

Dear Jennett's Park Community,



This information letter starts off quite sad.. but like every Christmas story from bad comes good and this story end with positivity.

We all are touched by mental health whether it be ourselves, our friends or people in our community or just the stories we see reported by the media and on our social media platforms. Its prevalence is even more so at this time of year with heightened loneliness, stress and pressure. Whilst mental health is more openly discussed – unfortunately that doesn't mean its any easier to manage.

In 2022, **5,027** people lost their battle with mental health and that was the total number of death by suicide that year. Most of these avoidable deaths were males. One of the 5,027 people that died that year was my fiancé and my children's dad Matthew. Id like to briefly tell you his story:

Matthew was an incredible man, he was the only father my boy Bear knew. We had a young baby called Ria, named after his mum Maria who died of an aggressive form of cancer and very quickly fell pregnant with our second daughter who is called Lilibet who very sadly Matthew never met.

Matthew had always struggled with his mental health despite being the one with 'top class banter' in the pub always making everyone laugh and never seeming miserable and Matthew was definitely in a "shut up and have a pint" culture.

Matthew was attacked violently and that along with a series of other events made Matthew lose his business which was extremely successful which he built from scratch himself. Alongside losing his business and mother all around the same time and recovering from a bleed on the brain which resulted in Matthew being in a coma for a prolonged period of time Matthew had to learn to walk and talk again. All of this, the struggle and the frustration and the loss and the heartache aswell as the loneliness that many of us felt with the Covid restrictions and juggling a young growing family, all resulted in Matthews demise.

The evening Matthew took his life we'd argued, he'd threatened to take his life. Unfortunately, that time wasn't an empty threat. Me and the children lost Matthew. Much to my eternal regret.

Before moving on please remember : **YOU DO MATTER AND YOU DO COUNT**, there are lots of organisations willing to help, but please reach out.

At Christmas even more so I dearly miss Matthew he was an absolutely fantastic cook. So this year to do something positive with my sadness his children and I are raising money for **MIND** and **ANDYSMANCLUB**. **MIND** is an already well known mental health charity that gives advice and support to people suffering with mental health illness. Whilst **ANDYSMANCLUB** focuses on male mental health and is a suicide prevention charity which holds meetings up and down the UK to “have a chat over a brew and a biscuit”, to try and end the stigma around men's mental health in particular with its **#ITSOKAYTOTALK**.

DIG DEEP

To raise money for these two fantastic charities at Christmas, a time where they need all the extra funding they can. We are selling robins. These robins are for your children to decorate however you like.

They are available to purchase for a minimum donation of £1.50 per robin with all profits being split between the two charities. Robins will be available to order via sQuid and need to be collected from the school office when advised they are ready for collection.

There are three vouchers that have kindly been donated by JP school, for the best designed robin in nurse and reception, KS1 & KS2. The robins need to be handed in by Tuesday 12th December to be entered into the competition with the results being announced on Thursday 14th December. You can have your robin returned to you or I will be placing a tree outside my property in JP, off Butler Drive, down Lucas Place which you are welcome to place your robin on our tree there.

Finally please remember people over gifts. I would do anything to have Christmas with Matthew. Hold your family tight and your friends and always check in with yourself and people around you as often as you can.

#ITSOKAYTOTALK

Much love and festive wishes
Sherri, Bear, Ria and Lilibet

