FRIENDS OF
ERLESTOKE PRISON

THE FRIENDS OF ERLESTOKE PRISON ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026



Contents

1. Chairman's Report 1

2. Purpose and objectives of the Friends of Erlestoke Prison charity 3

3. Structure, Governance and Management 4

4. Public Benefit Statement 5

5. Activities to support prisoners and their families 7

- 5.1 Transport Scheme 7
- 5.2 Family Day Play Project 10
- 5.3 Refurbishment of the Visitors' Cabin 11
- 5.4 Storybook Dads 12
- 5.5 Creative Writing - 'Rite to Write' 13
- 5.6 Origami 15
- 5.7 Art Classes 17
- 5.8 Penned Up 2025 20
- 5.9 Textiles Club 22
- 5.10 Greener on the Outside for Prisons (GOOP) at HMP Erlestoke 22
- 5.11 The Queen's Reading Room at HMP Erlestoke 23
- 5.12 Beekeeping 23
- 5.13 Changing Tunes 23
- 5.14 Sports Pitch 24
- 5.15 Horserenity 24
- 5.16 Prisoner's film to internally promote the Friends 25
- 5.17 Veterans in Custody - VE Day Celebration 25
- 5.18 Diversity and Inclusion 26
- 5.19 Reading/Scanning Pens 26
- 5.20 Employment Advisory Board 27
- 5.21 Dragon's Den 27

6. In the community 28
6.1 Messums and prisoner art 28
6.2 The High Sheriff of Wiltshire's 'Speed Dating' Charity event. 28
6.3 Omens ad Unum Devizes Autumn Artisan Fayre 29
7. Financial Review 2025/2026 31
8. The Year Ahead 2026/27 33
9. For more information 34

Front cover painting by an HMP Erlestoke prisoner

The painting was gifted to Lady Gooch on her retirement from The Friends

1. Chairman's Report



As some of you may know, HMP Erlestoke is expanding and due to welcome another 180 prisoners in late 2027. Witnessing the beginning of construction over the past few months reminds me of a Latin motto: *et nova et vetera* (both the new and the old) as the ancient idea of punishment of offenders adapts to the demands of the twenty-first century. The earliest prisons were dark, underground dungeons, established in Egypt and Mesopotamia over 3,000 years ago to incarcerate prisoners (who often had to labour in mines and quarries) waiting for trial or execution. It was only in the late 18th and 19th centuries that well known reformers like John Howard, Elizabeth Fry and the Quakers led moves to make prisons centres for rehabilitation, through education, work and resettlement. Various government acts have reinforced this over the years, and although the prison population is approaching 90,000, education remains a key tool for those trying to reduce recidivism.

It remains a privilege for the Friends to support the Governor and her staff at Erlestoke in whatever way we can, and this year it has been especially gratifying to see our vital basic programmes, such as the Transport Scheme, Storybook Dads, Origami, Art and Creative Writing classes combine with new initiatives as we try to reach out to more prisoners, particularly those with complex needs.

In the past year we have introduced a textiles class and a beekeeping project; we have also supported the refurbishment of the visitors cabin outside the main gates which enables prisoners' families to wait in the warm; and continue to sponsor family days and drama activities among prisoners. We also pioneered the GOOP (Greener on the Outside for Prisons) programme, which was generously supported by the Wiltshire Gardens Trust, delivering gardening projects to those prisoners who find it difficult to take advantage of classroom based activities; we hope to expand this in the coming year, as it has been very successful.

The Friends were recently invited to take part in a Charity 'speed dating' event where generous donors were matched with charities in Wiltshire. We were given fifteen minutes to explain the importance of our work, and after ten appointments, we enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by the Wiltshire Community Foundation, where we could chat to other charities and potential donors. The whole event was the brainchild of the High Sheriff of Wiltshire, Martin Nye, who has recently handed over his baton to Dr Alex Goodwin, after a terrific year in post. We were bowled over by

the support and enthusiasm shown for our work, and, of course, the donations will fund several new initiatives in the prison over the coming year.

We are most grateful to Johnny Messum who invited the Friends to show an exhibition of prisoners' art work at Messums Gallery near Tisbury in the summer. We had a successful opening event and were glad to welcome old and new friends along with several of the prison staff, including the Governor, Sarah Coombs. The exhibition then moved to Salisbury where it again attracted a lot of attention. We are delighted that this, in turn, has meant an invitation to exhibit prisoners' art and craft work at the Devizes Festival this year. We have also published an anthology of prisoners' creative writing which is available from our website and in local bookshops.

We were very sad to say farewell to Sarah Gooch, after a long and meaningful period as a Trustee, and also to Helen Holtam who has run the Origami Inside project for many years. Thank you both for your stalwart and enthusiastic work. We were delighted to welcome Max Porter and Jonathan Gaisman as new Patrons of the Friends. Max worked in the prison as Writer in Residence last year and Jonathan will not only be the Reading Ambassador but will also support the Chess Club which is due to begin next month.

We are always on the look out for anyone who would be interested in joining us, whether as a Trustee, volunteer driver or to take part in our new reading scheme. Please do get in touch if you would like to explore either option, or indeed if you know anyone who is keen to keep in touch with our work in Erlestoke Prison.

A huge thank you to all of our supporters, donors and to everyone involved with our work: it is a privilege to work alongside the dedicated and hard working Trustees and the prison staff who do such an amazing job.

Mrs Primrose Campbell DL
Chairman, Friends of Erlestoke Prison

2. Purpose and objectives of the Friends of Erlestoke Prison charity

The objective of the Friends of Erlestoke Prison is: *'to promote and support the rehabilitation of prisoners who are or have previously been prisoners at HMP Erlestoke, by the provision of funds and services as the trustees think fit, and in consultation with Prison Governors/Governing Body'.*

The Charity aims to support prisoners with the challenges of rehabilitation whilst in custody and also to help them keep in touch with their partners and children whilst completing their sentence. The Charity also aims to raise awareness and promote local understanding of the prison, which for many, is an unknown 'hidden' institution.

HMP Erlestoke is a public sector, Category C training and resettlement prison for adult and young adult male prisoners. It is the only prison in Wiltshire and is located in the rural village of Erlestoke, near Devizes. The prison was built in the grounds of the former Erlestoke Park House and first opened in 1960. The nearest railway station is Westbury, 8 miles away.

The prison is intervention focused providing a national resource of training programmes which address offending behaviours and drug/alcohol issues. It is one of four prisons delivering the Progression Regime which aims to help Indeterminate Sentenced Prisoners (ISPs) serving life sentences and Indeterminate Sentences for Public Protection (IPP) prisoners progress with their sentence.

The total operational capacity of the prison for this reporting period was 512. At the end of the year, there were 42 IPP prisoners and many of the prison's population are serving sentences of four years or more. There were 76 young adults, making up nearly 15% of the population which is slightly higher that this time last year. 37 of those young adults are aged between 18 and 21 years.

There are nine residential units; four are standard units, one of which is used for induction. Four are enhanced units, housing those prisoners with enhanced privileges. There is a Drug Recovery Wing and a separate care and separation unit for vulnerable and difficult prisoners. The prison also comprises a kitchen, visitors' centre, chaplaincy, gym, sports hall, education department, library, healthcare centre and a number of workshops.

For more information about HMP Erlestoke, please visit: http://www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/prison-finder/erlestoke

3. Structure, Governance and Management

1. The Charity is known as 'The Friends of Erlestoke Prison'. No other name is used.
2. The registration number is: 1201388
3. The Charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation
4. The Charity's governing document is a trust deed
5. The address of the Charity is: HMP Erlestoke, Westbury Road, Erlestoke, Devizes, SN10 5TU
6. The Charity Trustees for the period of this report:

Primrose Campbell	Chairman
Sue Weber	Treasurer
Eve McBride	Transport Scheme
Charles Atterton	Art
Mark Mangham	Origami
Angela Hughes	Creative Writing
Nick Crean	Storybook Dads
Sarah Gooch	Sports Pitch (until October 2025)

7. The Charity Patrons for the period of this report:

Robert Hiscox, DL	The Lord Margadale of Islay, DL
Sir Charles Hobhouse	Belinda Southwell MBE
Max Porter (from September 2025)	Jonathan Gaisman (from February 2026)
Andrews Sells (from March 2026)	

8. The Charity had 27 volunteer drivers within the Transport Scheme (section 5.1) for the period of this report. Volunteers are recruited through local advertising and word of mouth.

9. There were no paid staff.

New trustee and volunteer recruitment is achieved through local volunteer recruitment websites, advertising and existing trustees' personal networks. Trustees are risk assessed and vetted by the prison security department. Trustees' backgrounds are diverse and include experience/knowledge in the Army, Technical Sales, Education, Medicine, Human Resources, Marketing, Magistracy, Criminology, Victimology, Restorative Justice, Magistracy, Business Management, Fundraising and Event Management.

Trustees ensure that their knowledge is current and relevant to the work that they perform for the Friends. The trustees hold meetings approximately every 6 to 8 weeks to ensure that they remain up to date with what is happening in the prison, make decisions on requests for support, plan future initiatives and events and develop fundraising strategies. The Governor plus a member of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) attend these meetings to facilitate sharing of relevant information. Trustees also attend occasional Prison Council meetings.

For more information about the Independent Monitoring Board, please visit: https://imb.org.uk

4. Public Benefit Statement

Trustees have regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance when exercising their decision making powers and duties. Decisions are not based on personal views, but are based on academic research and evidence that particular initiatives have value in terms of prisoner rehabilitation and resettlement or they benefit their families.

Individuals in the care of the Prison Service represent a diverse, challenging population, many with highly complex needs including mental and physical health problems, substance misuse, disabilities, neurodivergent conditions and poor or no qualifications. Unless effective interventions are made whilst the men are in custody and their needs addressed, it is unlikely that the behaviours that led them to prison will change and many are at risk of reoffending on release and creating more victims of crime.

Most prisoners will eventually be released into our communities and will need to re-establish themselves back into society. HM Prison and Probation Services (HMPPS) work to help the men in these areas, but there is always more that can be done. The Friends passionately believe that, given the right opportunities and support, people can change. The Friends aim to increase those opportunities for the men in HMP Erlestoke.

It is well documented that the risk of individuals re-offending is much reduced if they have a home and a job upon release and have been supported throughout their sentence by friends and family. Any rehabilitated prisoner, who becomes a law-abiding citizen, will provide benefit to the community, particularly if they are employed and supporting themselves and their families. The Friends work with HMP Erlestoke to help prisoners take responsibility for themselves, develop new skills, improve their well-being and positive self-perception.

The Friends also offer volunteering opportunities for the local community to help the men maintain contact with their families. We raise awareness of prison life and build understanding of how many of the prisoners ended up in prison, often through, for example, mental illness, drug/alcohol addiction, abusive childhoods and poor education. Prison is an opportunity to change. The Friends are realistic and know that even with powerful interventions, some prisoners will reoffend. However, if the interventions work for a percentage of the prison population, communities will benefit from the integration of non-violent, employable individuals with skills and trades who are able to support themselves and their families. People are often prejudiced because of what they don't know – as more locals become involved with the prison and understand what it is trying to do, they may become more accepting of ex-prisoners, particularly those who want to transform their lives.

5. Activities to support prisoners and their families

5.1 Transport Scheme

"Thank you to you and all the drivers for running this scheme. I would not be able to get to the prison without it and it is helping my husband so much. We can't thank you all enough"

This year's report starts with a quote from one of the visitors who uses our service as it epitomises all we are aiming to achieve through our Transport Scheme.

This is our 12th year of running the scheme and it is increasingly successful. Those of you who are familiar with our work will know that the Scheme aims to encourage visits from the men's partners, families and friends by making their journeys easier, cheaper and more friendly and reassuring. The closer men stay to their families while in prison, the more likely they are to stay away from crime once released.

Our drivers are frequently told by the visitors that they have significantly helped with their levels of anxiety, particularly for those visiting HMP Erlestoke for the first time. The friendly face of our dedicated drivers and their sympathetic ear make for comfortable and settling journeys for the visitors who, understandably, often run high anxiety levels.

We are very fortunate that the National Lottery Community Fund has continued to fund the scheme through 2025/26 and we are optimistic that it will do so again in the future.

What we do

Visitors hear about the Scheme through the Visitors' Centre, the prison website and information distributed to the men. They contact our Transport Scheme Co-ordinator who processes their requests and arranges a weekly rota of lifts to be given to and from the prison from Westbury Train Station or Devizes Market Place for those arriving by bus. We can also collect visitors from Pewsey Station but we have, as yet, had no requests for this.

Our Transport Scheme Co-ordinator

Les Drage, our 'main man', has now been with us for three years and never for a moment do we forget how lucky we are to have his skills co-ordinating the lifts. It is clear how much both the visitors and the drivers appreciate his efficiency, communication skills and understanding. We are fortunate indeed!

Transport Scheme Figures

The number of weekly requests fluctuates but, overall, there has been an 18% increase in total individual lifts given over this past 12 months.

The number of pickups from Westbury Train Station have continued to rise over those from Devizes Market Place, with more visitors now arriving by train than bus.

The number of total journeys made by our drivers has increased by the small percentage of 4%. This is good news indeed as it reflects the increasing efficiency of the service in combining lifts for visitors. It can also be very supportive for those sharing a lift with another visitor of an imprisoned partner.

"Hello Les, if possible, could I car share with J and her baby on my visit next week and subsequent visits please. We catch the same train home and have become friends outside of visits now too which is lovely". K

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total individual visitor lifts given	1410	4	188	767	1233	1486	1759
Total lifts for children under 12 years	338	0	20	88	140	197	187
New visitors to the scheme				33	81	96	137
Total lifts given				264	587	784	781

There has been a small increase in the number of cancellations, 149 to 155, and "no shows", 6 to 8, over this last year. However these figures align with the total increase in our lift requests.

The small decrease in the number of children we have given lifts to simply reflects the families who are using our scheme. At no time have we failed to give a lift to families with a child when it has been requested.

Driver numbers

We had 27 volunteer drivers during this reporting period. The drivers' dedication to their role continues to be outstanding and there has never been an occasion when an extremely last minute request has failed to be filled. However, with the scheme becoming increasingly busy we continue to need to increase our bank of drivers.

All in all we are delighted that the scheme continues to prove so successful. We are very grateful to the PACT staff at the Visitors' Centre and to the communications team at the prison for their fervent promotion of the scheme.

Our Annual Drivers' Gathering

Held each Autumn this continues to provide a good opportunity for our drivers and the charity to share experiences, concerns, suggestions and news about the Transport Scheme. It is also a jolly, social occasion over lunch.

Released prisoners

We continue to make ourselves available to give lifts to prisoners on release who have no family or friend able to collect them and when prison staff availability for the lifts is stretched. In this last year there have been 5 requests and 2 successful lifts given. Communication between the prisoners and the staff and us regarding their need for a lift needs to improve in order to move this role forward. However, when the lifts do occur our drivers find them immensely satisfying, the first conversations for the released men being with people with a broad understanding of their circumstances and fervent wish for them to have a positive future.

Testimonials from visitors

Here is some further feedback which demonstrates the value of the Scheme to the visitors :

"Hey All, my time to Erlestoke has come to an end due to being moved and I wanted to thank everyone who has shown me kindness and helped me with my journeys to Erlestoke the last few months. I just wanted to tell everyone I appreciate everything you have all done for me. These last few months have been made sooo much easier thanks to your kindness and care for those who visit. Over the last few months I've gotten to know all of you and I appreciate the time you've all taken to drive me, get to know me, educate me and teach me new things, and most of all you've made this easier for someone like me to visit someone locked away. I struggle massively with anxiety and all of you made me feel sooo welcomed and treated me like I was a friend and never

looked down or judged anything. Thank you, all of you I will miss everyone sooo much and I wish everyone the best and I feel sad to say goodbye to everyone not knowing when my last ride would be with everyone. Please take care of yourselves! Thank You. K xx

"*My husband will spend his remaining time at Winchester so I will not need to use the transport system anymore. I really wanted to say thank you ever so much to you and all the lovely drivers that have helped me so much and enabled me to see my husband. It really does mean a lot to me and those drivers are a credit, they are a real credit. Please pass on my thanks to all the drivers. I will miss them all ever so much. Take care. J"*

"My son has been moved to a different prison but he didn't have credit to tell me. I would just like to say thank you to you and your colleagues for being so kind to me and for treating me with such respect. I am ashamed that my son is in prison but you and your team didn't look down on me or treat me any differently. I truly thank you for that. Best Regards, H"

Volunteers Needed!



BBC Radio Wiltshire produced a news item for us in April 2025 to support the Transport Scheme and spread the word about our need for new drivers. Two of our drivers, our Co-ordinator and our Transport Scheme trustee were recorded describing the scheme and appealing for more drivers. We are grateful to the BBC for their support. This report can be found on the homepage of our website, www.friendsoferlestokeprison.com

If you or anyone you know would like to join our team of volunteer drivers please contact Les: 07504 987190 or email: friendstransportscheme@gmail.com

5.2 Family Day Play Project

In the knowledge that keeping strong relationships with families while in prison is fundamentally important to reducing recidivism, the Friends again supported the Family Day Play Project. Held in October, the day involved 10 men who over the previous 8 days devised a play that they felt would most appeal to their children and visiting families.



Beth Fiducia-Brookes, a professional drama teacher from RAW Theatre Projects, brought together a group of enthusiastic if, at times, nervous and under-confident prisoners, and together they devised, wrote and performed a play for their families on the Drama Family Day. The group liaised with our Art Class who kindly created set for the scenes, including a fantastic ship wheel and ship front.

The play they produced this year was called “My Treasure”. The characters, having searched high and low and as far as the moon for their Treasure, eventually found it sitting in front of them in the form of their children and partners in the prison Sports Hall!

The play involved a peer mentor, a prisoner who had been involved in the previous year’s performance. He was key in helping the men feel comfortable by reassuring them at the start of the project when many were nervous.

This is some of the feedback from the men involved:
“Gives us a chance to be seen in a different light.”
“The most important treasure is family.”

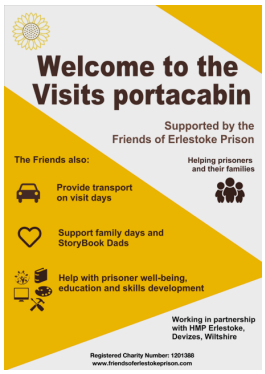
And this is some from the families:
“So good for confidence, relationships and staying in touch with culture and reality.”
“It was funny – enjoyable, touching, - I wanted to cry at the treasure.”

There is no doubt that this initiative builds opportunities for the prisoners and challenges their negative self-belief. It enables them to make demands of themselves in a positive way. We strongly believe that these days are a valuable way to strengthen and maintain prisoners’ family relationships, particularly with their children.

Family Days are run by PACT, the national charity which supports prisoners, their families and their children. PACT run 6 Family Days per year.

For more information about PACT and their work, please visit: https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/

5.3 Refurbishment of the Visitors’ Cabin



We were pleased to fund the refurbishment of an empty portacabin located just outside the prison gates. It is now a friendly space in which visitors can wait for visit times or for their family members to be released. The room now means that visitors do not have to wait directly outside the main gate in all weather conditions. Also, prison visits can be daunting experiences for families, particularly children and the portacabin provides a much improved visitor experience. We supplied sofas, rugs, tables, children’s furniture, an easel, storage combination boxes and coat hooks.

5.4 Storybook Dads

Storybook Dads has been running in HMP Erlestoke since 2010. For many years, it was run by the library and educational team. At their request, The Friends took this over in 2022. It has since been revitalised and has become a key initiative for us, notwithstanding the vital support that we continue to get from the library team, particularly from Penny Nixon. It is inexpensive to run but the return in terms of the number of men regularly reading and communicating with their families is motivating. This is what some of the men who have participated have said:

"This helps us a lot to be able to engage with our kids in a fun way. So, it gives them a chance to have a bit of normality even though we are away from them".

"I can't see my children so this way they can see me, and they will know how much I love them"

" It means a lot to me that my daughter can see my face and have a story read to her at bedtime. I know it makes her very excited to see me on TV".

"Storybook Dads is fantastic".

This year The Friends bought many new titles. This was further aided by Jo Bachelor who owns and runs the Devizes Bookshop and who generously ordered all the new titles and gave us a healthy discount. We are always humbled by the kindness of our local community.

It was interesting to read His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons report on Reading for rehabilitation, published 13th January 2026. In it Charlie Taylor comments:

"that Storybook Dads/ Mums is one of the effective reading-related interventions that prisons are using to help build a strong reading culture and support rehabilitation."

It also states that giving Mums and Dads an opportunity to record a story for their children often motivates them to improve their reading. But also recognises that it's more than just an educational tool — it's valued for its role in family engagement and emotional connection, reinforcing that reading isn't only about literacy but also about maintaining relationships and purpose."

To read the full report, please visit: https://hmiprisons.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmipris_reports/reading-for-rehabilitation/

Storybook Dads takes place fortnightly. We are close to recording a hundred or so readings a year. It is a great privilege to have an opportunity to talk with the prisoners, help with their reading skills and ensure that the important connection with their families is maintained.

For more information about StoryBook Dads, please visit: https://www.storybookdads.org.uk/

5.5 Creative Writing - ‘Rite to Write’



The Friends have continued to support the creative writing workshops which started in 2024. The now weekly Friday morning sessions are led by Jo Derrick, whose calm demeanour and creative inspiration brings out many highly imaginative and thoughtful writing pieces from the men.

The group consists of around 6 men which generates an environment where everyone can be heard and the men feel confident to contribute. Session themes this year have included suspense writing, short stories, script writing, poetry, editing, flash fiction, writer’s block, and creating believable characters.

In October, Max Porter, the prison’s Writer in Residence, and Jo organised a screening of Max’s new film ‘Steve’ based on his 2023 novella ‘Shy” starring Cillian Murphy. Max and David Kendall from Penned Up ran a follow up Q&A session about the film and its production. Jo dedicated the next creative writing session to discuss reflections about the film.

Max Porter and Jo worked with the group to create an anthology of the men’s work called ‘Lifetime’. Illustrated by prisoners, the completed publication was released as part of Penned Up in June 2025. In the foreword of the anthology, Max said: *“I love looking at the group just after I’ve set them a task. There’s a pause, the coffee has been drunk (the biscuits have disappeared in seconds), they listen, and they nod and smile. They might be a bit surprised at what I’ve asked them to do but they’re not fazed. Pens at the ready. Blank pages. And then they create.”*

The publication was made available in local bookshops and libraries and can be downloaded from The Friends website. It is free of charge but The Friends would appreciate any donations people are able to make.

Here is just one example from ‘Lifetime’:

A Note to My Younger Self by JD

I see you sitting there under the tree
You sweet little innocent version of me
Don't you be scared of the power inside
You have no need to run shy and hide

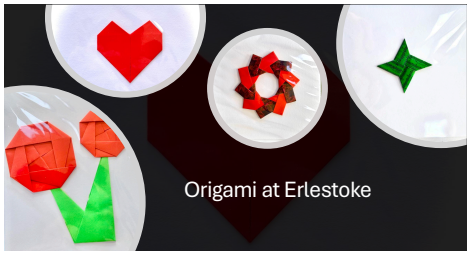
Remember your goodness
Your sweetness
Your pride

Shout out
Speak loud
Act up
And be free

Show who you are
This good little me

And just like the daisies you link in the chain
You'll learn to rise up and try over again

5.6 Origami



We have continued to support the origami group with sessions on a Friday morning. They remain rewarding both for the offenders and the team that engage with them. There have been a series of hails and farewells – some prisoners have moved to Category D prisons and some have been released, others have joined… but one particular prisoner remains our lynchpin. He is the technical backbone for the origami activity but also contributes to our textiles and creative writing groups plus many other efforts – a true ambassador for The Friends!

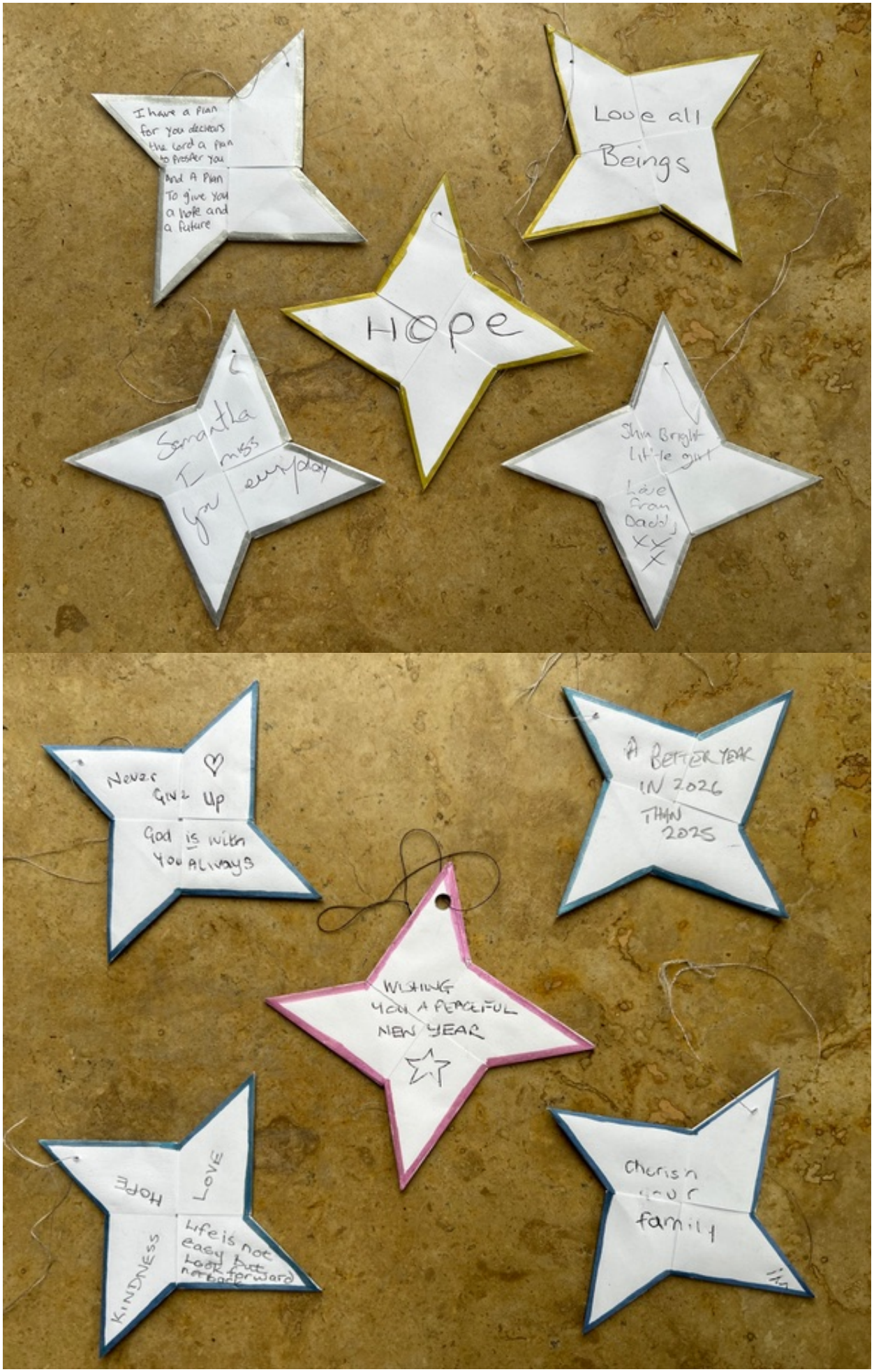


Helen Holtam MBE, the founder and inspiration of our origami group has finally decided to retire fully after 9 years at the prison. Thank you again to Helen for all her work with the group. We will miss Helen and her energetic sales channel activities distributing cards and products using her local volunteers, contacts and friends in Brighton as well as the Origami Inside website, which has now closed. However, we will be launching our own sales page on The Friends website to sell cards. We are also renewing our efforts to stock cards in local shops and businesses. Cards are now available in Lacock Stores, a Chippenham crafts pop-up and we are working on other outlets. This new approach will be launched at the 2026 Devizes Arts Festival in June. We will also gradually develop our ability to create bespoke cards for local charities, businesses and other groups.



Beginning her fourth year now, Becky our chaperone/guide/invigilator and now supplier and distributor has taken this change in her stride. Her continuity and level-headed approach make the session a calm and nurturing experience, which is much valued by offenders negotiating the complexities and challenges of life in HMP Erlestoke.

In December 2025, we entered a Christmas Tree decorated by the origami group into the St Thomas's, Salisbury Christmas Tree Festival. The group made a set of simple decorations and we used the idea of a dialogue with visitors. The men were asked to suggest a short message to write on the decoration for the visitors to the church to read. The decorations are shown here – those from people in Salisbury have blue and purple surrounds.


I have a plan for you declears the Lord a plan to prosper you And A Plan To give you a hope and a future
Love all Beings
Hope
Shine Bright Little girl
Love from Daddy XX
Never Give Up
God is with You Always
A BETTER YEAR IN 2026 THAN 2025
WISHING YOU A PEACEFUL NEW YEAR
HOPE
LOVE
KINDNESS
Life is not easy but Look forward
Cherish your family

5.7 Art Classes

The Friends continue to fund weekly Art Classes for a group of keen and talented prisoners. Our classes fall outside of the Education Department's remit of delivering qualification based educational programmes, thus allowing the men to draw, paint and create their ideas beyond a structured curriculum. The class atmosphere is one of creativity and the men are also very supportive of each other's work and well-being.

Their work has been exhibited outside of HMP Erlestoke, for example in Messums, Tisbury and the Young Gallery in Salisbury (see section 6.1), to be followed at the Devizes Art Festival and another venue in Salisbury in 2026. The men will also be involved in murals planned for this year inside the prison.

The Friends funded an Art Prize in 2025 which saw an overall winner, two runners up and three third places. Another Competition is planned for 2026. Our Art activity on Thursday afternoons continues to be successful and very much appreciated by the attendees. Sue Martin teaches and inspires the men to attend her weekly sessions. Her time and materials are funded by the Friends.

This is what some of the men have said about the classes this year:

"It's my escape. It's my happy place. It's the best thing I do all week."

"It's nice and quiet. It helps you to stop thinking intrusive thoughts and it stops me worrying about the rubbish. Mentally it's good for me and helps me to be in the moment."

"It's like a form of meditation, doing art." *"It's just you, the brush and a piece of paper."*

"I'm a big worrier so it helps me to focus just on art. You can't control your environment, but it's nice and quiet in art."

"The art we are able to achieve is only limited by our imagination. Sue and the Friends of Erlestoke help us achieve this. Sue's patience and knowledge is exceptional."

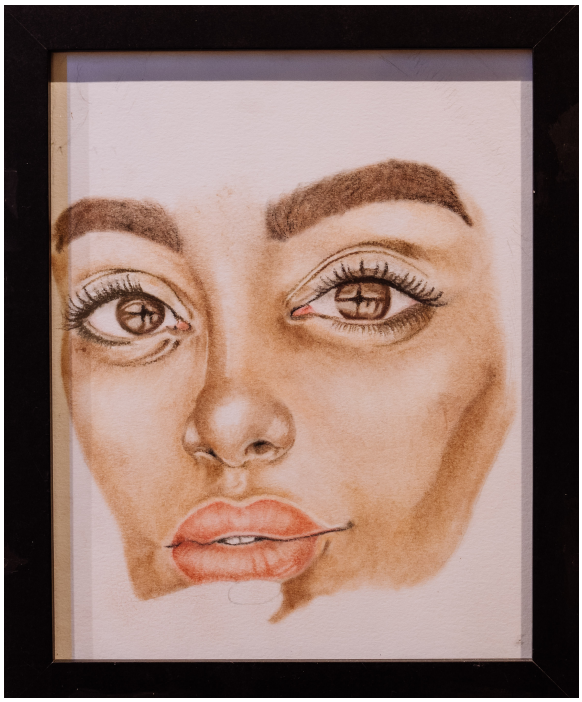
As a prisoner, you can hardly see the landscape outside, let alone paint it. However, you do have a sight you face everyday, and for a long time, that is your cell. There are four sides in each cell which reflect the different elements of your life, physically and mentally. Therefore, I decided to

make a painting for each side of the cell, leaving an imprint in the spiritual course, and on my way home."

The sample photos illustrate the variety and quality of work produced but the men over the last year. The art work on the cover of this report was also painted by the men who attend our weekly art sessions.



Portrait of Max Porter by an art class participant













5.8 Penned Up 2025

Following the success of Penned Up 2024, the Friends supported the Penned Up 2025 literary festival in the prison this year. This was the 7th Penned Up within Erlestoke and there is nothing like this festival anywhere else in the prison estate and it has grown year on year.

The festival is organised with, and for, prisoners. The men bring their own ideas to the festival, rather than just being an audience for the invited speakers. The events were filmed and and are the most viewed content on the men's in cell laptops. 19 other prisons with the same technology subscribe to receive Penned Up events as they are put on the Erlestoke laptops. Penned Up has also been featured in The Big Issue, Inside Time and on the Secret Life of Prisons podcast.

Elizabeth Williams, Head of Learning and Skills at Erlestoke said:

'This years Penned Up Festival at HMP Erlestoke had an amazing line up of speakers and facilitators which crossed different genres and spectrums of interests. We had a largely new committee of prisoners this year who had some inspiring and interesting suggestions for speakers, most of whom agreed to come in and were very well received by the prisoner community. We explored a new area around drama and performance which prisoners engaged well in and appreciated the excellent performance of Hamlet by actor Mark Lockyer. Numbers attending were up on last year by 30% which I believe is reflective of both the programme of speakers and our ability to advertise the event to more of our population. Each year we think it can't get any better, and it does, it is the most wonderful, inspiring and up-lifting event which our prisoners appreciate and benefit from enormously.'

The 2025 programme is shown on the next page.

For more information about Penned Up, please visit: https://pennedup.org.uk/

LLL Erlestoke poster 2025 Latest.qxp_Layout 1 07/04/2025 11:14 Page 1

Registered Charity Number: 1201388

PENNED UP @ ERLESTOKE

PROGRAMME MAY 2025

10th anniversary festival

WEEK 1



Clare Hammond

Wednesday 30 April
Clare Hammond
2.00pm-3.00pm Chapel

A chance to hear award-winning pianist **Clare Hammond** explore some famous and not so famous pieces of classical music and explain the background to each one, including works by Mozart, Beethoven and Chopin.



Justin Rollins

Thursday 1 May
Justin Rollins
10.15am-11.15am Room27

Justin Rollins became leader of a group of London street kids involved in graffiti-tagging and other crimes. After a prison sentence for violence Justin works to steer young people away from such a life.



Junior Bayode

Thursday 1 May
Junior Bayode
2.00pm-3.00pm Room 27

In prison **Junior Bayode** saw a book in the library, *The Stock Market Explained*, with a Black man on the cover. That lit the fuse. Now Junior is a Product Manager at a leading financial institution. Hear how he did this.

WEEK 2



Dr Lucy Marten

Wednesday 7 May
Dr Lucy Marten
10.15am-11.15am Room 27

What do we really know about Alfred the Great? From King of Wessex at the start of his reign to King of the English at its end. **Dr Lucy Marten** sorts the myth from the history.



Philip Ashford

Thursday 8 May
Philip Ashford (RIFT)
9.00am-11.15am Room 27

Everything you need to know about self-employment from business plans, to tax and insurance, market research and keeping start-up costs low, **Phil Ashford** will take you through the pros and cons of self employment.



Dwaine Patterson

Thursday 8 May
Dwaine Patterson
2.00pm-3.00pm Room 27

In his work, **Dwaine Patterson** talks of the need to create dignified spaces within prisons, fostering an environment where individuals can rebuild their lives and find hope. He himself served 22 years in prison.

WEEK 3



Victoria Gosling

Monday12 May
Victoria Gosling
2.00pm-4.30pm IT Room

Life writing workshop.
A workshop for those wanting to put a life on to paper. Where do we start when writing about our lives? What do we leave out? **Victoria Gosling** is the author of two novels.



Dr Matt Morgan

Tuesday 13 May
Dr Matt Morgan
10.15am-11.15am Room 27

We all look for second chances. **Dr Matt Morgan**'s book collects the stories of people who have experienced overdoses, heart attacks and transplants to see how their lives have been transformed by the second chance they've been given.



Dr Lucy Berthoud

Tuesday 13 May
Dr Lucy Berthoud
2.00pm-3.00pm Room 27

What would you take to Mars? What would you need to survive? Join Space Engineer **Dr Lucy Berthoud** to find out what it takes to live on Mars and how to build a Martian habitat.



Michael Balogun

Wednesday 14 May
Michael Balogun
2.00pm-3.00pm Room 27

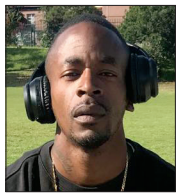
Growing up, **Michael Balogun** stole and dealt drugs to survive. It could have ended differently but in prison he got work release at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Since then, he's worked in theatre and on TV shows, such as *Top Boy* and *Sherwood*.



Jack Rutter

Thursday 15 May
Jack Rutter
10.15am-11.15am Room 27

Jack Rutter was about to sign for Birmingham City FC when an assault and resulting head injury put an end to his career. But only four years later he was leading the GB Paralympic football team.



Robyn Travis

Thursday 15 May
Robyn Travis
2.00pm-3.00pm Room 27

The author of *Prisoner to the Streets* – an honest and hard-hitting memoir about being caught up in the 'London Post-code Wars' – and *Mama Can't Raise No Man*. **Robyn Travis** talks about writing from and about the margins of society and the need for role models.

WEEK 4



Jacob Dunne

Monday 19 May
Jacob Dunne
2.00pm-3.00pm Room 27

At 19, **Jacob Dunne**'s life changed forever when a single violent act by him led to a prison sentence for manslaughter. He became a passionate advocate for restorative justice and for change in how prison is used.



Dominic McHale

Tuesday 20 May
Dominic McHale
2.00pm-4.30pm Room 27

Performance skills
A practical and enjoyable drama workshop exploring some of the fundamentals of acting and performance skills, which can be useful and informative for real life situations.



Bill Daggs

Wednesday 21 May
Bill Daggs
9.00am-11.15am Room 27

Bill Daggs is an artist who often works using sound. In this workshop, Bill will ask us to spontaneously respond to music and sound pieces, using pens, pencils, pastels, etc.



John Costi

Wednesday 21 May
John Costi
2.00pm-3.00pm Room 27

"I was born an artist. The world turned me into an armed robber." **John Costi** co-curated, with Jeremy Deller, last year's Koestler exhibition at the South Bank. Here, he talks about his life and art inside and outside of prison.



Life After Life

Thursday 22 May
Life After Life
2.00pm-3.00pm Room 27

Three released lifers give you the insight into their experience of life after prison. How they rose over the obstacles and created a new life for themselves.

WEEK 5



Dan Edozie

Tuesday 27 May
Dan Edozie
10.15am-11.15am Room 27

From homeless on the streets of LA as a child to international basketball player (Iowa State Cyclones & Bristol Flyers), it's not been an easy journey. **Dan Edozie** uses these experiences in his role coaching others to believe in themselves and deal with adversity.



Dominic McHale

Tuesday 27 May
Dominic McHale
2.00pm-4.30pm Room 27

Actor **Dominic McHale** tells you everything you ever wanted to know about Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and his complicated family. Through drama exercises and discussion we will investigate the characters and their motivations.



Mark Lockyer

Wednesday 28 May
Mark Lockyer
2.00pm-3.00pm Room 27

Performance of extracts from Regeneration Theatre's one-man production of *Hamlet*, featuring acclaimed actor **Mark Lockyer**, whose own experience of bipolar disorder and prison informs his take on the character.



Geoff Barrow

Thursday 29 May
Geoff Barrow
2.00pm-3.00pm Room 27

Geoff Barrow is a music producer and composer who was also an integral part of bands Portishead and Beak. He will talk about composing music for films and how to escape being limited by what you are most known for.

- Book via 'Penned Up' requests on laptop or sign up in the library
- You'll get the same sessional pay for attending an event as you would for your usual work or activity

5.9 Textiles Club



The Textiles Club had been running for many years at the prison as part of the education budget. Unfortunately, in October 2025, new Education contracts came into force with a budget reduction resulting in the prison losing 3 existing education courses delivered by Milton Keynes College. One of these was Textiles. However, recognising the value that this activity brings in terms of prisoner well-being and skills development, The Friends agreed to fund the course from January 26. Milton Keynes generously agreed that the current resources; sewing machines, material, cottons can be used by the Club eliminating the need for set up costs.

Sylvia Bell who has run the course since it started was very happy to come back and take it on again. Sylvia has an art and design background and is a great tutor. The objectives of the club are to teach prisoners basic skills in sewing which will support them now and on release. They make book bags for the prison library and cot quilts for the baby unit at Bath Royal United Hospital. The men have the opportunity to be creative and often make something for their children. Recently some of them have made cushions for members of the education staff. All this creates a great sense of achievement and the Club provides a safe space where prisoners well-being can be supported.

The Club runs weekly on Thursday mornings and is attended by six or seven prisoners each week. Other prisoners can drop in, and do so for clothing repairs!

5.10 Greener on the Outside for Prisons (GOOP) at HMP Erlestoke

The GOOP project is the brainchild of Dr Michelle Baybutt from the University of Cumbria and is a whole system health and justice intervention that uses nature-connection for wellbeing in prison settings. Not only does gardening contribute to prisoners' health and well-being but it also has positive impact on two key factors linked to poor mental health – loneliness and isolation.



Image from Spectrum Community Health CIC website

We are very grateful to the Wiltshire Gardens Trust for sponsoring this initiative at Erlestoke; during this reporting period, the project successfully ran for two mornings each week helping those who were finding it hard to connect to classroom based activities. The Wiltshire Gardens Trust has very kindly agreed to continue their sponsorship into 2026, and we are hoping to expand the provision and reach the increasing number of prisoners who exhibit behaviours and health needs which relate to past traumatic experiences.

For more information about GOOP, please visit: https://spectrum-cic.org.uk/our-social-value/goop/

5.11 The Queen's Reading Room at HMP Erlestoke

We were delighted that Her Majesty the Queen gave her personal blessing to our initiative to encourage prisoners to take advantage of opportunities to read more. There are now bookcases in each of the wings and although the project is at a very early stage, we are thrilled that two of our Patrons, Jonathan Gaisman, who is our Reading Ambassador and Max Porter, are visiting on Friday afternoons to read to prisoners and inspire an enthusiasm for the written word. So far we have concentrated on poetry by Thomas Hardy, W H Auden, Rudyard Kipling and Philip Larkin, but we are looking forward to expanding the reading list in the months to come.

Please visit: https://thequeensreadingroom.co.uk/ for more information about the Queen's charity.

5.12 Beekeeping



As a new initiative this year, The Friends supported the prison to explore the possibility of keeping bees at Erlestoke. We sponsored the purchase of a swarm of bees, a beehive and protective clothing to enable prisoners to take charge of their own bee keeping experience. The initiative has been successful and has enabled several men to learn a new skill, understand the importance of bees to the environment and share the responsibility of caring for the hive and the bees. We are looking forward to tasting the honey!

5.13 Changing Tunes

Changing Tunes is a music charity who have been coming to Erlestoke for over 20 years. They use the power of music to help people lead crime free lives that are meaningful and creative.

CHANGING TUNES

The charity visit the prison one day per week (Mondays) throughout most of the year delivering sessions for beginners in the morning and for more experienced musicians who can participate in a band in the afternoon. Changing Tunes provide equipment, such as guitars, drums, microphones and amps. Their impact on the men cannot be underestimated. The men show a real desire to learn and many have shown exceptional progress. Those men with a higher level of ability have also shown tangible changes in attitude and demeanour. Music can be very powerful and can bring peace and harmony to many prisoners, but particularly those with complex needs.

In previous years, Changing Tunes was funded by the prison Education budget, but due to cuts, it could not be recommissioned from this budget. The Friends were asked to step in and took the decision to support this important initiative, particularly as it supports the well-being and mental health of a group of prisoners and there is currently no other musical avenue for the men.

For more information about Changing Tunes, please visit: https://www.changingtunes.org.uk/

5.14 Sports Pitch



For many years, the Friends have reported our aspiration to support the build of a sports pitch within the prison. In this reporting period, we suspended allocation of funds to this project as it seemed unlikely that it would happen in the near future and deadlines for the building work in Erlestoke had moved several times. However, building work to increase the capacity of HMP Erlestoke by 180 prison places has now commenced and we are looking forward to working with the Small Secure Houseblocks programme team and the Governor to deliver our ambition of creating an outdoor sports area, following the completion of the capacity expansion programme. Prior to and after this completion, the Friends will continue to support initiatives that will benefit the prisoners' physical and mental health.

5.15 Horserenity

Prompted by one of our Patrons, Sir Charles Hobhouse, The Friends sponsored a scheme to help the staff HMP Erlestoke take advantage of a horse based therapy run by a professional accredited team. Horserenity is a nature-based alternative provision of equine therapy, coaching, training and wellbeing experience guided by horses. The training team work with the belief that all behaviour is communication and everything do is rooted in ethical, horse-centred practice, by which they

support meaningful connection, personal growth and positive change. The training took place in December 2025 and was so successful that we are now looking into introducing it more widely at Erlestoke for the benefit of the prisoners.

For more information about Horserenity, please visit: https://www.horserenity.co.uk/

5.16 Prisoner's film to internally promote the Friends



During Penned Up 2024, a prisoner approached one of our trustees to say that he wanted to do something for the charity as a thank you for all the ways in which The Friends had helped him. He offered to put together a short film promoting the charity internally within the prison, including why the charity was established and what it has to offer to prisoners.

The prisoner worked with our trustee and the prison Digital and Communications Manager, Neil Parsons, to create an outline of the film content. Over a period of months, they then filmed comprehensive footage of prisoners engaging in the charity's activities and interviews with trustees and our founder, Belinda Southwell, to tell the story of the Friends. Thank you to Neil for working with our trustee to edit the footage and complete the short film by the end of 2025. Also thank you to the prisoner who had the original idea for the film and did much of the filming. It is now available on prisoners' in cell laptops.

5.17 Veterans in Custody - VE Day Celebration

HMP Erlestoke has three Veterans in Custody Support Officers who are ex-service members from the Navy, Army and Air Force. They support prisoners who have served in the military at some point in their lifetime. They meet with these prisoners every 5 to 6 weeks and invite guest speakers to give talks and updates about the military. SSAFA, the armed forces charity and Care After Combat also attend to offer support and help in the last year of the prisoners' sentence, such as housing, jobs and transport.

On the 8th May 2025, the ex-military prisoners held an event to celebrate the 80th anniversary Victory in Europe (VE) day. The Friends were pleased to be able to support this event by funding the food and drink.

For more information about SSAFA or Care After Combat, please visit: https://www.ssafa.org.uk/ and https://careaftercombat.org/

5.18 Diversity and Inclusion



The Diversity and Inclusion department held their 3rd Young Adult Olympics competition in early 2025. It was held over 3 days, with the young adults working together in a team. The events included tyre flipping, shuttle runs and HYDROX style workouts. The Friends were pleased to support this event by funding the purchase of medals and refreshments for the 3 days. The Friends were also pleased to support several other events celebrating diversity and inclusion, for example, Pride, Black History Month and the over 50s group.

5.19 Reading/Scanning Pens

HMP Erlestoke have seen an increase in the number of prisoners arriving with low reading levels during this reporting period. Not being able to read and write is isolating and make the world a scarier place to be. This is made worse in prison when contact with loved ones is limited. It can impact relationships as the full range of family contact is reduced for those who cannot read as they are unable to engage in 'Email a Prisoner' or read letters from loved ones. It can also stop men from realising their full potential and progressing through their sentence.

The prison aims to ensure that all men have the opportunity to improve their reading skills during their time at Erlestoke. It provides them with a range of formal support through Education courses and more informal peer support such as Shannon Trust and reading orderlies. There are also 'book nooks' on the residential wings, the work areas and the Visits Hall so that books become part of the Erlestoke culture. The Queen's Reading Room initiative (section 5.11) also supports this strategy.



In addition the Friends were pleased to fund a supply of reading/scanning pens as part of the reading strategy to find different ways to engage the men in a safe and supportive way. These pens will help the men read letters from loved ones, a Parole Report or work with their peers to improve their reading skills. This may then lead to improved writing skills so they can progress in work or write a birthday card to their family. An increase in improved family ties and self-worth results in decreased violence and self harm whilst also improving sustained rehabilitation and employment opportunities on release.

5.20 Employment Advisory Board

All prisons throughout the country now have Employment Advisory Boards (EABs). This programme was initiated by Lord Timpson, Prisons Minister, with the goal of increasing the percentage of prisoners who find employment upon release, as this has been shown to reduce reoffending rates.

EABs work with dedicated prison staff (primarily the 'Prison Employment Lead') and other bodies (the DWP and New Futures Network) to prepare men for interviews and work once outside and to find employers willing to offer employment opportunities to suitable applicants.

The Friends have supported the EAB with, for example, funding for phones (not smart-phones) so that the men can put a contact number on their CV or applications.

To learn more about EABs, please visit: https://newfuturesnetwork.gov.uk/employment-advisory-boards/

5.21 Dragon's Den

Some men prefer the idea of working for themselves upon release instead of employment. The Prison Employment Lead and one of the Friends have established an informal Entrepreneurs Class, culminating in a 'Dragons Den' session (that also featured on National Prison Radio). Four men each pitched their individual ideas to four judges with the Friends of Erlestoke Prison funding modest 'investments' as prizes.

6. In the community

6.1 Messums and prisoner art

Messums is a successful commercial art gallery on the outskirts of Tisbury, Wiltshire and we were delighted when Johnny Messum invited the Friends to exhibit some of the prisoners' artwork in the tithe barn, alongside the works of professional artist, Henry Lamb.





Sue Martin our talented tutor put in many hours preparing and framing the various works, which were then professionally mounted by Messums. We were absolutely thrilled to see the end result and were very glad to welcome supporters and prison staff for an event to mark the opening of the exhibition. Several of our Patrons also attended and it was a super opportunity for people to chat to the Prison Governor, who gave an excellent speech, highlighting the benefits of art as therapy in the prison.



The exhibition was extended and ran for several weeks in May and June 2025 at Messums before moving to the Young Gallery in Salisbury Library. This gave many locals and experts a chance to look at what is achieved by the prisoners in art classes sponsored by the Friends.



For more information about Messums Art Gallery, please visit: https://www.messums.org/

6.2 The High Sheriff of Wiltshire's 'Speed Dating' Charity event.

It has been a pleasure to work alongside the High Sheriff of Wiltshire, Martin Nye, this year. He has toured the prison twice; his special focus was food and so he came to look at the kitchens and all the food related activities at Erlestoke. It was fortuitous that his tour combined with the changing of the menus and the decision to introduce more fresh food, which is all made in the prison kitchens. We also looked at the gardens where a great deal of the produce used in the kitchens is grown by the prisoners, and at a course that was being taught to give Barrista qualifications.

It was a huge privilege, therefore, to be asked to join his charity 'Speed Dating' event in February. The Friends were invited along with twelve other Wiltshire Charities and, having sent details about the work we did in advance, received a list of 15 minute appointments with local donors and benefactors who were keen to hear more about the work of local charities. During the course of a morning, beautifully organised by the Wiltshire Community Foundation, we spoke about our work and then had a chance to chat to other donors and charities over a delicious lunch. We were most gratified to receive significant donations from several generous sources which will be put to good use in our work.



It was at this event that our Chairman, Primrose Campbell, was presented with a High Sheriff's award, by Martin Nye, in recognition of the "exceptional contribution that she has made and continues to make to the Friends of Erlestoke Prison".

A huge thank you to Martin Nye for including the Friends of Erlestoke Prison and to the Wiltshire Community Foundation for organising such an excellent event.

For more information about the High Sheriff of Wiltshire or the Wiltshire Community Foundation, please visit: https://highsheriffs.com/wiltshire/ and https://www.wscf.org.uk/

6.3 Omens ad Unum Devizes Autumn Artisan Fayre

We once again joined the Omnes Ad Unum Fayre in the Devizes Corn Exchange at the end of September 2025. We promoted the charity to a local audience and sold origami cards. We also had a stock of the creative writing group's anthology (section 5.5) and encouraged those who were interested to make a donation to us. Thank you to everyone who visited our stall.



6.4 Halloween Sleuth Event



The generosity of one of our Transport Scheme volunteer drivers, Mary Wood, led her and husband Bas to put on a most extraordinary fundraising event for the Friends last Autumn. The event was an Interactive Crime Scene Investigation. Mary is a retired Metropolitan Police Officer and has devised such events professionally in the past.

Participants signed up to being detectives and investigated a bloody murder scene. It was so cleverly masterminded everyone went away realising just how much is involved in being a homicide detective. It proved to be a fascinating and, indeed, challenging opportunity for the attendees.

Bas added to the evening with his magnificent Fire Investigation Dog's skills. The dog, Chester, impressed us with his well-honed skills. The organisation and delivery of the event was so skilled and the Friends are very grateful to Mary and Bas for all that was involved in making such a successful occasion with useful funds raised for the charity.

7. Financial Review 2025/2026

Our total income for this year was £55,481. This was a combination of personal, corporate and charity trust donations and a small fundraising event. We received over £5,000 in Crown Court funds, money retrieved from offenders. We have a stream of income from our generous regular supporters for which we are very grateful. The substantial funds we currently hold have been put into a 95 day account and have earned interest of nearly £12,000 in this reporting period.

The proceeds of the sale of the origami work produced by some of the prisoners is still a major contributor to the charity; with the support and enthusiasm of Helen Holtam the work continues to provide us with a good income and this year raised £3,280.

Our total expenditure this year was £46,470 and was directly linked to the charity aims. Art classes and the creative writing workshops continue to be well attended. We have started to support textile classes which were previously funded by the prison education budget until budget cuts in Autumn 2025. The Transport Scheme, which is funded by the National Lottery, is being well used. We supported the family drama project, the annual Penned Up programme, Changing Tunes and a sensory garden. We also purchased five scanning/reading pens, a camera for Storybook Dads, furniture for the visitor waiting room and items for the new beekeeping project.

The trustees have agreed to maintain sufficient reserves to fund key projects for 6 months which we estimate as £25,000. Our reserves are still much higher than that at the end of the year because of the funds raised for the Sports pitch project. This is not now going to be created in its original form, we understand from the prison that a much simpler version is planned, which will be much less costly. We are of course aware of the high level of reserves and are actively researching new projects to fund in the prison.

Our insurance and admin costs overheads are similar to previous years at £1,168.

Our annual accounts are independently inspected by Chris Vaughan, Accountants, 195 Ermin Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 4NA, are available on our website:
https://friendsoferlestokeprison.com/

Receipts and Payments Accounts: 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026

	2025/26	Last year 2024/25
Receipts		
Grants Received	1,425	18,450
Donations, charities and courts	19,402	3,907
Donations individuals	18,930	8,502
Gift Aid Income	545	302
Origami	3,280	4,232
Concert fundraiser	213	2,492
Investment Income	11,689	8,985
Total receipts	**55,484**	**46,871**
Payments		
Transport Coordinator	8,971	7,292
Transport Scheme Expenses	1,047	794
Origami costs	2,491	2, 532
Art classes	8,652	7,427
Creative Writing workshops	3,394	1,825
Changing Tunes	7,500	-
Family Drama Project	1,700	1,700
Filming equipment	-	3,320
Penned Up festival	500	500
Visitor waiting area furniture	1,430	-
Scanning/reading pens	1,392	-
Sensory Garden	1,070	-
Horserenity	1,000	-
Prisoner support	3,162	1,097
Messums art event	2,993	-
Website costs	200	234
Insurance	470	444
Admin costs	498	300
Total payments	**46,470**	**27,465**
Net of receipts & payments	**9,014**	**19,405**
Assets		
Cambridge and County	81,738	94,913
Redwood Bank	100,366	107,507
Hampshire Trust Bank	88,625	80,000
Metro Current Account	28,800	9,008
Less Accruals	-758	-1,669
	298,770	**289,758**
Total Funds Brought forward	289,759	270,353
Total Funds Year End	298,770	289,758

8. The Year Ahead 2026/27

We are excited about the year ahead and are particularly pleased to be sponsoring an exhibition of prisoners' creative work at the Devizes Arts Festival, Wiltshire in June 2026.

Notably, we are very mindful that in late 2027 HMP Erlestoke will expand to accommodate 180 extra men, which will present many challenges for the Governor and her staff. We remain committed to doing everything we can to support staff, prisoners and their families through this time of change.

We are also very much looking forward to our long held hopes for a sports pitch coming to fruition during the last phase of the building works and for developing new initiatives which will support prisoner wellbeing linked to the pitch.

In the meantime we look forward to engaging more prisoners in projects on the accommodation wings, and particularly helping those with complex neurodiverse needs. Of course our support for art, creative writing, origami, drama, music and the many other smaller activities that we sponsor will continue; it is a huge privilege to work alongside the prison staff in delivering these opportunities and creative experiences to the prisoners.

As always, sustainability of the charity is a key objective for us in 2026/27. Although we are in comfortable position as we enter a new financial year, we are mindful that we need to continue fundraising throughout the year as we make new investments. We are also aware that we need to have clear plans for when trustees retire or leave the Charity. We will continue to ensure that we have a robust and talented group of individuals who, with regard to public benefit, will lead the strategic development of the charity throughout the year ahead and beyond.

9. For more information

If you would like more information about the work of the Friends, please visit our website: www.friendsoferlestokeprison.com, or email: info@friendsoferlestokeprison.com
If you would like to make a donation, please visit:
https://www.friendsoferlestokeprison.com/donate.html

Any contribution that you could make would be of great value to us, the men in HMP Erlestoke and their families.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in our charity.
The Trustees
Friends of Erlestoke Prison
HMP Erlestoke
Westbury Road
Erlestoke
Devizes
SN10 5TU