



**Feel Good!**

**Winter 2024**

# Hello and welcome from our CEO



What an incredible end to 2024. As the year draws to a close, we're reflecting on the fantastic achievements and milestones of the past few months, made possible by our amazing Rowan community.

Our much-anticipated new roof is now underway and on track to be completed by the end of the year – a huge milestone for Rowan. More updates on this exciting project are shared later in the newsletter.

This summer, we were thrilled to unveil our beautiful new garden, generously donated and renovated by RingWay. The garden has already become a much-loved space for relaxation and inspiration.

In September, we walked for Rowan, raising £1855 and walking an impressive 220km. Dressed as pirates, students, staff and volunteers alike brought fun, energy, and community spirit to every step.

November brought us the unforgettable student show 'I Am What I Am.' It was a truly inspiring evening, with powerful performances by our student artists in music and drama. We also celebrated a bittersweet farewell to Steve Faint, our mixed media tutor, who retired after almost 10 years at Rowan. While we miss him, we're excited to welcome new tutors and new workshops, including sewing and 'yoga and movement', which reflect the growing interests of our now 90+ student artists.

Another proud moment was seeing our ceramic pebbles, created in our ceramics workshops, featured in the Kettle's Yard shop. It is a joy to see our students' work shared and appreciated in the wider community.

Finally, Rowan is alive with festive cheer. We've been popping up at stalls and Christmas markets across Cambridge, offering unique handmade gifts and sharing the story of our amazing makers. Keep an eye on our socials to find out where we'll be next.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year – whether through donations, volunteering, or simply cheering us on. Rowan continues to thrive because of you. Here is to an exciting 2025.

Cherie Evans  
CEO - Rowan

# Studio focus

## Into the woods with Rowan Rangers

Rowan Rangers is our weekly Forest School for adults with learning disabilities, held in a private woodland in Histon, Cambridgeshire. Every Friday, our Rangers spend the day outdoors, supported by forest school trained leaders, Russell Cuthbert and Lorraine Whybrow, along with dedicated volunteers.



The sessions follow the Five Ways to Wellbeing - Be Active, Connect, Keep Learning, Take Notice, and Give. Activities like sawing, fire lighting, and exploring nature help build confidence, improve wellbeing, and strengthen the bond between the Rangers.



We asked Lorraine and Russell what the Rowan Rangers have been up to this winter at Forest School:

“This winter, we have been working on creating a new space - ‘The Nest’, a story circle built with the help of volunteers and Rowan Rangers. Shaped like a giant bird nest, it’s quickly become a favourite spot for storytelling and connecting with nature.”

Lorraine, who has led Rowan Rangers for the last three years, shares:

“I can honestly say it is the most joyful space I work in. Small, achievable tasks help build confidence and resilience, and over time, we’ve seen the students grow closer as a community. Volunteers also report a boost in their own wellbeing by attending Rowan Rangers each week”.

### Here is what some of our Rangers love about Forest School:

*“Being outside makes me feel relaxed and happy.”*



*“Seeing my friends and working in the woods”*

*“I like being outside in nature.”*



# Dates for your diary 2025



**Cork & Canvas Night**  
Friday 31st January, 7-9pm  
40 Humberstone Rd, CB4 1JG

A relaxed night of art, socialising and creativity! Paint your own postcard canvas with guidance from a Rowan Art Tutor. Take it home or enter into our art exhibition.

**Buy your ticket here** 

[rowanhumberstone.org.uk/latest-events](http://rowanhumberstone.org.uk/latest-events)



**Secret Postcard Exhibition**  
1st & 2nd March, 10-4pm  
The Guildhall, Cambridge

Scan the QR code to find out how you can take part or visit [rowanhumberstone.org.uk/latest-events](http://rowanhumberstone.org.uk/latest-events)



**Cambridge Half Marathon 2025**

Join Team Rowan and run the Cambridge Half Marathon 2025 in support of adults with learning disabilities in Cambridgeshire.

**Sign up today**

Send an email to [rose@rowanhumberstone.org.uk](mailto:rose@rowanhumberstone.org.uk)



**Evening Art Courses**

Oil painting - ceramics - life drawing - needle felting - and more!

Learn a new skill and meet friends in a relaxed environment.

Spring term 2025 art courses are available to book NOW!

Sign up to our monthly 'Feel Good Friday' updates for latest news, events, and more!  
Email NEWS to [communications@rowanhumberstone.org.uk](mailto:communications@rowanhumberstone.org.uk).

# Student focus

## Our stories

### Meet Peter

Peter joined Rowan earlier this year and attends twice a week, where he enjoys taking part in our woodwork and ceramics workshops. We caught up with him to learn more about his experience as one of our newest student artists:



### Why do you enjoy woodwork and ceramics?

“Hands-on activities are easier for me because my hands seem to remember what to do. I’ve also started writing things down, which helps me to plan my art work and remember.”



### Are you learning any new skills?

“Yes, I’ve never done woodworking or ceramics before. In wood, I’m learning to shape, hammer, and decorate with small details. It’s similar to working with clay in ceramics – shaping things. I’m doing very practical work with my hands, which I barely did before.”

### What progress have you made since joining?

“I’ve gone from making small ceramic houses to larger ones, which are now on display at home. I also made a camel with many legs!”

### How did you feel when you first joined Rowan?

“The tutors were great at making me feel included. The students are also very friendly. It feels like I’m supposed to be here, like I belong.”



## What do you enjoy most about Rowan?

“Coming here gives me a sense of purpose. I am always glad that I did it at the end of the day. When I get home, I tell my dad how much I like it and all the work I did during the day. Doing something productive with my time is important to me. I like feeling like I applied myself and accomplished something. Being here allows me to use my brain in ways I wouldn’t otherwise. It’s the best environment to learn new skills.”

## How would you describe Rowan?

“It’s cosy, comforting, and hospitable. It doesn’t feel like I’m at a school, but I am always learning. Rowan is being creatively stimulated and feeling useful.”

Peter’s journey at Rowan so far highlights the power of creativity and community. We’re so proud of his progress and can’t wait to see what he’ll create next!



## Become a student artist!

Interested in joining Rowan or learning more about us? Get in touch to arrange an initial visit with our team. We’ll give you a tour of the arts centre, answer any questions you have, and let you see us in action.

### Contact us

☎ 01223 566027

✉ [student@rowanhumberstone.org.uk](mailto:student@rowanhumberstone.org.uk)



# Celebrating 40 Years of Rowan

As we wrap up our 40th anniversary year, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on Rowan's incredible journey. Founded in 1984, Rowan was established to improve the lives of adults with learning disabilities by providing meaningful activities and day services. This idea arose during a time of significant social change, when the Government's 'Care in the Community' initiative sought to move people out of institutions and into community life.



With support from the NHS and Cambridgeshire County Council, Rowan began as a small woodwork project in Cambridge, run by four local professionals. In 1993, Rowan moved to our current home on Humberstone Road, and in 2003, we adopted a strong social enterprise ethos to ensure Rowan's sustainability for the future. By 2016, our building was redeveloped to better meet the needs of our student artists, creating more open spaces and upgraded care facilities.



This year, we tackled one of our biggest challenges yet: replacing our leaky roof. Thanks to the UK Government's Community Ownership Fund and the incredible support of our community, we raised £37,500 to unlock the grant. The roof is now underway, setting us up for a stable and exciting future. And, we will, at last, say goodbye to our bright yellow and blue 'leak diverter kit', often mistaken for modern art by visitors!

Our anniversary celebrations included a summer party at Rowan, complete with karaoke, and an afternoon tea at Emmanuel College with many of our major supporters. What a way to end the year. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has been part of Rowan's journey, past and present.



If you would like to continue supporting us, why not become a Friend of Rowan? Visit [rowanhumberstone.org.uk/become-a-friend](http://rowanhumberstone.org.uk/become-a-friend). Here's to the next 40 years!





# rowan

*Creating art, Improving lives*



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