NEWS, VIEWS AND VOICES FROM RECYCLING LIVES CHARITY

RenewSLETTER

Spring Edition 2026

Fresh Start Café **Wins Gold** at Lancashire County Council's **"Recipe for Health" Awards**

Recycling Lives Charity named finalist in **Proud Preston Awards**

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Recycling Lives Charity & Social Enterprise renews Lancashire Skills Pledge commitment

Recycling Lives Charity & Social Enterprise has renewed its commitment to the Lancashire Skills Pledge, continuing its support for skills development and opportunity across Lancashire. The pledge plays an important role in helping organisations support local people through employment, training and development, creating lasting benefits for both employers and the wider community. As part of this commitment, Recycling Lives Charity & Social Enterprise is supporting care leavers, with five young people now working within the organisation in a variety of roles. The renewed certificate is dated 27 February 2026.

Fresh Start Café **Wins Gold** at **Lancashire County Council's "Recipe for Health"** Awards

We are incredibly proud to share some fantastic news, the Fresh Start Café team has been recognised at the Lancashire County Council Recipe for Health Awards, achieving not just one award… but Bronze, Silver and Gold. In fact, due to the exceptionally high standards demonstrated by the team, Fresh Start Café was awarded all three levels at the same time — an achievement that very few community cafés have accomplished. We are especially proud to be one of only a handful of community cafés in Preston to receive the prestigious Gold Award.

The Recipe for Health Awards recognise food establishments that go above and beyond to promote healthier eating, improve nutritional standards, and support customers in making informed food choices. Fresh Start Café was recognised for:

- Providing freshly prepared, high quality meals
- Promoting balanced, nutritious options
- Supporting customers with calorie awareness and healthier lifestyle choices
- Displaying clear and accessible nutritional information alongside meals
- Encouraging healthy hydration and better drink choices

This achievement reflects the hard work, care and professionalism of our staff and volunteers, who are passionate about delivering food that not only tastes great but also supports wellbeing.

Under the leadership of Mike and his dedicated team, the café continues to demonstrate that community-based catering can lead the way in quality, health promotion and excellence.

We would like to thank Lancashire County Council for recognising the commitment shown by the team, and we look forward to continuing to provide healthy, delicious meals to our community in Preston.

Recycling Lives Charity named finalist in Proud Preston Awards

Recycling Lives Charity was delighted to have been shortlisted as a finalist in the Proud Preston Awards 2026, in the category Community Initiative of the Year. The nomination was a wonderful recognition of the charity's work and its ongoing commitment to making a positive difference in the community. The awards ceremony took place at Barton Manor Hotel & Spa on 19 March 2026, where the winners were revealed. Reaching the finalist stage was a fantastic achievement and something the team could be very proud of indeed truly.

Recycling Lives Charity Secures Cost of Living Grant Funding

Recycling Lives Charity has been successful in securing Cost of Living Grant funding from Preston City Council, providing welcome support for an upcoming project. The funding will help the charity continue delivering practical support where it is needed most, strengthening its ability to respond to community need and make a positive difference locally.

Employability Skills Workshop Helps People Get Ready for Work

Recycling Lives Charity is offering an Employability Skills Workshop designed to help people build confidence and prepare for the workplace. Open to anyone who is unemployed, the workshop focuses on practical support, including CV building, interview experience, job searching and improving overall job prospects.
The workshop is a valuable opportunity for people to develop workplace skills in a supportive environment and take positive steps towards employment. Referrals can be made directly through Recycling Lives Charity.

Raising Standards Through Education and Opportunity

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), the UK's professional membership body with over 140 years of expertise, has long been recognised as a gold standard in environmental health training, and our partnership with them has been nothing short of outstanding.

Recycling Lives is now proud to be an accredited CIEH training centre, offering six nationally recognised courses in food safety, health and safety, HACCP, food allergens, first aid, and manual handling. This is a huge milestone for us and, more importantly, for the individuals we support — many of whom face barriers to employment and formal education.

CIEH's commitment to quality, accessibility, and professional standards aligns perfectly with our values as a charity. Their courses don't just provide certificates; they build practical knowledge, confidence, and employability. For learners, these qualifications can be genuinely life-changing, opening doors to work, progression, and long-term stability.

The support CIEH has provided in helping us develop our training offer for 2026 and beyond has been exceptional. Their approach has been collaborative and supportive, rooted in a shared belief that education should be inclusive and impactful.

We're incredibly proud to work alongside an organisation that champions high standards while actively supporting social value. With CIEH's support, we're able to deliver accredited training that truly makes a difference, and we're excited about what we'll achieve together in the years ahead.

Recycling Lives Charity Gala returns this June

The Recycling Lives Charity Gala is just around the corner, taking place on Friday 5 June 2026 at Ribby Hall Village. The evening will begin with welcome drinks from 6:30pm, before guests enjoy a night of entertainment, fundraising, and great company, including a charity auction and raffle with some fantastic prizes.

Sponsor tables for up to 10 guests are now available, giving businesses the chance to support the event while also showcasing their brand in the event programme. It promises to be a brilliant evening of celebration and giving back.

Fresh Start Café Delivers Community Cookery Courses Across Fylde

Fresh Start Café is proud to be delivering a series of external cookery courses in partnership with Fylde Borough Council, supporting parents and children to build confidence in the kitchen and learn how to cook simple, affordable meals at home.

Over the past six weeks, our team has been running weekly sessions at the Well Community Centre in St Anne's, where Linda has been leading engaging, hands-on classes every Wednesday. Using Mike and Linda's tried-and-tested recipes, families have been learning how to cook nutritious meals on a budget, with fantastic feedback from participants.

The sessions are designed to be practical, supportive and confidence-building. Each class includes:

- A full live cooking demonstration
- Step-by-step guided practice
- Hands-on support throughout
- Recipe packs and ingredients to take home
- Practical tips for cooking healthy meals affordably

Due to the success of the initial programme, we are now delivering an additional course on Mondays focused specifically on air fryer cooking. These sessions teach participants how to use an air fryer correctly, safely and effectively, along with simple, everyday recipes that make healthy cooking quicker and more accessible.

At the end of the course, each participant receives their own air fryer to take home, enabling them to continue practising what they have learned and build lasting healthy cooking habits.

The feedback from families has been overwhelmingly positive, with many commenting on increased confidence, improved budgeting skills and the enjoyment of cooking together at home.

If you or your organisation would like to book external or internal cookery courses with Fresh Start Café, please contact:
Mike - 0777 236 9497

We are passionate about delivering practical food education that makes a real difference in our communities.

LEAFE: Strengthening Compliance Through Smart Digital Systems

Strong systems are the backbone of safe, compliant catering operations, and the LEAFE digital compliance app has become an essential part of how we here at Recycling Lives operate day to day.

LEAFE has transformed how we manage temperature monitoring, cleaning schedules, safety checks, record keeping and compliance documentation. Everything is clear, structured and accessible in one place, giving staff confidence that nothing is being missed and that Environmental Health and Health & Safety requirements are fully met.

For teams working across multiple areas and with varying levels of experience, the app provides clarity and accountability. Checklists are easy to follow, records are accurate, and audits are far less daunting. This has reduced paperwork, saved time and significantly improved consistency across our operations.

LEAFE has also supported staff development. By making compliance processes more user-friendly, it helps individuals better understand why checks matter, not just how to complete them. That learning and confidence feeds directly into safer practices and stronger working habits.

The impact of LEAFE has been instrumental in strengthening our systems, supporting our teams and maintaining the high standards we expect as a charity working in food and hospitality. We're very much looking forward to continuing our relationship with the LEAFE team as we move into 2026 and beyond.

Blackpool Jobs Fair Success at the Winter Gardens

The Employment Team had a fantastic day at the Blackpool Jobs Fair at the Winter Gardens on 26 February 2026. The event was a great opportunity to connect with local organisations, build new collaborative partnerships, and speak with people looking for support into employment. It was also a pleasure to chat with Chris Webb MP during the day. As a positive outcome from the event, two interviews were arranged for people who visited the stand, making it a really successful day all round.

Training partnership with Laing O'Rourke

Recycling Lives Charity will be delivering training in April for Laing O'Rourke employees focused on working with ROTL participants and prison leavers. The session will help build understanding around how employers can support people moving forward from the criminal justice system and into meaningful opportunities.
This is a positive step in raising awareness, strengthening employer confidence, and encouraging more inclusive approaches to recruitment and support in the workplace.

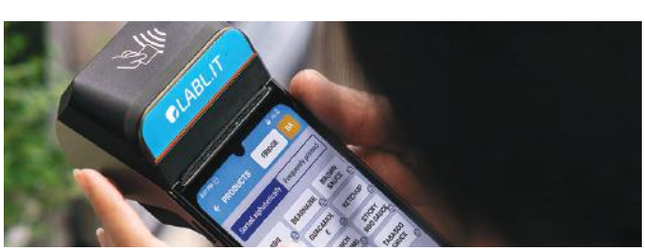
Christmas Tree Collection to launch next year

Recycling Lives Charity has signed up with Just Helping Charity to run its own Christmas Tree Collection this year across selected Preston and Blackburn postcodes. The initiative will cover PR2, PR3, PR5, PR6, PR7, PR25 and PR26 in Preston, as well as BB1 to BB12 and BB18 in Blackburn.
The collection will provide a convenient way for local residents to recycle their Christmas trees after the festive period, while also supporting charitable activity in the community. It marks an exciting new initiative for next year and a great opportunity to make a positive impact across both areas.

Labl.It: A Simple Solution Making a Big Difference

At Fresh Start Café here at Recycling Lives, consistency and compliance matter — especially in busy catering and food production environments where accuracy is essential every single day. The introduction of the Labl.it labelling system has been a real game-changer for our teams, volunteers and learners alike.

Labl.it has significantly improved how we manage date labelling, food rotation and product identification, helping us meet Environmental Health expectations with confidence and consistency. For staff and volunteers who may struggle with English or maths, the system removes barriers by making labelling clear, visual and straightforward. This has boosted confidence across the board and reduced errors, stress and uncertainty in fast-paced kitchen settings.



The simplicity of the Labl.it machine means training time is minimal, yet the impact is immediate. Volunteers quickly understand how to use it, and staff can trust that products are labelled correctly every time — ticking all the right boxes for food safety, compliance and best practice.

Beyond compliance, Labl.it has helped create a calmer, more inclusive working environment. It supports our mission to empower people, build skills and remove unnecessary obstacles, while maintaining the highest food safety standards. I would personally and professionally recommend the Labl.it service and products to anyone working in the hospitality industry.

We’re incredibly grateful to the Labl.it team for developing such an intuitive, practical solution and for the support they’ve shown to us here at Fresh Start Café. Their product has become a vital part of our daily operations — and a great example of how the right tools can make a real social impact.

Good News Story: Michael Clarke's Journey to Employment

We're proud to share a positive story of progress and resilience through the work of ACE. Since receiving support from ACE in April 2023, Michael Clarke has made remarkable progress. Now relocated to the Lake District with his partner, Michael has continued to build a positive future for himself following his time with ACE.

During his journey, Michael became a dedicated and regular volunteer in the MAP Workshops, where he engaged with young people and shared his story. His contribution has been greatly valued, and his involvement has had a meaningful impact on those around him. Michael has now moved into full-time employment in a role where he supports people with multiple complex needs.

His journey reflects the power of consistent support, personal determination, and the difference that the right opportunities can make. We're also delighted that he has remained in contact with ACE since his move, and we wish him every success in this next chapter.

Connecting with future talent at the University of Manchester

Dom and Hayley recently attended a networking event at Manchester University, held as part of the school-wide module Social Science Futures. The event brought together students and professionals to explore different areas of work, open up conversations, and create links around future volunteering and employment opportunities.

With strong student attendance and a full day of speakers, the event provided a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of the work being done in youth justice and connect with students interested in learning more about the sector. It was a positive chance to build new relationships and encourage future involvement from the next generation of talent.

Positive conversations at HMP Sudbury

Rick and Kat visited HMP Sudbury to speak with the Wates Group Supply Chain, where they had a number of positive and productive conversations around working with prison leavers. As part of the visit, Rick and Inside Job also delivered a Q&A session for the supply chain, focusing on the benefits and opportunities of employing prison leavers. The session helped encourage open discussion, share insight, and highlight the value that prison leavers can bring to the workplace when given the right support and opportunity.

Supporting Young Futures Through Catering

We're delighted to be working in partnership with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service as part of The King's Trust programme (formerly The Prince's Trust). This initiative supports young people aged 16–25 who may face barriers to employment, helping them think positively about their futures while developing confidence, transferable skills, and valuable work experience across a wide range of industries, ultimately preparing them for sustainable employment.

At Recycling Lives, we're proud to offer placements within our catering department, giving participants real insight into both commercial kitchen operations and front-of-house hospitality. These placements provide meaningful, hands-on experience, allowing individuals to understand the pace and standards of a professional environment while building both practical abilities and the interpersonal skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

Over the past week, we've had the pleasure of welcoming Harrison to the team. He has embraced the opportunity with enthusiasm and has already achieved his Level 2 qualification through our in-house volunteer training programme—an excellent accomplishment that reflects his dedication, commitment, and strong work ethic. During his placement, he has been developing practical cookery skills in a commercial kitchen while also gaining valuable experience in customer service, teamwork, communication, and maintaining high standards of food safety and hygiene.

Next week, Harrison will continue to build on this progress by taking on more responsibility in customer-facing roles and further developing his confidence in a busy working environment. His positive attitude, willingness to learn, and proactive approach have made him a real asset to the team. At the end of his placement, he will receive a strong reference to support him in securing paid employment, and we're confident he has a bright future ahead.

Recycling Lives Charity Updates

Chris Morrell officially took over the Residential provision on 2 March, marking an important step for the service moving forward. His appointment provides a clear lead for the provision and supports the continued development of this area of work.

Katrina Walmsley has been promoted to Head of Business Development at Recycling Lives Charity, marking an exciting new chapter for both Katrina and the organisation. After playing a key role in the residential programme, Katrina is now stepping into a position focused on expanding the charity's reach and developing new opportunities to support even more marginalised communities. Her promotion reflects both her dedication to the charity's mission and the positive impact of her work to date.

Three more ROTL placements have now started at Global, creating further opportunities for individuals to gain valuable work experience and take positive steps towards employment. This continued progress highlights the importance of employer partnerships in opening up practical routes into work and supporting rehabilitation.

Jack from the residential team is continuing to make a strong impact in his role as Recruitment Resourcer. He is thriving in the position and his progress is a brilliant example of how the right support and opportunity can help individuals build confidence and succeed in the workplace.

Recycling Lives Charity has had some really positive conversations with United Utilities, with one resident now beginning the onboarding process for a Grounds Maintenance role starting in April. It is a great outcome and another encouraging example of how partnership working can lead directly to meaningful employment opportunities.

An Unsung Hero at Recycling Lives Charity

Dom, a Keyworker at Recycling Lives, has been named winner of the Unsung Hero Award, recognising his outstanding impact across Lancashire. His journey from adversity to advocacy makes his achievement especially powerful.

After joining the charity in 2021 following his release from prison, Dom rebuilt his life and returned to support others facing similar challenges. With more than 30 years of lived experience in addiction, homelessness and the criminal justice system, he connects with people in a deeply authentic way.

Through the ACE programme, Dom helps individuals move towards stability, employment and confidence. In 2025 alone, he supported 66 individuals, achieving hundreds of positive outcomes.

He also delivers workshops across Lancashire, sharing his story to educate and inspire others. Dom's dedication goes far beyond working hours, ensuring no one faces their challenges alone—making him a truly deserving award winner.

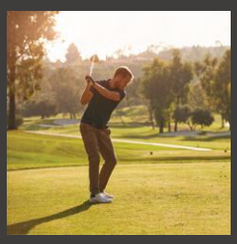
Upcoming Events

Gala

June 2026

Golf Day

September 2026



Quiz Night

October 2026

recyclinglives charity