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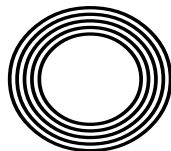
Highlighting LGBTQ+ in sport

*Stacey Saloman*

From TV personality to organising queen

*Dame*  
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# Editor's notes...

APRIL 2021



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** Leigh Thorpe Bay. What a difference a year makes. It was 12 months ago that we found ourselves right at the beginning of a national lockdown.

It was, for all of us, a step into the unknown. It would be fair to say there was an intriguing novelty about the early days of social distancing and the need to stay at home, but that quickly changed when all around us the concerns for health, jobs and our loved ones grew.

Speaking personally, the early days of the pandemic saw my dad in hospital for more than a week. He eventually won his considerable battle with COVID-19, while at home my wife and I were bracing ourselves for the imminent arrival of our baby daughter. Now, a year on, I feel better equipped to take a view on those dark days. Things were to get much worse before the corner could be turned.

No matter what our thoughts are on Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the economy or the COVID-19 response, one thing most people I speak to agree on is the speed and effectiveness of the vaccine roll-out so far. It has given the nation the biggest lift possible. Sure, we will be living with COVID-19 and its variants perhaps indefinitely, but getting the job is ultimately the way we can all get our lives back on track.

*Nik Allen*

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CONTRIBUTORS | Tabatha Fabray, Dean Shaw, Ruby Ward

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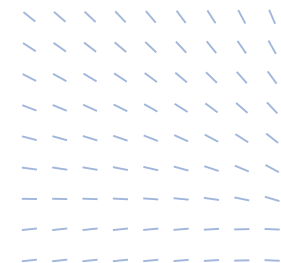
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# Stacey Solomon SPOTLESS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

**FOUR BOYS... AND POTENTIALLY MORE ON THE WAY – HOW THE STACEY SOLOMON/JOE SWASH LOVE STORY IS A REALITY TV STORY WE ALL LOVE**

Stacey Solomon isn't too worried about the airs and graces of celebrity life. Sure, she has grown up in the lens since being catapulted into the scene in 2010 with a stellar display on *The X Factor*. While she ended up falling short – coming third, behind Joe McElderry and Olly Murs – the dye was cast as far as a career on screen was concerned. It was her casual, considered, girl-about-town image that viewers admired; the fact she was never afraid to speak up, to share her emotions and to bridge the gap between viewer and star.

“Throughout my TV career I've always just tried to be myself,” she says. “It's strange when you receive criticism for that – perhaps I don't round my consonants as well as I should, perhaps I act a bit loud at times, but that's just me. I think the era of the manufactured presenter is over and we're all allowed to be a bit more ourselves, and that's something I love.”

.....  
‘I think the era of the manufactured presenter is over and we're all allowed to be a bit more ourselves, and that's something I love’  
.....

The 31-year-old Dagenham-born star's TV career has ultimately been the 'x factor' that has led her to love, having fallen for the charms of chipper, funny man Joe Swash, also a near-veteran of the reality TV industry. The pair got together five years ago, drawn together by a shared passion for... well, everything.

“We connect on such a perfect level,” says Stacey, “and we're always making each other laugh.”

The pair, who got engaged just before Christmas, now also have a little reality star of their own to share – baby Rex, who arrived in 2019.

“I have two sons from a previous relationship and Joe has one, so bringing everyone together in our home has been perfect.”

The Essex-based couple have recently moved into their new home - aptly named Pickle Cottage. Stacey admitted it would need some work, but what's certain is that she will get it looking spick and span – after all, Stacey has just released her latest book, entitled *Tap to Tidy*. It's a smorgasbord of houseproud hints that also details crafting and design, as well as cleaning and keeping shipshape.

Stacey, who has appeared on and won *I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here*, and has presented shows such as *The Love Machine*, *The Jump* and *Loose Women*, also has a new BBC series, *Sort Your Life Out*, arriving later in the year; while Joe's work ranges from *EastEnders* to *Dancing on Ice* – he is also a previous winner in ‘the jungle’, which is where the likeable pair first met.

“TV was always an industry I admired, and although it has been a strange year, I think so many people have been able to keep their spirits up by escaping for a few hours in the evening to watch something,” Stacey says.

“The pandemic has really brought us back to the basics, where spending time around our family now feels like the most important thing in the world, whereas before we were perhaps more side-tracked by work and careers and more selfish things in our lives.

“That said, I want to get back to normality – it's what we all need, and I've got a wedding to plan, after all!”



# Jasmine Harrison WATER BABE



Photo credit: Talisker Whisky Challenge

## HOW JASMINE HARRISON BRAVED ISOLATION AND SLEEP DEPRIVATION TO BECOME A WORLD RECORD HOLDER

From rowing across the Atlantic Ocean with only the sound of waves crashing against the sides of a flimsy 21ft boat, to answering a Zoom call from the Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton, on International Women's Day, Jasmine Harrison's journey from desperate isolation to taking centre stage as an example of true human endeavour and resilience has been magnificent.

The 21-year-old world record breaker was inspired to start rowing when she saw the event two years ago while teaching in the Caribbean. Yet despite having not set foot inside a boat until 12 months ago, she powered her way into the record books in February by becoming the youngest woman to row solo across the Atlantic Ocean as part of the Talisker Whisky Challenge.

Going up against a field of experienced entrants, the Yorkshire-based sailor drew on every last sinew of courage and conviction, to the delight of her friends, family and support crew who tracked

her every move across 3,000 miles of water.

The journey, from La Gomera in the Canary Islands to Antigua, took Jasmine 70 days. Despite extreme exhaustion – the longest duration of uninterrupted sleep she could have was two hours – searing heat, dehydration and no small quantity of challenges along the way – including capsizing her vessel just two days before finally making it to the finish line – the intrepid sailor says the experience was the most profound of her life.

"I will take away from this experience so many memories – some bad, but most of them good."

Asked what she was looking forward to most when back on dry land, she laughed: "That's easy – food... lots of food."

As for what comes next, the part-time bartender is almost certainly going to find herself in demand where other marine challenges are concerned.

"I'm going to take some time off then look around and decide what comes next. This isn't a one-off for me and I want to achieve more."

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# STYLISH SPIKES



HOME & DIY

A cactus can make a great addition to any home thanks to its striking shape and often unusual flowers on some varieties. However, this spiky houseplant offers many other benefits.

### CACTI ARE SELF-SUSTAINING PLANTS

If you want to inject some greenery into your home but you simply don't have the time to care for plants, then a cactus is the plant for you as it requires little to no maintenance. Native to the desert, cacti store moisture in their roots, leaves and stems and regulate their own food intake so you barely need to water them at all.

### CACTI IMPROVE THE AIR QUALITY IN YOUR HOME

Green plants such as cacti actively absorb carbon dioxide from the air and release oxygen, which helps to improve the air quality in your home. Other health benefits of cacti include an ability to reduce stress levels, provide companionship and even enhance your memory.

### CACTI CAN MAKE YOU MORE PRODUCTIVE

If you are currently working from home but are being driven to distraction by family life, a well-placed cactus plant can boost your productivity levels. In fact, controlled tests have shown that having a cactus in your office can improve your performance by more than 12 per cent.

### CACTI OFFER SUBTLE BEAUTY

For those who follow feng shui in their home, a cactus is the perfect plant for adding an elegant visual experience while at the same time banishing any negative energy. Cacti love the sun, so choose to add one to your windowsill or near the entrance to your home. Avoid placing in the living room or your kitchen, unless you want to be on the receiving end of an unexpected spike.

### BEST CACTUS VARIETIES TO GROW INDOORS:

Angel wings cactus | Rat tail cactus | Old lady cactus | Christmas cactus







# FAWNING OVER flora

The floral effect, and how to achieve it

Although floral interiors are nothing new, they've certainly become on trend over the last few years. Flowery bedspreads, botanical cushions, jungle-print curtains and all manner of foliage frolics have been brought into the home, with our front rooms, kitchens, bedrooms and even bathrooms better places for it.

Vivacious ideas and vivid colours have become the order of the day, with ambitious, elegant results, all crafted in the knowledge that floral interiors never go out of fashion.

If you've kept your walls clear and fresh, it means that you can just add in colour with floral-print additions to your furniture, with vibrant cushions, rugs and throws in your living room. For perhaps the smallest of makeovers, your inside space can represent all the bounty of an outside garden.

If, however, your current styles mean a drastic design change, a mural or flowered wallpaper may be more in demand. If this is your route, supplement a complicated background with plain cushions and simple, flat, easy-to-digest whites and greys.

In addition, adding real or fake flowers will bring walls into the 3D realm, enhancing your look and creating energy, interest and talking points.

As for the palette you have at your disposal, floral colours offer all manner of outdoor shades, as we know. From pinks to purples, yellows, whites and reds, there are few colours out of bounds.

And once you've remastered a room with a full-on floral theme, you can progress the idea by making small, subtle changes that complement the look, such as adding small garden-themed pictures, or perhaps even candles with floral scents.

Very soon, you can find yourself bringing the outside inside, where opening a window and allowing a breeze to blow through the space completes what is an invigorating and inspirational design effect.



Photo credit: [pin.youngviaidealhome.co.uk](http://pin.youngviaidealhome.co.uk), [greenadmiral.com](http://greenadmiral.com), [matterspott.com](http://matterspott.com) and [Courtesy.via.goodhousekeeping.com](http://Courtesy.via.goodhousekeeping.com), [franseson.laurense.de.lidell.com](http://franseson.laurense.de.lidell.com)

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# JET PROPELLED

## SEVEN HANDY HINTS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR JET WASH HIRE



**Y**ou're about to embark on a bit of high-pressure jet washing – perhaps you're getting that grubbiness off the walls, maybe your patio needs bringing back to its original sheen, or it could be your windows that want rid of all that winter grime.

Whatever the case, here are some tips that mean when hiring a pressure washer you'll clean up... literally and financially.

**ONE: The price is right**

It sounds obvious, but it pays to shop around. Kärcher leads the market with consumer pressure washers, but they all work in the same way, so don't necessarily be swayed by a big name or a fancy trim.

**TWO: Time is of the essence**

Be realistic over how long you want to hire a pressure washer for. Most hire companies will let you extend, but it's cheaper and easier to plan out your workload first; and of course, don't ever waste money by hiring one that you're not going to use straight away.

**THREE: Failing to prepare...**

With the last point in mind, prepare the areas you're going to use the jet wash for before picking it up. Not only will it help with space and efficiency, but your hire time won't be wasted moving items around so you can get started.

**FOUR: Safety first**

While great fun, pressure washers pack a huge amount of power, and even a lower-grade machine has enough punch to break through human skin.

**FIVE: Pre-wash**

Pre-washing any area makes jet spraying so much easier when you come back to it a few minutes later.

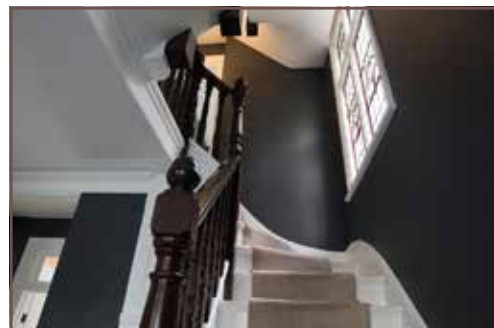
**SIX: Nozzle knowledge**

The pressure washer comes with a variety of nozzles, so ensure you select the right one for the job.

**SEVEN: "I need proof (waterproofs)"**

Spray will quickly consume you and people in neighbouring counties, so ensure you have waterproof gear, and prepare for a huge amount of dirt while you're at it.

You can use a jet wash for cleaning windows, patios, driveways and even your car.



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# NO FLY LOSSES



HOME & DIY



In theory, the loft is the perfect storage place for old mementos, cherished gifts and all manner of items you will sort at some point down the line. What unites all of them is we don't want these books, records, paintings, clothes and pieces of furniture around us in our living spaces – fair enough. And yet, when it comes to retrieving them from the most ideal of home hidey-holes, will they actually return to the light in the same condition we left them?

All told, the evidence appears to be 'no'. Part of the reason for this is because your attic is a hotbed (literally) for wildly fluctuating temperatures. We all know heat rises, so at certain times of the day, and the year, all manner of warmth will spread upwards into your loft space. Conversely, during times of extreme cold, it will be the only place in the house neither insulated nor heated.

Consider as well the creeps and critters that reside in the dark, sometimes damp, sometimes blissfully dry conditions.

You should pay particular attention to:

**WOODEN FURNITURE...** Wood can expand and crack with frequent changes in temperature, so beware of leaving it in storage for long spells.

**FABRICS...** Mice, dust mites, beetles and even birds will quickly find a second use for clothes, carpets, toys and rugs.

**LEATHER...** While the appearance of an old leather jacket will tarnish and fade, a bigger problem may be trying to rid it of a dank, musty odour.

**CANDLES, VINYL AND CASSETTE TAPE...** Extreme heat will quickly compromise the quality of items that you have cherished, be it that wedding photo album or your Canned Heat LP.

The best way to avoid items deteriorating over time is to wrap them well, store them in boxes and ensure proper ventilation through your loft space.



# LOCAL NEWS

*from your neighbourhood*



## Talented youngsters help to create virtual art gallery

Two talented children from Leigh-on-Sea have made works of art that are now on display in a virtual gallery.

The gallery was created by children's charity Rays of Sunshine, which aims to brighten the lives of seriously ill children by granting wishes and providing ongoing support. The gallery opened on March 1.

Among the artwork on display is an entry from Hope, aged 13, from Leigh-on-Sea (pictured left inset), who has global development delay, hypermobility and low muscle tone, meaning she has to undergo physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

Her artwork, titled 'Hope's Happiness', is inspired by her wish to meet famous girl band Little Mix, a wish granted by Rays of Sunshine in 2019. Hope says it

was the best day of her life.

Arabella, aged nine, also from Leigh-on-Sea, was diagnosed with perinatal stroke, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and left hemiplegia.

She has endured physiotherapy, splints and daily medications. In 2019, Rays of Sunshine granted her wish to have her very own touchscreen laptop. Her artwork is called 'Happy People' (pictured right inset).

Lindsey Bennister, chief executive officer of Rays of Sunshine, said: "Every piece on display was created by a child living with a serious or life-limiting illness. The result is a collection of art as unique and inspiring as the children themselves."

The gallery can be viewed online at [www.raysofsunshine.org.uk/childrens-art-gallery](http://www.raysofsunshine.org.uk/childrens-art-gallery)

## CCTV and safety team help improve security

Increased security measures have been introduced in Leigh-on-Sea following the death of teenager Luke Bellfield on February 26, which shocked the community.

Temporary CCTV cameras and safety team officers were launched in the town on March 13 as the council looks to improve safety.

The safety team, including community safety

officers, is based inside the Leigh Heritage Centre. It provides a patrolling presence and seeks to reduce crime, antisocial behaviour and fear of crime.

Two temporary CCTV cameras have been installed to help monitor the area, positioned at Bell Wharf and the bottom of Belton Bridge.

Plans are also underway to install three new permanent CCTV cameras.



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# SIR DAVID AMESS MP



Member of Parliament for Southend West



LOCAL NEWS LEIGH-ON-SEA

The first anniversary of the national lockdown has now been and gone. I completely understand how frustrated many local residents are about the restrictions the government is still imposing on people's lives. However, in the roadmap which the government has set out, from April 12 it is anticipated that non-essential retail, most outdoor attractions and settings, indoor leisure facilities and self-contained accommodation will reopen, and hospitality venues will be able to serve people outdoors. Everyone will no doubt welcome these relaxations.

On June 21, if we continue to make progress with social distancing regulations and the vaccination programme, then we will be able to return to some sense of normality.

A number of businesses have brought to my attention their frustration at delays in administering

grants to local businesses. In particular, there does seem to be real concern about the distribution of discretionary grants and what criteria are being used to award those grants. The money has been given by the government to support local businesses, and that is what every local authority should be doing.

The local elections will be held on May 6 in extraordinary circumstances. My party's candidates will robustly make the case for change and greater local accountability, particularly in regard to night flights at the airport, parking issues, planning matters, the state of our roads, distribution of government grants for businesses and the increase in council tax.

I am still holding regular virtual surgeries, and you can contact me with any issues by emailing [amessd@parliament.uk](mailto:amessd@parliament.uk) or calling 020 7219 3452.

## Bouncer faces new trial date

Photo credit: Ruby Ward @theheartoflondon



A bouncer charged with manslaughter after punching a man outside a bar in Brentwood will face a new trial after the jury was unable to reach a verdict.

Leslie Wiseman, from Leigh-on-Sea, will face a new trial after the 11-person jury was unable to decide whether he was responsible for the manslaughter of Paul Wallington on Christmas Eve, 2018. The jury was later discharged.

Wiseman, 31, who was a bouncer at The Vine bar on Brentwood High Street, denied manslaughter and said he acted in self-defence when he hit Mr Wallington outside the bar.

The trial concluded early last month. The jury spent more than 12 hours trying to reach a verdict but told the judge it was unable to come to a decision.

Christopher Paxton QC, prosecuting, asked Judge Ian Graham for seven days to allow discussions for a retrial date.

Wiseman was released on bail until the retrial takes place.

He will face trial at Basildon Crown Court the week commencing September 27.



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# LOCAL NEWS

*from your neighbourhood*



LOCAL NEWS THORPE BAY



## Help protect yourself thanks to free kung fu course

A kung fu club in Thorpe Bay is offering a free self-defence course for women.

Meridian Kung Fu (MKF), in Colbert Avenue, has launched the free service following the high-profile murder of Sarah Everard.

The martial arts club says it wants to "support women in the area during this awful time", with the offer open to any woman wanting to take part.

The course teaches women how to defend themselves against an attacker even if they are of greater size and strength.

The courses will start in June when lockdown restrictions ease, with booking in advance essential.

MKF senior instructor, Steve Carpenter, said: "No

gimmicks, no fee, just our way of serving the female community and offering as many women as possible an option to live without fear through our professional self-defence education.

"You will be taught by professional instructors with decades of experience. Classes will be taught in a courteous manner, in full-time martial arts schools. You will not be thrown around, hit, hurt or embarrassed in any way whatsoever.

"This course is for women over 16 of any level of fitness or mobility, so don't let your preconceptions of what you need to be stop you from attending."

For more information visit MKF's Facebook page or [www.meridiankungfu.com](http://www.meridiankungfu.com)





## Heroic paddleboarder comes to the rescue

LOCAL NEWS THORPE BAY



A heroic paddleboarder helped rescue a man after he fell into the sea and got into difficulty.

The man was paddleboarding in Thorpe Bay on 27 February when another boarder fell off and started to struggle in the water.

Southend Coastguard was called to the scene, as the possibility of cold water shock put the man in real danger.

The fellow paddleboarder was able to bring the man back to land, where he was treated by the coastguard and paramedics.

The coastguard said: "We would like to thank the member of the public who helped the casualty out of the water quickly.

"Cold water can be silent and deadly. Even on the warmest of days, it kills. Please never underestimate the impact of cold water shock in winter and summer."

## Slower speed limits to be trialled

The trial of new 20mph zones is set to make Thorpe Bay a safer place.

The trial, which will also include areas in Leigh-on-Sea, will see "environmental zones" introduced by the end of the year.

It is hoped the zones will encourage motorists to drive more slowly, particularly those who use residential areas as rat runs.

Resident Kathy Jones told VISION Leigh-on-Sea she welcomes the move.

She said: "I'm sure people will still speed, but it might mean they go that little bit slower, which could make all the difference.

"Let's hope it becomes a permanent change."

Councillor Ron Woodley, deputy leader of the council, said: "We're trialling two wards in Southend

(Leigh-on-Sea and Thorpe Bay), which we know are both wanted by councillors.

"We will then go ward by ward across Southend to introduce the environmental zones.

"We are dealing with the minority of people who are speeding in the town."

Lib Dem councillor Peter Wexham says the new measures are much needed.

He said: "This is something we have tried to get implemented for a long while and only managed to get it put in around schools.

"The residential side roads are used for rat running. Once drivers get off the main road, they seem to think it is alright to speed."

## Police appeal after teens robbed at knifepoint

People in Thorpe Bay are being asked to help a police investigation after two teens were robbed at knifepoint.

The robbery took place on the corner of Blyth Avenue and Delaware Road on Saturday, March 20, at around 11.45am, before the thieves made off towards Thorpe Bay station.

The victims, both aged 14, were riding their e-scooters when they were targeted.

The thieves threatened to stab the teens if they did not give them their scooters.

A spokesperson for Essex Police said: "Two men on bikes engaged in conversation with the teenagers before threatening them and leaving the scene with both e-scooters. They were last seen travelling towards Thorpe Bay train station.

"Thankfully, neither of the teenage victims was hurt. No arrests have been made and our enquiries continue."

Anyone who witnessed the incident or has information on it should submit a report online at 101 and cite incident 509 of Saturday, March 20.



Photo credit: Google Maps

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*Victoria Reed*

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For our residents who are living with dementia, Signature at The Beeches offers dedicated dementia suites that have specialist features to support with the provision of exceptional care within a dignified and comforting environment. Our dementia community is spacious in size, with a comfortable yet elegant, family feel.

Those who have not visited The Beeches before are often pleasantly surprised by the sheer quality and beautiful interior design, five-star amenities, gardens and fine dining that creates a truly holistic offering. Resident facilities include a cinema, landscaped gardens, spa bathrooms, activities room, restaurant, bistro, café and library. Residents can choose from a variety of dining

options including; formal, casual, al fresco in the summer months and use of the private dining room to entertain family and friends. This is bolstered by new technology and innovations such as electronic care planning with a 24-hour relatives' portal which provides additional peace of mind for family and friends, as well industry-leading clean air filtration systems.

While optimising the home environment is one thing, it's the level of specialist training and staffing that really makes the difference when it comes to providing exceptional care. Signature at The Beeches offers industry-leading carer to resident ratios and operates an ongoing group-wide Dementia Learning Strategy while continually seeking guidance from professional bodies including the University of Stirling and The Alzheimer's Society ensuring the highest quality of resident care.

For further information on how Signature at The Beeches can offer guidance and support, please contact Ellie or Julie on

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# JUDI DENCH

## THE LIFE OF THE BUSY DAME

**Why Dame Judi Dench is perhaps the most unique acting talent of them all**

---

In a professional career on stage and in front of the camera, it's notable that Dame Judi Dench has, more often than not, played characters who are assertive, strong and definite. From Q in the James Bond films to Ophelia, Juliet or Lady Macbeth on stage; from Evelyn in the *Marigold Hotel* movies, right through to 13 years playing Jean, the comedic mainstay of classic BBC comedy *As Time Goes By*, there has always been a strength present.

And so it follows, then, that the 86-year-old embodies very much those same qualities in real life. How else do you explain the fact that, despite lockdown, the York-born doyenne remains ensconced in one of the busiest periods of her acting career?

"I think the intention was that when I stepped away from Bond I'd be calming things down a bit," she begins. "What actually ended up happening was I found more roles coming my way, as would, I guess, any actor breaking free of a big character."

And therein lies the problem. The determined and decorated cornerstone of British drama simply can't say no. During 2020, while the world's acting fraternity were sitting back doing very little as the entire industry fell into a state of dormancy, Dench was still busy promoting four projects – films *Artemis Fowl*, *Blithe Spirit* and *Six Minutes to Midnight*, as well as an appearance on *Staged*, the widely acclaimed lockdown-themed TV series starring David Tennant and Michael Sheen.

She was also filming parts of what 2021 presents as two major feature films. First up is *Off the Rails*, a drama about a group of friends recreating an interrail journey across Europe, in which she appears alongside Kelly Preston, Ben Miller and Sally Phillips. Then, in *Belfast*, Jamie Dornan co-stars in a drama about a working-class family in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s.

Indeed, since bidding goodbye to 007 in that dramatic, windswept Highlands setting in *Skyfall* in 2012, Dench has appeared in 24 big- and small-screen projects.

"I think, for me, it's about picking and choosing things that make me content and happy," she says. "If I'm being asked to fly halfway around the world for a few minutes on camera, or the brief means being away from home for weeks on end in some inhospitable backwater, I'll say no. The truth, though, is I'm as enchanted as much by acting now as I was when I first performed *Hamlet*, or first stepped in front of a television camera at the end of the 1950s.

"I won't deny the slower parts of lockdown were frustrating, but if you want to keep busy and you want to find yourself things to do, then those things are out there, no matter where you are in the world or in your life," says Dench, who has now been two decades without husband Michael Williams, who died of lung cancer aged 65.

"I know Michael will be looking down, proud of the fact I'm still a workaholic," she smiles. "The truth is it's the only way I know to live."



Photo credit: FAQUINDO ARRIZABALAGA/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock



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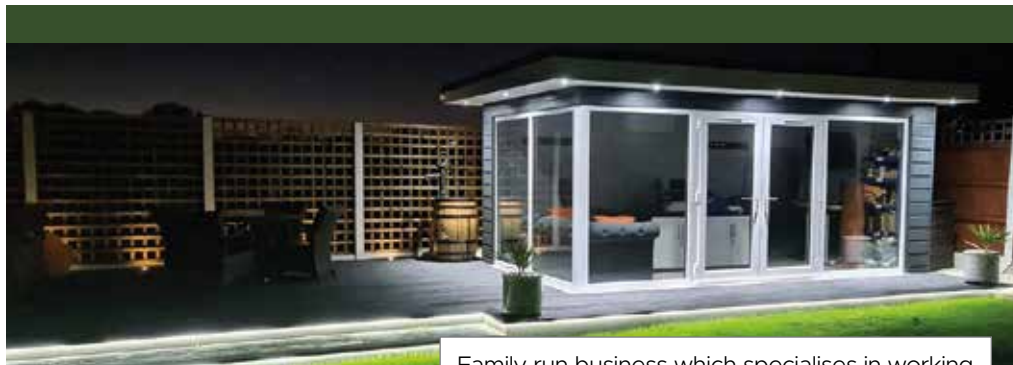
  
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APRIL BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH:

# Daisy



GARDENING

If you were born this month, your flower is the delightful daisy, a bloom that often doesn't get the appreciation it deserves. Incredibly versatile and easy to grow, daisies can make a cheerful addition to any garden, however big or small.

### *What does the daisy represent?*

A quintessential symbol of both purity and chastity, the daisy can also be used to convey secrecy. In fact, daisies were once called "day's eyes", as they close their petals at night and only reveal their bright yellow centre in the day. This flower can also be used to symbolise true love.

### *What does this birth flower say about your personality?*

If your birth flower is the daisy, you are said to be a happy-go-lucky kind of person who tends to brighten up everyone's day just by being you. You are also adventurous, cheerful and optimistic, all of which means you are often the person whom others choose to confide in.

### *Why grow daisies in your garden?*

Sadly, in the UK, we have lost nearly all of our traditional meadow land, meaning that meadow wildlife is under strain. By planting natural and local meadow plants such as daisies in your garden, you will be giving a much-needed helping hand to meadow insects and other wildlife.

### *How can I ensure my daisies thrive?*

Daisies are the perfect choice for those who are looking for garden plants that do not require much care and attention. English daisies thrive in well-drained and evenly moist soil so be sure to water them during droughts. For the best display of daisies, plant them in full sun.

### *Best types of daisies for a vibrant show:*

English daisy | African daisy | Gloriosa daisy | Blue Marguerite daisy | Shasta daisy | Cape daisy







# GARDEN OF LIFE

# THE BIRDS *and the bees*

In the third of a four-part series that shows how even the most urban garden can be a haven for the wonders of wildlife and the nurturing of nature, we consider how birds and bees are so pivotal to everything outside our windows.

While they appear to be fluttering and buzzing about our gardens in blissful relaxation, the roles of our birds and bees is actually a vital one.

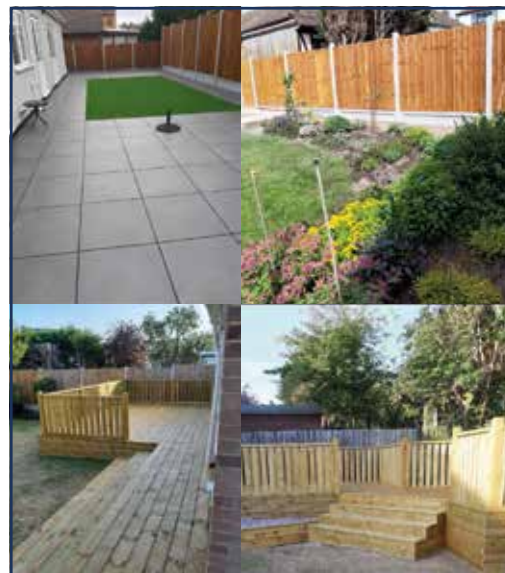
Let's take the humble bee, for instance. Forget a spoonful of tasty honey, the value of these buzzing beauties goes much deeper, with pollination the name of the game. In the first instance, bees as pollinators are responsible for more than one-third of the world's food. Add in the fact that more than 90 per cent of plants rely on bees' cross-pollination skills, and you can see why the move to halt the recent decline in global numbers has been taken so seriously.

Bees also

provide habitats for a huge quantity of insects and animals. Their complex, interconnected ecosystems allow a vast number of diverse species to co-exist. Put another way, a garden without bees would be bare, as would your plate.

A smaller role for bees is as a food source for birds, but go easy on our feathered airborne acrobats – while they have their own pollination qualities and act as pest controllers, they themselves, most crucially, act as a source of food for animals.

There's also something truly cerebral about birds, who predate our own time on the planet by some 150 million years. Sure, they're not cuddly or kinaesthetic, but through birdsong, breathless beauty, their solid commitment to building homes and raising families, and with a level of ingenuity and intelligence that many mammals can't even get close to, birds are a truly cerebral addition to nature's nest.



  
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# PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

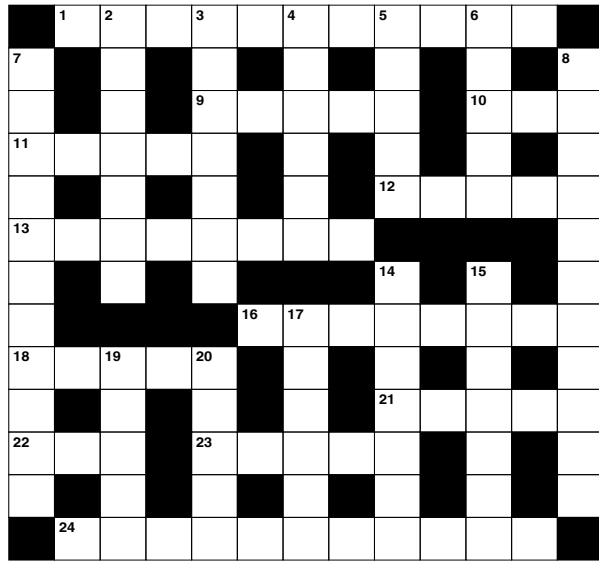
Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

### ACROSS

- 1. Dishonestly (11)
- 9. Ape (abbrev.) (5)
- 10. Fish eggs (3)
- 11. Hackneyed (5)
- 12. Giraffes have long ones (5)
- 13. Mad rush (8)
- 16. Eye condition (8)
- 18. Spring flower (5)
- 21. Boredom (5)
- 22. Female chicken (3)
- 23. Island in the Mediterranean Sea (5)
- 24. Study of lawbreaking (11)

### DOWN

- 2. Morally right (7)
- 3. Extract (7)
- 4. Wound together (6)
- 5. Unfasten a garment (5)
- 6. Expressing emotions (of poetry) (5)
- 7. Calamity or great loss (11)
- 8. Celebrity (11)
- 14. Panacea (4-3)



- 15. Linking (7)
- 17. Cosmetic cream (6)
- 19. Of the moon (5)
- 20. Device that splits light (5)

### DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Saudi Arabia is one of the only countries in the world that doesn't have any permanent rivers
- ▶ In the Falkland Islands, sheep outnumber people
- ▶ Napoleon ordered the construction of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris
- ▶ It's thought that in the future, the Maldives may become completely covered by water
- ▶ In Norway, around 98 per cent of the electricity production comes from renewable energy sources
- ▶ The Great Wall of China is 21,196km long
- ▶ Reykjavik is the most northern capital city
- ▶ Indonesia is the world's largest island nation, but no one knows exactly how many islands it contains

### SUDOKU

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# Rambutan

The rambutan is a tropical fruit that closely resembles a lychee. Grown in countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, the name rambutan means hairy, which refers to the fleshy spikes on the skin of the fruit.

### WHAT DOES RAMBUTAN TASTE LIKE?

The flavour of rambutan is similar to a grape but with a bit of a strawberry quality. Slightly acidic and sweet in equal measures, this fruit has a pleasant fragrance that makes it ideal for using in cooked dishes.

### WHAT ARE THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF RAMBUTAN?

Rambutans are high in vitamin C as well as containing lots of fibre that is good for your digestive health. They also contain vitamin E, which is known for helping to prevent both acne and premature ageing.

### WHERE CAN I BUY RAMBUTAN?

You can find rambutans in most Asian markets and food shops. Look for bright red skin that indicates the rambutan is at its freshest. Green rambutans are not ready to be eaten, whereas black ones are over-ripe.

### HOW TO PREPARE RAMBUTAN

You should not peel a rambutan until you are ready to eat or cook with it. To open, carefully cut the skin with a sharp knife or simply twist open with your hands if the fruit is ripe enough to do so. Then peel away the skin to reveal the egg-shaped fruit. Don't forget to cut open the fruit to remove the nut-like seed in the centre.

### HOW TO STORE RAMBUTAN

Wrap them whole in a paper towel and put them in a perforated plastic bag before placing in the fridge. Your rambutans should last for up to two weeks.

### HOW TO EAT RAMBUTAN

Enjoy rambutans as a healthy snack or as part of a tropical fresh fruit dessert bowl. Alternatively, add to cooked dishes such as curries and soups.







# BREAKING NEWS:

# PEAS OUT!

According to Harvard University scientists, peas are not as healthy as we have been led to believe and may not even count towards one of your five a day.

Find out more about this shocking revelation below. Plus, great alternatives to peas that pack a punch when it comes to improving your health.

### WHAT DOES THE SCIENCE SAY?

Harvard University believes that it has found the key to leading a longer life, and it lies with consuming the right combination of fruit and vegetables. Its research shows that by eating two portions of fruit a day and three servings of vegetables, you are much less likely to die from conditions such as heart disease, cancer and/or respiratory diseases. However, not all vegetables offer the same longevity-boosting properties, with a higher intake of peas having no link to lower mortality rates.

### WHY YOU SHOULDN'T CONSIDER PEAS AS ONE OF YOUR FIVE A DAY

Strictly speaking, green peas are not vegetables, as they are part of the legume family which consists of plants that produce pods with seeds inside.

Furthermore, peas have a high glycaemic index which can cause a spike in your blood sugar levels, and they contain phytates that prevent key nutrients from being absorbed by the body.

### WHAT OTHER FRUIT AND VEGETABLES DO NOT AID LONGEVITY?

During the extensive study, the scientists at Harvard also found no link between a higher intake of starchy vegetables, such as corn and potatoes, and enhanced longevity, as well as drinking fruit or vegetable juices.

### WHAT CAN YOU EAT INSTEAD OF PEAS?

If you like to add a bit of greenery to your own and your family's meals, there are still lots of alternatives to peas that most definitely do count towards your five a day:

- Broccoli
- Asparagus
- Spinach
- Kale
- Courgette
- Cooked greens
- Lettuce



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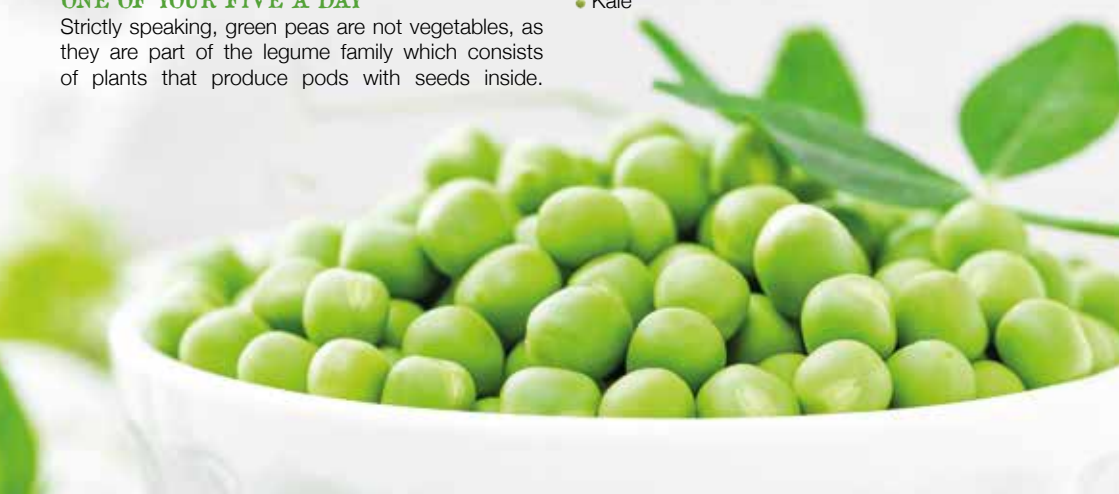
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Conditioner  
Confusion

**D**o you choose a conditioner based on your individual hair type? If not, you could be doing your hair more harm than good. Discover the right conditioner to transform your locks from limp to luscious.

**Oily hair**

If your hair is naturally oily, you may find that conditioners make your mane look and feel even worse. That being said, rather than skip conditioner altogether, look for a treatment that actively helps to reduce oil.

Choose conditioners that are:

- Light • Volumising • Balancing

Avoid products that claim to be:

- Hydrating • Smoothing • Moisturising

**Dry or damaged hair**

When hair is dry, damaged or brittle, you need a conditioner that will help prevent future breakages and protect against heat damage.

Choose conditioners that:

- Moisturise • Hydrate • Offer frizz control • Promote repair

Avoid products that claim to be:

- Fortifying • Volumising • Strengthening

If your hair is severely damaged, you may also want to use a coconut oil treatment or deep-conditioning cream once a week for intense damage repair.

**Fine or flat hair**

Straight hair that does not suffer with frizz, but can appear flat, suits conditioners that add some much-needed texture.

Choose conditioners that are:

- Volumising • Lightweight

Avoid products that claim to be:

- Heavy • Moisturising • Smoothing

**Coloured hair**

Coloured hair has very specific needs, especially if you want to retain your colour for as long as possible. In terms of a conditioner, you need one that will seal hair cuticles.

Choose conditioners that are:

- Colour-safe • Colour-depositing • Hydrating

Avoid:

Any conditioner that is not for coloured hair

**Afro hair**

Afro hair tends to be described as kinky owing to the intensity of its curl. However, with the right conditioner, it can look both healthy and shiny.

Choose conditioners that are:

- Deeply hydrating • Oil-based • Protein-based

Avoid products that claim to be:

- Volumising • Lightweight

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# Beat the BURNOUT

Do you have chronic fatigue?

The mechanics that make all of us individuals mean no two people will endure the same medical condition in the same manner, but where chronic fatigue syndrome (also known as CFS or ME) is concerned, the overriding sense of physical and emotional emptiness is one that hits all sufferers.

The health condition, which shouldn't be confused with sleepiness and general lethargy resulting from working too hard or resting for too short a period of time, can be caused by a number of factors – from stress and anxiety to depression, eating disorders and the gradual debilitating impact of life events on the mind.

There can also be medical problems at play, such as thyroid problems, diabetes, vitamin deficiencies, irritable bowel syndrome, high blood pressure and even kidney disease.

A proper diagnosis is essential and should be sought as soon as you feel you are slipping into a

phase where you simply don't have the ability to perform very basic daily functions, such as rising out of bed, conversing with people or leaving the house.

A doctor will use various tests and techniques in attempting to reach a diagnosis; only when this is done will a medical professional set you on a path of therapy to get you back on track.

While medication is a recognised route to this, it could be that making positive changes to diet, routine and physical health will make a profound difference. There might also be moves to improve surroundings, practise mindfulness and build mental positivity in putting you on the road to feeling revived and restored.

Mental health services are of prime focus to the NHS in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, so don't delay in contacting your doctor if you need help – there will be brighter days ahead.



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SPORT

# Making plans for NIGEL

How Welsh referee Nigel Owens MBE is the latest to bring LGBT issues to the front line of sport

On the face of it, it's perhaps the manliest sport of them all – where the fire and ferocity of competition demands brutish, testosterone-driven combat.

Like it or not, the past hasn't always been kind in associating homosexuality with those characteristics. And yet it's a credit to our progressiveness as a society that those attitudes are changing; and across Gareth Thomas, other male stars, both retired and still playing, plus a whole host of women who have proudly declared their sexuality, rugby is the sport that seems to be pioneering inclusion and diversity above any other.

The rise to prominence of Nigel Owens MBE as an ambassador for such inclusion is, alongside Thomas, perhaps the best example of someone emerging from the shadows. Having previously battled bulimia and suicidal thoughts as side effects of the hiding of his sexuality, the experienced referee came out in 2007.

"It's such a big taboo to be gay in my line of work," he says. "I had to think very hard about it because I didn't want to jeopardise my career. Coming out was very difficult and I tried to live with who I really was for years. I knew I was 'different' from my late teens, but I was just living a lie."

In reality, coming out only enhanced Owens' reputation in the game. He went on to claim the record for most test matches refereed, and in the Queen's 2016 Birthday Honours was awarded an MBE for services to sport. He retired in December 2000 after 17 years at the top.

And yet his work doesn't stop – in a long-term relationship with a teacher, Barrie Jones-Davies, Owens is a pioneer for LGBT issues in both sport and wider society. He works with charitable organisations in raising awareness and acceptance of gay people, using his story as a bridge to greater understanding of the issues involved.



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KIDS



# VITAMINS

## FOR CHILDREN EXPLAINED

**D**o you currently give your children daily vitamins but are not sure if they are worth the expense? Or are you thinking about buying vitamins for your kids but don't know which ones they need?

may be tempted to take more than they need, which could be harmful to their health.

### WHAT VITAMINS DO CHILDREN NEED?

The Department of Health recommends that all children aged six months to five years are given daily vitamin supplements that contain vitamins A, C and D. They also advise breastfed babies to be given a daily vitamin D supplement from birth. Some experts recommend that the following groups of children should take a daily multivitamin:

- > Those who do not have access to regular, nutritionally balanced meals
- > Picky eaters who are not getting sufficient vitamins and minerals
- > Children who eat a lot of processed or fast food
- > Vegetarians or vegans, who may need an iron and/or calcium supplement

### WHAT DOES A HEALTHY DIET INCLUDE?

If you are not sure whether your child is already getting all the vitamins and minerals they need from their diet, this guide should help you. A well-balanced diet should include:

- > Milk and dairy products or vegan alternatives
- > Plenty of fruit and vegetables
- > Protein
- > Whole grains

### ADVICE FOR GIVING YOUR CHILD VITAMINS:

- > Keep them out of reach so that children do not have more than one a day
- > Do not treat them like sweets
- > Try a chewable vitamin if your child won't take a pill or liquid supplement
- > Consult your doctor first if your child is taking any other medication

### ARE GUMMY VITAMINS A GOOD CHOICE?

Becoming increasingly popular in recent years, gummy vitamins seem to be the perfect solution for kids who lack certain nutrients. However, these are usually higher in sugar than other vitamins, plus they look and taste like sweets, meaning your child







TRAVEL

# NATIONAL PARKS

fortnight: April 4 – April 18



New Forest National Park



South Downs National Park



Yorkshire Dales National Park



Northumberland National Park

Treasure trails and historic hill forts, secret coves and stunning lochs: all these and more are waiting to be discovered in the UK's 15 National Parks. Let's take a closer look at some of what England has to offer.

### DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK

Located in the south of Devon, Dartmoor National Park is known for its wild open moorlands and rich local history. For hikers, check out the Meldon Reservoir and then treat yourself to afternoon tea in Ashburton.

### NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

Made a National Park in 2005, New Forest National Park offers a huge diversity of rare plants and animals. Marvel at the grazing ponies, cattle and pigs that roam freely around the park and enjoy a real sense of freedom whether you choose to explore on foot, on horseback or by bike.

### SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

Less than two hours from London, South Downs National Park is a destination rich in culture and countryside, as well as some gorgeous country pubs. Don't miss the chance to dine at The Earl of March, owned by Giles Thompson, former executive chef at The Ritz London.

### YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK

Perfect for those looking for natural beauty at its finest, the Yorkshire Dales National Park has much to offer, including Aysgarth Falls, the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge and the Force Gill Aqueduct.

### NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK

The most northern National Park in England, it is also the least populated and least visited. However, don't let this put you off as this park boasts Hadrian's Wall, Kielder Water and Forest Park and the Sycamore Gap Tree.

### NATIONAL PARKS IN OTHER AREAS OF THE UK

There are two National Parks in Scotland: Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs. In Wales, there are three: the Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia.



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# DRIVER DANGER

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**T**he responsibility of making sure a car is being driven legally, and that all the proper checks are up to date, is one not just to ourselves and our passengers but also to everyone else both on and off the road. From motorists to cyclists and even pedestrians, it's vital our cars are roadworthy – in fact, it's so important that the government will impose strict sanctions on anyone not toeing the line.

### **MOT**

A huge number of people drive on our roads unaware that their MOT has expired; and yet with the DVLA's reminder system, setting up a simple text message alert would prevent this happening.

The only time you're allowed to travel on the road with an expired MOT certificate is if you're en route to the test centre to get the service done, otherwise you could be looking at a fine of £1,000.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 outbreak and

subsequent lockdown, MOT dates were extended, though this is not the case in 2021.

### **TAX**

Road tax is a necessity for any car, and you can expect a hefty fine in the post (of up to £1,000), if you're driving around in an untaxed vehicle. That may be a better scenario for some than the alternative – your car is clamped, and if the fine isn't paid quickly it is impounded, incurring a daily fee of £21.

### **INSURANCE**

The big one – driving without insurance is the biggest threat to yourself, your passengers and other road users. It is looked upon dimly, and if you are stopped by the police, your keys will be confiscated immediately. A £300 fine and six points on your licence is the minimum, but greater penalties, including disqualification, are possible.

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# Compassion!

**W**hatever industry you work in, taking the time to understand and empathise with your employees is vital if you want to provide exceptional leadership. Discover how to become a more compassionate leader below. Plus, find out why compassion is crucial in the workplace.

### HOW TO BECOME A COMPASSIONATE LEADER IN FIVE SIMPLE STEPS:

**Listen:** Think about how often you really listen to your team. Successful leaders seek to understand the perspectives, motivations and challenges of their employees. Make sure you actively listen without judgement for optimal effect.

**Empathise:** If you don't think that your team members feel able to open up to you, then empathy can help resolve this. Take the time to sit down with your employees and talk to them about non-work-related topics.

**Share:** If you aren't authentic with your staff, how can you expect them to be with you? Don't be afraid to show your weaknesses; as a leader

you do not have to be better than everyone else.

**Respond:** Employees need feedback from their leaders, in terms of both their successes and areas in which they still have room to grow. Ensure you explain to your team that you are there to help them improve, and offer any resources they might need.

**Change:** Compassion is all about commitment, and even simple changes to the way you lead can work wonders for improving employee morale. Challenge yourself to make at least one change a month and build up from there.

### WHY COMPASSION IS SO IMPORTANT:

- ♥ Creates enhanced employee engagement
- ♥ Decreases employee turnover
- ♥ Inspires collaboration
- ♥ Increases employee commitment
- ♥ Raises levels of trust
- ♥ Empowers you as a leader

**TAKEAWAY TIP:** Compassionate leadership is not about giving people what they want; it is about giving people what they need.



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T: 01702 552 868 E: [info@paulnewmaninteriors.co.uk](mailto:info@paulnewmaninteriors.co.uk)

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