

Community Highlights

From carnival celebrations to heartfelt artwork, here's a look at some of the uplifting moments that have brightened our work since our summer update...



Carnival Cheer!

We were delighted to have staff, volunteers and clients take part in both the Wellington and Taunton Carnivals. Together, they helped raise over £400 through collection tins while spreading awareness of Arc's work throughout the local community. A huge thank you to everyone who supported us!

Spooktacular Fun

Our residents enjoyed a fantastic Halloween celebration thanks to the creativity and kindness of our support workers Nicki, Anna, and Ayaz. The day was filled with fun, laughter, and spooky treats. Special thanks go to Pitt Farm Pumpkins for their generous pumpkin donation, Matt at the Co-op on Cheddon Road for providing sweet treats, and our wonderful volunteer Jill, who made a batch of truly amazing cupcakes. Your contributions helped make the celebration extra special!



Young Somerset Volunteers

We were thrilled to welcome a hardworking volunteer team from Young Somerset who spent the morning preparing our allotment, digging, clearing, and getting everything ready for colder months, before heading to our Head Office to help sort donations for our Welcome Packs. These packs are vital for people moving into our accommodation, offering warmth and comfort during a difficult transition. We're incredibly grateful for their energy, enthusiasm, and collaboration. It's inspiring to see charities working hand-in-hand to create meaningful, lasting change in our community



Honouring Remembrance Through Art

We are proud to showcase the beautiful artwork created by one of our talented clients, Andrea (see photo to left). His pieces pay tribute to the courage and resilience of those who served, offering a heartfelt reminder of Remembrance and its significance. We look forward to sharing more of his artwork with you soon.

From Hardship to Hope: Tony's Amazing Journey

At St Mary's Church in Bridgwater, Tony is a familiar face to anyone who walks through the door. On Mondays and Wednesdays, he helps run two wellbeing groups supporting people with learning difficulties. On Thursdays he has created his own little area where rough sleepers can come in from the cold, grab something to eat, charge their phones, get some warm clothing, and receive a bit of support. On top of that, he runs two AA meetings every week: Tuesday nights and Saturday mornings.

Tony's passion for helping people is clear:

"If I can just help one person, I'll die a very happy man."

Tony has been homeless for around 40 years. His turning point came on 7 August 2024, when he went into rehab. He left on 17 August, and after spending a month on the street, he ended up in Highbridge. Through the council and a doctor's referral, he was connected to Arc, where he met Outreach workers Amy and Rich, who visited him every morning. They helped him secure a referral interview at Lindley House and then a place at Dampiet House and he walked into St Mary's Church the very next day.



"One morning I woke up and thought, I've had enough. I reached out to my doctor for help, who referred me to Turning Point and SIDAS, and I ended up in rehab in Weston. For the first time in 40 years, I was clean. I was left with all these raw thoughts, emotional, no comfort blanket anymore, so I walked the streets for two weeks crying until I finally found comfort in the church and got a lot of answers."

After rehab, Tony packed his bag and headed to Highbridge, determined to make something of himself.

"I was sleeping in the church graveyard for around a month, and Rich and Amy would come out every morning to see me before I got the good news that I had an interview at Arc. This is where my journey really started."

At Dampiet House, Tony met Julie, his support worker and doors started to open for him; *"Julie was someone I really needed in my life. She pulled me from the clouds and made me bring myself down to earth. At the time, I had loads of crazy plans, but she kept me grounded."*

With Julie's help, Tony spent just over a year at Dampiet House before moving into his own place on 7 August 2025, exactly one year after entering rehab. Tony reflects on his journey as amazing, despite not being able to read and write. He is loving what he does with the church and hopes to take an adult education course, and perhaps one day become a Peer Mentor and work professionally, maybe even for Arc!

"My journey has been amazing, the church, Julie, my stay at Dampiet House, and the support from Rich, Amy, and Tracey at Outreach has been incredible. Julie really looked out for me; she helped me stay honest, build my confidence, and even encouraged me to make my bed every morning, a small thing that made a huge difference. Arc was a massive stepping stone for me; if I had been given just a house without their support, I would have struggled. It was reassuring to know that someone had my back. When I found the church, I was so full of rage, but it taught me to forgive, which helped take all the hate away and take full ownership of my actions."

Tony's journey has been shaped by support, care, and trust. The church has given him purpose and foundation, Arc gave him support and a home, and Julie helped him rebuild his confidence. Simple gestures like a Christmas shoebox and a welcome pack, meant the world to him when he had nothing.

"The shoebox I was given at Christmas was so important to me, the fact that someone thought of me during that time meant the world to me when I was quite lonely. It was a beautiful touch. Another great touch was the Welcome Packs. All those extra little things mean so much, they add up to a mountain when you have nothing. The little personal message in my card touched my heart."

Tony is proud of his story and doesn't hide anything. His life today includes a Yorkshire Terrier, his own home, and the joy of giving back. He hopes to organise a Christmas dinner at the church and start collecting donations of gifts to make sure others feel the same warmth and care he once received. His journey has been truly inspiring, and the team at Arc are excited to see what he will achieve next, as his determination and passion continue to make a difference every day in the lives of others.



We're so thrilled to hear how much Tony appreciated his Christmas shoebox, a campaign we've run for the past decade where our incredible supporters have donated thousands of shoeboxes filled with thoughtful treats and essential items, each one bringing warmth, comfort and connection to people experiencing homelessness during one of the hardest times of the year. What began as a simple act of kindness has grown into a cherished community tradition. And now, ten years on, it feels like the perfect time to take the next step.

A new chapter: Bags Of Joy

This year, we're excited to introduce Bags of Joy a refreshed and more person-centred way for supporters to give. Instead of shoeboxes, we're inviting people to fill festive gift bags with small but meaningful items...

What to include:

- Shower gel
- Brush/Comb
- Sweets
- Chocolate/Biscuits
- Novelty socks/socks
- Christmas decoration
- Notepad and pen
- Hot choc/coffee sachet
- Christmas card

One Small Bag, One Big Difference

If you'd like to take part in this or another of our Christmas campaigns, turn the page to find out more!



Bags Of Joy: One Small Bag, One Big Difference

If you're interested in supporting our Bags of Joy campaign, please fill a gift bag with our recommended items and deliver it to one of our drop off points by 12th December.

TAUNTON

My Carbon Coach, 18 Lower Middle St.
Co-op, 169 Cheddon Road
Co-op, 33 Wellington New Road
Lush, 2 North Street

WELLINGTON

The Nook & Cranny, 8 High Street
Nurtured by Nature, 9 South St

BRIDGWATER

Asda, East Quay

Hamper Appeal

We'll also be providing Christmas hampers to all of our properties to spread that festive cheer, if you're interested in getting involved, the items we're after are...

Nuts, crisps crackers, fruit, chocolates, biscuits, mince pies, jams/spreads, breadsticks, yule log, hot chocolate & marshmallows, soft drinks and pastries.

Hampers or hamper items can be delivered to 7 The Crescent, Taunton TA1 4EA by 18th December. Thank you.



COMING UP IN 2026... ARC TURNS 50!

In 2026, Arc will be celebrating 50 years of making a real difference in Somerset to those without a home and we've got a year packed with events, stories, and initiatives to mark this milestone. From inspiring stories of clients, volunteers and staff, to community events like **Arc in the Park on the 13th of June**, and our **50 Miles for 50 Years** challenge, there will be plenty of ways for everyone to get involved and show their support.

Next year will also see the launch of our **forward-looking strategy**, which sets out our vision for the next 50 years. This strategy focuses on prevention, affordable housing, tackling rough sleeping and driving systemic change, ensuring that Arc continues to make a lasting impact in the community.

We're also inviting corporate partners to join us by supporting our **50 Corporate Champions for Change campaign**, supporting fundraising challenges, or helping raise awareness in their networks, so local businesses can play a vital role in shaping a future where everyone in Somerset has a place to call home.

We can't wait to celebrate our past, engage the community, and build this future together. Keep an eye out for updates, stories, and ways to get involved as we gear up for this landmark year! To find out more, please get in touch with Rosie & Sam at giving@arcinspire.co.uk



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