

Welcome to my October newsletter with a difference!

- **Fond farewell**
- **Introduction to Jess Meale**
- **My time at The Children's Society**
- **Alyssa**

Dear All,

It was lovely to see some of you at The Good Childhood Event in Salisbury last week where we heard from Jim Davis, TCS Head of Youth Engagement with the findings from the latest Good Childhood report. We also celebrated The Children's Society 140th birthday and gave thanks to Mary Gange who retired after more than 15 years in her role as Salisbury Diocesan Ambassador.



It was lovely to meet in person again after so long and special thanks to Carol Sampson, Geraldine Cole and Dorothy Maggs for providing sumptuous cake and refreshments.

It was great to hear that Dorchester committee recently held a pop up shop and raised over £2000 and Shaftesbury held their first 'in person' quiz and raised over £1000 and just this morning that Bitton St Mary are arranging their Christingle service. Just lovely to hear of such roaring successes now that people are able to get out and about.

For those of you who were there it was my chance to say thank you and to bid you a teary farewell. With the recent restructure and changes at The Children's Society moving forward into new ways of working, I've decided to use the opportunity to make life changes myself and

retire from my 30+ year career in the charity sector. I leave TCS on 21st October.

I can't hide the fact that it is really hard to leave a career that has been a way of life and that I have felt passionate about for decades. I have worked here in The South West at The Children's Society for 11 years and enjoyed my time here immensely. I've been so inspired and humbled by the tireless support that you all give. I've made friends along the way, made memories to last a lifetime, worked with the best colleagues who I have no doubt will stay in my life as I embark on my own new onward journey. Most crucially and satisfying for me personally is knowing that my own contribution too has helped change countless lives – that feels like a job well done!

I'm handing over the baton to my colleague and dear friend, Jess Meale who has managed the Exeter, Truro and Bath & Wells Diocese since I went part time 2 years ago. Jess and I have worked together for many years and I have every confidence that you are in good hands.

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Thank you.



Jess and I met up at Bristol Cathedral this week for me to hand over the new, first ever Bristol Muddy Christingle service planning which will take place on 18th December on the College Green. Now that's one for the diary!

Some of you have met Jess before but here are a few words of welcome from Jess and I have also attached a copy of her newsletter for you.

Hi,

I'm Jess and I will be the new Community Relationships Manager for the South-West, which includes Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight from 25th October. I'm no stranger to The Children's Society, having worked here since 2012.

I am currently doing this role across Cornwall, Devon and Somerset and I've worked with Gill for many years. She's not only a colleague but a very dear friend. Gill has built many amazing relationships across the area over her 11 years and I know I have some big shoes to fill. As The Children's Society embark on a new way of working and I take on a larger area, you are likely to see some changes. These are yet to be fully established but I do know this will be a hybrid way of working, with more virtual meetings taking place and looking to key volunteers to provide further support in their local area. I'm looking forward to getting to know you all and would like to invite you to stay connected with me.

You can find me on Facebook at [Facebook.com/jess.meale.12](https://www.facebook.com/jess.meale.12)

Twitter @JessMealeTCS. I also send a monthly newsletter, sharing news of local work, campaigns and good news stories.

If you'd like to receive this or say hello, please email me at jess.meale@childrenssociety.org.uk and I will add you to my distribution list. Thank you for all your continued support.

Jess Meale

South-West Relationships Manager (from 25 October)

07715 510464

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Thank you.

Gill's time as a fundraiser at The Children's Society

Oh those pre lock down halcyon days! I joined The Children's Society in 2010 and travelled far and wide covering all 5 Diocese in the South West for 9 years until I went part time 2 years ago covering (just) the Bristol and Salisbury Diocese! From packed crowds at your churches, coffee mornings, Lent lunches, Christingle services, garden parties, house box openings, sponsored walks, cycle rides, carol singing at railway stations, walking through city streets with donkeys and celebrity evenings to hosting legacy events, supporter events, attending synods, clergy days and Greenbelt festival et al.

I've spoken in the last church in Britain-at Land's End and organised (with others) the magical flagship 50th Christingle service at Salisbury Cathedral which has to be the highlight of my career.



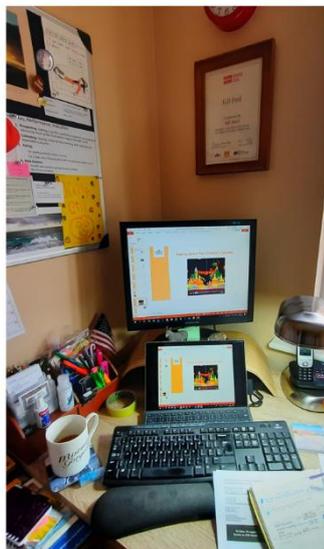
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During lockdown when the world shut down our work at The Children's Society continued at pace. Although confined to spending my days in my cosy little spare bedroom office I was learning new technology and alternative ways to communicate.



Online meetings and even filming myself in my lounge for online Christingle services! On-line, off line, at home, in the streets, in churchyards and even on the backs of lorries! Your innovative spirit even in the toughest of times was inspiring.

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Thank you.



I've met the most wonderful supporters and shared part of your journeys. Some of you have supported The Children's Society for longer than my entire lifetime. Not least Anne Faulconer pictured here in 1936 at just 8 years old at her first fundraising tombola event where she raised £1.17.3d.

Anne has gone on to support The Children's Society for her whole life, forming committees, raising £000's, speaking, campaigning, being a Diocesan Ambassador for the Salisbury Diocese etc. A real inspiration.



More recent times Ann and I enjoying afternoon tea together!

I want to thank each and everyone of you for your wonderful support, for your work and for the time, money and voice you give to The Children's Society. Without you, it would be impossible to fulfil our mission to reverse the damaging decline in the well-being and happiness of children and young people.

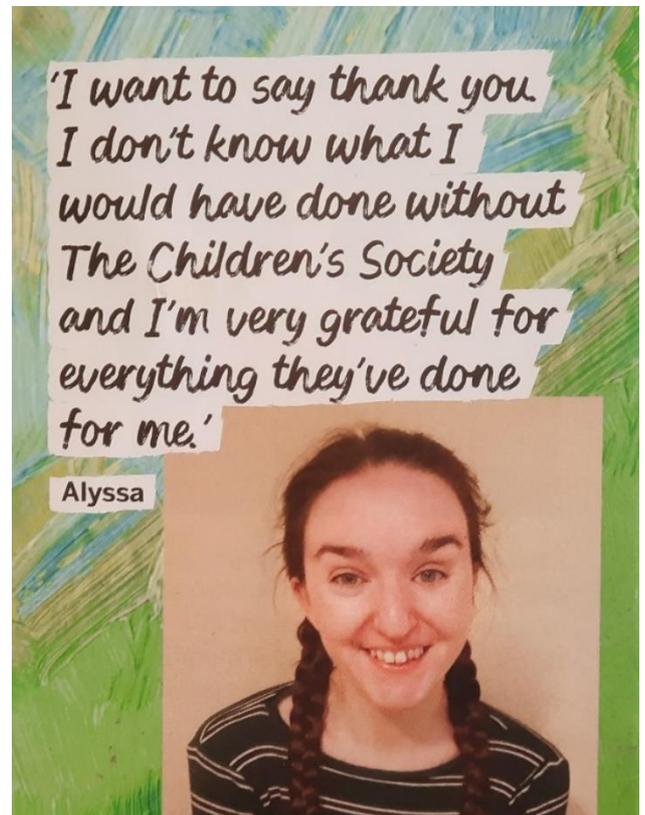
It has been an honour, a privilege and quite simply, the best, most rewarding job I have ever had. God bless you all, good luck with your continuing events and I hope to see some of you again when I undertake voluntary speaking engagements for The Children's Society in the future.

It seems fitting to end with a quote from Alyssa who is the reason we all do what we do.

With my HUGE thanks and very Best wishes,



Gill Ford



Alyssa

Thank you all so very much for all that you do to help to make this a society that is built for all children.

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