



Hitchin Road advent calendar

Festive fun lovers are looking forward to a packed programme of Christmas events with the launch of their annual advent calendar.

Each year Hft colleagues at 117 Hitchin Road organise a month full of events in December to celebrate the festive season.

Colleagues work with those living at the residential service to decide which activities to plan, with something fun being added to the calendar every day in December.

So far, a Paddington Bear Experience, an Abba Christmas concert and two pantomimes have a space in the December diary – with more fun things planned. Each activity is slotted into the pockets of the hand-crafted fabric calendar counting down the 24 days to Christmas Day.



The festive activities for each day are revealed each morning. Jennifer, who lives at Hitchin Road, says she is excited about the festive season.

“It will be great fun,” she said.

“There is always something to look forward to every day in December.” As well as the advent calendar, Hitchin Road’s on-site pub, The Buzz Inn, is transformed into a Christmas grotto.

Hitchin Road Service Manager Claire Davies-Sond officially rings a special bell on December 1 to declare the festive season underway.

"We love Christmas at Hitchin Road and it is a very special time for the people we support," said Claire.

"The idea of the advent calendar is to plan a proper countdown to Christmas Day for everyone.

"The people we support lead the discussions on what they would like to do and then we see if we can organise it.

"A mix of things are planned from everything to taking part in Christmas jumper day to making mince pies or watching a pantomime."

Planning of the Christmas calendar starts in October.

Research has shown that participating in social activities provides numerous benefits for learning disabled adults.

It helps provide opportunities to enhance communication skills, confidence and self-esteem, offers learning opportunities and boosts mental health.

"We all love Christmas at Hitchin Road," said Claire. "And we want to make sure every day of the wonderful festive season is a fun and memorable experience for everyone."