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COME FOR COFFEE

Letter from the Editor

Hello again and welcome...

Since 1990, Macmillan Coffee Morning has brought together millions of people from across the UK to have fun and raise money for a good cause. Coffee Morning is usually the last Friday of September each year. This year's Coffee Morning Day is Friday 26 September 2025. However, you can host any time of the year, whenever suits you best.

Their first ever Coffee Morning was a small affair with a simple idea: guests would gather over coffee and donate the cost of their cuppa to Macmillan in the process. It was so effective they did it again the next year – only this time nationally! Since then, Coffee Morning has raised over £165.5 million for Macmillan.

So, on September 26th, why not catch up over a cuppa, enjoy some gorgeous treats – and the money you raise at your coffee morning will help make sure no one has to face cancer alone. To sign up for your free Coffee Morning Kit, visit the Macmillan website at www.coffee.macmillan.org.uk You will find everything you need, including posters and games to download from their top tips page, ready for you to host a brilliant get together. I hope you all have a wonderful day!

And the thought I will leave you with this month:-

"People rise to the challenge when it is their challenge". (Belasco & Stayer)

Sheila

Until next time...

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Get in touch...

The Village Breeze is a local community magazine and business directory distributed monthly to 8,000 homes and businesses in Appleby Magna, Donisthorpe, Linton, Measham, Moira, Oakthorpe and Overseal.

Deadline for next issue

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Drop us an email

Read the magazine online at

Big Hearts, Little Minds

This month's short story is dedicated to teachers everywhere – especially to those of you who teach in a **Nursery School.**

"GOOD MORNING, LITTLE ACORNS! I'm sorry that Hazel, your regular teacher, can't be with you today. Unfortunately, she's off sick. Yes, I can see you're disappointed. A nervous break . . . err, bad headache. So, I'm afraid, you've got ME! No, please don't boo! I'm Marty – short for Martha, NO, Simon, MARTY with an Mnot an . . .! We don't use that word, now do we? "Glad to see you're all wearing your new name badges.

"The boy at the back waving both his hands in the air? Hugo? You want to go to the toilet? For a wee? Oh, you want a poo? Well, off you go - remember to wash your hands after you've wiped your...You want a wee, Esther? Be quick, then!

Very smart! Now, have you all got your bottles? Make

sure you drink plenty of water, please.

"So, today, we're going to draw and colour a dinosaur. How exciting is that, eh? NO Becky, I may look ancient, but I'm certainly NOT a dinosaur! You'll find a large sheet of paper and crayons on the desk in front of you...Byron – give Mahendra back his crayons. NOW! Thank you.

> "Donna - STOP staring out of the window and get on with your drawing. No, I'm NOT shouting at you - SORRY! Don't start crying, pleeease!. .. Aaron – what are you fiddling with under your desk? Well, I'd rather you didn't - it's not nice in front of the other children!

"I'm coming around now to see how you're all getting on . . . Ah! Hugo and Esther – you're back. Return to your seats, please – and pull your pants up properly, Hugo!

> "Wow! That's a lovely picture, Pablo. Well done! But next time, try to colour WITHIN the lines

- NOT all over the desk! . . . And why are you wandering around the classroom, Amelia? You're bored? SIT DOWN!

"Lin! I'm sure that Jason doesn't want a bia red love heart on his face! Yes, I know you like him. A lot. Well, okay, LOVE him. Let's hope it washes off... What do you want, Hugo? Not again, surely? But you've only just been! A wee this time? Anyone else? Rosie? Oh, go on, then!

"Now, attention everybody! Does anyone know what day it is today? No, not Sunday, Roland. The girl at the front? Sam? Oh! You're a BOY - SORRY!

It was the long hair! Stop giggling class! I am not SHOUTING, Donna! No. Sam, today is NOT my 100th Birthday!! Anyone know the answer?

Well, I'll tell you - it's School Photo Day! How exciting is that!

"After lunch, we're walking in a crocodile to the Assembly Hall. A nice young lady is going to take your photographs. Don't pull that face, Darcie! What? You don't want a picture taken? You've aot a spot on the end of your nose? Okay! OKAY! NO PHOTO! I get it!

"Now, children, how are we doing? Oh, that's a bit different, Salvador! A dinosaur with six legs, two heads and eight eyes! Very, err, artistic! And take a look at Dinesh's drawing! It's supposed to look like me, is it? That's very unkind! . . . Hillary – GET DOWN! We DON'T stand on our desks, do we?

"Aahh, there goes the school bell! Thank God - SORRY! End of the lesson. Stop cheering, children - I can't hear myself think! Yes, I DO have a brain, Albert!

"Right then, off you go! Playtime, my little darlings now where did I put my headache tablets . . ."





Ashby Woulds Town Council

Ashby Woulds Community Hub

Our new Community Hub is open and available for hire. The Hub consists of a main room with toilets and has direct access to a functioning kitchen. WIFI, tables and chairs are available. The room can accommodate up to 50 people and there is a large outdoor secure space. There is also a large car park. Regular weekly hire is available in addition to ad hoc bookings. For further information and to arrange a look round please contact the town council office.



Town Council Contacts

Town Mayor Councillor: Laurence Ordish Town Council Office: 01283 552784

Laurence.o@ashbywouldstowncouncil.gov.uk

The office is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings 9am-1pm and is easily accessible from the main car park.

Email: clerk@ashbywouldstowncouncil.gov.uk Telephone: 01283 552784

Visit our website:

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Coffee Mornings

Our coffee mornings continue to grow bigger and bigger and provide a welcoming and friendly place to gather and chat over a hot drink and biscuit or two.

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Read now, not later

Wish you didn't keep putting off tasks until another day? These highly recommended books will help you beat procrastination.



INDISTRACTABLE by Nir Eyal

Perfect for professionals, students and anyone battling digital distractions, this book teaches readers how to reclaim focus in an age of constant interruptions. Nir Eyal combines science with actionable advice to help readers identify internal triggers, develop better habits and create distraction-free environments. It's an empowering guide for anyone who feels overwhelmed.



EAT THAT FROG by Brian Tracy

Successful people don't try to do everything. They learn to focus on the most important tasks and make sure they get done. Tracy offers 21 practical steps to avoid procrastination and improve time management. Although this was published in 2013, when digital distractions were far fewer than they are now, the principles still apply, and the book is a concise and motivational read for anyone who finds themselves delaying meaningful work.



ATOMIC HABITS by James Clear

World-renowned habits expert James Clear knows that real change comes from the compound effect of hundreds of small decisions: doing two push-ups a day, waking up five minutes earlier or holding a single short phone call. This book is for anyone who wants to make small, sustainable changes that lead to big results. James Clear breaks down the science of habit formation with simple strategies for building good habits and breaking bad ones.



JUST ONE THING by Dr Michael Mosley

While not directly related to productivity, this book by the late health presenter and writer Michael Mosley explores how various simple activities performed throughout the day can positively impact your health and well-being. It's an easy book to dip in and out of, and if you are feeling physically and mentally at your best, you are much more likely to be a high achiever in your daily work or study life.



STOLEN FOCUS by Johann Hari

This is a compelling exploration of why our ability to concentrate is declining and what we can do about it. Drawing on extensive interviews with scientists and experts, Hari identifies 12 causes of our diminishing attention, including the rise of social media, constant digital stimulation, poor sleep, stress, environmental toxins, and even the consumption of processed food. This book is ideal for anyone who feels overwhelmed, scatterbrained, or burned out in the digital age.



THE ONE THING by Gary Keller and Jay Papasan

The authors explain the power of focusing on just one thing that truly matters, rather than juggling a million tasks. The writing is straightforward and easy to follow, with lots of reallife examples. It's not just theory; it gives you steps you can actually use. If you're feeling overwhelmed or stuck, this book is a game-changer.



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Pattern perfection

Whether it's a textural geometric, a country-style floral or a bold, retro/ modern design, introducing pattern always adds character. It could be a few simple pieces that feature understated designs for subtle interest, an eyecatching, oversized pattern as a focal point or a complex combination of patterns for real impact.

Find your inspiration

Look at books, magazines and websites for ideas, and then look for inspiration in the pattern books created by fabric and wallpaper designers, where everything is already coordinated, for example, stripes with damasks, spots with florals.



A downstairs cloakroom is the obvious place to try out a large-scale wallpaper. Beware: very bold patterns used extensively may date or you could get sick of them.

Layer patterns for dynamic effect

Think of starting with the most dominant pattern and adding in secondary and tertiary patterns (and maybe more). Remember that stripes and very small patterns can be brilliant at coordinating with more intricate patterns. And don't forget textures - the slub of raw silk, the herringbone of woven linen, chunky knitted wool.

Choose coordinating tones

A cautious approach would be to match colours exactly. But it may become dull. You can achieve excellent coordination and sophistication by working with tones. Colours with similar tonal values will work together, making it easier to combine patterns. Density, too, is a factor, as loose, open patterns give a visual 'breather', while intricate patterns with closely placed designs have more drama.

Mix and match styles

You could choose everything from the same 'genre', for instance, florals or geometrics, but a mixand-match approach can be extremely successful, provided there is some cohesion in terms of colour, tone, scale or style.



Create a mood board

This allows you to assess how colours, patterns and surface textures work together. There are websites that will help, or you can pull together swatches of fabric, wallpaper and so on. Swap samples in and out, and, if you have large samples, hang them and live with them for a few days.

Consider scale

In general, bigger patterns are better suited to bigger rooms and smaller patterns to cosier rooms – though there's something to be said for the occasional use of a huge pattern in a small space.



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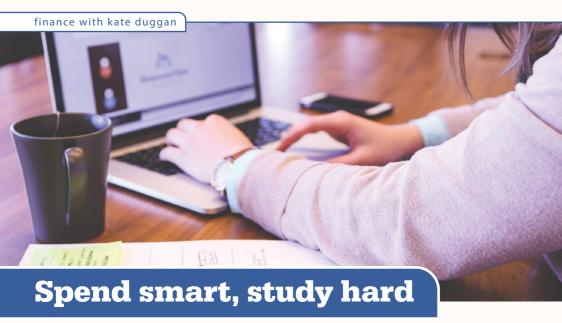
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SET A BUDGET

This is basic but crucial. Students need to add up everything they're receiving from loans, bursaries, savings, parents and work, and calculate how much they have available to spend every week. The key items of expenditure are likely to be accommodation (plus bills for anyone living out of halls) and food. What's left after essential outgoings is all yours. Try hard not to bust that budget. Free apps like Money Lover can help.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR BANK ACCOUNT

Student bank accounts often offer incentives that can save you money, such as discounts on dining and entertainment, or cashback. For those who travel frequently by rail, Santander's Edge account gives you a free four-year 16-25 Railcard along with a generous interest-free overdraft of up to £1,500. In fact, most student accounts offer a 0% overdraft, although you should try to keep this for emergencies.

SHOP SMART

The area where you can make a huge difference is your food shop. Go to cheaper supermarkets like Aldi and Lidl, and sign up to loyalty schemes like Tesco Clubcard, Sainsbury's Nectar Card and Lidl Plus to net you money off future purchases. Plan your meals ahead to avoid wasting money on unnecessary items, and opt for own-brand products. Frozen veg is cheaper than fresh and just as nutritious.

Knock even more money off by shopping in the evening when prices are often slashed and by making the most of discount vouchers. A good place to find these is on the MoneySavingExpert website (www. moneysavingexpert.com/deals/discount-vouchercodes). Many students also swear by the Too Good to Go app, which lists leftover food at up to half price.

PAY LESS TO LIVE

Gas, electricity, water, wifi – these and many other household bills can be painfully expensive. But you can try to cut the cost. Study in libraries and other uni or public places like cafés to save on heating, lighting and the cost of powering and charging your laptop.

Cook up bulk batches of food and freeze it - that will help you save on bills. It's also much cheaper to cook with an air fryer, which, according to The Eco Experts, costs £250 a year less to use than an electric cooker.

DIG AROUND FOR DISCOUNTS

Student discount schemes can be a real money-saver. Unidays and Student Beans are popular. You sign up for free and get exclusive student discounts online and in some stores. A Totum card also gives good reductions but costs £14.99 a year.

MoneySaving Expert has a dedicated student discounts and deals page (www.moneysavingexpert. com/deals/student-discounts).

Finally, consider some of the cashback sites, such as TopCashback and Quidco. If you have to spend your money, you might as well see if you can get a few percent back.



Understanding how Income Tax works can seem confusing, particularly when you're first starting out in the workplace. Knowing how Income Tax and the Personal Allowance work will allow you to figure out if you're being paid the right amount and help you budget

Income Tax is charged on most types of income. The most common way is on your wages and salary from work, but you also need to pay Income Tax on:

- · profits, if you're self employed
- interest and dividends from savings and investments
- rent you get if you're a landlord.

You don't usually pay Income Tax on all your taxable income. This is because most people qualify for one or more allowances. An allowance is an amount of otherwise taxable income that you can earn each year, without paying tax on it.

Understanding Income Tax

Income	Income Tax bands 2025/26				
£0 to £12,570	0%				
£12,571 to £50,270	Basic rate: 20%				
£50,271 to £125,140	Higher rate: 40%				
Over £125,140	Additional rate: 45%				

Everyone, including students, has something called a Personal Allowance.

For the 2025/26 tax year, the Personal Allowance is £12,570. If you earn less than this, you usually won't have to pay any Income Tax. Your Personal Allowance might be bigger if you claim Marriage Allowance or Blind Person's Allowance. Or it might be smaller if you're a high earner or if you owe tax from a previous tax year.

Income Tax is made up of different bands. This means as your income increases, so does the amount of Income Tax you pay.

The table above shows the rates of Income Tax depending on how much you earn.

Remember, you don't pay Income Tax at the same rate on all your income. You only pay the rate of Income Tax on your income in the bracket.



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Plum, pink pepper & watercress loaves

Making the most of in-season juicy plums, these deliciously sweet treats are perfect with morning coffee or an afternoon cuppa.

Detail...

Serves 12

Preparation time 10 minutes Cooking time 20 minutes

You will need...

- Butter and flour, for lining the tins
- · 2 tsp lemon juice
 - 90g whole milk
- 150g plums, stones discarded, flesh chopped into small pieces
- 120g light muscovado sugar, plus 2 tbsp
- 250g plain flour
- 13g baking powder
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp pink peppercorns, crushed
- 1 tbsp watercress, finely chopped
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- · 150g rapeseed oil
- 2 large eggs

To serve...

- Icing sugar, for dusting
- · Plum slices, to decorate
- Whipped cream (optional)

Method...

- 1. Preheat the oven to 180°C, fan 160°C, gas mark 4. Grease and lightly flour 12 mini loaf tins.
- 2. Mix the lemon juice into the milk and set aside to room temperature.
- 3. Mix the chopped plums with the 2 tbsp muscovado sugar and set aside.
- In a separate, large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, peppercorns, remaining sugar and watercress.
- In a jug, mix the vanilla, reserved milk mixture, oil and eggs.
- Pour the wet mixture into the dry and whisk in a clockwise direction from the edges inwards. Do not overmix; a few lumps are fine.
- Carefully stir through the plums and the residual syrup and divide the mixture equally between the loaf tins.
- Bake in the preheated oven for 18-20 minutes or until a skewer comes out clean. Cool in the tins for 10 minutes before turning out to cool completely.
- Once cold, dust with icing sugar and decorate with plum slices. This is fantastic with pillows of whipped cream, if liked.



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Avoid trip hazards

A good travel agent handles all this for you. They'll streamline the logistics, create

Planning an amazing holiday? You should use an expert.

The advent of cheap airlines, flight booking apps and accommodation sites means the basic elements of many holidays can be booked online. Add in Tripadvisor for some attractions and you might question why you'd need a travel agent.

It's certainly true that most people will arrange a short trip to a European city for themselves. But if the holiday is long-haul, involves a varied itinerary, or the local language is unfamiliar, self-booking can be fraught with challenges.

Too much choice. As soon as you start to plan a more complex trip, you are likely to be overwhelmed with choice. Hours spent looking at airline and hotel reviews can leave you unable to finalise a decision.

Travel agents often have extensive knowledge of destinations, hotels and activities. They may know about under-the-radar experiences or be able to secure priority bookings for some of the more difficult-to-access places.

Too many factors. The more involved your trip, the more challenging it will be to coordinate everything. If there's a group, if people are joining you at different times, if you are visiting several different places using multiple travel methods – it can become so complicated you spend more time managing the holiday than enjoying it.

a coherent itinerary and help ensure everything runs smoothly, so you can focus on enjoying the experience.

Money-saving? The main reason you might prefer to book your own holiday is the belief that you'll save money. But as a small party, you're not going to be offered any special deals.

Agents sometimes have access to discounts not available to the public - think room upgrades, resort credits or complimentary breakfasts. They may also save you money by bundling flights, hotels and activities.

Don't think there's an extra charge either; most agents get commission on the booking, so there's no additional cost to you.

Problem solving. If something goes wrong mid-trip, you have someone to help. They'll be able to reroute and rebook you, deal with airlines and hotels on your behalf and even help with compensation or refunds.

Just relax! Life admin takes up so much of your time at home that doing even more of it while you're away really isn't a holiday. Most trips will build in some free time for you, but having someone in the know' help plan your holiday is part of the joy of going away.

If booking your dream trip seems daunting, then using a travel agent will be well worth it. When it's the holiday of a lifetime, you want it to be as stress-free as possible and make every minute count.







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PLAN YOUR JOURNEY

If you're driving an electric vehicle a long distance this summer, the chances are you'll need to top up at least once. If it's a familiar route, look at what chargers are available on the journey and then work out which one will best suit your vehicle.

Range anxiety is a common phenomenon among EV drivers. However, to prevent it, all you need is to drive carefully, considerately and know where to stop off. Then, a long journey in an electric vehicle can be as stress-free as in a petrol or diesel car.

TOP UP THE NIGHT BEFORE

If you have a home charger, top up the night before. This means you can start your journey fully charged, so that potentially you'll stop less and get to your destination more quickly.

All home chargers will be a slow AC 7kW unit, which will top up an average EV overnight, but it will just reassure you that your vehicle is ready to go when you set off in the morning.

TAKE SNACKS AND DRINKS

If your EV won't cover your journey on one charge, stopping off to top up can take time. So, to ensure that no one goes hungry or thirsty, take food and drink with you. This will make the journey less stressful.

What's more, always ensure you drink plenty of fluids when you're on the move to avoid dehydration, which can mess with your concentration levels, make you easily frustrated and leave you less able to make decisions quickly.

MANAGE YOUR SPEED

Changing your driving style can help to eke out every last kilowatt from your EV. Driving an electric vehicle at 70mph on the motorway can drastically deplete the charge, as the motor is having to work harder to keep it moving. However, if you drop back to 60mph, not only are you still making decent progress, but you can improve the battery's efficiency and lose less charge overall. You might even get to your destination more quickly, as you may not have to stop to charge as many times.

DOWNLOAD EV CHARGING APPS

There are several different EV charging apps available for your smartphone. They can tell you where a charger is located, how many sockets are available and what sort of plugs they use. Some apps will also tell you how many chargers are in use at the time and if the devices are functioning as intended. Apps include Zap-Map, ChargePoint, Pod Point and Charge Map.

HAVE A 'PLAN B'

Just because you're driving an EV doesn't always mean your journey will run smoothly. If you encounter diversions, roadworks, heavy traffic or poor weather, always have a backup plan.

If you're diverted, make sure you know where the next available charging point is to head off range anxiety.



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Travelling is the perfect opportunity to indulge in a little retail therapy. Whether you're on the hunt for luxury brands, traditional crafts, eclectic



street markets or a touch of window shopping, here are five of the world's best destinations for flashing your plastic.

Dubai. United Arab Emirates

Home to one of the world's largest malls - and the 'world's first

shopping resort' - Dubai is undoubtedly one of the most exciting shopping destinations on the planet.

At Dubai Mall, expect theme parks, a waterfall, fountains, an indoor souk and designers including Chanel, Louis Vuitton and Valentino, Check out the Mall of the Emirates, which houses the Middle East's first indoor ski resort, and the Gold Souk's jewellery stores.

New York, USA

Many people travel to New York for the shops alone. With dozens of enclaves spread out across the five boroughs, it's well-nigh impossible to cover them all. You could spend a whole day browsing the department stores of Barneys, Macy's and Bloomingdale's!

Shop high-street brands in SoHo or head to Fifth Avenue for designer brands and some of the world's most striking window displays. There are plenty of shopping hotspots outside Manhattan too; hop over to Brooklyn for antique shops with vintage-chic vibes and markets galore.

Tokyo, Japan

Japan's capital has it all: high-end fashion, vintage wares, traditional handmade crafts and gadgets you didn't know existed.

For a spot of luxury, make your way to Ginza, which is bursting with designer boutiques and luxury brand outlets. Watch out

for wacky Japanese street style in the Harajuku district and get lost in the shopping jungle of Shinjuku, where the department store Isetan has its mammoth flagship store, spread across eight buildings. Here you'll be treated like royalty from the moment you step inside.

Milan, Italy

Many of fashion's most famous design houses are Italian, so it's no wonder many luxury brands (including Gucci, Prada and Versace) all have flagship stores in Milan.

This legendary fashion capital is known for housing potentially the world's most important fashion district -Quadrilatero d'Oro. Admire the 'golden neighbourhood's' jewellers and fashion boutiques, and treat yourself to Italy's famed high-quality leather and cashmere goods. There are shopping opportunities for bargain hunters too. Il Salvagente is Milan's best-known and oldest outlet, with three floors of discounted goods.

Istanbul, Türkiye

Türkiye's cultural capital has arguably some of the

best shopping in the world. The Grand Bazaar - the oldest and largest covered market in the world - should be your first stop. Amongst its 4,000-plus stalls, you'll find everything from handwoven scarves and jewellery emblazoned with precious stones, to fragrant spices, ceramics and carpets.

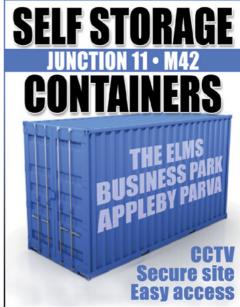
Explore the city's shopping centres, including Istinye Park and the avantgarde Kanyo outdoor shopping mall.





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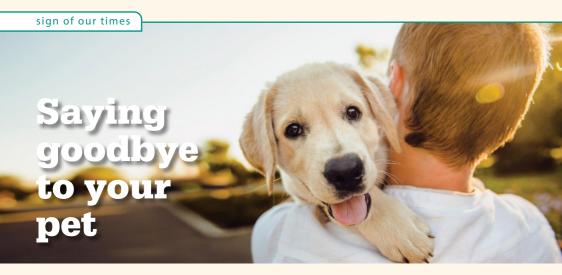
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Coping with the death of an animal companion can be an incredibly challenging, overwhelming and emotional experience. We all grieve in different ways, but don't feel you should face the pain of losing a pet alone.

The sudden or unexpected loss of a pet can leave us with a whole host of emotions – from feeling shocked and struggling to cope, to Ioneliness and despair - but it's completely normal to feel upset. If you've had to make the decision to have your beloved pet companion put to sleep, while it's natural, try not to feel guilty or blame yourself.

As hard as it might be, try to take each day as it comes. The house might feel emptier than usual, and your daily routine might be turned upside down with no dog to walk or groom, or cat to feed.

HELPFUL CONTACTS

Taking the time to honour your pet and process your loss is an important part of healing. Look for pet loss support groups, either in person or online.

ORGANISATIONS ON HAND TO HELP INCLUDE:

- PDSA (www.pdsa.org.uk)
- RSPCA (www.rspca.org.uk)
- Blue Cross (www.bluecross.org.uk)
- Animal Samaritans (www.animalsamaritans.org.uk)
- · Cats Protection (www.cats.org.uk)
- Living with Pet Bereavement (www.livingwithpetbereavement.com)

Treasure your memories and talk to family and friends about how you feel. Don't feel embarrassed or ashamed of your emotions; they are not your enemy, simply part of the healing process. There is no right or wrong way to mourn and to cope with your grief, but - and it may not seem like it just now - gradually it will get easier to come to terms with the passing of your companion.

HELPING OTHERS UNDERSTAND

For youngsters, it can be especially upsetting as they become very attached to pets. It may also be their first experience of death or loss of something close to them. Talk to them honestly. Emotions can include feeling they've lost a best friend or the only one who understood them and knew how they felt when there was a problem at school or with friends. There may also be feelings of anger and guilt that something they said or did makes them think they contributed to the death.

> Other family pets can also show signs that could be interpreted as grief when another pet passes away.

Signs may include:

- Loss of appetite
- Crying or whimpering
- Searching for their friend

Try not to become too emotional in front of them and speak to them in an upbeat way.

WAYS TO REMEMBER

Once you've taken time to grieve, you might start feeling you want to celebrate your pet's life and reflect on the good times. Consider creating a memorial. This could be a photo album, scattering their ashes in a special place or planting something new in their favourite spot in the garden. Celebrating their life can shift the focus from grief to gratitude.



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CHILDREN'S PUZZLE PAGE WHAT'S THE TIME AT SCHOOL Why did Can you help work out what time it is? Look at the clocks and write the time you see as a 24-hour digital time (like this: 08:40). the echo get a detention on the first day? SCHOOL STARTS MORNING BREAK LUNCHTIME Why does a maths book always look sad? DN What does an **ASSEMBLY** HOME TIME English teacher like to eat for breakfast? BACK 2 SCHOOL WORDFIT ART BREAK BUS COMPUTER DESK FRIENDS FUN HOMEWORK LAB LIBRARY 10 SIR LUNCHBOX MATHS MUSIC 12 13 14 PAD PEN **PLAYGROUND** SIT 15 SPORT TRY





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Make gardening kids' play

As the new school year begins, September is a good month in which to turn your attention to the garden. This late summer period is the last hurrah before the daylight hours shrink and the air cools. Take some time off work or make time within your busy schedule, if necessary, to enjoy your outdoor space during a month of calm.



The month is generally a productive one for those who have been growing for the kitchen. You should be able to harvest figs, apples, pears, blackberries, grapes and tomatoes. There will be fresh vegetables to enjoy, including leafy greens, runner beans, squash, potatoes, onions and carrots. It's also the perfect time to plant spring-flowering bulbs.

It's a particularly beautiful time outdoors, with golden light that is less harsh than during mid-summer. Certain plants save their best for this time of year, including ornamental grasses, perennials including Aster,



Japanese anemone and Rudbeckia. and shrubs such as Hydrangea. Did you know there are now up to 600 named cultivars of Hydrangea?



Inspire the younger generation

It's wonderful to encourage any kids in your life to develop a lifelong interest in plants. Donate a small patch of garden and help them design the content. Have you heard of a zoo garden, for example? The names of the plants can represent animals, and each can be labelled, perhaps using a model of the animal too.

Easy-to-grow plants for a zoo garden

- · The name lamb's ear refers to Stachys byzantina, a drought-tolerant evergreen perennial that will form a carpet of soft, fluffy 'ears'. Leaves and stems are covered in white, woolly hairs.
- Bergenia cordifolia, or elephant's ears, is an easy-togrow evergreen with big, tough leaves that look just slightly like the ears of Jumbo.
- Catnip (Nepeta cataria), is a member of the mint family, and cats love to roll around in the aromatic foliage and flowers thanks to the chemical compound Nepetalactone, which is also an insect repellent.
- Dogwoods (Cornus sanguinea or alba) are shrubs that are brilliant in winter. Cut them down to the ground in very early spring and the new growth will give you vertical stems of colour next year. They're easy to grow at the back of your children's zoo garden.
- Fleabane, Erigeron karvinskianus, was so named because it was believed the dried leaves and flowers repelled fleas. This delightful little daisy-like perennial self-seeds into cracks and dry places.

Try building a miniature garden in an unusual container such as a dish, bottle, box or shoe. Take a tiny world and become absorbed by the endless possibilities that micro-gardening presents. It's not only the kids who will become enthralled.



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TWO MUNUTE TRUAL

PRYAIT

You have two minutes to find all the everyday words of three or more letters that can be made from the letters above. Plurals are allowed, proper nouns are not.

3 letters: 18 4 letters: 12 5 letters: 2 6 letters: 1

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Clearing up the confusion

A million people in the UK are living with dementia, but how much do you know about it?

Is dementia the same as Alzheimer's?

Dementia is a catch-all term for a set of symptoms that affect memory, problemsolving, language and behaviour.



Two out of three people with dementia have Alzheimer's, which mostly affects older people. It's a progressive disease caused by a buildup of substances in the brain, amyloid and tau, which damages it.

There are other types too. Vascular dementia is the next most common, caused by damage to blood vessels that supply the brain. The third most common form is dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB), where clumps of a protein called alpha-synuclein build up around nerve cells in the brain. It can also cause slow movement and is related to Parkinson's. It's possible to have mixed dementia, such as Alzheimer's and vascular dementia together.

'Mild cognitive impairment' refers to mild

problems with thinking and memory. Causes include stress, sleep disorders, medication side effects and thyroid conditions; sufferers may or may not go on to develop dementia.

What are the signs of dementia?

Whatever the cause, the early symptoms are broadly similar. They include:

- Forgetting recent events or people
- · Persistently repeating yourself
- Problems making decisions and following instructions
- Mood or personality changes, including anxiety and irritability
- Being confused about time or place
- · Struggling to find the right words

People can become more aggressive, develop unusual sleep patterns, wander or become paranoid as symptoms get worse.

What can I do about it?

You might be thinking, there's no cure, so why bother? However, getting a diagnosis can help you make adjustments so you can continue living independently, open the door to extra support, and enable you to plan for the future, such as setting up a lasting power of attorney. And it could be that a trip to the GP will rule out dementia and pinpoint another cause of your confusion.

There are treatments available, including four medications that temporarily ease dementia symptoms for some people. They are best taken at an early stage, though side effects, including headaches and dizziness, are common. Your GP can refer you to talking therapies to help with your mental health.

Research into a cure is progressing rapidly. Two new drugs that can slow down the progression of Alzheimer's, lecanemab and donanemab, have been approved for use in the UK, but are only available

privately. Other drugs showing promise include semaglutide marketed as Ozempic/Wegovy for Type 2 diabetes and weight loss. People taking it have been found to have a lower risk of developing dementia.

Can I stop myself from developing dementia?

There's no guarantee, but you can increase your chances of staying cognitively fit by:

- Not smoking
- · Drinking moderately
- · Correcting hearing and vision problems
- · Staying a healthy weight
- Keeping physically active
- Managing conditions like high blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes
- · Keeping mentally active and socially connected



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CROSSWORD 10

ACROSS

- 6 Attractive (6)
- 8 Allow (6)
- 9 Bite persistently (4)
- 10 Chosen (8)
- 11 Ripping (7)
- 13 Acknowledge (5)
- 15 Quarrel (5)
- 17 Secured (7)
- 20 Non-military person (8)
- 21 Neat (4)
- 23 Suppose (6)
- 24 Surplus (6)

DOWN

- 1 Midday (4)
- 2 Reply (6)
- 3 Type of fruit (5)
- 4 Found (6)
- 5 Similarly (8)
- 7 Relieving (6)

DOWN cont.,

- 12 Soonest (8)
- 14 Alter (6)
- 16 Special (6)
- 18 Unbroken (6)
- 19 Conceals (5)
- 22 Hurry (4)

Each letter in this puzzle is represented by a number between 1 and 26. The codes for three letters are shown. As you find the letters enter them in the box below.

2	3	4	ľ
6	7	8	
10	11	12	
14	15	16	
18	19	20	
22	23	24	
26			
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6				9			3

3 9 1

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987691872 6978819

CODEMORD

ANSWERS...

	11		2		23		25		17		26	
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			12		12		24		12		15	
10	12	3	24	12	21	15		17	23	3	7	18
	14				15		4				19	
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	11	Ů	5		6		21		5		18	Ī

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Alison Hammond's vibrant personality and infectious laughter have made her a TV favourite.

Physically, Alison Hammond may be half the person she was but she's still one of the biggest personalities on our small screens. Driven by a desire for a healthier lifestyle, she has lost 11 stone, focusing on eating in moderation and regular exercise. These changes helped her reverse her diagnosis of prediabetes.

She has spoken about the shame she felt when compelled to buy two plane seats because of her size, describing herself as 'morbidly obese'. But things have changed. "People will say I'm bia but now I'm 17 stone rather than 28 stone and I'm comfortable with telling you my weight."

HOUSEMATE

In 2002, Alison was the second housemate to be evicted in the third series of reality show 'Big Brother'. But fast forward and she's very much still on our screens.

There have been acting roles, including 'Palace Hill', 'Doctors' and 'The Dumping Ground, while reality appearances include 'I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here'. 'Strictly Come Dancing', 'Celebrity MasterChef' and 'Ready Steady Cook'.

FROM DREAM TO REALITY

Born to Jamaican parents, Alison, who turned 50 in February, was raised in the north Birmingham district of Kingstanding alongside her two siblings. From the age of 11, she took part in workshops run by Central Television but lack of funds meant she couldn't go to drama school.

However, Alison has been part of ITV's flagship breakfast show 'This Morning' since 2002. A firm fan favourite, she co-hosts Friday episodes alongside Dermot O'Leary. She also presents 'For the Love of Dogs', after stepping in for the late Paul O'Grady in 2023.

As well as her ITV work, she joined Channel 4's 'The Great British Bake Off' in 2023, co-hosting with Noel Fielding.

POPULAR CHOICE

It seems Alison, with her down-to-earth, fun persona, is fast becoming the Beeb's sweetheart too. It was reported earlier this year that she's set to host the reboot of the BBC's iconic game show, 'Hole In The Wall', when it returns. Back in late spring, she hosted 'Alison Hammond's

Big Weekend' for BBC One, going on a 'sleepover' with celebrities in places that made them who they are. (All episodes available to watch on BBC iPlayer.)

Her showbiz career has garnered Alison a net worth of up to £4 million. She has been dating 27-year-old David Putman since 2023 and there have been recent rumours that the bubbly presenter is setting her sights on moving across the pond. She always said she had no plans to go to the US until her son Aiden, born in 2005 from a previous relationship, turned 21. But could they have been checking out life stateside when she embarked on her recent project, 'Florida Unpacked', for BBC Two? This travel

series, which the former tour rep filmed with Aiden, saw them take on a guest for a family adventure without breaking the bank.

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