

ISSUE 9

Southport's Journey

MAGAZINE

**THE BIG NIGHT
OUT (OR IN?)**

What to do, where to try this
October.

WOW WHAT A

SHOWCASE

How we are making an impact!

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Editor's Note

SOUTHPORT'S JOURNEY

October carries its own momentum. The air is cooler, the colours deeper, and with it comes a sense of purpose... and maybe a pumpkin latte or two. It's the season for setting intentions, putting plans in motion, and watching the town shift into its next chapter.

I love autumn — the anticipation of crisp morning walks and the glow of lazy sunsets. In these pages you'll meet people choosing new directions, community groups laying the groundwork for change, and independent spaces that continue to shape Southport's identity.

Autumn is a time of action, and every story here is proof that progress doesn't happen by chance, but through small steps taken together.

It's a season for intention — for making choices, backing ideas, and celebrating the people and places that give Southport its heartbeat.

Thank you for reading, sharing, and keeping this independent voice alive.

See you around town.

Lizzie Barnett

Editor-in-Chief



About Southport's Journey

We're an independent magazine celebrating the people, places and projects that make Southport proud—sharing warm, useful stories across print, digital and events. We champion independents, share what's on, and make it easier to discover something good every month.

Get involved

Have a story or event? Want to advertise, pitch or partner? Email hello@southportsjourney.com or visit southportsjourney.com. We'd love to hear your story.

Welcome your *Journey* starts here



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Want to be featured in the magazine?
We're always looking for stories big or small!

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Local Spotlight

Southport Life Network

Welcome to the Southport Life Networking

It started, as good things often do, with a conversation. Two women — both business owners, both rooted in Southport — talking about what we were seeing in the town. The pride was there, the potential was there, but so were the gaps: spaces that could shine with a little care, community projects that needed more hands, people with great ideas who just needed support. ➤

“AND THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING”

So they put their names to it Lizzie Barnett and Serena Silcock-Prince—two serial “shall we grab a coffee?” types who, by midweek, had clocked up enough lattes to power the town. Lovely as the one-to-ones were, we realised we didn’t need twelve coffees; we needed one room. Fewer caffeine highs, more collective momentum. Gather like-minded people, shorten the distance between “we should” and “we did,” and channel Southport pride into practical, regular action—projects, partnerships, tidy beds, safer paths.

That conversation became a spark. And on a September morning at The Waterfront Hotel, that spark became a roomful of fire. With the support of PIB Insurance, sixty people gathered for the very first Southport Life Network. Business owners, residents, and Southport-proud locals filled the room—not just to talk, but to imagine. To ask: what could be done if we all showed up? What might our town look like if we worked together? Like many events, opinions were shared. But this time, the energy felt different. We started with a simple exercise—words to describe Southport. The answers came quickly: potential, community, welcoming, unique. Words that told us we were on the right track. Next, we turned the lens on places in need of more love. People fed back ideas—and solutions. It wasn’t a room of complaints; it was a room of possibility.

And just days later, possibility became action. On Wednesday 17 September, volunteers pulled on their wellies and magnolia gloves and braved the weather to gather at King’s Gardens. Alongside Green Sefton, we set to work on a small corner of the town, proving that change doesn’t have to start big—it just has to start.

Not another meeting. Not another slot in the diary. It’s energy in motion — where business brains meet community hearts. Where a small action, shared, can make a visible difference to our town. Where people don’t just network — they roll up their sleeves. This is a new age for Southport — and you’re invited.

The next Southport Life Network gatherings, in October and November, are already shaping up to be filled with interesting talks, lively networking, and real opportunities to collaborate. With one event set for the morning and another in the evening, we’re making sure everyone — whatever their schedule — has the chance to be part of it. Because this isn’t just about one night, one garden, or one project. It’s about keeping the momentum alive and giving Southport the network it deserves.

Follow @southpirlifenetwork to keep up to date with events and how you can help.





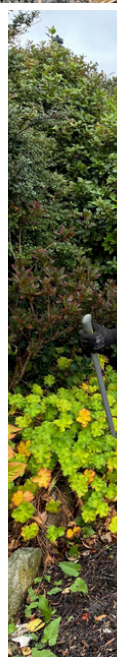
A day with the Friends of Kings Gardens

Rain, Roots, and a Muddy Boots

At 11am, after a morning of stop-start drizzle that nearly called the whole thing off, the first pair of gloves thudded onto the bench. No speeches, no fuss — just neighbours with gloves, tools and welly boots. With a few new friends from the Southport Life Network, the group got busy—disappearing into flower beds and reappearing with clumps of weeds and bits of rubbish in hand. Edges were sharpened. A path re-emerged. A bed that looked tired lifted its head. “It’s amazing what thirty minutes can do,” said Lynne, teasing out a stubborn root with the calm of someone who’s done this before. By the time the clouds finally gave up, the garden looked like it had taken a deep breath. We retreated for coffee — laughing about kayaking mishaps, swapping family stories, practising a few dance moves — and warmed our hands around hot brews and a cheeky slice of cake. It was, quietly, a true social occasion.

Southport runs on the kindness of strangers. So many of the spaces we love aren’t curated by budgets or contracts, but by people who give an hour, a morning, a bit of themselves. Tidy beds deter litter, invite pollinators, and make paths feel safer. Small, regular care cuts council call-outs and keeps our shared spaces welcoming for families, runners and café dwellers.

If you’ve got an hour and a pair of gloves, you’ve got enough. Friends of King’s Gardens meet regularly; tasks are simple, friendly and guided. Turn up in welly boots, leave with lighter shoulders and a tidier town. There’s always room at the bench, a brew at the end, and someone to show you which green things to keep.



“It’s amazing what thirty minutes can do.”

Thank you to Green Sefton and the Friends of Kings Gardens

“ Let’s hear the
rumble and
roar ”



AIR SHOW

SOUTHPORT'S BIG-SKY, SMALL-TOWN MASTERCLASS

Big sky spectacle, small town ease—friendly faces, rain-proof spirit, and a beach that becomes a grandstand.

A shoreline stage since 1991, Southport's air show is rare for a reason: the sea is your backdrop. It's a big-sky spectacle with small-town ease—accessible, family-minded, and more than the sum of its flypasts.

What I didn't expect was how personal a big show can feel. The "wow" in the sky is matched by a quiet army on the sand—organisers, safety teams, engineers, volunteers, traders. Yes, the rain showed up more than once. Umbrellas bloomed, hoods went up, and those chasing the perfect shot waited it out for the moment the planes roared back into the air. Southport does pomp and ceremony well—precision timings, respectful moments, a proper sense of occasion—but it does friendliness even better: the Town Crier out both days to welcome the crowds, and a true Army singer lifting the seafront with trills and music from another time.

You spot faces who return year after year, families who've made it a tradition. For a small North West seaside town, have you ever sat back and clocked what we pull off here?

A beach turned grandstand, world-class flying, a town centre that hums, and a team that makes the complicated look effortless. That's the real headline.



Life's a journey

What's on this

October

Charity Sound Bath & Prosecco — in aid of Queenscourt Hospice

Exhale the week and soak in soothing sound as we raise funds for Queenscourt Hospice—our local lifeline providing specialist palliative care for people with life-limiting illnesses across Southport, Formby and West Lancashire. Queenscourt cares for patients and their families at the hospice, at home and in hospital, wrapping medical expertise with calm, compassionate support. Most of their work is funded by our community—so every ticket truly makes a difference.

Join us for a restorative Sound Bath followed by a glass of prosecco (alcohol-free options available). It's a gentle way to reset your Sunday evening, step into Monday refreshed, and support a cause that supports so many of us.

Keep the good going: even after the event, you can help by donating, volunteering, shopping with Queenscourt's charity shops, sharing their campaigns, or setting up a monthly gift.

Local care thrives on local kindness.



**Strictly
Queenscourt**

**SOUND BATH
& PROSECCO
EVENING**

**SILCOCK'S PIER RESTAURANT
SOUTHPORT**

**SUNDAY 5TH OCTOBER
7PM**

£15

**ALL PROCEEDS TO
QUEENSCOURT HOSPICE**

SMEC GHOST TRAIN 2025

RIDE IF YOU DARE!

SOUTHPORT MODEL ENGINEERING CLUB

31st OCTOBER – 1st NOVEMBER

southportmec.com/halloween or facebook for details

HALLOWEEN Family Events

WEDNESDAY	29 th OCT	SLIME WORKSHOP - 10AM
WEDNESDAY	29 th OCT	SLIME WORKSHOP - 11AM
WEDNESDAY	29 th OCT	SLIME WORKSHOP - 12PM
WEDNESDAY	29 th OCT	SLIME WORKSHOP - 2PM
WEDNESDAY	29 th OCT	SLIME WORKSHOP - 3PM
THURSDAY	30 th OCT	STARKIDZ TODLER BOO PARTY - 10AM
THURSDAY	30 th OCT	STARKIDZ POP DEMON HUNTERS - SOLD OUT
THURSDAY	30 th OCT	STARKIDZ VILLAINS & VKS - 2:30PM
THURSDAY	30 th OCT	STARKIDZ HOCUS POCUS & NIGHTMARE - 5PM
FRIDAY	31 st OCT	STARKIDZ TODLER BOO PARTY - SOLD OUT
FRIDAY	31 st OCT	STARKIDZ POP DEMON HUNTERS - SOLD OUT
FRIDAY	31 st OCT	STARKIDZ HOCUS POCUS & NIGHTMARE - 2:30PM

TICKETS: WWW.SOUTHPORTMARKET.COM

HALLOWEEN GAMING & ACTIVITY SESSION

FRIDAY 31ST OCTOBER

HARP COFFEE & GAMES

Adapted by Leslie Darbon

SEC LITTLE THEATRE SOUTHPORT

Agatha Christie's A Murder is Announced

Marvellous Miss Marple Mystery

7th - 15th November 2025

littletheatresouthport.co.uk

Christmas PARTY NIGHT

Join us at Southport Market for a night of festive fun!

SATURDAY 6TH DEC - 7PM

Live DJ & Entertainment
Full Venue Transformation
Drink On Arrival
Street Food

HALLOWEEN VILLAIN BASH

with your Favourite Villains and VIKI!

Calling all Villains & VIKI! Release your wicked side with dancing, spooky entertainment, glitter, and foamy fun. Dress in your fiercest costume and join the party! Trick or Treat surprise included with every child ticket.

October 30th | 2.30pm-4.00pm | Southport Market

Tickets £15 per child and £2 per Adult

SOUTHPORT OKTOBERFEST

24th & 25th October 2025

Victoria Park, Southport, Merseyside

SOUTHPORTS JOURNEY PRESENTS OKTOBERFEST

FESTIVE AFTERNOON TEA

SANTAS ASSORTED SANDWICHES AND HOME MADE CAKES

CUPIDS SOFTS WITH CLOTTED CREAM AND HOME MADE JAM

PIANCER'S MINCE PIES

SERVED WITH:

- TEA OR COFFEE £2.8
- MULLED WINE OR PROSECCO £3.2
- CHAMPAGNE £3.8

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TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY

Got something going on in Southport? We're always on the lookout for local events to feature in our What's On page—from community meetups to creative workshops, charity fundraisers, live music, and everything in between. Send us the details at southportsjourney@gmail.com and let us help spread the word!

WWW.SOUTHPORTSJOURNEY.COM

The British Musical Firework Championships



SOUTHPORT LOOKED UP!

In a world where everything sits at our fingertips, true awe still asks you to show up. On the final weekend of September, Southport's Victoria Park did exactly that as the British Musical Fireworks Championships returned—this year with a twist: past champions invited back to battle it out for the Champion of Champions.

I was lucky enough to step behind the scenes and watch the craft up close. It's a meticulous, all-weather team effort: crews on bended knee in relentless rain, double-checking cabling, angling shells for inspection, and debating musical choices with the kind of passion that only lifelong love can fuel. Between the graft there was warmth—teams swapping stories over cups of tea, celebrating Bill's retirement after 27 years of judging, and greeting rivals like old friends.

As twilight deepened, the sky lit up with Southport's first ever drone light show. The drones sketched out hometown pride with nods to familiar local landmarks—think fairground thrills, our golf heritage, arty flourishes, even air-show silhouettes and a bloom for the Flower Show—before handing the night back to the fireworks.

As the last drone drifted out of site, anticipation built as the crowd edged forward, claiming their perfect viewpoint. Then the music rose and the sky answered. These aren't simply fireworks; they're choreography in light—moody passages and razor-sharp cues where a crack, flare or shimmer lands exactly on the beat. Each sequence built toward those delicious crescendos: the breath-held hush, the involuntary “wow,” the kind of bass-deep thud you feel in your chest.

When the last glitter fell, the night left its mark—on the sky and on everyone watching. It was more than a competition; it was a celebration of craft, creativity and community. And it reminded us that some things are still best experienced in person, eyes up, hearts open.

**“The drones dazzled,
highlighting local pride.”**

DRONE SHOW





Level Up!

GROW MOVE CONNECT

It starts with a walk

The best ideas don't always come from boardrooms — sometimes they're found on the move. That's the heart of Level Up Network: a chance for Southport's business community to step outside, connect, and grow together. No stiff pitches, no pressure — just an hour's walk where conversations flow as easily as the coffee that follows. It's networking with purpose: moving our bodies, building relationships, and supporting the town as we go.

“It's about building a community that levels up, together.”



Each month, Level Up partners with a different local business to host the coffee stop — shining a spotlight on the independents that give Southport its character.

This month we planted ourselves at Season Café, right opposite the market. From the moment you walk through the door, the hospitality is fabulous — warm smiles, friendly service, and a menu that changes with the seasons.

Spirit of communication

The support within Level Up is just as strong. Every month, a member shares a simple piece of advice to help others grow. This month, Lewis Nickson, owner of Poly Up Ltd, offers his top tip: “Consistency beats intensity. Build habits in business that you can maintain, and you'll always be moving forward.”

Level Up Network isn't about ticking boxes — it's about lifting each other up, supporting the independents that make Southport unique, and proving that growth feels better when it's done together.



The next level up walk is on Saturday 18th October, starting from the Waterfront Hotel in Southport. Join us from 9:30am.



Photography by Real-minded Media



with I CAN Education

“My child is struggling to make friends at school. What can I do to help them socially?”

It's very common for children to feel shy or unsure about friendships, especially in the first term. Keep things small and simple — arrange one-to-one playdates or invite just a couple of classmates for an activity your child enjoys. Clubs and after-school groups also help, as shared interests create natural conversation starters. Role-play situations at home so your child feels confident about what to say, and praise even the smallest brave social steps. Finally, let the teacher know — often, a little support with group work or playground introductions can make all the difference.

“My child comes home tired and moody after school. Should I be worried?”

Feeling drained after a long day is perfectly normal, especially in the busy autumn term. The school day is full of learning, social interaction, and routine, so it's natural for children to “let it out” at home. Give them downtime before tackling homework — a snack, some outdoor play, or a quiet activity. Keep evenings calm and predictable, with a good bedtime routine. If exhaustion seems extreme or constant, check in with the teacher about workload and sleep patterns at home. Most often, with rest, routine, and understanding, children find their balance as the term goes on.

“How much screen time is okay now that evenings are darker and longer?”

Screens are part of modern life, but balance is key. For primary-aged children, aim for no more than 1–2 hours of recreational screen time a day, and keep it away from the hour before bed to protect sleep. Encourage interactive or educational use over passive scrolling, and balance it with active play, reading, or creative hobbies. Family rules work best when they're consistent and clear — for example, no phones at the dinner table, or screen time only after homework and outdoor activity. Children learn by watching adults, so modelling healthy screen habits is just as important as setting rules.

S.E.N.D SNAPSHOT

Many parents say they feel under pressure — not just from the school system, but from the wider noise of social media, other families, and the constant comparison of what their child “should” be doing. The truth is, SEND diagnoses are rising and resources are stretched, so feeling overwhelmed is not unusual. That doesn’t mean you’re failing — it means you’re carrying a lot. Focusing on what is within your control, like setting routines at home or celebrating small wins, can lighten the load.

One mum shared how mornings with her Year 3 son were filled with tears and tummy aches until she worked with his teacher on a visual timetable and calm corner. At home, she kept track of small wins on the fridge — and over time those little victories built confidence for both of them.

“ONE WIN A DAY IS
ENOUGH TO BUILD
CONFIDENCE FOR
TOMORROW.”

It’s easy to feel weighed down by the sense you should be doing more. But remember, schools already have strategies in place — from calm spaces to visual schedules — and parents don’t have to reinvent the wheel. The key is partnership: share what works at home, ask what’s working in class, and find the overlap. A quick chat at the school gate or a over the phone can stop small struggles from turning into big ones. You are not alone

Rising SEND numbers mean more families are experiencing these challenges, and feeling under pressure is common. That doesn’t make you less capable — it simply means you’re carrying a lot in a system that’s stretched thin. Focusing on what’s manageable — reinforcing school structures, modelling calm routines, and praising progress — can all take the edge off.

There will always be challenges, and every child’s path looks different. But you don’t have to do it all, and you don’t have to do it alone. Progress comes from small, steady steps — each one building confidence for your child, and easing the weight on your shoulders.

THE BIG PICTURE WITH



1 in 6 pupils in England are currently identified with special educational needs.

The number of children with an EHCP (Education, Health & Care Plan) rose again this year, up to 5.3% of all pupils.


Speech, language, and communication needs are now the most common SEND type, followed closely by autism.

PRACTICAL TIPS

Visual routines that calm – Many schools already use picture timetables, so echo this at home with a door-side checklist or morning chart. It keeps things consistent and reduces stress.

Quiet space reset – Schools often have calm corners or allow sensory breaks. Parents can back this up by creating a quiet spot at home too, so children know it’s okay to pause when overwhelmed.

Celebrate the small wins – Teachers praise progress in class; parents can reinforce it at home. Write down daily “wins” — finishing a worksheet, joining in a group, or simply walking through the gates without upset.



BIG Voices

How a Magazine Becomes a Classroom for the Future

Southport is full of young people with something to say—about sport and street style, climate, gaming, grief, and the small joys tucked into a Saturday at the park. What they need is a platform, a brief, and a team. That's where a magazine becomes more than pages: it becomes a living classroom, a workshop for real-world skills, and a launchpad for creative talent.

Writing is a muscle—and a magazine trains it in the real world. Teen writers learn to pitch ideas, meet deadlines, and shape drafts with an editor. They learn to interview without leading, check names and dates, “show not tell,” and accept notes. Those habits travel: into UCAS statements, interviews, presentations, and any career where clear thinking matters.

A magazine is also a mini-ecosystem. Yes, there are writers and editors—but there are roles for every brain. Visual thinkers become photographers, illustrators, or layout designers. Digital natives thrive as web editors, newsletter producers, or audience leads. Talkers host podcasts and conduct interviews. Lovers of accuracy become fact-checkers and researchers. Community builders work on partnerships, events, distribution, and sponsorships. Not every teen loves essays, and that's the point.

Education comes alive when the project goes public. Give a student a real brief—“Profile the volunteers behind Southport's newest community garden”—a style guide, and a deadline, and watch the transformation. They're not doing homework. They're contributing. Along the way they gain literacies classrooms now prize: media literacy (spotting bias, verifying sources), AI literacy (using tools to brainstorm while keeping the human heart of a story), and civic literacy (how local councils, charities, and businesses work).

What does Southport gain? Fresh eyes. Teens documenting café culture in Birkdale, run clubs by the Marine Lake, grassroots sport in school halls, and heritage groups keeping stories alive help the town see itself anew. A teen who interviews a florist learns seasonality and supply chains. A student who photographs a rehearsal learns timing and trust. A podcaster covering a charity night learns how fundraising works. That knowledge stays local, becoming confidence, networks, and jobs.

Southport watch this space...

“

Leaves changing colour
are a quiet reminder that
seasons shift—and it
might be time for a
crisper perspective.

”





SOBER OCTOBER IN SOUTHPORT

SWITCH IT UP

Sober October isn't about saying no — it's about saying yes to better mornings. The UK-wide challenge has gone mainstream for a reason: a month off brings clearer sleep, steadier moods, and a little extra money in your pocket. Closer to home, it's the perfect excuse to swap pub nights for slow, golden starts.

Begin outside at Croziers in Birkdale Village, brushing a few crisp leaves from the table as your coffee arrives. If you're skipping caffeine, order their soothing turmeric and chai latte — spiced, silky, and ideal with a cool autumn breeze. Lace up afterward and join one of the town's many run clubs (they start from different spots across Southport), or map your own loop 5K loop around the Marine Lake.

Why not make it a brunch trail? The Tea Rooms serve a standout bacon benedict — salty, soft, and perfectly

sauced— that turns any “beer fear” Sunday into a mini celebration. A little further out of town but not to be missed: Wild Root Café for chickpea pancakes — protein-packed, gently herbed, and surprisingly moreish.

Still hungry? Pop into the town centre for something sweet, or make it a slow afternoon: grab a book, visit a gallery, or wander through one of our many parks and pick up a conker or two.

Across the month, keep it simple: earlier nights, a 20-minute morning walk, and one small treat with the money you didn't spend on rounds. Invite a friend. Share a table. Trade late nights for brighter days.

This October, Southport's sober-curious crew isn't missing out — we're moving forward. Let's start highlighting your brunch swaps and run routes, and show us how you're switching the vibe.

The season within us

Autumn has a way of reminding us that change is inevitable. Leaves turn gold, the evenings draw in, and suddenly it's socially acceptable to drink your body weight in pumpkin spice lattes. But it's not just nature that moves through seasons, so do we.

A friend of mine recently said, after a particularly hard patch, "Don't worry, I'll be back to my usual self soon." And I had to stop and think: why do we always assume there's a "usual self" to return to? Why can't we let ourselves evolve?

We grow, stumble, learn, and sometimes completely reinvent how we show up in the world. Those changes are not detours or mistakes — they're new seasons of ourselves. And just like autumn leaves, some of those changes might feel messy or uncomfortable, but they're beautiful in their own right.

Here's the thing: your authentic voice doesn't demand that you stay the same. It doesn't care if you were quieter last year, braver last month, or more chaotic yesterday. Authenticity is about expressing who you are right now, in this season of you. And the more we allow ourselves to change without guilt, the easier it becomes to navigate life's twists and turns.

So, next time someone tells you they'll "get back to normal," give them a gentle nudge and say: "Why? I rather like this new version of you and I'll like the next one too" Embrace the evolution, celebrate the chaos, and remember: even if you shed a few leaves along the way, you're still standing, still growing, and still very much yourself.

Change isn't a betrayal of who we were, it's proof we're alive, learning, and capable of surprising even ourselves. And honestly? That's a much better legacy than just being "usual."

Comfortably Heard



Sarah McEntee our expert shares her guidance and knowledge



Gareth Jone Photography

“Embrace the evolution,
celebrate the chaos”

FRESH START

in Fitness this Autumn

Autumn often feels like the season on change.

The long summer days start to fade, routines settle back into place, and we're reminded that change isn't just for the New Year, it happens when we choose to create it.

In fitness, one of the most powerful tools you can give yourself is a fresh start. That might look like shaking up your routine, setting new goals, or even simply reframing your mindset: "What do I want to achieve this year ends?"

This October, that theme of renewal feels especially close to home for us at Project Phoenix. We're thrilled to announce the opening of our brand-new private fitness studio on Norwood Road! We've finally spread our wings into a space that reflects our vision: a place built for transformation, accountability, and support.

So, how can you create your own fitness fresh start this month? Here are three ways:

- **Change your environment.** Even small tweaks, like moving your workout space, trying a new class, or reorganising your kitchen—can help reset your habits.
- **Set a small challenge.** Short-term, realistic goals stop fitness from feeling overwhelming and keep you motivated through the darker months.
- **Find accountability.** Whether it's a friend, coach, or group, having someone who notices when you show up (or when you don't) makes all the difference.

Fitness isn't just about burning calories...it's about building confidence, resilience, and community. Our new studio is designed to be exactly that kind of space.

This autumn, let's embrace change. Whether in the gym, at home, use the season as your reminder that transformation always begins with a spark.

Project Phoenix Private Fitness Studio now open: 140 Norwood Road, Southport, PR8 6EH. Come and see what your fresh start could look like.



Kindness is beautiful

Thirty Years On: Living, Surviving, Inspiring

It started, oddly enough, with a Saturday night TV quiz. Watching *The Hit List*, a charity name caught her eye: the Bone Cancer Research Trust — a community raising money for research and supporting patients past and present. A group that didn't exist when she was 14, facing a diagnosis that would change everything.

A Diagnosis at Fourteen

Back in 1994, pain in her hip and groin was put down to growing pains. By Christmas it had faded, then returned stronger. On 3rd March 1995 — a snowy Birmingham morning with school cancelled — her GP referred her for an X-ray. The paperwork went missing, delaying things. When an X-ray was finally taken, she was sent to the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital. A grapefruit-sized tumour was found in her pelvis. After MRI, CT and biopsy, the diagnosis came: osteosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer, especially in a flat bone.



Treatment meant six rounds of chemotherapy (four before surgery and two after) and a pioneering operation. On 2nd August 1995, surgeons removed her pelvis, irradiated it and put it back. Recovery was slow. Weeks on her back. Veins wrecked by chemo. Hair gone — with a nurse tying the few strands left in a ribbon on top and calling her “Bam Bam” (from The Flintstones). She moved on crutches she named Bill & Ben, “me the Little Weed in the middle,” which made the ward smile when it was hardest to do so. Her stepdad’s humour carried them through, squeezing her hand during lung complications and cracking jokes when it felt impossible to laugh.

Finding Normal Again

School became a test of courage. Returning with a stick and a limp, she just wanted to fit in. Friends helped, though classmates didn’t always know what to say. Decades on, she’s upfront about her story so no one else has to feel uncomfortable.

Life moved forward in chapters: GCSEs, A-levels, university. More surgery on her hip, another tumour removed from her lung. A degree in biochemistry, then a PhD in cancer immunotherapy — determined to create therapies that weren’t as harsh as the ones she endured.

But alongside ambition came loss: her stepdad’s bowel cancer, the death of close friends, her PhD supervisor, and her cousin. She describes it as a tidal wave of grief she’d been too busy “being normal” to process.

Rebuilding Life in Southport

Through the grief came love. She met Adam, her future husband, and they built a family — Charlotte and Joshua. Pregnancy brought its own challenges, but also joy. Moving to Southport gave them a new chapter, though her body reminded her of its limits: worn wrists from crutches, constant hip pain, surgeries that never quite resolved.



Still, she adapted. Always adapting. Always finding a way forward.

Why the Trust Matters

Finding the Bone Cancer Research Trust felt like a lifeline — a community of long-term survivors. Most bone cancer statistics focus on five to ten years; she is now 30 years post-diagnosis and initial treatment. Sharing her story brings hope: that survival is possible, even with the lifelong impact treatment leaves behind.

“I don’t like talking about it much — but if it helps someone else keep going, it’s worth it.”

Today she raises awareness and funds so future patients have the support she never had. This year she hosted a “Hip Hip Hooray” tea party with family, friends and cake, marking 30 years since her surgery. Next comes a swimming challenge at Victoria Leisure — 3,000 lengths in total (100 lengths for each year of the 30 years). And her husband is planning a half marathon in each of the five places she has lived, starting in Liverpool in March and finishing in Birmingham by the end of next year.

Workshops like wreath-making are also on the horizon — blending creativity with connection and showing others that life after cancer can be full, joyful and inspiring.





Waltz your way to Vienna this winter

As the mornings—and days in general—turn colder and we start to look ahead to autumn and the approaching festive season, now is the perfect time to consider a trip to the captivating city of Vienna. Sitting on the banks of the Danube, Austria's beautiful capital is full of elegance, from baroque palaces such as Schönbrunn to the cultural venues of the MuseumsQuartier. These year-round sights are truly worthy of a visit.

However, each winter—from mid-November until just before Christmas—Vienna bustles with festive energy, fuelled by the scents of Glühwein, roasted chestnuts and gingerbread.

Vienna is famed for its Christmas markets, foremost among them the traditional Vienna Magic of Advent on City Hall Square, entered through a candlelit archway. Here you'll also find the city's best rink, Vienna Ice World, with a trail that winds through the gorgeously illuminated City Hall Park.

Don't miss the multi-level carousel, the reindeer train and the nativity-scene trail, alongside all the craft and food stalls. Just a quick, direct 2.5-hour flight from Liverpool, Vienna is the perfect break to get you into the festive spirit. And if your spirit still needs a little warming once you're there, I can highly recommend the gingerbread liqueur—in moderation, of course!

Get in touch today to secure your short break away.
Cath x

LOCAL LOVE


Interiors Edit

As the nights draw in and the air turns crisp, let your space lean into a playful edge—autumn's rich tones with a touch of Halloween magic. Start with deep rusts and burnt oranges to ground the room in warmth, then layer accents of inky black and forest green for quiet drama. Soften it all with pools of candlelight, velvet cushions, and tactile throws that invite you to linger. The balance is intentional: cosy and enchanting, never kitsch. Think matte ceramics, smoky glass, and a few statement pieces that glow after dark. It's autumn's richness with just the right hint of seasonal theatre.

The best part? You don't need to look far. Southport has everything you need to weave the season's trends into your space—whether that's a statement teapot to spruce up an autumnal afternoon tea, or a set of locally sourced cushions that make your whole room feel new.



1.SazArt- ARTWORK 2.TESCO-LED PUMPKIN LANTERN 3.SOUTHPORT CERAMICS-WEDGWOOD TEAPOT
4. ISAACS BAZAAR- CUSHION 5. JUNE THE FLORIST- AUTUMN BOUQUET
6. T.K.MAXX- SKULL HEAD ORNAMENT



Jack-o'-LOL-Lanterns

There's something wonderfully grounding about the ritual: pulling on a jumper, walking a muddy field to pick a pumpkin, and bringing home a bright, weighty globe that promises flicker and magic after dark. Long before pumpkins, people in Ireland and Scotland carved turnips to ward off wandering spirits. When those traditions crossed the Atlantic, the humble turnip met the glorious pumpkin—and a new icon was born.

The “jack-o'-lantern” comes from the tale of Stingy Jack, a trickster doomed to roam with only a glowing ember in a carved root to light his way. Lanterns in windows were said to welcome friendly souls—and discourage the mischievous. Whether you love the lore or just the look, that soft, candlelit grin still feels like a warm “hello” at the door.

Our Top Tips

- Pick well: Firm stem, even skin, flat base.
- Plan it: Sketch first or trace with a washable marker.
- Angle the lid: Cut inward so it won't fall inside.
- Thin the walls: Scoop to ~2 cm for easier, cleaner carving.
- Saw, don't press: Use a small serrated tool/knife and take it slow.
- Light safely: Go LED tealights/fairy lights for a steady glow.
- Make it last: Keep cool/shaded; spritz edges lightly if drying.
- Use it all: Roast the seeds; turn the flesh into soup.
- Clean finish: Wipe surfaces, trim fuzzy bits, snap your photo!

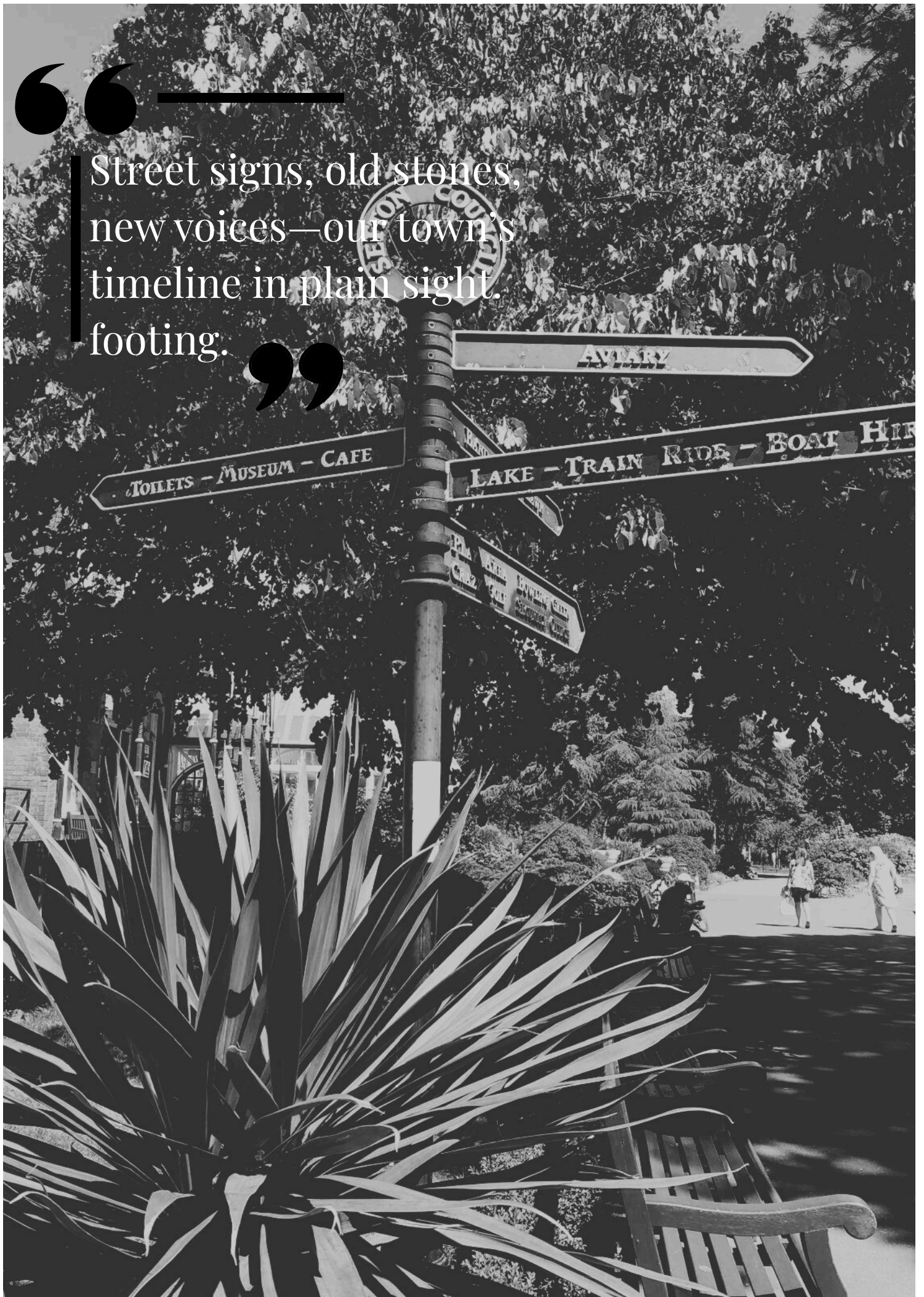
What design will you go for this Halloween?



Waste not: roast your
carving pumpkin to deepen
flavour, then ladle up a
Halloween Soup

Find the full recipe on our website

“Street signs, old stones,
new voices—our town’s
timeline in plain sight.
”





SNC

Southport Netball Club

FIND YOUR TEAM

There's a moment every player remembers: the first clean catch, the first pass that lands exactly where you meant it, the grin that flashes round the circle. Southport Netball Club is built on those little wins — a friendly place for girls to move, make mates, and learn a sport that's as much about teamwork as it is about technique.

If your daughter is curious, this is a gentle way in. Sessions are upbeat and welcoming, with qualified coaches who break skills into easy steps: footwork becomes a rhythm, passing turns into trust, and defending feels like a game of smart problem-solving. Confidence grows quickly — not just on court, but in the way girls speak up, listen, lead, and bounce back.

What we love about SNC netball club is how inclusive it feels. Coach Lynne Barnett says; "You don't need to be the fastest in the class or the tallest in the room; there's a role for every body and every style of player."

Some come for the fitness, some for the friendships, many for the feeling of belonging that sticks long after the final whistle. Parents tell us the post-training glow is real: better sleep, calmer mind, a little extra spark for school.

Thinking of giving it a try? Come along for a no-pressure taster — trainers, a bottle of water, and a "let's have a go" attitude are all you need. New faces are paired up, drills are tailored to age and stage, and there's always time for questions (and a laugh). Whether she's never played before or wants to build on school netball, Southport Netball Club is a safe, positive space to grow.

Club nights run on Mondays at Stanley High School. Please message us on social media to confirm times for each age group. Back to Netball is 8-9pm on Mondays (ideal for beginners or returners). Walking Netball runs every Thursday at 10am at the YMCA. Pop down to a session, watch a few minutes, and see if her eyes light up. If they do, you've found her team.





GETTING 'GRANDMA'D'

What a charity shop moment taught me about assumptions, shortcuts, and seeing life differently

The other day, I was in a charity shop with my middle son. We'd been having a fine old time, looking at everything on offer and Michael had picked out a whole load of random, but in his eyes, essential stuff [which is very much the way things go when in a charity shop with one, or more, of my children!]

We got to the counter and he proudly laid out all of the bits and bobs that he'd chosen. As I rummaged in my bag to find my purse, the lady behind the counter started to chat to Michael, asking him about all that he'd chosen. He was happily sharing all his best thinking with her and then I heard her say "haven't you done well.....I think you've spent all of your Grandma's money!"

For a second, I considered correcting her - but I didn't. To be honest, it was a Saturday morning, my hair was probably unbrushed and my face make-up free, so potentially it was an understandable mistake, but a mistake all the same! Ouch!

Cards on the table - I'm in my fifties and Michael is six. So, you can do the maths.

In reality I am immensely proud to be an older mum. Given my history, I am grateful to be alive, so being occasionally called 'Grandma' is a small price to pay. To be honest, it's actually quite funny.



I smiled and let the moment pass. My son didn't even notice. I've found that children are brilliant like that. They tune into what matters to them – the joy, the treasure, the fun – not the labels that adults sometimes trip over.

Still, it did get me thinking. Why do we make these assumptions? Psychologists remind us that we're 'cognitive misers'. Our brains are economical with effort to conserve energy. We like shortcuts.

We rely on patterns to make sense of the world quickly. Some grey hairs plus a young child? Must be Grandma. It's efficient, but not always accurate.

And the interesting thing is, we do this to ourselves as well. Sometimes the assumptions that we make can be empowering. 'I'm the kind of person who can give this a go' or 'this is going to be okay'. These kinds of empowering beliefs open doors, give us permission to try, to experiment, to grow.

But just as often, our assumptions hold us back. 'I'm too old', 'I'm too busy' or 'I'm not that sort of person'. Without realising it, we clip our own wings.

The truth is assumptions are like background music; half the time we don't even notice them, but they set the tone for how we live.

The invitation, perhaps, is to get curious. To ask ourselves: Is this story true? And does it help me live bigger, or keep me playing small?

In my work with teams and leaders within organisations, I am often drawn to the work of Nancy Kline and the Thinking Environment. One of the 10 components that support a Thinking Environment is the 'incisive question' which encourages us to challenge our thinking by asking 'what are you assuming about this situation?'

The simple power of this challenge is quite amazing. Thinking can be instantly transformed. A blindingly bright insight revealed.

Why not try it out for yourself?

I'm inviting you to turn up the background music of the assumptions that are setting the tone for story and be amazed at what you discover.

And when I next get 'Grandma'd' I'm going to pause, I might give them a little glare and then I will let it be a great reminder to laugh, take it lightly and to challenge a few of my own assumptions along the way.



**"THE TRUTH IS
ASSUMPTIONS
ARE THE
BACKGROUND
MUSIC; HALF
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DON'T EVEN
NOTCE THE,
BUT THEY SET
THE TONE FOR
HOW WE LIVE"**

Come for a
jumper that fits;
leave with a little
more room to
breathe.



COMPASSION ACTS

Prevention doesn't always look like a grand gesture. Sometimes it's a cardigan with a name tag, a pair of tights that actually fit, or shoes that aren't scuffed to surrender by week three. Compassion Acts' work is increasingly about those small, upstream interventions — the ones that steady a family before a bill, a form, or a uniform trip them up.

First-Day Magic

On a chair the night before term: polo, jumper, trousers, shoes lined up like a promise. Confidence. Belonging. Routine. Every parent knows September is survival mode — jumpers vanish (despite three stitched name tags), hems drop, and someone needs a PE top by 8am. The Uniform Hub turns that panic into calm: pre-loved schoolwear, sorted by size and school, so families can walk back through the gates with their heads high.

Alongside the Uniform Hub, Compassion Acts runs the Southport Foodbank, a network of local distribution points offering short-term crisis parcels—around three days of food, following Trussell Trust guidance—so families have breathing room when the month runs long.

For steadier weeks, their Food Pantry clubs work more like a low-cost shop: for £5, members choose roughly £25 of groceries, keeping dignity and preference at the heart of the trolley. Wrapped around both is practical, upstream help—welfare and benefits advice to navigate forms and entitlements, debt and budgeting support to quieten the meter and the mind, and welcoming chat sessions that stitch people back into community. It's a safety net with a friendly face, designed to catch today's wobble and prevent tomorrow's fall.

Why uniform matters

A good start to school changes everything else: mornings run smoother, attendance climbs, children focus, parents breathe. That's upstream impact — the kind that rarely makes headlines but quietly rewrites a term (and sometimes a year).

Need help or want to give it?

Call 01704 264505 or email hello@compassionacts.uk. Donations (funds or uniforms) and volunteer sign-ups via the website



Hope



Gentle. Personal. Independent.

Wendy and Claire by your side—from arrangements to aftercare.

Some places feel homely the moment you walk in: a kettle on, a chair angled closer, gentle voices that don't overfill the silence. You're given time, not a timetable. The next steps are explained in calm, plain language, and the care continues afterwards — help with forms, signposting to support, and a promise to check in.

At the heart of it are Wendy and Claire. It's a female-run service, and they're the only people you'll deal with from first call to final thank-you. That continuity shows in the nuances they notice — a favourite scarf laid just so, a photo positioned with love, a child given time and simple words — and in the way every question is answered clearly. Their testimonials speak for themselves.

Goodbyes here aren't a menu. They're tailored — for big families or quiet rooms, for favourite songs and sunflowers, for moments where children need gentle explanation. The chapel is peaceful rather than formal; the day feels personal, not performed. It's an independent space that works with families, crafting funerals with distinction — not for show, but for love.

“

Our goodbye was exactly as we wished—respectful, personal, and full of love

”





Life, Local & Little Joys

I've barely sat still this September — and honestly, that's how I like it. Southport has been alive with ideas, events, and energy, and I've had the privilege of dipping into so many corners of it.

The GABA launch at the Pier Balcony Restaurant was a humbling affair. To see resilience in action — and to watch young ideas grow into something real — reminded me why I give so much of myself back into this town. Their tagline, "Be Anything, Go Anywhere," struck a chord. It's a message that's not just aspirational but deeply personal. Through my role as Madam President of the British Legion, I've been able to listen to countless local stories — each one layered with pride, tradition, and belonging. That pride is alive in every gathering, whether it's Queenscourt Hospice's charity ball, or a stretch-and-spritz morning on the pier with Sharon Stock. This spirit fed directly into new collaborations too, including with the Round Table on Southport's very first Pier Oktoberfest. What I see is strength — in strangers, in friends, in groups that come together with a common goal. Strength that promises more than just events; it points to outcomes that change how a town feels about itself. That's why I'm so determined to keep giving back. Not because I have all the answers, but because I believe that pride plus people equals possibility. If we continue to collaborate, to listen, to show up — Southport can be a place where ideas grow, and where together we are anything and we can go anywhere.

Serena Silcock-Prince xx

Let's hear from a local

Personal picks and a peek at the top spots in town. This month we hear from Emmy Oranges from Art Ease.



Go-to place for coffee or brunch?

Coffee or brunch has to be lagom in Burscough - technically not Southport but our closest bakery! Also love croziers in Birkdale for a poached egg, gorgeous!

Favourite local event or tradition?

Food and drink festival - it's free, fun and food is always delicious!

Hidden gem shop or stall?

Neighbourhood Tattoo in Wayfarers Arcade, amazing and friendly local tattooers and amazing artists always supporting our community in many ways.

Local business recommendation?

Southport based Artist and Illustrator Emmy Oranges, Southports journey magazine, mills interiors, and KC workwear for amazing and helpful service.

Groups or spaces that helped you feel connected?

Art Ease workshops - host a free monthly Crafty Cafe and various different arts workshops across the town. Also the hearth and CASA network. Cove is my favourite space for co working

Hopes for the future of Southport?

Hopes are to reduce isolation and build a stronger community after covid and other issues the town has faced. There's lots to be proud of here and so many of us working every day in our communities to build a better Southport.

THE QUIZ

- 1) Which Birkdale spot did we praise for its turmeric/chaï latte?
A) The Tea Rooms B) Croziers
C) Samuels D) Café 1821
- 2) In our Autumn Brunch Trail, where did we recommend the Bacon Benedict?
A) Croziers B) Wild Root Café
C) The Tea Rooms D) Samuels
- 3) Heritage: Which Victorian glass-roofed arcade is a Southport landmark on Lord Street?
A) Wayfarers Arcade B) Burlington Arcade
C) Arndale Arcade D) St. John's Arcade
- 4) Where is Walking Netball held every Thursday?
A) Stanley High School B) Dunes Leisure Centre
C) YMCA D) The Grand
- 5) In our Sober October guide, which café did we highlight for chickpea pancakes?
A) The Atkinson Café B) Croziers C) Samuels
D) Wild Root Café

Meet the Team



Mills Interiors — Creating beautiful, functional spaces with a curated edit of local interior finds.
www.millsinteriors.com

Sarah McEntee — Communications coach helping people use their voice to change the world. [@comfortably_heard](https://www.comfortably_heard.com)

Kate Miles-Roberts — Co-Director at The Clear Thinking Partnership; Vice-Chair, Southport Little Theatre—on clear thinking and calm leadership. kate@clearthinkinguk.com or www.clearthinkinguk.com

Cath Reese — Our resident travel writer, from smart staycations to worldwide adventures.
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Anna McNally — With over 15 years as a personal trainer, I specialise in strength training, pre & postnatal coaching, and building real, lasting science based results, without the fads. www.projectphoenixignite.co.uk

Mike Settle — Performance coach: friendly advice for everyone from beginners to elite athletes. [@hogansettle](https://www.hogansettle.co.uk)

ICAN Education — Practical advice, support and helpful hints for parents. Visit www.icaneducation.co.uk



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