

Flourish & Bloom

Kingswood, Winter 25



Welcome to the Winter Edition of Flourish & Bloom

As we embrace the shorter, darker days of winter, I find myself cherishing this season more than ever. There's an undeniable warmth in the early twilight, the soft glow of candles illuminating cozy, familiar spaces, and the way our Cornish towns and villages welcome the colder months. From Land's End to Saltash, dedicated volunteers come together to light up every dark corner with festive decorations, creating an enchanting atmosphere of togetherness. This slower pace also encourages us to pause and reflect on the past year - considering what flourished, what took us by surprise, and what new approaches we might explore when the days grow longer once again.

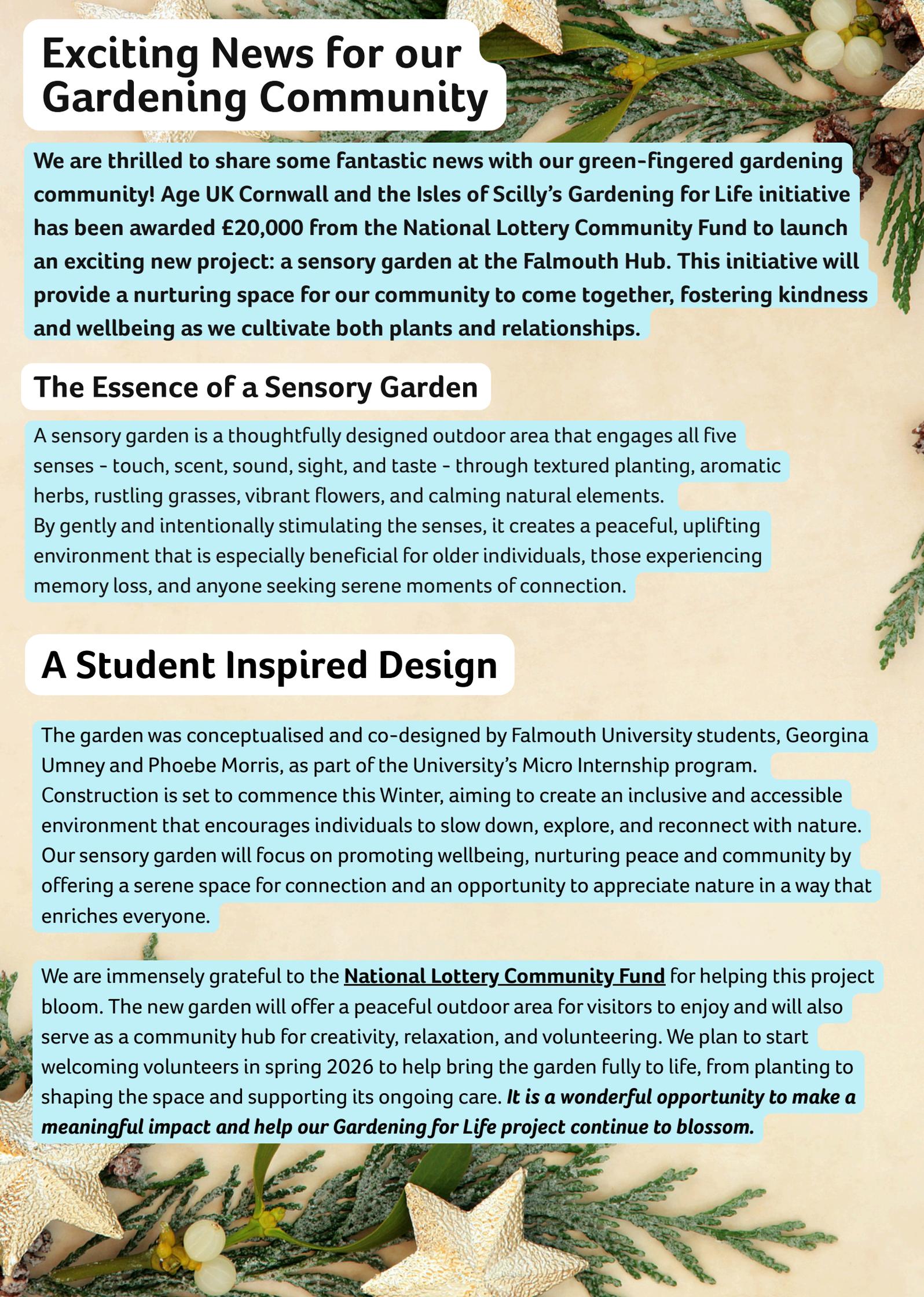
Winter is also when my imagination really wakes up. I love spending evenings leafing through seed catalogues, dreaming of color combinations, planning new beds, and picturing how the garden will look and feel in full summer sunshine. Those little sparks of inspiration help carry me through the darker months and make the promise of spring feel wonderfully close.

In this vibrant and festive issue of ***Flourish & Bloom***, we've compiled a delightful blend of news, events, and seasonal inspiration for you to enjoy. This quarter, we are shining a spotlight on our Gardening team, and we are thrilled to share that the National Lottery is supporting the creation of a new Sensory Garden at the Falmouth Community Hub.

Additionally, the Falmouth Hub will be hosting a Christmas Fête on December 5th; we hope you can stop by! We are also incredibly excited to announce that, thanks to Donna and her fantastic team, our new Charabanc service is now operational - more inside.

In this edition, you'll discover **Winter gardening tips** to keep your outdoor spaces thriving, along with vibrant plant stars that add color and life during this restful season. Additionally, we've included gentle craft ideas utilising foraged materials - ideal for cozy afternoons and festive decorations.

I sincerely hope you enjoy this winter edition as much as we loved creating it. Wishing you a peaceful and nourishing season, along with a very merry Christmas! **Jeff and the Gardening Team.**



Exciting News for our Gardening Community

We are thrilled to share some fantastic news with our green-fingered gardening community! Age UK Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's Gardening for Life initiative has been awarded £20,000 from the National Lottery Community Fund to launch an exciting new project: a sensory garden at the Falmouth Hub. This initiative will provide a nurturing space for our community to come together, fostering kindness and wellbeing as we cultivate both plants and relationships.

The Essence of a Sensory Garden

A sensory garden is a thoughtfully designed outdoor area that engages all five senses - touch, scent, sound, sight, and taste - through textured planting, aromatic herbs, rustling grasses, vibrant flowers, and calming natural elements.

By gently and intentionally stimulating the senses, it creates a peaceful, uplifting environment that is especially beneficial for older individuals, those experiencing memory loss, and anyone seeking serene moments of connection.

A Student Inspired Design

The garden was conceptualised and co-designed by Falmouth University students, Georgina Umney and Phoebe Morris, as part of the University's Micro Internship program.

Construction is set to commence this Winter, aiming to create an inclusive and accessible environment that encourages individuals to slow down, explore, and reconnect with nature. Our sensory garden will focus on promoting wellbeing, nurturing peace and community by offering a serene space for connection and an opportunity to appreciate nature in a way that enriches everyone.

We are immensely grateful to the **National Lottery Community Fund** for helping this project bloom. The new garden will offer a peaceful outdoor area for visitors to enjoy and will also serve as a community hub for creativity, relaxation, and volunteering. We plan to start welcoming volunteers in spring 2026 to help bring the garden fully to life, from planting to shaping the space and supporting its ongoing care. ***It is a wonderful opportunity to make a meaningful impact and help our Gardening for Life project continue to blossom.***

Seasonal Tips for a Cornish Winter Garden

Winter in Cornwall may be milder than much of the UK, but it still asks for a gentler, more thoughtful approach in the garden. Shorter days and cooler temperatures offer a natural pause - so it is time to tidy, plan, protect, and reflect. It is also time to enjoy the quiet beauty that only winter brings.

Winter Jobs to Tackle Now!

Clear fallen leaves



A perfect month to clear leaves from lawns, paths and drains to keep things safe and stop algae building up. A thin layer left on borders is fine - worms love it.

Prune shrubs like fuchsias, roses and buddleia

Prune lightly now if they've become unruly, saving the harder prune for early spring.

Look after Wildlife



Top up bird feeders, break ice on water bowls, and leave corners a little scruffy for hedgehogs and insects.

Protect tender Plants



Such as salvias, dahlias, and cannas with mulch or fleece. Cornwall's coastal winds can be sneaky this time of year.

Prepping for an abundant Spring

This is the season for quiet groundwork and imagination.

- Plant spring bulbs (yes, you can still sneak them in!) such as tulips, daffodils, crocus, and alliums.
- Divide overcrowded perennials on milder days - hostas, asters, daylilies and the like will thank you come April.
- Tidy greenhouse and potting areas, washing pots and trays so seedlings get a clean start next year (your Age Uk gardener will be happy to do this for you).
- Order seeds early, especially popular varieties of peas, sweet peas, squash and cosmos which sell out fast.
- Plan your veg beds with crop rotation in mind. A quick sketch now saves headaches later.

Spotlight: Winter Stars

Winter gardens don't have to be bare. They can glow, shimmer, and surprise if you choose the right companions. Listed below are some of my favorite winter stars. I especially love bright red dogwood stems that set winter ablaze and stand out when so many other things are white or pale greens.

Hellebores – The “Christmas rose” brings elegant winter blooms in shades from plum to cream. Perfect for part shade and woodland edges.

Cornus (Dogwood) – Bare stems blaze in red, orange or lime green. Stunning by themselves or mass-planted for real impact.

Sarcococca (Sweet Box) – Tiny flowers with a knockout scent. Ideal near paths, porches or doorways.

Winter Heathers – Low maintenance, long-flowering, and brilliant for pollinators on milder Cornish days.

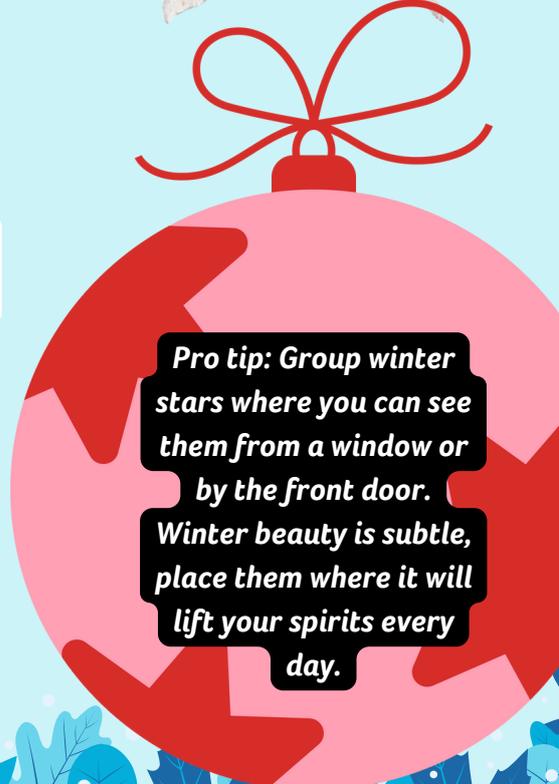
Mahonia – Architectural foliage with fragrant yellow flowers that brighten the gloomiest corners.

Camellias – A classic in Cornish gardens, flowering from late winter into spring. They love our acid soils.

What can I sow in Winter?

Winter sowing is all about resilience and patience.

- **Hardy broad beans** (*'Aquadulce Claudia'* is a Cornish favourite): It may be a little too late for this, depending on how cold it is getting but worth a go for the price of a few seeds.
- **Winter-hardy salads:** mizuna, lamb's lettuce, and winter purslane in cold frames or sheltered spots.
- **Sweet peas in deep pots:** freeze-resistant and ready to romp away come spring.



Pro tip: Group winter stars where you can see them from a window or by the front door. Winter beauty is subtle, place them where it will lift your spirits every day.



Seasonal Craft Ideas

Winter is the perfect time to slow down, wrap up warm, and enjoy the simple pleasure of crafting with what nature offers. Cornwall's hedgerows, woodlands and coastal paths are full of beautiful materials at this time of year—ripe for turning into festive decorations and cosy winter displays.

But before we gather anything, a gentle reminder:

Forage lightly, never disturb wildlife, and only take what has already fallen or is growing in abundance. Think of it as borrowing from nature with gratitude.

A Winter's Walk contains many treasures!

A brief outdoor walk can reveal various textures and shapes, including:

- **Fallen branches and twigs**
- **Pine cones, acorns, and beech cupules**
- **Evergreen sprigs or garden prunings**
- **Rosehips, dried seedheads, and winter berries**
- **Moss (only from your garden)**
- **Dried leaves in bronze and copper tones**

If gathering materials is challenging, ask your Age UK Cornwall Gardener for help, ensuring that collected items are plentiful and easily replaceable; if unsure, it's best to leave them.

Try out a homemade wreath

Creating a homemade wreath is easy and adds warmth to any doorway.

1.The Base: Use twisted willow, dogwood stems, or flexible bramble as a foundation (gloves recommended).

2.Everygreens: Incorporate glossy, aromatic sprigs like bay, rosemary, or holly.

3.Soft elements: Add moss, lichen-covered twigs, and dried grasses for a woodland feel.

4.Decorate: Include pine cones, rosehips, acorns, cinnamon sticks, dried orange slices, or ribbon snippets.

5.Finish: Add a bow or keep it rustic and natural.

Hang it somewhere you'll see it every day - amazing how a homemade wreath can lift the spirits.

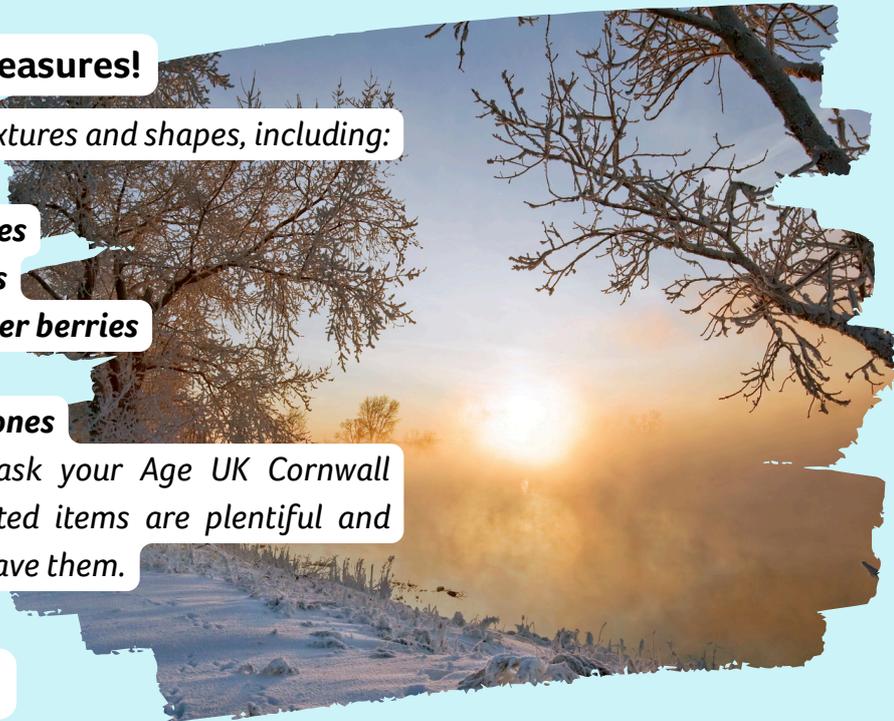


Easy Table Displays

If a wreath feels excessive, consider smaller arrangements like:

- **A bowl of mixed cones** with eco-friendly glitter
- **A jam jar lantern** with dried seedheads or rosehips
- **Mini bouquets of evergreen sprigs** tied with jute string for mantels or windowsills
- **A twig star** made from fallen twigs, great for kids to make

These elements add a natural touch without overwhelming the space.



Celebrating Our Gardeners' Get-Together

At Age UK Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly, we know that our gardeners are the core of our Gardening for Life initiatives. Their enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment are what define our service delivery today. Recognising the immense value of their ideas and insights, we frequently gather everyone to share experiences, discover new opportunities; this helps shape the future of our gardening community.

Our most recent gardeners' meeting in September was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate achievements and look ahead. The group shared several inspiring ideas that will help strengthen both our service and our connections across the community. One suggestion was to introduce volunteer garden days, giving us the chance to join forces, support a worthy cause, and make a visible difference to local spaces while also building teamwork and shared purpose. Another idea focused on developing intergenerational gardening activities with Scouts, Brownies, or local schools, helping to bridge generations, pass on skills, and create meaningful moments of learning and companionship. The group also explored the idea of creating community show gardens, which would not only showcase local talent but provide welcoming spaces where people can come together, feel inspired, and enjoy the well-being benefits of nature.

All brilliantly innovative ideas that we will be exploring together as we enter 2026!



If you know of a worthy cause or organisation that would benefit from a little gardening TLC, please get in touch with Jeff at jeff.muir@ageukcornwall.org.uk

Dates for your calendars!



Falmouth Christmas Fête - Falmouth Hub

- **Date:** Friday, December 5, 2025
- **Time:** 10 AM to 1 PM

As Christmas approaches, the Falmouth team is ready to celebrate in style with their delightful Christmas Fête! This event features a diverse range of stalls, delicious food and refreshments, along with an exciting prize raffle. Mark your calendars; everyone is welcome!

Carol's on the Plaza

Govenek Community Hub are joining [The Salvation Army in Newquay](#) & [Crantock Street Community Garden](#) for an evening of Carols on the Plaza on **Monday 22nd Dec at 6pm**. If you are free why not go down and join them.

St Austell Hub Events

St Austell Community Hub have some exciting live entertainment and singers joining them in December. For more information, dates, or to organise a taster day, please contact them on 01726 76806

Charabanc Trips

Govenek Hub are all about having fun and making connections while enjoying a special outing. **The first trip was to Trelawney Garden Centre on Wednesday, 3rd December** - call to book or find out more about upcoming trips by contacting the hub on **01637 876150**.

Please keep emailing

lee.davies@ageukcornwall.org.uk with any upcoming events, sessions, or gardening-themed activities. We will be sure to share far and wide, adding anything we can to the next newsletter and our social media platforms.

Have a lovely Winter everyone.

Christmas Market at the Headland

We are excited to announce that one of our supporting partners in Newquay, the Headland Hotel, will be hosting a Christmas Market **on Saturday, December 6th, from 11am to 2.30pm**. This event promises a variety of delightful gift ideas and enjoyable activities - also a wonderful addition, the Truro Preparatory School Choir will also be performing Christmas carols in the Ballroom, starting at 2:30pm. **To find out more, contact Lee or Tim.**



Govenek Charabanc Club

Enjoy a fun day trip to Trelawney Garden Centre. Only £15 per person. Lunch not included.



 Wednesday 3rd December
pickup 9.30am - return 3pm

 from Govenek Hub, Crantock Street, Newquay. TR7 1JR



govenek@ageukcornwall.org.uk 01637 876150