

Media Highlights

The Laughing Robot by Julia Ross

Event

- Julia Ross speaking at Isle of Wight Literary Festival 2025 on Saturday 11 from 10:00 until 14:00 at the Local Authors' Marketplace.

Why Now

- UK trials of robots in care homes making national headlines.
- Rising concern about who will care for us as we age.
- Current debates on assisted dying, dignity, and autonomy.
- Tech trends: teenagers using AI chatbots for therapy, adults turning to ChatGPT for emotional advice.

About the Book

- A witty, thought-provoking novel about Anna and her robot companion Henry.
- Explores aging, independence, and technology with humour and candour.
- Set partly on the Isle of Wight, a region with one of the UK's highest retirement populations.

Why It Stands Out

- Blends serious social issues with humour and humanity.
- Draws on Ross's decades of frontline and leadership experience in social work.
- Tackles ageism by showing diverse ways people want to live and age.
- Timely link to debates on robots, AI, and the future of care.

Author Insights (Julia Ross)

- "I loved the idea of robots actually being able to care for people—it seemed such a contradiction and puzzle."
- "If we don't learn to live with technology and robots, we'll get left behind—or worse, let them take advantage of us."
- "Older people aren't all the same. Some would much prefer a friendly machine than four different strangers coming in a day to do intimate things."
- "Meeting readers is the best thing ever—even if daunting! People are fascinated by AI and robots, and I don't blame them."

Topical Hooks for Media

- Robots in Care: Already in use in Japan; now being trialled in UK care homes.
- Assisted Dying: Ross contributed to The Times debate, highlighting key distinctions around choice and dignity.

- Social Care Expertise: As Chair of the British Association of Social Workers, Ross offers frontline insight.
- Isle of Wight Angle: Local focus on aging population mirrors national concerns.

About Julia Ross

- Chair of the British Association of Social Workers.
- Former nurse with frontline experience in mental health and elder care.
- Published author exploring AI, technology, and human dignity.
- Currently writing a new novel about a young woman overtaken by artificial intelligence.

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