studies were emotional, incredibly 'real'. I cried, I realised this is going to be rewarding but it highlighted how tough the role can be.

Congratulations on qualifying as a peer mentor. How are you feeling?

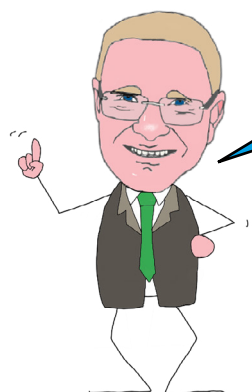
I feel so proud! There have been lots of ideas in my life that I haven't seen through. It sounds cheesy, but I was never that kid who got awards. I'm very 'certificate happy' now.

What are your plans for the future?

The next step is frontline work experience. I'm going on a course to become a facilitator, I'm taking an English course. Becoming a peer mentor has made me more confident, I've worked hard; I've stuck to a plan.

What advice would you give someone hoping to become a peer mentor?

First of all, you've got to really want to do it, and not be half-hearted. If you're in the right headspace, go for it. That way you won't let the negatives in your life have been for nothing. Turn those scars into positives. Help others, is the glass half empty or half full? My mum once told me "when the time is right, you'll make the change". She was right.



Our peer mentors are a part of our community. They are an inspiration to us. Hearing their stories and the challenges they've overcome is incredible.

Tom O'Connor
Providence Row CEO

Providence Row's next online peer mentor training begins January 2021. The course offers the chance to gain an accredited E3 and L2 qualification in peer mentoring, and experience to progress into education, volunteering or employment.

If you'd like to apply, please email peermentoring@providencerow.org.uk

Check our website for further info:

<https://www.providencerow.org.uk/pages/54-peer-mentoring>

COMMUNITY POST BOX

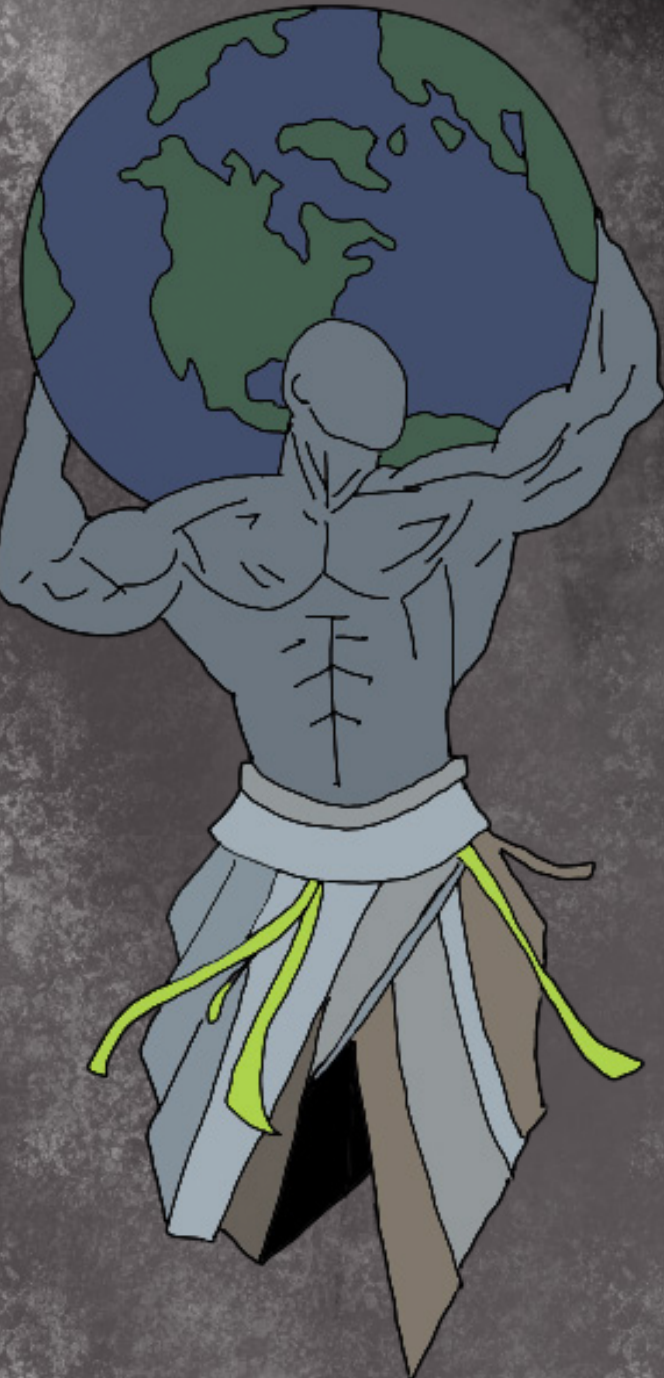
...more on Peer Mentoring:
A letter from Peer Alex.

Hello my name is Alex and I have been living in a Hostel since the 4th of May 2020, after I had been street homeless for 4 years.

When I first got here, it was like I found my promised land: I dare anyone to feel different after sleeping 1460 nights on the street!

But the first two weeks it was a nightmare because I did not manage to get my script straight-away so every morning I woke up withdrawing from drugs. From St Pauls I had to go to Aldgate East. But then on the 18 of May I finally managed to get my methadone script and I was ready to start my clean recovery time.

So with the supports of amazing people like my support worker, navigator and all the other workers here at the Hostel, I stopped taking drugs and it wasn't easy.



The biggest problem is time filling because when you are drug addicted, every day all day you just make money to get drugs, then you smoke drugs and so forth. But when you stop, you've got all that time spare, and you don't know what to do with it. It may sounds silly but it's one of the main reasons why drug addicts don't stop using drugs.

So one of the first things I've done has been starting to volunteer in the hostel. I'm a professional Chef, so with staff we thought it was a nice thing for me to be the person in charge of managing the food donations for the kitchen. I've then started a peer mentoring training course and I have successfully passed the exam, which qualifies me as a Level 2 trained Peer Mentor.

So, basically the message I'm trying to pass on is that services really gave me the chance to turn my life upside down in the best way I could.

Don't give up on your recovery and dreams!

Thank You

Tales from Tails

By Emma!



Hello humans,

welcome to the first edition of our new monthly update of life from the perspective of me Luigi, a dog and Leo, the cat.

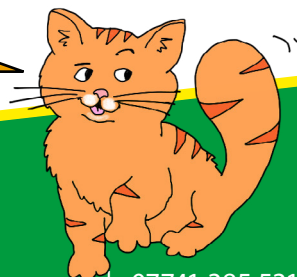
So what do we do all day you might ask? well, we eat, sleep, explore and most importantly look after our strung-out humans. I mean I know lockdown and restrictions is tough but Leo and me have had the best year ever, sorry not sorry!



The biggest issue for me at the moment is those cocky foxes. Where did they get that attitude from? I mistook one for Leo the other day and boy did I bark. It was not Leo though or even a fox dressed up as a cat, just a cocky fluffy fox.

While me and Leo rest up after traumatic fox encounters, I wonder about what the dogs and cats who do not have a warm home do when the cold nights draw in. We hope you are able to keep warm and get some food. Please know me and Leo are thinking of you. Look forward to telling you more in January. Stay safe.

Do you also have an issue with sleeping? I just wonder...

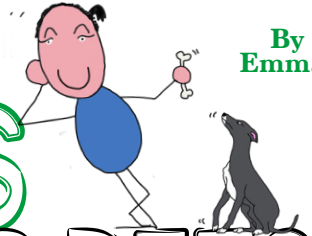


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By Emma!

STREETVETS TAKING CARE OF YOUR PETS



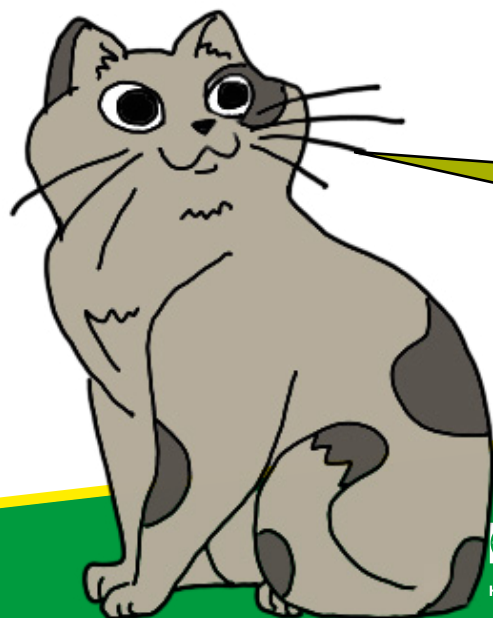
As winter draws in, living rough on the streets of Tower Hamlets is more difficult than ever -putting people and much-loved dogs at even more risk. Luckily help is on hand, StreetVet is a charity that helps homeless people and their pets who have nowhere to live. Whether it's food, warm coats, flea treatment or diagnosing medical conditions the dedicated StreetVets want to help. In November StreetVet launched the first ever pet friendly hostel in Hemel Hampstead. The team hope to roll out the scheme across the country including Tower Hamlets.

StreetVet co-founder Vet Jade Statt is passionate about keeping owners with their best friends and strongly believes at risk people should never be isolated from their companions. "Animals provide protection, company, warmth, a purpose and many other things to their owners", said Jade who rescued an abandoned dog called Buddy and treated him when he was hit by a train. "The bond is profound, and the health and wellbeing of the canine companions is often a major priority for their owners."

Jade's Top Tips for taking the best care of your dog (and yourself) this winter:



1. Register with StreetVet. Many services are provided from nutritious dog food, flea treatment to major surgery at a local pet hospital.
2. Don't' be afraid to ask for help.
3. Keep as warm as possible.
4. Food - for both of you.
5. And a big NO to Christmas pudding... for dogs!



If you want or need to contact StreetVet and access their services, please register at: info@streetvet.org.uk

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Questions.

ACROSS

- 1 In Germany, what would you eat on Christmas Day instead of turkey? (4)
- 6 How is St Stephen's Day better known? (6 and 3)
- 8 Who invented the Christmas Cracker in 1847, Tom -----? (5)
- 9 What decoration do elves traditionally have on their shoes? (5)
- 10 What Christmas-themed ballet premiered in Saint Petersburg, Russia in 1892? (3 and 10)
- 12 The Trafalgar Square Christmas tree is annually given as a gift by which country? (6)
- 13 Miracle On 34th Street centres on which real-life department store? (5)
- 14 In which fictional land is it always winter but never Christmas? (6)
- 15 If you were born on Christmas Day, what would your star sign be? (9)
- 17 Which plant has bright red and green leaves and is known as the Christmas Flower? (10)
- 21 What colour suit did Santa Claus wear until Coca Cola rebranded him in red? (5)
- 22 What is the Welsh for Christmas? (7)
- 23 What are you supposed to do when you find yourself under the mistletoe with a friend? (4)
- 24 What is a baby turkey called? (5)
- 25 What colour are most mistletoe berries? (5)

DOWN

- 2 What is wrapped in bacon in a British 'Pig in blanket'? (7)
- 3 In the movie Love Actually, which actor sang 'Christmas Is All Around' Bill -----? (5)
- 4 How do you say 'Merry Christmas' in Spanish, "Feliz -----"? (7)
- 5 Which female singer-songwriter sang with The Pogues in Fairytale of New York? (6 and 6)
- 7 How many ghosts appear in A Christmas Carol? (4)
- 11 In Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," what was Mr. Scrooge's first name? (8)
- 16 Who sings the first line of the 1984 version of Do They Know It's Christmas, Paul -----? (5)
- 18 How many reindeer are featured in the poem "Twas the Night Before Christmas?" (5)
- 19 Christmas Island is in which ocean? (6)
- 20 In "The Muppet Christmas Carol," which actor played Scrooge, Michael -----? (5)

Solutions. Don't look at them unless you are sure you can't find the answer!



ACROSS

- 1 In Germany, what would you eat on Christmas Day instead of turkey? (4) FISH
- 6 How is St Stephen's Day better known? (6 and 3) BOXING DAY
- 8 Who invented the Christmas Cracker in 1847, Tom -----? (5) SMITH
- 9 What decoration do elves traditionally have on their shoes? (5) BELLS
- 10 What Christmas-themed ballet premiered in Saint Petersburg, Russia in 1892? (3 and 10) THE NUTCRACKER
- 12 The Trafalgar Square Christmas tree is annually given as a gift by which country? (6) NORWAY
- 13 Miracle On 34th Street centres on which real-life department store? (5) MACYS
- 14 In which fictional land is it always winter but never Christmas? (6) NARNIA
- 15 If you were born on Christmas Day, what would your star sign be? (9) CAPRICORN
- 17 Which plant has bright red and green leaves and is known as the Christmas Flower? (10) POINSETTIA
- 21 What colour suit did Santa Claus wear until Coca Cola rebranded him in red? (5) GREEN
- 22 What is the Welsh for Christmas? (7) NADOLIG
- 23 What are you supposed to do when you find yourself under the mistletoe with a friend? (4) KISS
- 24 What is a baby turkey called? (5) POULT
- 25 What colour are most mistletoe berries? (5) WHITE

DOWN

- 2 What is wrapped in bacon in a British 'Pig in blanket'? (7) SAUSAGE
- 3 In the movie Love Actually, which actor sang 'Christmas Is All Around' (5) NIGHY
- 4 How do you say 'Merry Christmas' in Spanish, "Feliz -----"? (7) NAVIDAD
- 5 Which female singer-songwriter sang with The Pogues in Fairytale of New York? (6 and 7) KIRSTY MACCOLL
- 7 How many ghosts appear in A Christmas Carol? (4) FOUR
- 11 In Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," what was Mr. Scrooge's first name? (8) EBENEZER
- 16 Who sings the first line of the 1984 version of Do They Know It's Christmas, Paul -----? (5) YOUNG
- 18 How many reindeer are featured in the poem "Twas the Night Before Christmas?" (5) EIGHT
- 19 Christmas Island is in which ocean? (6) INDIAN
- 20 In "The Muppet Christmas Carol," which actor played Scrooge, Michael -----? (5) CAINE

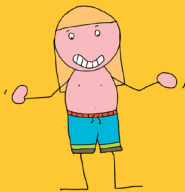
Whizzoo Jokes Page!!!



Our jokey inclusiveness page gives us a few jokes that should appeal to all people and all ages from ice cream eaters to Welsh rarebit (cheese on toast) scoffers

Q. What do you get if you cross a fish with an elephant?

A. Swimming trunks



Q. What do kittens like to eat?



Q. What do you call a snake on a building site?

A. Mice cream



A. A boa constructor

Four rabbits went into a pub serving substantial meals



Q. What do you do if you see a spaceman?



A. Park your car, man



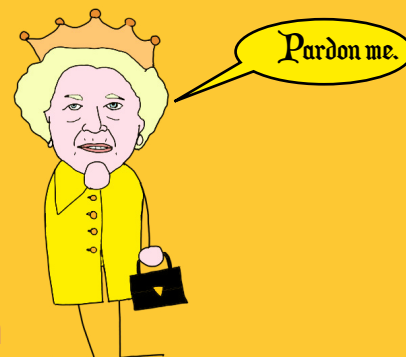
Breaking News! Government's mobile vaccination programme begins!!

Q. What do you call a boomerang that won't come back?

Q. What does the Queen do when she burps?

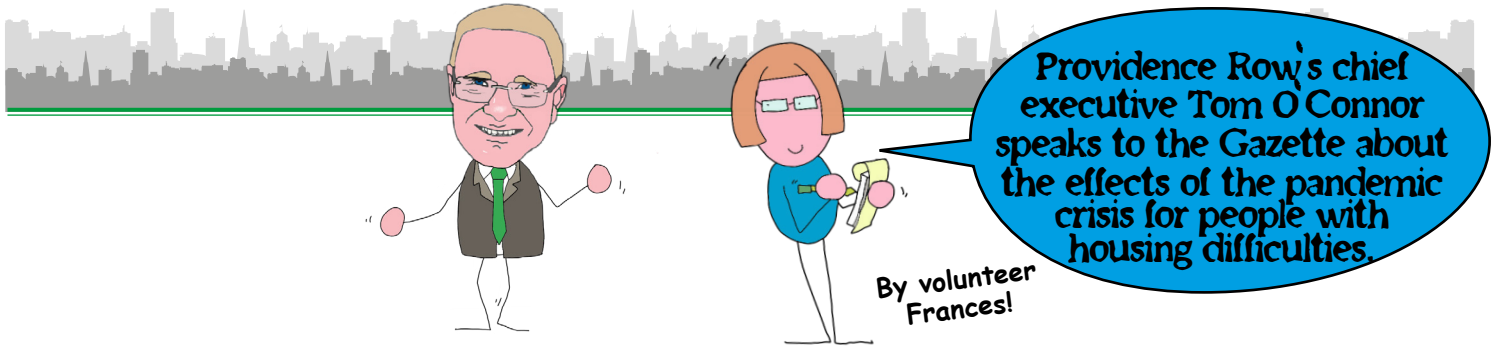


A. A stick



A. She issues a royal pardon

ADAPT IN A CRISIS



All organisations had to adapt rapidly to the chaos caused by Covid 19. Providence Row's chief executive, Tom O'Connor explains that the charity's East London Dellow Day Centre was one of the last to close under the lockdown restrictions.

'Had we known what lay ahead, I wouldn't have believed that we could adapt as we have.' Tom admits. 'After 160 years of service, suddenly in March, we had to rethink everything to focus on people in need in immediate support. Now, an uncertain future means we must continue to adapt further.'

During the lockdowns, Providence Row continued to support rough sleeping clients initially accommodated in three local hotels under the government's 'Everyone In' scheme, now ended.

'More than 100 people were found further accommodation and now have a support plan', Tom says. 'Sadly, we are seeing an increasing number of new rough sleepers.'

Providence Row continues to provide a daily hot meal service and other support to rough sleepers at the Dellow Centre.

'Our food provision is expanding quickly and we are appealing for volunteers', continues Tom (see link below).

'RESET, our drug and alcohol service continued as an outreach service to clients on the street and in hotels and hostels', recalls Tom. 'working remotely during the first lockdown.'



If you would like to volunteer with the Providence Row food project, do get in touch :

<https://www.providencerow.org.uk/pages/16-volunteer-for-us>

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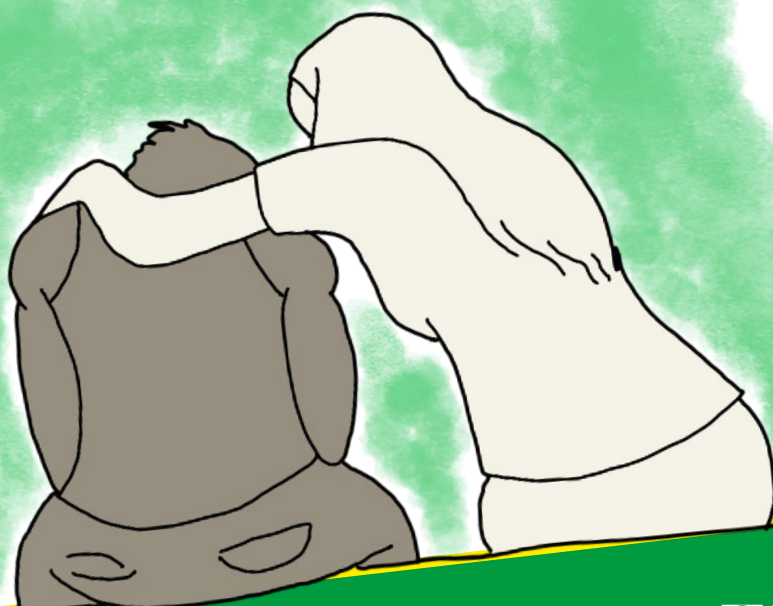


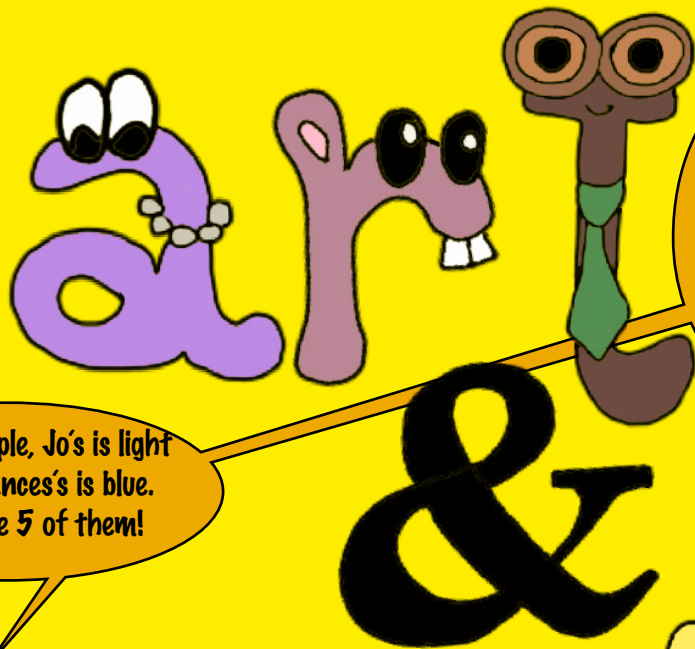
'A crisis exposes truths we already knew.' Tom believes. 'During the pandemic's early days, waiting times for medical support increased and our clients needed additional support. People with mental health and substance misuse issues were particularly affected.'

'Vulnerable women at risk of abuse are a growing concern while people with no recourse to public funds are at great risk so our employability service is helping individuals to find paid work.' explains Tom.

Tom encourages those who feel stressed or vulnerable about their situation to talk to someone. 'We all need help at some time in our lives and another person such as at Providence Row, Citizens Advice or a friend can often see a way to get back on our feet or out of a problem.' Nonetheless, persistent difficulties have been exacerbated.

'There still needs to be much more investment in social housing, a significant expansion in mental health services and more ways of ensuring that people in need remain part of their community,' Tom believes. 'No single element will succeed without the others; all need to be in place.'





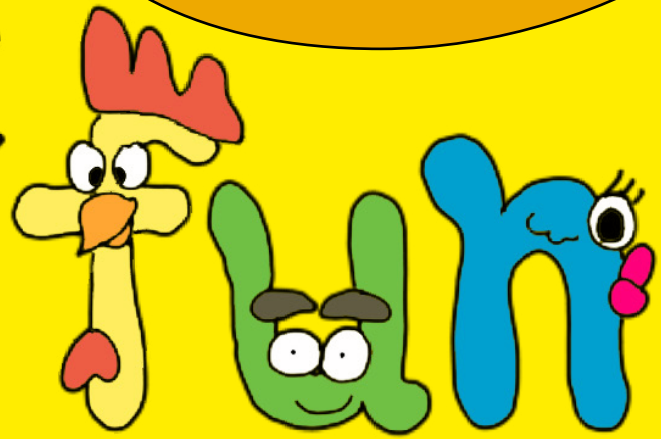
Since COVID rules don't apply to illustrated meetings, the team is able to enjoy a Christmas dinner together. We are celebrating the wonderful times we got to spend with each other this year creating the Gazette, and also getting ready for the new challenges that 2021 will bring us. Help us find the presents that are hidden in the room: there is one gift for each one of us and each gift is the same colour as the owner's clothes.

So for example, Jo's is light brown, Frances's is blue. Go find the 5 of them!



And Merry Christmas!!!

By volunteer Sam!



This butter is a bit too hard, they have probably kept it in the fridge for too long...

Where is this cat again...? Liam!! That piece is mine!!

Cheers for a wonderful upcoming 2021!

No way. I saw it first.

Yeah, I wonder where Leo is too...

Behind the white tree (Sam's), on top of the curtain by the window (Liam's), in the bookshelf (Hannah's), by Leo (Frances's) and behind the green tree (Jo's).

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volunteering@providencerow.org.uk | 07741 385 531 | providencerow.org.uk