

# STEPPING FORWARD.....

ONE SMALL STEP AT A TIME



**East Midlands Asbestos Support Team**

helping victims of asbestos-related diseases and their families. Formerly known as DAST.



**Bereavement Magazine Feb - March 2026**

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## Social media

If you or your family use social media please check out our sites and help us to reach more people. Please also like or share our posts to help raise awareness.



[www.facebook.com/EastMidlandsAsbestosSupportTeam](https://www.facebook.com/EastMidlandsAsbestosSupportTeam)

[www.facebook.com/groups/emastbereavementsupportgroup](https://www.facebook.com/groups/emastbereavementsupportgroup)



[www.instagram.com/emastuk](https://www.instagram.com/emastuk)



[bsky.app/profile/emastuk.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/emastuk.bsky.social)



[www.emast.org.uk](https://www.emast.org.uk)



## **Welcome to the February/ March Edition of Stepping Forward.**

As we step into this edition of our magazine, we move through a season of quiet reflection and gentle renewal. The early months of the year can feel heavy for those living with loss: the festive busyness has passed, the nights are still long, and grief can feel more present in the stillness. And yet, even in these quieter days, there are signs of hope - longer hours of daylight, the first shoots of spring, and moments of light that remind us that healing, however gradual, continues.

This edition offers space to pause, reflect, and connect. We are delighted to share that our Annual General Meeting will take place on 25th March, and we warmly invite all members to join us. The AGM is an opportunity to come together, reflect on the past year, hear about the work of our organisation, and look ahead to the months to come. Most importantly, it is a chance to connect with others, reminding us that even in our grief, we are part of a caring community.

As Easter approaches, we recognise that this season can stir a variety of emotions. For some, it brings comfort, hope, or a sense of renewal; for others, it may be a time of reflection on absence and change. Wherever you are on your journey, we hope this edition offers reassurance, companionship, and gentle encouragement, helping you to feel supported during this time.

We also warmly encourage you to consider joining one of our bereavement support groups. These groups provide a safe and welcoming space to share your experiences, listen to others, and build meaningful connections with people who truly understand the challenges of loss. Even a small step towards connection can bring a sense of comfort, belonging, and hope.

Through these pages, we hope to offer moments of reflection, support, and gentle uplift. May this edition remind you that even in times of sorrow, there are opportunities for connection, understanding, and the quiet beginnings of renewal.

## Quiet Beginnings

In the hush between old and new,  
A hand reached out, a chance to share,  
Soft words that listen, hearts that hear,  
Moments of understanding, tender and true.

Through the stillness of early days,  
Where sorrow lingers, lightly pressed,  
Connections form like roots in soil,  
Patient, gentle, slowly blessed.

Each story told, each tear released,  
Becomes a bridge across the ache,  
A space where grief may softly rest,  
And hearts find courage to remake.

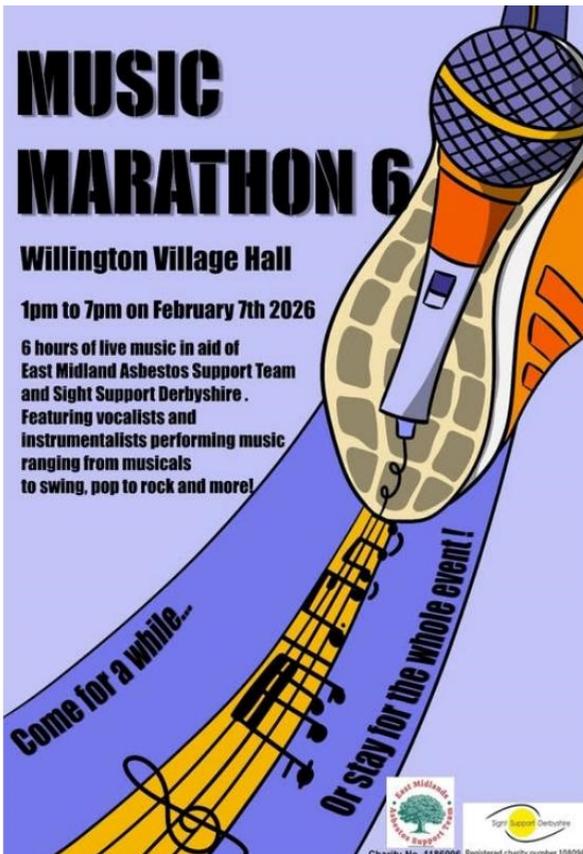
The quiet beginnings often go unseen,  
A spark of hope, a whispered sign,  
Yet even small, unnoticed steps  
Can turn toward light, a gentle climb.

So reach, connect, and let be known,  
The weight you carry need not stand alone.  
In listening, sharing, we find our way,  
Renewal waits at the close of day.

Here is a foot tapping way to support EMAST. On February 7th from 1pm to 7pm, there will be a music marathon at Willington Village Hall. Come for an hour or foot tap through all 6 hours. Entry is by donation you can pop in and out as you please. If you are able please come along!

Cathryn Haywood is a very talented musical director, vocalist, piano teacher, artist and art teacher. She has been responsible for five, hugely successful music marathons to raise money for good causes. This year is her 6th music marathon and she has kindly chosen EMAST and Sight Support Derbyshire as the charities to benefit from it this year.

Come along and enjoy vocalists and instrumentalists performing music from musicals, swing, rock, pop and more!



**MUSIC MARATHON 6**

**Willington Village Hall**

**1pm to 7pm on February 7th 2026**

6 hours of live music in aid of East Midland Asbestos Support Team and Sight Support Derbyshire . Featuring vocalists and instrumentalists performing music ranging from musicals to swing, pop to rock and more!

*Come for a while...*

*Or stay for the whole event!*

East Midland Asbestos Support Team  
Sight Support Derbyshire  
Charity No. 1186006 Registered charity number 1080986



# Grief Is a Maze, Not a Map

When someone we love dies, we are often given well-meant advice that suggests grief is a journey with a clear direction. “One day at a time. You’ll get there.” “Just keep moving forward.”

But for many bereaved people, grief does not feel like a path at all. It feels more like a maze.

A maze has walls that block the way you thought you were meant to go. It has dead ends where you must stop, turn around, and retrace your steps. Sometimes you can see daylight just ahead, only to find the route suddenly bends away from it. Other times you find yourself right back where you started, wondering how you could possibly still be here.

**Grief works much the same way.**



In the early days, the maze is often overwhelming. Everything is unfamiliar. You take tentative steps, guided by instinct rather than certainty. There is paperwork to complete, arrangements to make, condolences to receive. You move forward because you must, not because you know where you are going. At this stage, people often

expect grief to be loud and visible. Tears come easily; exhaustion is constant. The walls of the maze feel close, pressing in.

Then, just as you think you have learned the layout, grief changes shape.

You might reach a point where things seem manageable. You

have found a rhythm again. You can talk about the person you lost without crying every time. From the outside, it can look like you are “doing well”. But a maze is not linear, and grief does not stay put. A song on the radio, a familiar smell, or an ordinary Tuesday afternoon can lead you straight into a passage you did not expect.

Suddenly, you are lost again.

This is often the part that feels most confusing. “I thought I’d dealt with this”, people say to themselves. “Why am I back here?” But in a maze, returning to an earlier place does not mean you have failed. It means you are navigating something complex, something that cannot be mastered in one attempt.

Grief does not ask you to get it right. It asks you to keep going, even when the route makes no sense.

One of the hardest things about a maze is that you cannot see it from above. Other people may offer directions based on their own experience, but no two mazes are the same. What helped someone else may not help you. Some people find comfort in talking; others in silence. Some need routine; others need rest. There is no universal shortcut, no correct sequence of turns.

This can feel isolating. You may look around and see others who appear to have reached an exit, while you are still walking the corridors. But appearances are deceptive. Many people carry their maze quietly. Some have simply learned which turns hurt the least.

Importantly, a maze is not designed to trap you forever. It is designed to be navigated at your own pace. You can pause. You can lean against the wall when you are tired. You can ask for help when the path feels impossible. You are allowed to take breaks, to sit with your grief rather than constantly trying to escape it.

Crucially, the goal is not to “get over” the maze. The person you lost is part of its design. Love created these walls, and love remains within them. The aim is simply to learn how to live alongside it.

If you are grieving and feel lost, know this: feeling disoriented does not mean you are weak. It means you are human. Grief is not a straight road with milestones and deadlines. It is a maze that asks for patience, self-compassion, and time.

And even when you cannot see the way forward, each step you take is still a step.

## **The Meaning of Mazes Across Cultures**

Mazes and labyrinths have appeared in human cultures for thousands of years, carrying meanings far beyond their physical form. While they are often thought of simply as puzzles or places to get lost, many cultures have used mazes as powerful symbols of life, spirituality and transformation.

In ancient Greece, the most famous maze was the Labyrinth of Crete, built to contain the Minotaur. This story portrayed the maze as a place of danger and trial, where survival depended on patience, memory and guidance. The thread of Ariadne, which helped Theseus find his way out, became a lasting symbol of hope and support in times of confusion.

In contrast, many Indigenous cultures view labyrinth-like patterns as spiritual paths rather than traps. In Native American traditions, particularly among the Hopi, the maze symbol represents life’s journey. It reflects choices, learning and growth, with the centre

symbolising wisdom or harmony rather than an ending.

Across Europe, labyrinths were incorporated into medieval cathedrals, such as the famous one at Chartres in France.

These were used as tools for contemplation and prayer.

Walking the labyrinth was seen as a symbolic pilgrimage, offering reflection, repentance and renewal without the need to travel far.

In Asian cultures, maze patterns have often represented protection and balance. In Feng Shui, winding paths are believed to slow negative energy, encouraging calm and mindfulness. The act of navigating complexity is seen as a way of cultivating inner focus.

Across cultures, the common thread is clear: mazes are not just about being lost. They are about movement, meaning and transformation. Whether seen as a test, a journey or a place of reflection, mazes remind us that finding our way often matters more than reaching the end.

A maze invites us to slow down. It resists haste and certainty, asking instead for attention, patience and trust. Within its turns, progress is rarely straight and the way forward is not always clear. Yet each step, even those that seem to lead nowhere, teaches us something about where we have been and how we choose to continue.

In a maze, being lost is not a failure but part of the experience. We pause, we turn back, we try again. Over time, confusion gives way to familiarity, and uncertainty softens into understanding. The maze reminds us that meaning is often found not in reaching the centre, but in the quiet act of walking, noticing, and learning to stay present with the journey itself.

# Looking After Your Mental Health

Taking care of your mental health is just as important as looking after your physical health, yet it's something that is often overlooked. Mental wellbeing affects how we think, feel and cope with life's challenges, and it plays a key role in maintaining overall health, particularly for older adults or those living with long-term conditions.

## Understanding Mental Health

Mental health isn't just about feeling happy all the time. It includes how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Everyone experiences ups and downs, and it's normal to feel anxious, sad, or frustrated at times. What matters is recognising when support is needed and taking steps to protect your wellbeing.

### **Simple Ways to Support Your Mental Health:**

**Stay Connected:** Keep in touch with friends, family or support groups. Social contact, even a short phone call or message, can lift mood and reduce feelings of isolation.

**Be Active:** Gentle exercise, stretching or short walks can help reduce stress and improve wellbeing. Listen to your body and pace yourself.

**Create a Routine:** Having a daily structure, including regular meals, sleep, and enjoyable activities, can provide a sense of control and stability.

**Take Time for Yourself:** Engage in hobbies, reading, music, or simply resting. Small moments of calm and enjoyment make a big difference.

**Talk About Your Feelings:** Sharing worries or concerns with someone you trust, a counsellor, or a support helpline can provide relief and perspective.

**Mind Your Thoughts:** Practices such as mindfulness, meditation, or gentle breathing exercises can help reduce anxiety and encourage a calmer mindset.

### **When to Seek Extra Support**

It's important to recognise when extra support is needed. If feelings of sadness, anxiety, or isolation persist, or interfere with daily life, reach out to a healthcare professional, counsellor, or charity support service. Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

### **You Are Not Alone**

Looking after your mental health is an ongoing journey. Small steps every day can make a real difference, and support is always available. Our charity offers guidance, information, and a listening ear to help you cope with the emotional impact of living with a long-term condition.

Remember, your mental wellbeing matters. Taking care of yourself isn't a luxury — it's an essential part of living well.





# Top Tips for Mental Health



## Stay Connected

Phone, message, or video call friends, family, or support groups. Even brief contact can lift your mood.



## Be Active

Gentle exercise, stretching, or short walks help reduce stress and improve wellbeing. Pace yourself and listen to your body.



## Keep a Routine

Regular meals, sleep, and enjoyable activities provide structure and stability.



## Make Time for Hobbies

Reading, music, crafts, or relaxing activities bring small daily pleasures.



## Talk About Your Feelings

Share worries with someone you trust, a counsellor, or a charity helpline. Talking helps lighten the load.



## Try Mindfulness or Relaxation

Gentle breathing exercises, meditation, or mindful moments can calm your mind.



## Ask for Help When Needed

If feelings of sadness, anxiety, or isolation persist, reach out to your GP, healthcare team, or support charity. Seeking help is a sign of strength.

# PLANTING MEMORIES!

Tricia Clough, has been an ardent supporter of EMAST since her husband Dave's death, from mesothelioma. She is now a Trustee of EMAST. She has also written a beautifully illustrated children's book, called Planting Memories. The book is now available to buy



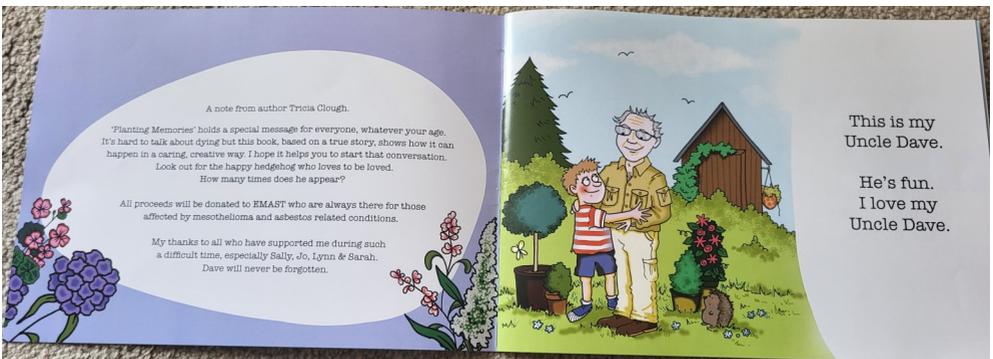
from Tricia and the EMAST Office. The cost of the book is £8 or £10 for a signed copy.

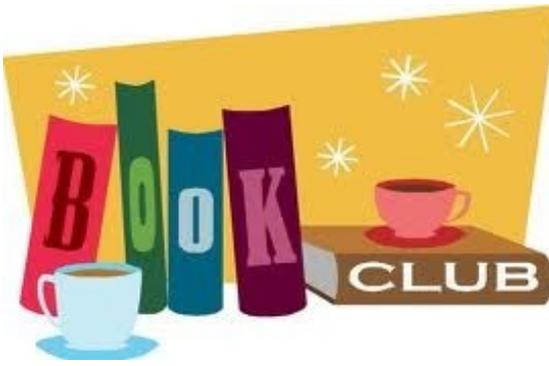
Tricia has generously paid for the illustration and publishing of the book so that all the proceeds will go directly to EMAST.

The book tells the story of Tricia and Dave's nephew, and him

being told about Uncle Dave being poorly. This prompts them to make memories together.

It really is a beautiful book that adults will love as much as children. To get your copy please contact the EMAST office .





## How did you find Andrew Raymond's book, *The Shortlist*?

The Shortlist explores ambition, power, and moral compromise within a competitive professional selection process. As a group

of candidates vie for a single coveted role, Andrew Raymond reveals how pressure exposes insecurities, rivalries, and ethical fault lines.

I found the characters were convincing, the plot was thrilling with twists and turns, red herrings here and there and dry humour. tension is largely psychological rather than dramatic, but I found it compelling, driven by interviews, conversations, and internal conflicts. Did it keep you guessing right to the end?

Our next book, ***Love Untold* by Ruth Jones**. I have chosen this as I like Ruth's work on TV (Gavin and Stacey, Stella, Fat Friends & Run Away). This is her latest new novel which is funny, moving and uplifting.

Grace is about to turn ninety and she doesn't want parties or presents or fuss. She just wants a quiet celebration: her daily swim in the sea and a cup of tea with granddaughter Elin and great-granddaughter Beca. More than anything, she wants to heal the family rift that's been breaking her heart for decades.

And to do that she must find her daughter, Alys - the only person who can help to put things right. But thirty years is a long time. And many words have been left unsaid.

So is it too late now to heal the pain of the past?

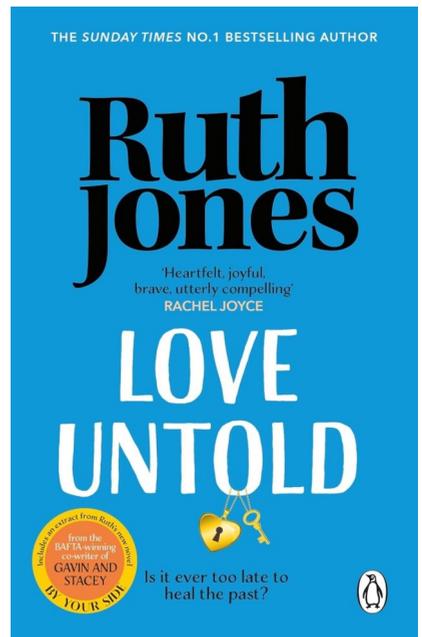
This is a story about mothers and daughters: the love inherent in that bond and the heartache that miscommunication can bring.

More than anything, it's about the importance of being true to oneself. Meet Grace, Alys, Elin and Beca - a family you'll come to know, and to love.

Here are some thoughts to consider as you read the book:

- ⇒ Which character did you find most relatable and why?
- ⇒ Did you find Grace's journey to reconcile with the past believable?
- ⇒ How did the younger characters (Elin, Beca) contrast with the older generations?
- ⇒ Did any character remind you of someone you know (or even Ruth Jones's famous character Nessa)?
- ⇒ Did you find the ending satisfying, or did it feel too neat/rushed?
- ⇒ How did the humour fit in with the serious themes?
- ⇒ What lessons did you take away about family and regret?
- ⇒ How did Jones's writing make you feel connected to the characters and the setting?
- ⇒ Did the different points of view enhance the story?

I hope you enjoy the book! Let us know what you thought of it.



*Thank You Thank You Thank You*

# THANK YOU TO UFFA MAGNA WI

The wonderful ladies from UFFA Magna (Mickleover) WI, chose EMAST and Meso UK as the charities they supported throughout 2025. They raised an amazing **£1500** in total.

Thank you so much for your  
**generosity!**

Diane Woollands presenting  
Jo Reeve from EMAST, a cheque for  
£750.

Megan from MesoUK, Diane and Jo  
with a photo of Paul Woollands who  
sadly died from mesothelioma.



Diane Woollands presenting  
Jo Reeve from EMAST, a cheque  
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Megan from MesoUK, Diane and Jo  
with a photo of Paul Woollands  
who sadly died from  
mesothelioma.

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March  
10.30 - 2.00pm

# EMAST AGM



Double Tree by Hilton Hotel, Brayford  
Wharf, Lincoln LNI IW

You are warmly invited to our Annual General Meeting, held this year in Lincoln. This is a great opportunity to mix and meet with EMAST staff, trustees and members.

- Refreshments and buffet lunch provided.
- Hear about the work of EMAST over the past year.
- Presentations from the staff.
- Ask The Panel - an opportunity to ask questions of our panel of solicitors.

Please book your place by contacting the office: 01246  
380415; email: [emast.admin@emast.org.uk](mailto:emast.admin@emast.org.uk)



# Those were the days...

*We continue our nostalgic journey back in time through the memories shared by friends and beneficiaries of EMAST.*

My brother and I had 3 tortoises between us. Mine was the largest, Henry. George, the middle sized one; and Little Ernie, the baby sized one, belonged to my brother Trevor. Henry used to be able to run. I would come home from school, open the back door with some freshly milled peas from the pod in my hand and Henry would charge down the garden to meet me and eat the peas from my hand. I am sure that I saw him smile.



Trevor complained that someone was eating the pea plants he had planted in his part of the garden. George was the culprit! I saw him walk deliberately towards the wire fence erected around the pea plants, tuck his head into his shell so the wire just slid over his shell and he was in! He just calmly walked along the rows eating the plants. Little Ernie was funny; he used to haul his front legs up and walk along using only his back legs.

*Denise Healy*

One of my first jobs was working as a croupier at a casino. I thought it might be glamorous, but the upkeep of the compulsory black high heeled shoes and red fingernails cut to exactly the right length soon got very boring. It involved working until 4am and as there was no public transport at that time in a morning, I had to get taxis home, which took up a large chunk of my wages. It did not live up to the casino life that I had seen in James Bond films, but then I was in downtown Sheffield. The final straw came one evening when I picked up the ball from the roulette wheel and tried to send it on its way using the wrist flick that I had been

trained to do. I was too heavy handed and my aim was a little out... I watched as, in slow motion, the ball bounced off the table and made its way down the room. This is a big no-no in a casino, it was unprofessional and I was not allowed to leave my table to go and get it back - I had to call for assistance from the Pit Boss (the supervisor). It was all very embarrassing - I handed my notice in shortly after that and I don't think any of the management staff were sorry!

*Sarah Walters*



At age 16, my working life began at The Metropolitan Water Board in Buckhurst Hill, in the countryside. Later, I was transferred to the Head Office in London. It was a grand building and had a sweeping wooden staircase. The whole building smelt of polish. I was to be discriminated against there just because I was a woman. A scheme was established to try to obtain in-house accountants quickly. The successful candidate had to have passed two A Levels (the grades were not considered then) and had to have successfully completed the first part of a professional accountant's examination themselves. The scheme automatically raised the remuneration of the candidate to the next pay grade and sent them to college full time for 6 months, then back to work for 6 months until the professional examinations were completed. I had gained everything that was required for the scheme but I was just 18 years old and I was not allowed, being told that I was too young to earn such money and I was a woman of all things, long before the relevant laws were brought into being.

*Denise Healy*

***We'll continue our trip down memory lane in the next issue.***

***Do you have any memories you'd like to share with us?  
Send them to us [emast.admin@emast.org.uk](mailto:emast.admin@emast.org.uk)***

# The New Normal: Learning to Live with Change After Loss

After a bereavement, one of the phrases people hear most often is “finding your new normal.” It is usually offered with kindness and hope, yet for many grieving people it can feel puzzling, or even unsettling. What exactly is this new normal meant to be? And how are you supposed to recognise it when everything feels unfamiliar?

Loss changes the shape of life. The routines, relationships and assumptions that once felt solid are suddenly altered. The old normal — the one that included the person who has died — is no longer possible. In its place comes a period of uncertainty, where days can feel unstructured and emotions unpredictable. In this space, the idea of a new normal can sound like something you should arrive at, as though there is a fixed point where life settles again.

In reality, the new normal is rarely a single destination. More often, it is a series of adjustments. In the early weeks and months of grief, the new normal may be very small. It might mean getting through the day, managing appointments, or finding the energy to prepare a meal. At this stage, life often operates in survival mode. This does not mean you are doing grief “wrong”; it means you are responding to a profound change.

As time passes, you may begin to notice subtle shifts. You might return to work, re-engage with friends, or rediscover activities that once brought comfort. These moments can feel strange or even disloyal. Many bereaved people worry that adapting somehow diminishes the importance of the person they have lost. But finding a way to live again is not a betrayal. It is a reflection of the fact that love and loss coexist.

## **Crucially, the new normal is not static.**

What feels manageable one month may feel overwhelming the next. Anniversaries, significant dates and unexpected reminders can disrupt any sense of stability you have built. You may think you have found your footing, only to feel unsteady again. This does not mean you have gone backwards. It means your life, like your grief, continues to move and change.

The new normal also shifts as you change. As circumstances evolve — children growing older, roles changing, health improving or declining — grief adapts alongside them. The way you carry your loss at one stage of life may look very different at another. This flexibility is not a failure to “move on”; it is a natural response to ongoing change.

For some people, the new normal includes finding meaning in new ways: volunteering, supporting others, or honouring the memory of their loved one through action. For others, it simply means learning how to experience moments of peace alongside sadness. There is no correct version.

***What matters is giving yourself permission to let your normal change.*** Rather than searching for a final version of life after loss, it can be more helpful to think in terms of *\*now\**. What does normal look like for you today? What feels possible, and what feels too much? These answers may differ tomorrow, and that is acceptable.

Grief does not ask us to rebuild life exactly as it was. It asks us to remain open to a life that is different, shaped by love, loss and resilience. The new normal is not a fixed state you must achieve. It is a living, breathing process — one that shifts, bends and grows as you do. And within that change, there can still be room for connection, meaning and hope.

# “Rethinking Farewells: The Rise of Direct Cremations”

Direct cremations are becoming increasingly common, reflecting changing attitudes to funerals, cost, and personal choice. A direct cremation involves the cremation taking place without a funeral service or mourners present, with ashes returned to the family afterwards. As with any option after death, there are practical, emotional and social considerations to weigh up.

## Practical pros and cons

**Pros** Cost: Direct cremations are usually significantly cheaper than traditional funerals, as they remove costs such as a service, hearse, flowers and limousines. For many families, this financial simplicity is a major benefit.

Simplicity: Arrangements are straightforward and can often be handled quickly, reducing administrative burden at a stressful time.

Flexibility: Families can choose to hold a memorial, scattering, or celebration of life at a later date, in a location and format that suits them.

**Cons** Timing and logistics: The cremation is scheduled by the provider, often at a time chosen for operational efficiency rather than family preference.

Less structure: Some people find the lack of a formal process disorientating, especially if they value rituals that mark death clearly.

## Emotional pros and cons

**Pros** Reduced pressure: Without the need to organise a service quickly, families may feel less overwhelmed in the early days of grief.

Private grieving: For some, the absence of a public ceremony allows space to grieve quietly and personally.

Personal choice: A later memorial can feel more meaningful, allowing time to reflect and honour the person in a way that feels right.

**Cons** Lack of immediate goodbye: Not being present at the

cremation can leave some people feeling they have missed an important moment of farewell.

Delayed grief: Without a clear marker of loss, emotions may surface later or feel unresolved.

Mismatch of needs: What feels right for one family member may feel unsatisfactory or distressing for another.

## **Social pros and cons**

**Pros** Changing norms: Direct cremation reflects a shift away from traditional expectations, which can feel freeing for those who dislike formal funerals.

Inclusivity: Later memorials can be more accessible, informal and tailored, allowing wider participation.

Reduced social pressure: Families may feel less judged about ceremony, attendance or cost.

**Cons** Lack of communal support: Funerals often provide a shared space for collective mourning. Without this, some people may feel isolated.

Misunderstanding Friends or extended family may struggle to understand the choice, particularly if they expect a conventional funeral.

Fewer shared rituals: Rituals help societies acknowledge death; their absence can make loss feel less recognised.

Direct cremation is neither inherently better nor worse than a traditional funeral. Its value lies in how well it aligns with the wishes of the person who has died and the needs of those left behind. For some, it offers dignity, affordability and freedom. For others, it may feel too minimal or emotionally unsatisfying. What matters most is open conversation — before a death if possible, and within families afterwards — about what feels meaningful. In a society where grief is increasingly individual, direct cremation is one of many ways people are redefining how they say goodbye.

# Bereavement Support Groups



Bereavement can be one of the most isolating experiences a person faces. Even when surrounded by family and friends, many people find that their grief feels deeply personal and difficult to articulate. Bereavement support groups offer a unique and valuable space where individuals can share their experiences with others who truly understand what it means to live with loss. The benefits of these groups extend far beyond simply talking about grief; they help people rebuild confidence, connection and hope as they navigate life after loss.

One of the most important benefits of a bereavement support group is the reassurance that you are not alone. Hearing others speak openly about their struggles can be profoundly comforting. This month, our group conversations have highlighted how varied grief can be, yet how many shared challenges exist. Topics such as sleep problems, hating the silence in the house, or the difficulty of cooking for one have resonated strongly. Knowing that others are lying awake at night or dreading mealtimes in the same way helps reduce feelings of isolation and self-blame.

Support groups also provide a safe place to explore new experiences and emotions. Discussions about solo holidays, for example, have opened up honest conversations about fear, guilt and, sometimes, unexpected pride. For some, the idea of travelling alone feels daunting; for others it represents a step towards independence and rediscovering joy. Sharing these experiences allows members to learn from one another and to

feel encouraged to try new things at their own pace.

Another valuable aspect of group support is the opportunity to talk about signs from our loved ones. These experiences can be deeply meaningful, yet people may hesitate to share them elsewhere for fear of being misunderstood. Within a bereavement group, such conversations are treated with respect and openness, allowing individuals to find comfort and validation in what they have noticed and felt.

Finding a “new normal” after loss is rarely straightforward. Groups help members explore what this means in everyday life, including how to cope with family expectations. Many people feel pressure to “move on” or to behave in a certain way for the sake of others. Talking openly about these pressures helps individuals set boundaries and recognise that grief has no fixed timetable.

Importantly, bereavement support groups are not only about sadness. Light-hearted conversations play a crucial role in healing. Chatting about grandchildren, today’s parenting styles, or new technology such as smart watches and Alexa brings moments of laughter and normality. These shared smiles remind members that it is possible to experience joy alongside grief, without guilt.

In essence, bereavement support groups offer understanding, connection and balance. They provide a place where tears and laughter can coexist, where practical challenges are shared, and where people are supported as they gently rebuild their lives. Through listening and being heard, individuals often find strength, resilience and a renewed sense of belonging.

We currently have four bereavement support groups each month, in Nottingham, Derby, Kettering and Leicester. Why not come along to one of them?

# Stepping Stones Bereavement Support Groups

## Kettering

Here are some of the people who come to our Kettering group. We have a lovely venue in the Loasby Room at St Andrew's Church, Lindsay St, Kettering, NN16 8RG



We meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 11.30am - 1.30pm a light lunch will be provided. The dates for our upcoming meetings are: **10th February, 10th March, 14th April**

## Derby

Our Derby group meets up for lunch at **The Silk Mill pub** at 19 Full St, Derby DE1 3AF on the 3rd Wednesday each month, 12noon - 2pm.

Our upcoming meetings are: **18th February, 18th March, 15th April.**



There is a lovely light bites lunch menu as well as a comprehensive main menu. Please come and join us! We look forward to welcoming newcomers as well as old friends.

## Nottingham

Our Nottingham group meets in the church hall at the rear of St Peter's Church, St Peter's Gate, Nottingham, NG1 2NW

We meet on the last Friday of each month 10am-12pm. The dates for our upcoming meetings are:  
**27th February, 27th March, 24th April**



***Newcomers always warmly welcomed.***

## Leicester Stepping Stones Bereavement Support Group

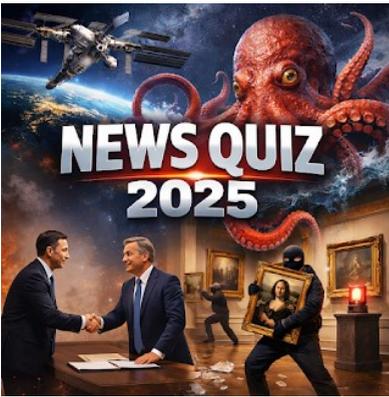
Meeting on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Quaker Meeting House, 16 Queen's Road, Leicester LE2 1WP between 10:30 – 12:30 refreshments and cake will be provided.



A welcoming and safe space to meet others who have similar experiences, and 'Get it!' Where, over a cuppa and cake you can speak openly about how you are coping...or not, make new friends and feel part of a community.



If you are nervous about coming along, bring a friend, or give our friendly team at EMAST a call on 01246 380415



1. In which city was the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest hosted?
2. Who won this year's Great British Bake Off?
3. Who won The Celebrity Traitors 2025?
4. Which former Strictly Come Dancing presenter is to host her own BBC chat show?
5. More than 300 of what were recorded in the UK this year, according to the latest data from the British Geological Survey?
6. What is the name of the Olympic swimmer who married his partner Holly Ramsay at Bath Abbey on Saturday amid a fallout with his family?
7. Singer Chris Rea died aged 74 in December 2025. What Christmas song is he known for?
8. Who won this year's edition of Strictly Come Dancing?
9. What was the most complained about TV programme of the year according to regulator Ofcom?
10. The UK will rejoin a European scheme from 2027. Can you name it?
11. Which film won the Best Picture Oscar at the 2025 awards?
12. Which country won the Eurovision Song Contest with their contestant JJ and the song Wasted Love?
13. Who was crowned the BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2025?
14. Who is threatening to sue the BBC over their editing of a Panorama programme aired last year?
15. Which song has been voted Greatest Hits Radio listeners'

favourite of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, for the seventh year in a row?

16. What jumped to a new record high of £299,862 in October, according to the Halifax?

17. ITV made which iconic former teenage drama available to stream from next month?

18. Who was Spotify's top global artist of 2025?

a) Taylor Swift b) Bad Bunny c) ABBA

19. Where was the Women's Rugby World Cup held in 2025?

a) Australia b) France c) England

20. How old did Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody' turn this year?

a) 40 b) 45 c) 50

21. What was the hottest temperature recorded in the UK in 2025? a) 34.2°C b) 35.5°C c) 35.8°C

22. Which of these films celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2025?

a) Jaws b) The Exorcist c) Grease

23. Which princess gave birth to her second child in January?

24. Which 90s rock band reunited for a tour and held their first performance since 2009?

25. Which world famous art gallery was robbed in October this year?

1. Basel, Switzerland. 2. Jasmín Mitchell. 3. Alan Carr. 4. Claudia Winkleman. 5. Earthquakes. 6. Adam Peaty. 7. Driving Home for Christmas. 8. Karen Carney. 9. Love Island. 10. Erasmus Student Exchange Scheme. 11. Anora. 12. Austria. 13. Rory McIlroy. 14. Donald Trump. 15. Bohemian Rhapsody. 16. Average house prices. 17. Byer Grove. 18. Bad Bunny. 19. England. 20. 50. 21. 35.8. 22. Jaws. 23. Princess Beatrice. 24. Oasis. 25. The Louvre.

**ANSWERS**

# GARDENING CLUB

## Gardening Tips for February/March

The transition from winter to early spring is a gentle but exciting time in the garden. Even in these cooler months, there are plenty of tasks that can be done safely and enjoyably, especially if you take care to work at a comfortable pace. Here are some tips tailored for seniors:

### 1. Plan and Prepare

Use February to plan your garden for the year ahead. Sketch out vegetable plots, flower beds, and containers.

Check tools, clean and sharpen secateurs, trowels, and spades. Well-maintained tools make gardening easier and safer.

### 2. Prune and Tidy

Late winter is ideal for pruning many shrubs and fruit trees, including apples, pears, and roses.

Remove any dead or damaged branches from trees and shrubs. This improves health and encourages growth.



Clear fallen leaves and debris from borders and paths to prevent slips and pests.

### 3. Soil Care

Prepare beds for sowing and planting by lightly digging and adding compost or well-rotted manure.

Mulch borders to protect emerging shoots and suppress weeds.

#### 4. Early Planting



Sow hardy vegetables such as broad beans, peas, and onions under cover or in prepared soil.

Start seeds indoors for tender vegetables and annual flowers, ready for transplanting later in spring.

Plant bare-root trees and shrubs while they are dormant.

#### 5. Care for Wildlife

Leave some winter flowers and seed heads for birds and pollinators.

Clean bird feeders and provide fresh water.

#### 6. Take Care of Yourself

Work in short sessions and pace yourself, using stools or raised beds to reduce bending.

Wear gloves and supportive footwear, and stay hydrated.

Even small, gentle tasks now will set your garden up for a vibrant spring. Enjoy the fresh air, the sights and smells of early growth, and the quiet satisfaction of preparing your outdoor space for the season ahead.

*We're always keen to hear your gardening tips or pictures to share. We'd love to hear if you've visited a beautiful garden too!*

Email [emast.admin@emast.org.uk](mailto:emast.admin@emast.org.uk)





# Meals for one

## Cheese, Leek and Bacon pie

### Ingredients

3 rashers of smoked bacon, cut into 2cm<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>in pieces

1 tsp olive oil

10g/<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>oz butter, plus extra for brushing the pastry (optional)

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> large leek, finely sliced

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> tsp mustard powder or Dijon mustard

2 tsp plain flour

200ml/7fl oz milk

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> tsp grated nutmeg

50g/<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>oz mature cheddar, grated

80–120g/3oz–4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>oz ready-rolled puff pastry (depending on the size of your dish), cut into 5cm/2in squares

salt and freshly ground black pepper



### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 220C/200C Fan/Gas 7.
2. Add the bacon to a cold ovenproof frying pan or skillet (18–20cm/7–8 inches in diameter) and place over a medium heat. Add the olive oil and fry the bacon, letting the fat render out, until the bacon is lightly browned.
3. Add the butter and leek. Cook for 4–5 minutes until the leek is soft.
4. Add the flour and cook for 2 minutes before slowly adding the milk, stirring constantly.

5. Add the nutmeg, mustard and cheddar and stir until the cheese has melted. Turn off the heat, taste and season with salt and black pepper.
6. Lay the pastry squares, overlapping slightly, on top of the pie filling. The amount you need will depend slightly on the shape and size of your dish. If you like, you can brush the top of the pastry with a little butter or milk, but this is only to add colour.
7. Bake for 20–25 minutes until the pastry is golden brown. Let it cool slightly before eating!

## Anytime Eggs

An easy one-pan egg dish, you could use whatever you have in the fridge to make it your own.

### Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2-3 cooked potatoes sliced
- handful cherry tomatoes sliced
- 2 spring onions sliced
- 1 egg few basil leaves



### Method

1. Heat the oil in a frying pan, then add the potato slices and fry on both sides until brown.
2. Add the tomatoes and spring onions and fry for about 1 min until softened.
3. Season with salt and pepper, then make a space in the pan. Gently break the egg into the space and fry until cooked to your liking.
4. Scatter over the basil leaves and serve.

# Raise funds for us for FREE

If you shop online, buy through EasyFundraising and they will donate a portion of what you spend to us, at no extra cost to you!

They partner with over 8,000 retailers from groceries and electricals to entertainment, travel and insurance so you can turn your daily shopping into much needed funds for us

They even have a mobile app and browser extension with a built in donation reminder so you won't forget to shop through them and generate your donation

To sign up, go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/emast> and click 'Start raising free donations today'

8,000+ retailers will donate to us whenever you shop with them



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LEWIS



Start at the  
easyfundraising  
website or app



Click out  
to where you'd  
like to shop



Checkout:  
prices are exactly  
the same!

The retailer sends  
a % of your spend  
to easyfundraising



They pass  
it on to us  
:)

# WAYS TO HELP EMAST



**1** Make a one off or regular donation through our Local Giving page [www.localgiving.org/charity/east-midlands-asbestos-support-team](http://www.localgiving.org/charity/east-midlands-asbestos-support-team). You can also donate by cheque (please use the form at the back of the magazine), bank transfer or standing order.

**2** Shopping online? Buy via EasyFundraising and we'll receive a donation at no extra cost to you. They partner with 8,000+ brands, from groceries and electricals to entertainment, travel and insurance. To find out more and sign up, go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/emast> and click 'Start raising free donations today'.

**3** Join our 200 Club lottery for just £1 per number per month, with each month's winner receiving half the proceeds and EMAST receiving the other half. To join, email [admin.assistant@emast.org.uk](mailto:admin.assistant@emast.org.uk) or call 01246 380 415

**4** Consider making a legacy in your will. EMAST has received much generous support this way. Talk to your solicitor about this and they will give you personalised advice.

**5** If you're a UK taxpayer, increase every £1 you donate by 25p by becoming a Gift Aider. There's no extra cost to you and it makes a huge difference to our fundraising. Return the form at the back of the magazine with your donation or contact us for an electronic copy.

# **SHED SPEAK**



By Dave Macgregor

Hi Guys.

Well, we are into a new year, I hope that you all enjoyed Christmas and the New Year.

EMAST is going to have a very busy year again with no signs of calls asking for help and advice reducing.

In March we will have our AGM in Lincoln, this will be advertised in our magazines and on social media. I would encourage you to try to attend as your attendance is a great support to the staff who work tirelessly helping and supporting people in the East Midlands suffering from asbestos related diseases .

We will be running our fundraising week again this year to coincide with Action Mesothelioma Day starting 28th June to 5th July. Thinking caps on please every pound helps, (you can start now with your fundraising, just let us know and we will support you).

The Trustees will be working in the background to help keep EMAST running dealing with accounts, our strategy, forward planning and many other things that are required to keep the charity sustainable and legal.

Right guys, I have a small issue or maybe a big issue. Looking back and reading some of the last issues of Shed

Speak to me it seems I am going over the same things. OK, some things need repeating but many don't.

It has become a bit boring in my opinion and I am running out of ideas as to what you guys want to read in Shed Speak, this is not helped with not being able to get any feedback from you guys.

I do believe the men need a space in the magazines, this space a precious commodity so we need to use the space well.

Like any magazine I need something to write about. News, interesting articles, your ideas etc. Please send these to the office and they will pass them on to me.

My last point I would like to make is why is it so few of you go to the monthly meetings or the AGM or get involved with fund raising.

Going to these events helps us to fund helping many others just like yourselves. You cannot say they are not for you if you have not attended any and I don't mean just once.



That's me, I have had my say its up to you may be the ladies have some ideas.

That's me for this time

Stay safe.

Dave

# YOUR LEGACY COULD BE EMAST'S FUTURE

Do you have a will, and is it up to date? It's important that we all have an up-to-date will as it can make things so much easier for our family when we die.

If you are thinking about amending your will, or even making one for the first time, then please consider leaving a legacy to EMAST. We have received some very generous donations in the past, that have made a real difference to the services that we can deliver.

Unlike the big national charities, your gift to EMAST won't be soaked up by large running costs. Past legacies have paid for bereavement support meetings, memorial events and literature that raises awareness of the dangers of asbestos.

To arrange a legacy, discuss it directly with your solicitor who can give you personalised advice.



A legacy in your will or an In Memoriam collection can secure our future so that we can support more victims of asbestos exposure



## 200 CLUB NEWS



Congratulations to our latest 200 Club winners, Shay Boyle (no 77) and Carol Harris (no 124) We hope they enjoyed their winnings!

The 200 Club is a valuable regular donation that we use to continue supporting people with asbestos related diseases and their families and we are incredibly grateful for your generous contributions.

Since we launched the lottery in 2016, we've worked hard to keep prices unchanged to ensure they are reasonable and affordable. However, as you can appreciate, the costs of running both the 200 Club and the organisation overall have continued to rise over the years. Therefore, we've had to adjust our prices to cover these rising costs and **from January 2026, 200 Club renewals and new numbers will be £2 each per month.**

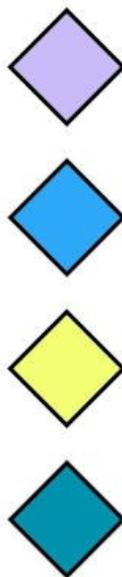
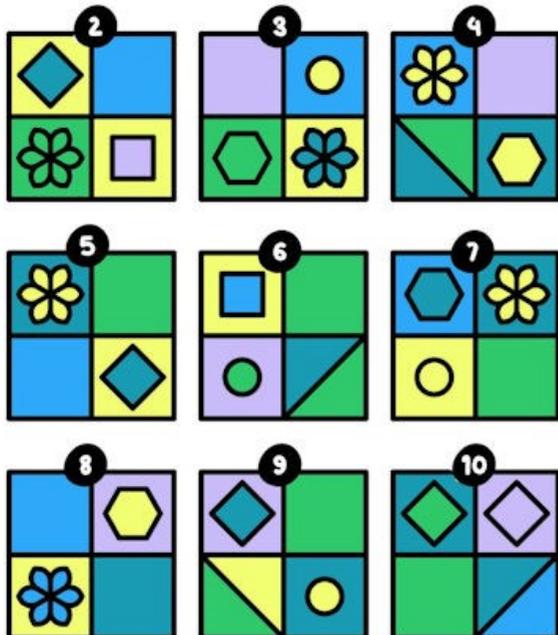
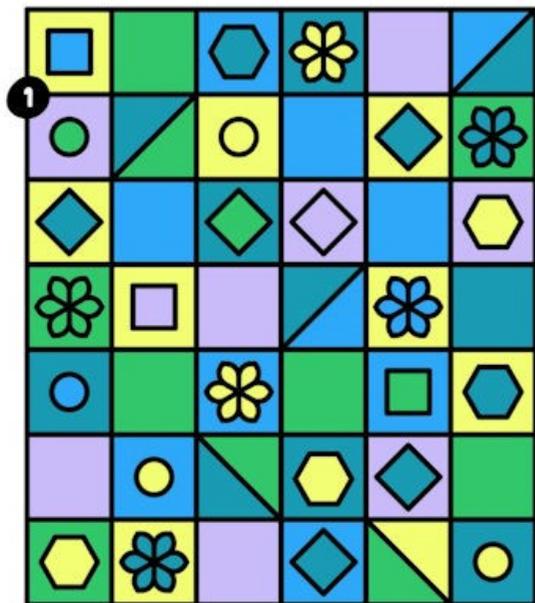
With a smaller pool of participants than larger lotteries, you still have a greater chance of winning, plus the new 200 Club cash prizes will be larger! We truly appreciate your understanding and ongoing support for our small charity - your participation continues to have a meaningful impact.

For more information on joining the 200 Club, please get in touch with us at [admin.assistant@emast.org.uk](mailto:admin.assistant@emast.org.uk) or 01246 380 415.

# PUZZLE CORNER

## MISSING FRAGMENTS

WHICH FRAGMENTS  
#2 - #10 ARE PART  
OF IMAGE #1.



# WINTER FUN



SEASONEDTIMES.COM

## ACROSS

1. WINTERY SURFING
2. MOVING IMAGES
3. LENGTHS OF WARMING FABRIC
4. INTERPRETING SYMBOLS FOR MEANING
5. EXPOSING TO DRY HEAT FOR CONSUMPTION



## DOWN

1. SNOWY FIGURE
2. CRAFT OF CREATING INTERCONNECTED LOOPS
3. SOURCE OF WARMTH
4. DESIGNED TO SOLVE
7. MOVING ON FLAT RUNNERS

# NEW YEAR WORD SEARCH



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

MINUTE

DANCE

PARTY

CLOCK

CELEBRATE

MIDNIGHT

NEW YEAR

JANUARY

COUNTDOWN

FIREWORKS

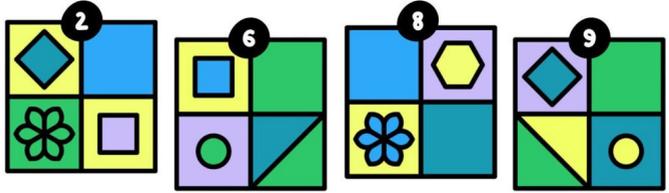
RESOLUTION

BALLOON

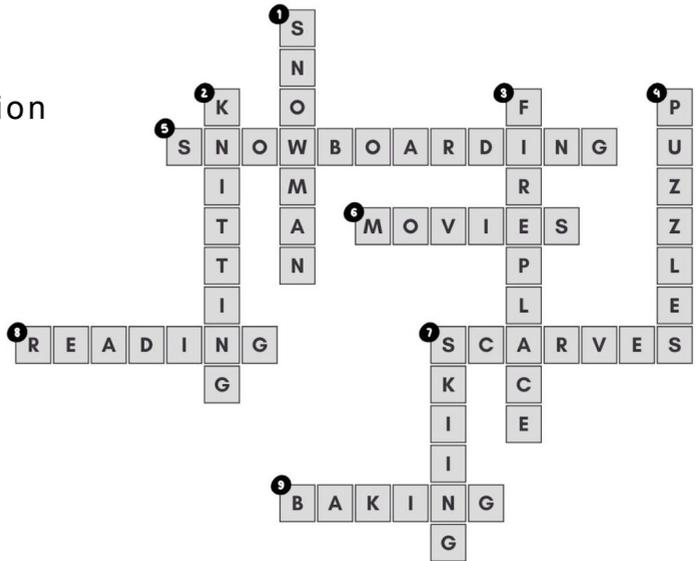


# Puzzle Answers

## Missing Fragments Solution



## Winter Fun Solution



## New Year Word Search Solution

# DONATE TO EMAST



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Full address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE TICK THE BOX IF YOU'D LIKE TO GIFT AID YOUR DONATION:**

I am a UK Income or Capital Gains taxpayer and I want to Gift Aid this donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to EMAST.

Gift Aid

If I have ticked the Gift Aid box, I confirm that I am a UK Income or Capital Gains taxpayer. I have read this statement and want EMAST to reclaim tax on the donations detailed on this form, given on the date shown. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax or Capital Gains tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all of my donations, it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given. I will notify EMAST if I want to change this declaration, if I change my name or address or if I no longer pay sufficient tax.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE MAKE ALL CHEQUES PAYABLE TO 'EMAST' AND SEND ALONGSIDE THIS FORM TO 1 ROSE HILL EAST, CHESTERFIELD, S40 1NU**

You can also make a BACS payment (please call us on 01246 380 415 for our bank details) or donate at [www.localgiving.org/charity/east-midlands-asbestos-support-team](http://www.localgiving.org/charity/east-midlands-asbestos-support-team)

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION!**