

Newsletter

Winter 2023

Issue 3

BBA

In this edition

Taking the stress out of the holiday season ideas for

- planning
- gifts
- activities
- food and drink

Are you affected by SAD?
Find ways to combat Seasonal Affective Disorder

Age in Spain
Good Neighbour Award

and much more....



ANGLICAN CHURCH

CHRISTMAS

Fair



JAMS
 CAKES
 RAFFLE
 CHUTNEY
 MINCE PIES
 SAUSAGE ROLLS
 CHRISTMAS PUDS
 CHRISTMAS GIFTS
 ARTISAN JEWELRY
 CHRISTMAS DEC
 WORKSHOP
 CARDS



THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN THE COSTA BRAVA ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THEY ARE HOLDING A SMALL CHRISTMAS FAIR 🌲🌲🌲

SAT 2ND

DECEMBER 2023

10^{AM} - 2^{PM}

FREE ADMISSION

CIVIC
CENTRE

MADRENANYA

Welcome!



We welcome New Members, thank you for joining us, and New Volunteers, we look forward to working with you.

We have noticed in our different communities across the region, and highlighted in the Facebook groups we follow, that there are lots of people returning or moving here anew under the different visa options.

It also seems that there may be changes afoot in the 90 day rule (we can but hope) and you can find more on that in the News Round Up section.

With the influx of new people we hope to connect and make ourselves and our free voluntary services visible and available to all. So please do feel free to share this newsletter far and wide.

The more people that know about us the more use we can be.

Also, if you are a business owner and would like to support us whilst promoting your services to our community take a look at our Partnership Programme. Details can be found at the end of this Newsletter and on our website.

Winter seems to have suddenly crept up on us, mainly because it has been so unseasonably warm so we could be forgiven for not noticing.

This last week we were enjoying mid 20s temperatures and some of us were sitting on the beach!

Wandering around in t-shirts and shorts it seems quite strange to be out in towns and villages and seeing the Christmas decorations going up.

Winter and the Christmas holiday in particular can be a joy for some but also a lonely time for others. Traditions are very different here and many of us are far away from our families and can feel quite isolated.

We are starting this edition with some helpful ideas, tips and suggestions to make the season simpler, easier and fun if that is what floats your boat!

We will also be looking forward to the New Year and our plans to broaden horizons through our meet and greet Hot Topics Cafe coffee mornings.

If there is a subject area that you would like us to cover then we are all ears. We have a few ideas of our own so watch out for those being promoted across our social media. They are getting popular so be sure to register to secure your spot!

In the meantime, from all of us here at the BBA we wish you

**Happy Holidays &
A Healthy & Happy New
Year!**

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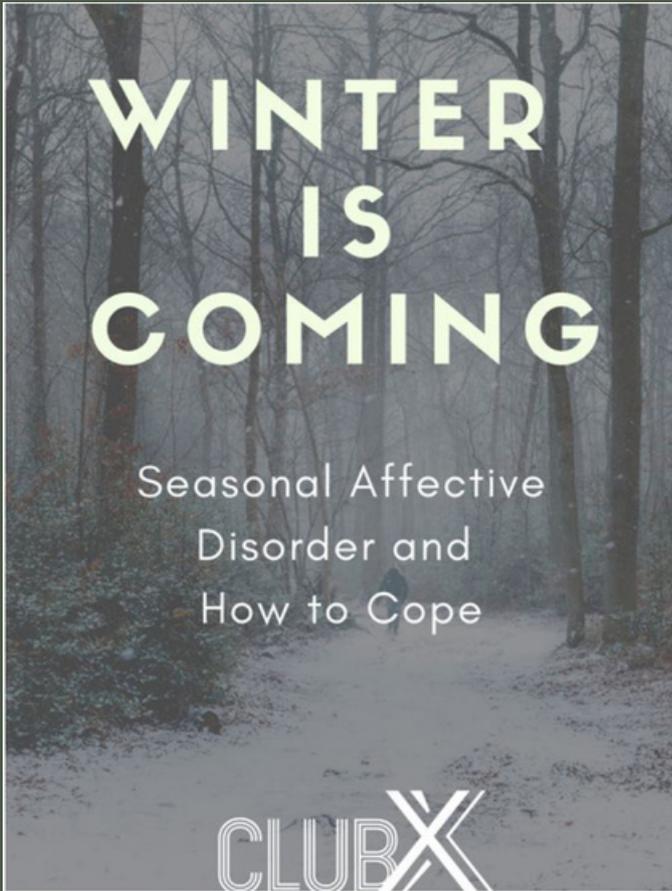
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Stress Free Christmas

As we approach the season to be jolly we have lots of fresh ideas, tips and freebies for you to make the holidays just that bit less stressful



“It’s the most wonderful time of the year,” or is it?

It is that time of the year again, and it seems like there are a lot of changes. From the leaves beginning to change, holiday activities are keeping us busy and even seasonal outdoor activities like fall walks and plans to see friends and loved ones, especially after the not so long ago COVID restrictions.

However, with these changes the days get shorter, and the night comes sooner – which can often cause seasonal depression”

This is an excerpt from Dr Thomas Vance’s blog on Seasonal Affective Disorder and How to Cope.

If you struggle with the “winter blues” you will find some great advice and helpful tips in the blog article [here](#)

Hygge is a Danish concept, in essence it means creating a cosy atmosphere and enjoying the good things in life with good people.

Following on from the previous article this is a perfect little tool to find prompts to lighten the spirit.

The Hygge concept is perfect for this time of year and this Advent Calendar gives you lots of great ideas to create a Hygge atmosphere in your home and heart!

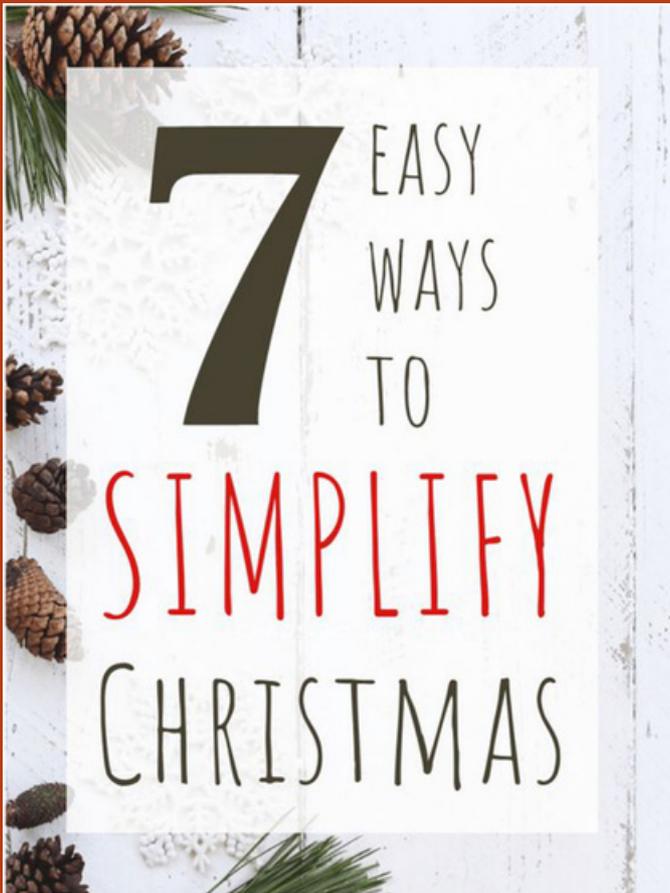
Sometimes we are so busy trying to make everything perfect, making lists, shopping for one or two big days we forget to just enjoy the moment.

These little prompts make you stop and take stock, enjoy the moment and enjoy the journey. Click [here](#) to get you free printable



A Christmas KISS

Use the KISS approach - Keep It Simple Silly! Some great tips and tricks for making the most of the holidays without the stress factor



From the blog Chaos and Quiet some really simple ideas to make Christmas or any big event go that little bit smoother

When we look back at Christmas when we were young or our children were young it was all about the excitement, the simple preparations, the tree, writing letters to Santa. Carol services, nativity plays and mince pies.

Now it's more about Instagram worthy decor and the latest gadget under the tree. This blog reminds us to scale back and appreciate the habits, traditions and activities that we hold dear.

If you want to create unforgettable moments then this blog post article is for you. Read all about it [here](#)

Children are relatively easy to buy for, they usually come with a list as long as your arm! Adults on the other hand are much more difficult to buy for. What do you buy the person who has everything?

Do you struggle to come up with ideas for something special?

Do you get people saying I don't need anything but you really want to get them a gift.

Well this article has some great ideas, some are experiences, some are homemade and suggestions for those who really need to put something wrapped under the tree.

Get your minimalist gift ideas [here](#)



The Personal Touch

It's the thought that counts and when we can make it a family and friends affair even better! Plus trying our hand at non boozy tipples.



The thing we liked about this list of ideas from Mommyptotamus is that she starts by giving you two top tips based on the authors successes and failures!

#1 - Plan 2-3 projects at the very most *that way you can enjoy the gift making process without feeling overwhelmed*

#2 - if you can, make plans to sip something delightful with friends and family and make gifts together *bottom line - stick to a few gifts to keep things simple and, most importantly, have fun!*

Now are you ready to explore? From body care, to home gifts, gifts for men, women, grandparents and children, pretty much something for everyone [here](#)

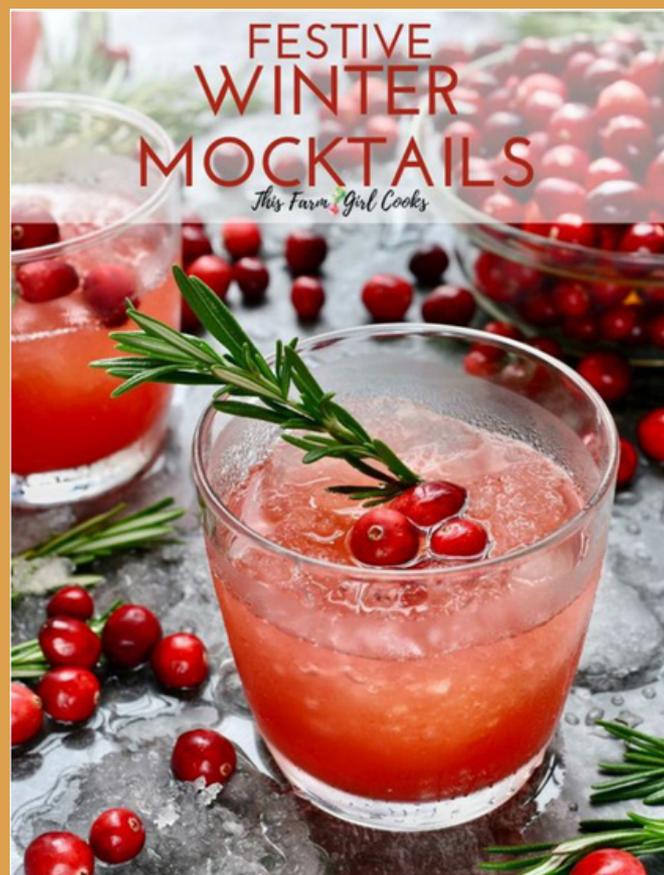
We all like a tippie, glass of wine, a frothy beer, a glass of sherry or if we are going totally retro - a snowball with a cherry!

However, some of us have given up the drink for health or lifestyle reasons and yet we still crave something special on occasion.

Then we also need to consider the designated drivers in our midst - let's celebrate without the hangover!

Diane Frieders of This Farm Girl Cooks has a good selection of winter mocktails that wouldn't go amiss at the swankiest of cocktail bars. How about a Tom Collins, a peppermint White Russian, or a family friendly apple cider punch?

Find all the details [here](#)



Food for Thought

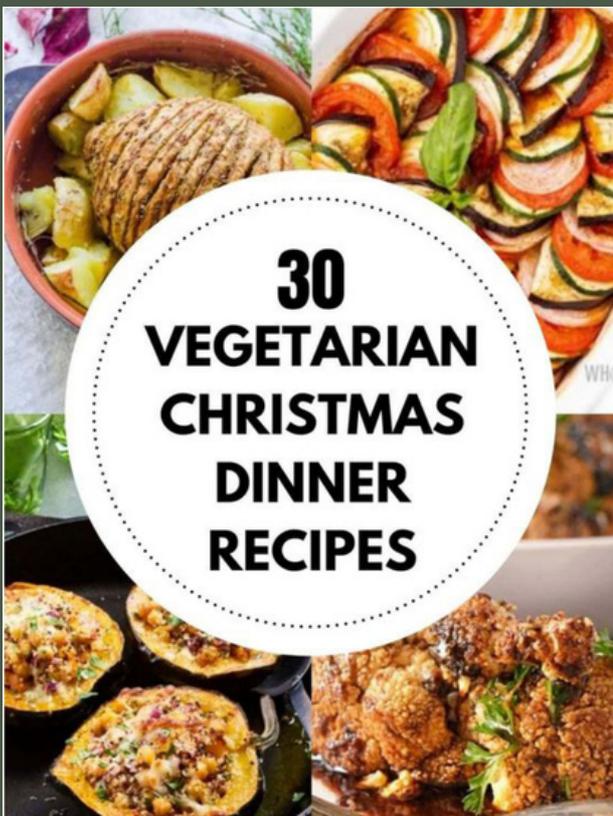
Catering for others, especially those with special dietary requirements, during the holiday season coming up with fresh ideas can be challenging. We have done a bit of shopping around to give you a head start.



From Nutriciously link [here](#)



From Wendy Polisi link [here](#)



From Moon and Spoon link [here](#)



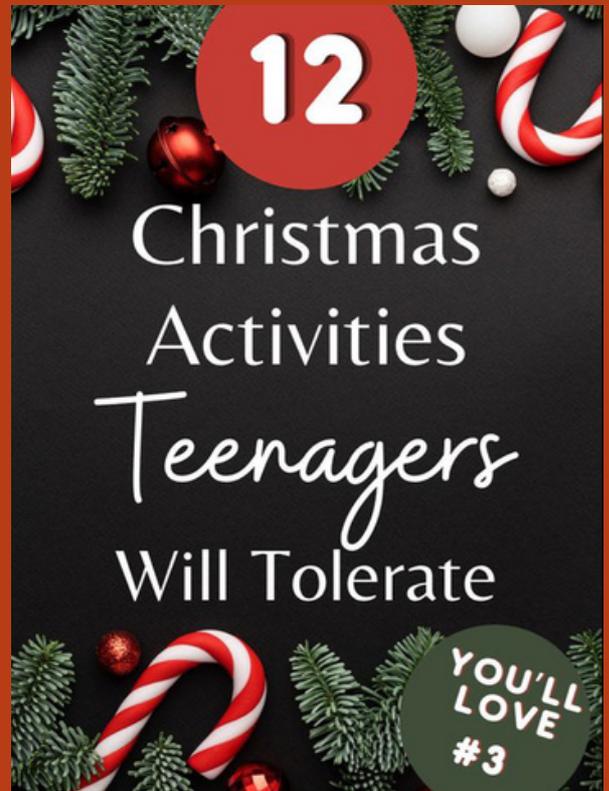
From Family Favourite Holiday Recipes link [here](#)

Keeping Entertained!

Much as we are enjoying good weather the cooler darker evenings and a cold snap are never far off the horizon, keeping screen time down here are some great ideas to keep the youngsters, the teens and the adults occupied



From Printgogostore link [here](#)



From From Life Between the Dishes link [here](#)



From BusyBloominJoy link [here](#)



From This Crazy Adventure Called Life link [here](#)

Hot Topics Café

Our second Hot Topics coffee morning in Lloret de Mar welcomed new folk to join in a lively discussion around all things internet.



Making life simpler
33

DIGITAL AWARENESS & SAFE SURFING

top tips on internet and online use and safety

VENUE: COFFEE N CRUNCH

AVE DE VIDRERES, 36, 17310 LLORET DE MAR

WED 25 OCTOBER 10am - 12pm

Common ground was how much more reliant we have all become in online activity, from shopping to meetups, using it for social mixing when we were all stuck at home during covid keeping in touch with family and friends.

The downside being the rise in online scams and fraud and knowing what you can do to prevent yourself from becoming a victim.

We also looked at the rise in fake news and how we can help to stop the spread.

If you want to find out more about the information we covered and the tips and tricks all the info is on our website [here](#)

What Next?

New Year - New You!

Do you make New Year resolutions that fall by the wayside once you get half way through January? Are there things that you really want to tackle in 2024?

We have a few ideas in the pipeline that might interest you:-

- language skills - how is your Spanish or Catalan? Are you new to the region? Would you like to get to grips with the basics, or, have you been here some time but never really had the confidence to take classes? We are planning a coffee morning where you can do just that
- health and wellbeing - physically most of us have over indulged during the festivities and would like to give ourselves a spring clean, we are hoping to team up with various professionals in the coming months to introduce you to a variety of ideas that might be just the spring board you need to a better you
- is there something you would like to meet up and discuss, areas that you think would be a great start to the New Year? Send us your ideas and we will see what we can organise! Contact us [here](#)

Spotlight - Age in Spain Good Neighbour Award



Do you have a good neighbour? Has someone gone out of their way to help you when you've needed a hand? Offered you transport, done your shopping, looked after your pet, or gone that extra mile on your behalf? Has anyone done anything for you that has changed your life?



Would you like to say thank you to that person?

Then nominate them for Age In Spain's Good Neighbour Award!

This person doesn't have to live next door. They can be a local hero or a good citizen – anyone who looks out for others and has done you or your community a kindness. Last year's winner was a Spanish teacher who had gone out of her way to help her students feel welcome in their new community.

This year's winner will receive a personal letter of congratulations from the UK Ambassador to Spain, Hugh Elliott, and be treated to a celebration dinner for two.

For details and the application form follow this link to their website [here](#)

Registering a Foreign Vehicle in Spain

If you have a UK / foreign registered vehicle over here in Spain then you'll almost certainly have wondered how long you can legally drive it on UK plates and if you need to import it onto new Spanish plates



Here are the rules:-

- If you are non-resident then you can drive a foreign / UK registered vehicle for up to 6 months per calendar year before you are legally obliged to import it onto Spanish plates.
- If you are a Spanish resident then it's just 30 days.

Tax, MOT & Insurance

Please bear in mind that your car must still be taxed and MOT'd in the country of registration and insured whilst on foreign registration plates. The Spanish Authorities, including the Guardia Civil, Policia Local and Policia National all have easy web based access to many foreign vehicle databases and can check on these details.

Temporary Import Plates

Clearly, in some circumstances tax / MOT may have expired or drivers may have marked as exported believing it was the right thing to do, but Spain does offer a very cost effective solution for this situation in the form of temporary import plates, also known as “placas verdes”. Temporary import plates have a duration of 60 days and allow you to legally drive your car whilst in Spain irrespective of the status in the country of registration and can also be used to retrieve your vehicle from the pound, if it's been confiscated by the authorities.

Insurance

As the temporary import plates are a Spanish registration you will also need to have a Spanish insurance policy in place. The benefit here is that in Spain the car is insured and not the driver, so typically anyone can drive your car with your permission and once your car is registered in Spain permanently your insurance can be switched across free of charge.

For further information visit the N332 Facebook post [here](#)

News Round Up

Right click links and select 'Open In New Tab' to keep this Newsletter open so you can return to it easily

Registering your S1 online



How to register your S1 form in Spain using the Instituto Nacional de la Seguridad Social (INSS) online portal.

If you cannot visit an INSS office in person, you can register your S1 form online instead.

Some parts of the process are either in Spanish or need to be completed in Spanish.

If you need help with translation this is one of the services the BBA can help you with. Contact us via the [website](#) or email britbengirona@gmail.com

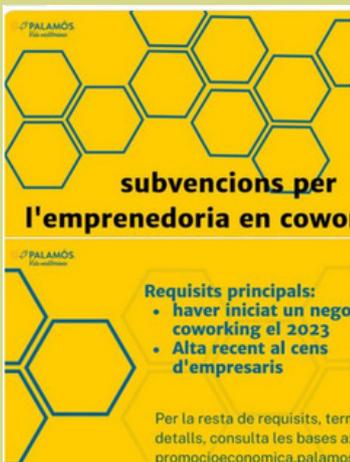
Ryanair winter schedule from Girona



From 1 November 2023 to 30 March 2024, [Ryanair](#) flights operate on nine routes in and out of Girona-Costa Brava Airport. Those routes include:-

- Belfast
- Brussels-Charleroi
- Dusseldorf-Weeze
- Karlsruhe-Baden
- Pisa, Marrakesh
- Krakow
- Birmingham
- London-Stansted.

Palamos business premises and coworking premises support



Palamós City Council allocates €34,000 to promote the establishment of businesses in empty premises and for the installation of new economic activities in coworking spaces

Applications are invited from entrepreneurs and existing businesses.

Closing date for applications in 19 December 2023

Further details [here](#)

Food Safety - timely reminder

IS THIS FOOD EXPIRED?

UNDERSTANDING DATE LABELS

The dates that food companies put on packages are not regulated and do not mean that the food is unsafe to eat, except in the case of baby formula. Most foods are still tasty and nutritious after the date has passed. **Not sure if food is spoiled? Check for off odor, flavor or texture.**

"BEST BY" OR "BEST IF USED BY" DATE

This date tells you when the food will have the **best flavor**.
It is **still safe to eat** past this date.

"USE BY" OR "EXPIRATION" DATE

This is the last date that the product will be at its **peak quality**.
It is **still safe to eat** past this date (**except for baby formula**).

"PACKING/MANUFACTURING" DATE

This is the date used by manufacturers for tracking.
It is not an expiration date - it is not related to food quality or safety.

"SELL BY" DATE

This tells the store how long to display the product for sale.
It is **still safe to eat** past this date.

GOOD FOR UP TO ONE YEAR AFTER THE DATE:

- Packaged food like cereal, pasta, dried beans, and baking mixes
- Frozen foods
- Canned goods including soup, condiments, meat, fruit, and vegetables

GOOD FOR UP TO 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE:

- Butter
- Cheese
- Eggs

GOOD FOR UP TO SEVEN DAYS AFTER THE DATE:

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cream Cheese

Questions? Contact us at 215-223-2220 or info@sharefoodprogram.org.



Where to get your ECO stickers for your car



Where to get the Eco Sticker?

In any Post Office

What documents do I have to show?

- Vehicle's owner ID and the logbook of the vehicle called "Permiso de Circulación".

How much does it cost?

- 5 euros

Staying in Spain longer than 90 days for health or humanitarian reasons



It is possible to apply to remain in Spain longer than 90 days on humanitarian or health grounds. The extension is called a Prórroga de Estancia in Spanish. Applications have to be made directly to the Spanish authorities and the British Consulate cannot help you with this process.

You can find information about how to apply, including the application form and a list of supporting documentation needed, on this [link](#). The grounds for extension have to be clearly justified and any extension will be limited. Any documents from outside of Spain may also have to be translated and legalised.

Public holiday dates Spain 2024



The list of nine festivities common to the entire country in 2024 is as follows, follow this [link](#) for details of region specific holidays

- 1 January: New Year (Monday)
- 6 January: Epiphany of the Lord (Saturday)
- 29 March: Good Friday (Friday)
- 1 May: Labour Day (Wednesday)
- 15 August: Assumption of the Virgin (Thursday)
- 12 October: National Day of Spain (Saturday)
- 1 November: All Saints (Friday)
- 6 December: Spanish Constitution Day (Friday)
- 25 December: Christmas Day (Wednesday)

Update on the 180 campaign

French senate backs 'automatic visa' right for UK second-home owners

However, two other amendments including a five-year 'homeowner' visa were rejected

14 November 2023 17:08



Jenny Meddicot of LBC reports that as we know under current post-Brexit law, Brits can stay in areas in the EU for a total of 90 days out of every 180

Anyone wanting to extend their stay has to apply for a long-stay visa of up to six months, Spain is hoping to lobby for change.

Spain's acting Minister of Tourism, Hector Gomez said: "Unfortunately, the rule is not something Spain has established by itself or can get rid of."

"It is in our interest to lobby and convince the EU that we can try to work an exception with them. But the solution must come from them."

It comes just days after France's senate voted to amend immigration law, giving British second homeowners the automatic right to a long-stay visa. French politicians said they had voted the amendment through for those who had been "punished by Brexit".

Now similar work could be in the pipeline for Brits hoping to visit Spain after Mr Gomez confirmed earlier this week he had an "important meeting" with the UK's Director of Consular Affairs and Crisis, Jennifer Anderson, at the Foreign Office.

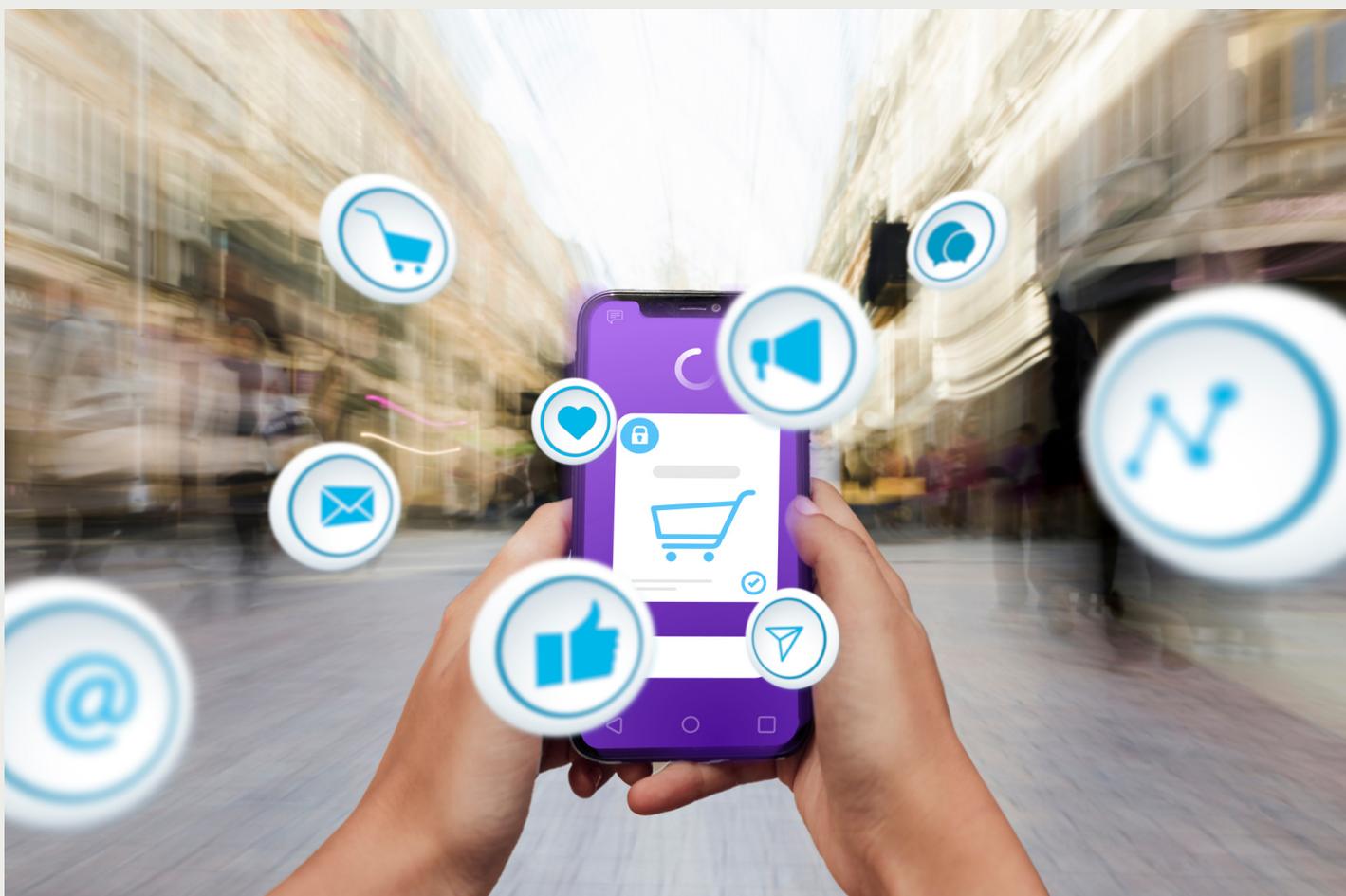
To read the full article follow this [link](#)

You may also find it useful to follow Andrew Hesselden, who runs the 180 campaign and the Facebook page [After Brexit in Spain](#)

Job Vacancies

Donations

Partnership Programme



Would you like to introduce your products or services to the English speaking community in the Girona Region?

We are inviting Companies and Service Providers who have something to offer our readers and members to take part in our Partnership Programme.

We have a comprehensive programme which includes promotional space in this quarterly Newsletter, listing on our website as a partner and blog posts which are distributed via social media.

We mail out the Newsletter quarterly to our members and we also share on social media with Facebook pages used by British and English speakers across the region, followers of these pages exceed 10,000.

We have also started hosting Hot Topic Cafes across the region and Partners will be invited to take part in relevant Topics providing another opportunity to connect with the wider community.

Partnership starts from as little as 20euros. To find out more contact britbengirona@gmail.com

We reserve the right to decline applications if we feel they are not aligned to our members and readers needs.

Image courtesy of Freepik

Partners and local providers we work with

To find out more about these organisations click the images to go to their websites.

Want to join our Partnership Programme? Connect your business and services to our membership. Sponsorship starts from as little as 20euro for inclusion in our quarterly newsletter, promotion across our social media and annual entry in the partnership section on our [website](#)



Providing information and support to English speakers in Spain since 1992, check out their website for the wide range of locations you can meet with other members as well as online support



Offering help and support to those with life limiting illnesses and their families



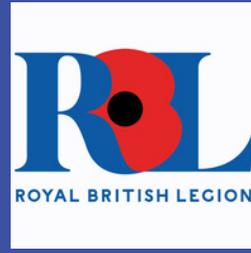
Anglican Church in the Costa Brava, holds Zoom services on a Sunday and other meetings online, some physical Church services are held check the website for details



Spanish Red Cross site in English [some explanation needed as to what services are being offered]



The British Benevolent Fund is a Spain wide Charity for when times are tough – providing financial support to help Britons in Spain get back on their feet



The Royal British Legion provides lifelong support for the Armed Forces community – serving men and women, veterans and their families. District North Spain covers an area from the French Border to Almeria



The British Society of Catalunya – Bay of Roses since 1995 members group welcoming people of all nationalities organising social and group events including sports across the region check the website for details



Formerly Girona Grapevine changed to online Meetup during Covid and has kept the online presence but now organising physical events and meetings again check the web for details



An informative and useful website. The site will assist you with all aspects relating to living, visiting, owning a holiday home or investing in Spain.



U3A Girona region, members groups and events across the region, check the website for details



A Diocese of Girona organisation the website is in Catalan but should translate automatically if using Google translate option in your search engine



A central hub for volunteers in the region, from training to projects and opportunities



British Benevolent Association



GIRONA PROVINCE

The British Benevolent Association for the Province of Girona (BBA) was set up as a registered charity in 2007 with the aim of providing practical help and support to any British or Commonwealth subject living in, staying in or passing through the province of Girona and the Costa Brava. Practical help is provided through a network of volunteers across the region and supported by donations and fundraising events.

Do you need help now?

Call the BBA between 8am – 8pm Tel: 695 210 108 To speak to one of our volunteers

Email: britbengirona@gmail.com

or call the 24 hour emergency number at the British Consulate Barcelona

Emergency 24 hour telephone: (+34)902 109 356 or (+34)917 146 300

Spain Emergency Number: 112

