

Festival of Kindness 2024 Review

On Monday 26th August, 2024, Norfolk and Waveney Mind, in collaboration with Lowestoft Town Council, hosted the second *Festival of Kindness* at Sparrow's Nest, Lowestoft.

The event was a great success, with over 400 people attending throughout the day enjoying the sunshine, live music, art workshops, food and drinks and speaking with local organisations about the work they do in the community to support people with their mental health and wellbeing. People of all ages were at the event - which was great to see - with so many important conversations being had around mental health and wellbeing.

Venue and timings

We feel Sparrow's Nest is the perfect venue for this type of event. The stage area looking out over the park is ideal, the grass area by the playground lends itself nicely to hosting the stands as Giardinios blocks out the noise from the stage allowing conversations to be had without being drowned out. Ample parking and accessible entrances are also huge benefits

Music

Using local artists is an important consideration for this event. Suffolk Sober Spaces opened the proceedings with powerful messages about recovery, with singer/songwriters Lara Price, Milly Anna, Maple Ward and Shaun Small following, delivering equally fantastic performances.

Workshops

As last year, the ArtEat workshops proved to be extremely popular amongst families. Mask making, collages and painting provided young people a great opportunity to engage in some creative activities while having a rest in the shade under our stretch tent.

The circus skills workshop was also very popular, being ran by 'Backflip Ben' who wowed people with his spring-loaded stilts while flipping over people.

Stands

We had a wide range of organisations attending this year, from Tia's Treasures, Woodwork Art Café and Nature Connect; all providing information, resources and valuable donations to local mental health and wellbeing providers.

Food and drink

This year we were thrilled to be joined by Society Alive's Afro-Caribbean food stand; from which we received incredible feedback about how good it was. Kadosh Soul Space offered speciality teas and cakes, while offering a relaxing space under their tent including hand massages and kindness sessions. Lamarti's ice cream van was also there, which was complimented well by the sunshine.

Fundraising

Although the overarching ambition of this event is awareness raising of mental health and wellbeing opportunities for the people of Lowestoft, Norfolk and Waveney Mind did include a small fundraising aspect to the event. These included a raffle, giving out programmes for a small donation, face painting, and food and drink vendors donated in the agreement of a free pitch at the event.

A total of £667.88 was raised on the day.

Considerations for 2025..... and beyond

- More 'upbeat' music. Look to get a wider range of performances such as bands and choirs.
- More info stands, including NWM services and other MH charities
- Look into how we can expand pre-event promotion channels
- More food stalls
- Keep the same times for next year (11am – 4pm)
- Face painting was very popular

Norfolk and Waveney Mind are extremely grateful to Lowestoft Town Council for providing us the opportunity and the funding to deliver this event; we look forward to continuing this partnership into 2025 and beyond.