EAST SUSSEX FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION

England & Wales · Charity number 1092668

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	04216137
Registered	2002-06-28
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	58b High Street Polegate East Sussex BN26 6AD
Phone	01323747045
Email	admin@esfca.co.uk
Website	esfca.co.uk

Activities

Objects: FOR THE BENEFIT OF CHILDREN IN THE CARE OF FOSTER FAMILIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE COUNTY OF EAST SUSSEX, BY PROVISION OF, OR ASSISTANCE IN THE PROVISION OF, FACILITIES, ADVICE, ADVOCACY, TRAINING, AND SUCH OTHER SERVICES AS THE TRUSTEES SHALL DECIDE.

Activities: The Association aims to support East Sussex Foster Carers and their families in their efforts to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children in their care, by working in partnership with appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies. It has developed a range of support, advice, advocacy, activities and training for their fellow carers, their families and Looked After Children.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, Other Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** Children/young People, Other Defined Groups

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Geography

- **Area of benefit:** EAST SUSSEX
- East Sussex

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£42,867	£43,533	-	-
2024-03-31	£42,238	£52,531	-	-
2023-03-31	£50,514	£54,651	-	-
2022-03-31	£46,007	£55,305	-	-
2021-03-31	£41,620	£27,645	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
SUSANNE BEESLEY	Chair	
ANN HOLDER		2001-03-12
Anja Christina Leeves		2017-11-01
Christine Ellen Phillips		2019-10-14
Emily Vitoria Wells		2022-11-14
Laura Ottley		2025-10-20
Michael Kim Phillips		2022-11-14
Ru Petraitis-Williams BEM		2016-04-05
Sandra Josephine Maylam		2017-11-01
Tina Henderson		2025-10-20

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EAST SUSSEX FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1092668

Accounts

Charity number: 1092668
Company number: 04216137

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Directors' report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

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Charity number	1092668
Company registration number	4216137
Registered office	Sorrel Drive Resource Centre 29-41 Sorrel Drive Eastbourne BN23 8BH
Independent Examiner	Dominic Hill Associates Limited Archer House Britland Estate Northbourne Road Eastbourne East Sussex BN22 8PW

The directors present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Structure, governance and management

The charity is an incorporated association governed by its memorandum and articles of association, together with its constitution.

The following persons served as directors/trustees during the year;

Mrs. S Beesley BA (hons) – Chair
Mr. MK Phillips -Treasurer
Mrs. AH D Holder MBE
Mrs. A Leeves
Mrs. S Maylam
Mrs. R Petraitis-Williams BEM
Mrs. C Phillips
Mrs. V Archer
Mrs. E Wells

Trustees are appointed at the AGM with there being a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve. At the AGM one third of the trustees must stand down, often the longest serving trustees stand down first, but may choose to stand for re-election. All trustees must be members of East Sussex Foster Care Association and members can nominate themselves for election.

Charitable Objectives and Activities

The East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA), as defined in its Memorandum of Association, exists to promote charitable purposes for the benefit of the community, primarily within the County of East Sussex. Its principal aims are to advance public understanding of substitute care and to support the education, training, and wellbeing of foster carers, their families, and the children they care for. This includes the provision of facilities and services intended to improve social welfare and enhance quality of life.

The East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) exists to support East Sussex foster carers and their families in achieving the best possible outcomes for the children in their care. The Association works in close collaboration with statutory bodies and voluntary sector partners to deliver a range of services, including training, advocacy, peer support, and events designed to strengthen the fostering community.

Membership is made up of registered foster carers approved by East Sussex County Council. The Association is governed by a Board of Trustees, consisting primarily of individuals elected from within the membership, along with a number of co-opted trustees who are long-standing supporters of the Association and bring professional experience from relevant fields such as education, social services, and other child-focused sectors.

Activities, Achievements, and Performance

During the reporting period, East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) continued to deliver meaningful support to a wide range of individuals within the care system, with a focus on fostering strong outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC), foster carers, and their families.

Support for Young People in Foster Families

Young People Who Foster (YPWF) - This initiative recognises and supports the birth and adopted children of foster carers who play a significant role in the fostering household. These young people often make personal sacrifices and share their home environment selflessly. ESFCA provides them with a safe, supportive platform where they can express their views, share experiences, and access peer support.

Children in Care Council (CiCC) - The CiCC is a representative body of children and young people currently in care. It ensures that their voices are heard in decisions that affect them. ESFCA facilitates engagement with the council, enabling young people to participate in advocacy and service development activities.

Support for Young Adults Leaving Care

Through Care Service - ESFCA continues to work closely with East Sussex County Council's Through Care Service to support young people aged 16–25 as they transition from care to independent living. This includes collaboration on initiatives such as a supervised camping trip designed to build resilience, confidence, and peer connections.

Additionally, ESFCA has supported the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children team by funding cultural celebrations like Eid and organising trips to London. These activities help foster a sense of belonging and provide positive, enriching experiences for vulnerable young people adapting to life in the UK.

Targeted Grant Funding

Make It Reel Project (Designated funds)- ESFCA manages a restricted fund generously donated by The Reel Poster Company. These funds are allocated specifically to directly benefit Looked After Children where modest financial support can have a significant positive impact. Grants from this fund are used to respond flexibly to the immediate needs of children and young people.

My Things Matter (Ringfenced Funds) - In partnership with the Children in Care Council and with funding from the Hall & Woodhouse Community Chest, ESFCA launched the My Things Matter initiative to provide personal storage boxes for children entering care, changing placements, or moving on to independent living. These sturdy containers allow children to transport their belongings—such as books, toys, and keepsakes—with dignity and care. By avoiding the undignified use of bin bags, the initiative reinforces the message that every child deserves respect, stability, and a sense of self-worth during times of transition.

This project is part of a broader commitment to preserving the dignity and wellbeing of Looked After Children:

- **Suitcase Initiative (Donations)** - ESFCA provides suitcases to children and young people entering, moving within or leaving care to ensure their belongings are transported in a respectful and appropriate way. Over 200 suitcases have been distributed to date through carers, social workers, and assessment teams. The initiative also supports care leavers aged 16–25 as they begin their journey into independent adulthood. The suitcases were donated by Tripp Luggage.

- **Gift Bag Project (Donations)** - In collaboration with volunteers from the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), ESFCA distributes age-appropriate backpacks filled with essential and comforting items. These include toiletries, clothing, stationery, books, toys, and a cuddly companion. Donated by DWP staff, their friends and families, these backpacks provide practical support and emotional comfort to children at the point of entering care. Trustees also maintain an emergency supply of gift bags for urgent placements.

Together, these projects reflect ESFCA's commitment to promoting dignity, compassion, and continuity for every child in care.

Advocacy and Sector Engagement

The Association continues to play an active role in advocating for foster carers and children in care. ESFCA's Trustees engage with local and national forums to influence policy and raise awareness of the challenges and contributions of the fostering community. Through regular engagement with government departments, local authorities, and sector bodies, ESFCA ensures that the voices of its members are represented in key decision-making processes.

Independent Allegation Support Fund (ringfenced funds) - ESFCA receives an annual contribution from East Sussex County Council, held in a restricted fund, to support foster carers facing allegations or concerns related to standards of care. This fund enables access to independent advice and professional support during what can be complex and emotionally challenging investigations.

Given the confidential nature of such cases, this support plays a vital role in reducing isolation and safeguarding the wellbeing of foster families. To assist carers during this process, ESFCA—working in partnership with ESCC Fostering Services—has developed a specialist Allegation Information Pack. This resource helps carers understand the process, breaks down each stage into manageable steps, and signposts sources of support.

Foster Parent Engagement and Support Forums - ESFCA holds monthly meetings, open to all foster carers and their families, providing a regular forum for discussion, information sharing, and raising concerns. Carers can attend in person or submit questions and topics for discussion through the Association.

In addition, ESFCA offers monthly surgeries in partnership with senior managers from East Sussex County Council's Children's and Fostering Services. These sessions allow foster carers to bring forward complex or time-sensitive issues for direct attention. ESFCA also offers a trustee to attend each surgery to offer support and help ensure matters are addressed in a timely and professional manner.

Activities 2024-2025

April

Art Session - In April, ESFCA launched its first art session of the year for looked after children and young people who foster, in partnership with art teaching consultant Maureen Wells. The monthly sessions offer children a chance to paint and draw with Maureen's guidance, while giving carers a couple of hours' respite. ESFCA covers art supplies and subsidises venue costs, with carers contributing £5 per child. Maureen donates her time, supported by a volunteer trustee or staff member. Class sizes range from 4 to 11 children, depending on availability.

Urban Jump – Jump party - Thanks to an underspend on our August (2023) PGL day camps, our community partners at Children in Need supported the creation of reunion events, giving children who attended the camps a chance to reconnect. The first event was held in January 2024, with the others continuing throughout the year. All were hosted at Urban Jump Trampoline Park in Heathfield, where the children enjoyed two hours of trampolining followed by lunch.

Inspire Performing Arts Project - This year, we were pleased to reintroduce *Inspire*, our three-day performing arts initiative for looked after children and children who foster, aged 7 to 17. Held during the school holidays, the project requires no prior experience and provides a safe, creative environment for participants to explore singing, dancing, and acting using material from well-known stage and screen musicals.

The programme is led by two experienced performing arts teachers and supported by a dedicated team of volunteers, including foster carers, trustees, and staff. The East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) subsidises the majority of the project's costs, with a nominal contribution of £5.00 per child from foster families.

Arlington Bluebell Walk – With the arrival of spring, ESFCA returned to the Arlington Bluebell Walk, completing two duty days running the refreshments in the Bluebell Barn and marshalling the walk itself. The weather was changeable which led to less visitors than previous years, however the event was still very popular and after costs the two days raised over £2923.61. Volunteers donated home-baked goods and attended the event to support the association.

Fred Livings Award – During the Bluebell Walk event, ESFCA launched the Fred Livings Award, established in memory of Fred Livings — former chairman and trustee of ESFCA — in partnership with the Fred Livings Youth Foundation (FLY Foundation). The award is dedicated to improving the lives of looked-after children and aims to champion new cultural experiences.

May

Wellbeing (Spring Wreath Workshop) - In a collaborative initiative between ESFCA and ESCC Foster Care Training, we hosted our first wellbeing day of the year. This event was created to offer foster carers a few hours of respite in a welcoming environment, where they could connect with fellow carers, take part in a relaxing activity, and enjoy light refreshments.

The session featured a floristry workshop led by Anthologie Floristry, giving carers the chance to unwind, recharge, and express their creativity. Costs were shared equally between ESFCA and ESCC Foster Care Training, with carers contributing a £10.00 donation.

Art Session – See April Art Session.

George Stone Limited (Donation) – In May we received a donation of £1,100 to put towards our next Inspire Project. This funding plays a vital role in helping us continue our mission to provide enriching cultural experiences for looked-after children and young people.

We are incredibly grateful for the support and belief in our work. Every contribution helps us continue creating meaningful, positive experiences for the young people we serve.

Toddler Support Group - We were pleased to resume our Toddler Support Group, offering foster parents of children under the age of five a safe, supportive environment to connect and engage. These sessions provide a valuable opportunity for carers and children to build relationships, access peer support, and benefit from positive social interaction. Recognising the importance of early childhood development and carer well-being, ESFCA continues to run regular baby and toddler groups that promote secure attachments and shared experiences in a welcoming, child-friendly setting.

June & July

Exploring New Directions - This summer, ESFCA made the decision to pause our usual PGL residential trips to create space for fresh thinking and the exploration of new opportunities. While these trips have been a valued tradition, we recognised the importance of stepping back to reflect on how we can evolve and better meet the changing needs of our young people and carers.

Instead of our standard summer activities, we used this time to focus on Futures Thinking — a strategic process that allows us to envision different possibilities for growth and innovation. This reflective period has played a key role in shaping our upcoming business plan, ensuring our future activities remain impactful, inclusive, and responsive.

August

Bright Foundation Open Days - Over the summer holidays, our community partners at The Bright Foundation kindly invited our foster families to attend their open days at The Barn Theatre. Families were welcomed to bring a picnic, explore the beautiful grounds, visit the toy museum, and take part in a wide range of engaging activities. It was a fantastic opportunity for carers and children to enjoy a day out in a creative and family-friendly environment.

Art Session- See April Art Session – We held two sessions during August.

Urban Jump Party – See Urban Jump party – We held two sessions during August.

September

Toddler Support Group – See Toddler Support Group May

Phillip Mann (Donation) - We are incredibly grateful to Phillip Mann Estate Agents for their generous donation of nine computers to support the children and families we work with. Access to technology is essential for education, communication, and personal development — and this donation will make a real difference in the lives of our young people.

October

Beachy Head 10K & Ultra Marathon – ESFCA was once again invited by Eastbourne Borough Council's Visit Eastbourne team to provide volunteer marshals for the Beachy Head 10K and Ultra Marathon. A committed group of volunteers — including foster carers, trustees, staff members, through-care service representatives, and supporters of the charity — participated in the event, braving challenging weather conditions to fulfil key safety and guidance roles along the race route.

Our volunteers played an essential part in supporting the smooth and safe running of the event, contributing to both community engagement and public visibility for the organisation. In recognition of our involvement, ESFCA received a £300 donation, which will be directed towards the delivery of future projects.

Art Session – See Art Session April

Bright Foundation – Community partners "The Bright Foundation" offered our families tickets to the school holiday performances of "The Witch and the Egg "by the longnose puppet theatre.

November

A Key Month for Governance and Planning - November is a particularly busy and important month for the organisation, as it marks the finalisation of both our financial statements and annual report. During this period, staff and trustees work closely to ensure all reporting requirements are met, and that the documentation accurately reflects our activities, impact, and financial position over the past year.

In addition to completing these statutory responsibilities, we also begin preparations for the Annual General Meeting (AGM), where we review achievements, share future plans, and engage with stakeholders. This concentrated period of activity is vital to maintaining transparency, accountability, and strong governance across ESFCA.

More Radio Toy Appeal - As part of their annual Christmas initiative, More Radio runs a Toy Appeal encouraging listeners to donate new toys for distribution to charities and community groups supporting disadvantaged children across the South of England.

Once again, ESFCA was pleased to receive a generous selection of donated toys through the appeal. These gifts were distributed to foster families and children in care within our network, helping to bring joy and support to those who may otherwise have gone without during the festive period.

December

Asda Foundation (Donation) – We successfully bid for a grant from the Asda Foundation and received £400.00 towards our children's Christmas Party.

Carol Concert –For the third consecutive year, the *Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association*, in collaboration with Masonic Lodges across Sussex, hosted a Christmas Carol Concert at St Saviour's Church in Eastbourne. The event was held in support of ESFCA and WOLO (We Only Live Once), a local charity supporting families affected by cancer.

We are pleased to report that the concert raised a total of £610 in support of our work — £250 generously donated by the *Widows Sons Masonic Bikers*, with a further £360 raised through a collection held during the service. We are extremely grateful for their continued partnership and commitment to supporting our foster families and children.

Annual Christmas Party – ESFCA hosted its annual Christmas Party for children in care and their foster families, providing a joyful and inclusive afternoon of celebration. The event featured a disco, party games, and a visit from Father Christmas, creating a festive and memorable experience for all who attended.

We were especially grateful to the Eastbourne & Lewes Soroptimists, who generously donated their time and provided gifts for the children to give to their carers — a gesture that added a meaningful and personal touch to the day.

The event was funded through a combination of ESFCA resources and a contribution from the Asda Foundation, with The Kings Centre kindly donating the venue. We extend our sincere thanks to all partners and volunteers who helped make the celebration possible.

Toddler Support Group – See Toddler Support Group May

Wellbeing Event – Festive Wreath-Making Workshop - as part of our ongoing commitment to carer wellbeing, ESFCA partnered with ESCC Foster Care Training to deliver a festive wreath-making workshop in the lead-up to the holiday season. This wellbeing event provided foster carers with a much-needed opportunity to relax, socialise, and take part in a creative and restorative activity in a supportive environment.

Led by Anthologie Floristry, the session guided participants through the process of crafting their own festive wreaths. Carers enjoyed a warm and welcoming atmosphere, with light refreshments and the chance to connect with peers.

The event was jointly funded by ESFCA and ESCC Foster Care Training, with carers contributing a nominal £10 donation to support participation.

Through Care Service – Christmas Party Support- We were pleased to support the Christmas party organised for the children of young adults receiving assistance from the Through Care Service. As part of our contribution, ESFCA provided over 40 Christmas presents and coordinated a special visit from Father Christmas, helping to create a festive and memorable experience for the families involved.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) - Our Annual General Meeting was held on Monday, 9th December, marking the conclusion of the 2023–2024 reporting year. The meeting was chaired by Susanne Beesley, who reflected on the year's achievements and key developments. Treasurer Kim Phillips presented the financial report, providing a detailed overview of the organisation's financial position and performance over the period.

Following the formal proceedings, trustees and guests had the opportunity to enjoy light refreshments and informal networking, fostering valuable connections and discussions as we look ahead to the coming year.

Ashdown Day School – Father Christmas Visit - As part of our seasonal outreach, ESFCA was pleased to support the Christmas celebrations at *Ashdown Day School*. At the school's request, we arranged a visit from Father Christmas, who spent time with the children, shared festive cheer, and delivered early Christmas presents. In return we received a donation of £240.

Bright Foundation – Community partners "The Bright Foundation" offered our families tickets to the school holiday performances of "The Snowman" by the enchanted cinema. This performance teaches and encourages the children to create sound effects to the story, after the performance our families then had the opportunity

Printers Playhouse - We were pleased to continue our partnership with *Printers Playhouse*, who generously offered discounted tickets to ESFCA families for their amateur production of *Treasure Island*. This initiative provided foster families with an accessible and enjoyable cultural outing during the festive season.

January 2025

Pantomime – *Snow White* - The first event of 2024 was our annual trip to the pantomime at Devonshire Park Theatre in Eastbourne — a much-anticipated highlight in the ESFCA calendar. This year, over 40 foster families attended the Saturday morning performance of *Snow White*, enjoying a fun and festive start to the year. As in previous years, ESFCA subsidised the cost of tickets to ensure the event remained accessible to all families within our network.

Haven Players – Pantomime – Community partners "Haven Players" offered our families free tickets to their amateur production of "Dick Whittington and his Cat". As mentioned before, this initiative provided our foster families an accessible and enjoyable cultural outing during the festive season.

February

Toddler Support Group – See Toddler Support Group May

Inspire – Performing Arts Project - Thanks to the funding from George Stone LTD we were able to offer a second Inspire Project for the Year – See Inspire April.

Bright Foundation – Community partners- "The Bright Foundation" offered our families tickets to the school holiday performances of Anansi & the Lost Sun performed by Swallow Wings puppetry.

BBC Radio Sussex – Interview – Our Patron Dame Jacqueline Wilson acting in her guest editor role interviewed ESFCA Chair Susanne Beesley on the Sarah Gorell show. The pair discussed how they first met and mentioned the charities' role at the upcoming Bluebell Walk event, the discussion then moved onto what it means to be a foster carer, and the issues foster cares face on a daily basis and the need for more foster carers across the country.

March

Strategic Planning – Throughout March, ESFCA continued its programme of Future Thinking discussions and strategic planning sessions, bringing together trustees, staff, and key stakeholders to shape the long-term direction of the charity. These meetings focused on identifying emerging needs, evaluating our current service model, and exploring sustainable pathways for growth.

The primary objective of this work is to develop and present a comprehensive business plan that will secure the future of the organisation, ensure financial resilience, and enhance the impact of our services for foster families and children in care. This forward-looking approach reflects our commitment to strong governance, long-term sustainability, and continued support for the fostering community.

Treasurer's Review

The financial year 2024/25 has overseen considerable change in all areas of the charity`s activity. This is by no means accidental. Following on the previous year`s decision by the Trustees to involve the organisation in a root and branch review of the charity`s work, operation and activity in a process called "Future`s Thinking".

The review has resulted in the re-calibration of the core values and value statement of ESFCA, a refocussing of the activities of the charity, a reappraisal of our partnerships and joint ventures and following a reappraisal of the changing environment in which the charity operates, a reassessment of the needs of our membership, their families and those in their care.

Central to this review has been the focus given to financial arrangements. In respect of income streams, expenditure and the administrative processes and controls central to running the charity`s accounts and their visibility and accountability to trustees and members, important changes have been wrought.

Up to the end of the financial year the accounts have operated on a manually entered double entry system maintained on a spreadsheet available on Google Documents. A comprehensive monthly statement of accounts has been delivered to Trustees showing monthly bank balances, expenditure and income for the month and indicating available spending funds and those that designated to specific programmes and activities.

In the coming financial year, we will be switching to Xero online accountancy with monthly statements being added to by a data dashboard continually available to Trustees online. In addition, a budgetary control system has been designed to facilitate the accurate spending of reserved funds, dedicated funds and general expenditure on events and activities. All these developments are a result of the deliberations undertaken by Trustees in the Future`s Thinking exercise which is copiously documented and available for scrutiny.

Three objectives are being met by these improvements:

a) More accurate reporting for meetings and the fulfilment of continually up to date information to ensure Trustees meet their responsibilities on being able to show an up to date and functional understanding of the charity`s condition.
b) To provide accurate and accessible data for financial stream enhancing bids in a world where applying for charitable support is far more competitive and demanding of clear, accurate and purposeful applications.
c) In line with broader reforms that are the result of the "Future`s Thinking" process, the financial process discussed and set in motion will be accompanied by short- and medium-term objectives and a regular series od reviews to monitor the success and progress of reforms.

Reform of this nature is not borne of a need to change because of apparent difficulties but because of the prudent action of the charity to review its functioning from time to time, enables it to keep up to date with developments, expectations and needs of its membership, government reforms, the changing environment and the absolute imperative that the charity operate effectively for those it serves in a rapidly changing world.

During the 2024/5 financial year we have continued to enjoy the support of East Sussex County Council in supporting financially, operational and staffing costs, membership fees and advocacy costs and that support continues to be valued as is the broader partnership of shared objectives. While large project financial support is always appreciated, a special mention should be given to all those who support the charity through volunteering, undertaking fundraising challenges and those who have made valuable personal contributions. The bluebell wood project not only provided excellent funding through the hard work of volunteers, friends of the charity and trustees but also provided us with the platform to attract further support from the general public. Matching funding between the ESFCA and individual donors has also served to fund individual achievement awards to young people and compassionate support for individuals in need.

A most industrious, positive and beneficial year building on the present for the future.

Kim Phillips - Treasurer of East Sussex Foster Care Association

Chairperson's Review

I am pleased to present the financial report for 2024–2025, a year marked by meaningful progress and unwavering commitment to our mission. At the same time, increased pressures across the entire Third Sector have been deeply felt, with a significant rise in demand for services—not only from our foster community but throughout the wider charitable sector. This growing need highlights the many challenges individuals and organisations continue to face.

As we reflect on the past year and look ahead to the years to come, I want to express my deepest gratitude to our foster parents and their families, our esteemed patrons Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE FRSL and Jayne Torvill OBE, the friends of ESFCA, and our community partners for their unwavering support of East Sussex Foster Care Association. Their commitment has been instrumental in helping us deliver vital services, raise awareness, and create meaningful opportunities for the children and families we serve. It is a true privilege to work alongside such compassionate, dedicated, and inspiring individuals and organisations.

I also want to thank our amazing group of trustees, and to their partners and families, whose support is vital to their role. Kim Phillips (Treasurer), who not only ensures we remain on a strong financial footing, but who has also helped lead us through our "Futures Thinking" project. Ann Holder MBE (founder trustee), Sandra Maylam, Ru Petraitis- Williams BEM- Ru was awarded the British Empire Medal in 2024, Anja Leeves, Christine Phillips, Veronica Archer and Emily Wells. Despite their own busy lives, they continue to step up and ensure the association runs smoothly, staying true to our mission of building brighter futures for children in care, their foster parents, and their families. We especially acknowledge the invaluable role played by their own children, whose understanding and encouragement enable our trustees to give so much of themselves to ESFCA.

Thanks to prudent management of our resources and the steadfast support of our donors, community partners, and members, we have been able to meet this rising demand while maintaining financial stability. Whether through financial contributions, time, or expertise, your support has been invaluable in helping us continue our work during these challenging times.

The review process we began in 2023 has remained central throughout this year, with the goal of publishing our "Futures Thinking" business plan by the end of 2025. Through planning sessions and trustee meetings, we have reflected not only on who we are as an association but also on who we aspire to become.

The growing demands on the charity and community support sector are driving us to adapt—reconsidering how we work, how we deliver impact, and how we build resilience in an uncertain future. This ongoing reflection will be vital to continuing to serve our communities effectively in the years ahead.

Currently, we are working hard to secure a dedicated, flexible workspace accessible to our foster families—a goal we have pursued for several years. This space will expand our reach and enhance the projects, activities, and support we offer.

To meet the increasing needs of foster carers and children across East Sussex, we are actively seeking funding to bring this vision to life—a venue that will serve both as an administrative hub for our team and a welcoming community centre for foster families. Most importantly, it will provide a safe, inclusive environment where children and carers can openly share their experiences and needs. Securing a permanent, flexible space will enable ESFCA to grow sustainably, increase our visibility, and offer a trusted, emotionally safe place for the fostering community to connect, share, and find support—a home that truly reflects the heart of our mission and strengthens the foundation for all we do.

Looking ahead to the next financial year, our focus will be on implementing our "Futures Thinking" plan—expanding our reach, strengthening community engagement, and securing a dedicated flexible workspace. These goals will help us meet the growing needs of our fostering community and create lasting impact. With your continued support, I am confident we can turn these ambitions into reality.

It remains a privilege to work alongside such compassionate, dedicated, and inspiring individuals and organisations, all united by the belief that together we can make a real and lasting difference.

Susanne Beesley - Chair of East Sussex Foster Care Association

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Independent examiner's report to the trustees on the unaudited financial statements of East Sussex Foster Care Association.

I report on the accounts of East Sussex Foster Care Association for the year ended 31 March 2025 set out on pages 2 to 19.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and independent examiner
The charity's trustees (who are also the directors of the company for purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), and that an independent examination is needed. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's statement
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
   - to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Peter D Hill FCA P D Hill
On Behalf Of
Dominic Hill Associates Limited
Archer House
Britland Estate
Northbourne Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN22 8PW 21 Oct 25

East Sussex Foster Care Association
Statement of financial activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account)
For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Incoming Resources					
Donations		621	-	621	4,512
Core funding		26,000	-	26,000	20,000
Advocacy support		-	4,631	4,631	4,968
Apprentice scheme grant		-	-	-	-
Membership		-	1,130	1,130	1,155
Fundraising		4,810	-	4,810	8,118
Christmas events		719	-	719	738
Keep it reel		-	-	-	-
Jamies farm		-	-	-	-
PGL		-	-	-	-
Theatre visits & pantomime		1,916	-	1,916	1,676
Event contributions		2,439	-	2,439	589
Interest		601	-	601	482
Total incoming resources		**37,106**	**5,761**	**42,867**	**42,238**
Resources expended					
Insurance		620	-	620	612
General running expenses		8,417	-	8,417	8,734
Pantomime		3,722	-	3,722	3,108
PGL		-	-	-	7,946
Through care team		-	-	-	2,280
Keep it reel		-	-	-	134
Jamies farm		-	-	-	-
Events and projects		7,006	-	7,006	2,064
Fundraising		748	-	748	454
Intuitive Horse		-	-	-	-
Advocacy support		-	495	495	5,318
Salaries & pensions		19,643	-	19,643	18,872
Christmas events		890	-	890	1,019
Accountancy fees		1,992	-	1,992	1,990
Total outgoing resources		**43,039**	**495**	**43,533**	**52,531**
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/ Net income/(expenditure) for the year		(5,932)	5,266	(666)	(10,293)
Transfers		-	-	-	-
Total funds brought forward		74,957	6,556	81,513	91,807
Total resources		69,025	11,822	80,847	81,513

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Balance sheet
As at 31 March 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2025 £	2024 £	2024 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets			-		-
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		83,008		83,503	
Debtors & prepayments	**2**	-		-	
		83,008		83,503	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**3**	(2,161)		(1,990)	
			80,847		81,513
Net Assets			80,847		81,513
Funds					
Unrestricted funds	**4**		69,025		74,957
Restricted funds	**5**		11,822		6,556
Total Funds	**6**		80,847		81,513

Balance sheet (continued)

Directors statements required by the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2025

In approving these financial statements as trustees of the company we hereby confirm:

(a) that for the year stated above the company was entitled to the exemption conferred by section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 ;

(b) that no notice has been deposited at the registered office of the company pursuant to section 476 of the Companies Act 2006 requesting that an audit be conducted for the year ended 31 March 2025.

(c) that we acknowledge our responsibilities for:

(1) ensuring that the company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006, and

(2) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the provisions of the Companies Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 1A 'Small Entities' of Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The financial statements were approved by the board on 20-10-25 and signed on its behalf by:

Mrs S Beesley
Director and chair of trustees

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Notes to financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year and the preceding year.

1.1. Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 1A 'Small Entities' of Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

1.2. Going concern

The trustees are of the view that the charity is a going concern and will continue for the foreseeable future.

1.3. Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Voluntary income is received by way of donations and gifts and is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included.

Grants and incoming resources from charitable activities are recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are receivable.

Income from investments is included in the year in which it is receivable.

1.3. Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT, which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

1.4. Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Expenditure on individual items of office and computer equipment costing less than £5,000 is written off in the period in which the expenditure incurred.

1.5. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity.
Restricted funds are specifically for particular areas and projects undertaken by the charity.

1.6. Average number of employees

The average number of employees during the year was 1. There are also a number of volunteer support workers.

Notes to financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

2. Debtors and Prepayments

	2025 £	2024 £
PAYE debtor	-	-
	-	-

3. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Accountancy	1,692	1,632
Pension	119	98
PAYE creditor	341	152
Other creditor	9	108
	2,161	1,990

4. Unrestricted funds

	Balance at 01-Apr-24 £	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Balance at 31-Mar-25
General fund	74,957	11,106	12,366	(4,673)	69,025
Designated fund	-	26,000	30,673	4,673	-
	74,957	37,106	43,039	-	69,025

5. Restricted funds

	Balance at 01-Apr-24 £	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Balance at 31-Mar-25
Advocacy support	5,088	4,631	495	-	9,224
Keep it Reel	313	-	-	-	313
Membership	1,155	1,130	-	-	2,285
	6,556	5,761	495	-	11,822

6. Analysis of net assets by fund

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Current assets	71,185	11,822	83,007	83,503
Current liabilities	(2,161)	-	(2,161)	(1,990)
	69,025	11,822	80,847	81,513

7. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions other than expenditure reimbursement made to trustees. These payments were supported by documentary evidence such as receipts, and approved for payment by a third party.

EAST SUSSEX FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1092668

Accounts

Charity number: 1092668
Company number: 04216137

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Directors' report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

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Charity number	1092668
Company registration number	4216137
Registered office	Sorrel Drive Resource Centre 29-41 Sorrel Drive Eastbourne BN23 8BH
Independent Examiner	Dominic Hill Associates Limited Archer House Britland Estate Northbourne Road Eastbourne East Sussex BN22 8PW

The directors present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Structure, governance and management

The charity is an incorporated association governed by its memorandum and articles of association, together with its constitution.

The following persons served as directors/trustees during the year;

Mrs. S Beesley BA (hons) – Chair
Mr. MK Phillips -Treasurer
Mrs. AH D Holder MBE
Mrs. A Leeves
Mrs. S Maylam
Mrs. R Petraitis-Williams BEM
Mrs. C Phillips
Mrs. V Archer
Mrs. E Wells
Mrs. S Turner - (Retired Jan 2024)

Trustees are appointed at the AGM with there being a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve. At the AGM one third of the trustees must stand down, often the longest serving trustees stand down first, but may choose to stand for re-election. All trustees must be members of East Sussex Foster Care Association and members can nominate themselves for election.

Objectives of the charity

The East Sussex Foster Care Association, as outlined in its Memorandum of Association, aims to promote charitable purposes for the community's benefit, primarily within East Sussex. Its key objectives include advancing public education on matters related to substitute care, providing education, training, and support for foster carers and their families, and offering relief to Looked After Children and their carers by providing facilities and services to enhance their well-being.

The Association supports East Sussex Foster Carers and their families in achieving the best outcomes for the children in their care by collaborating with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies. It fulfils this mission by offering various events, advocacy, training, and support for both the families and the children. Membership consists of Foster Carers registered with the East Sussex Local Authority, and the managing group comprises elected Trustees/Directors from within this membership.

Groups we support

Along with looked after children, foster parents and foster families ESFCA is proud to support various groups of young people within the care system across East Sussex including (but not exhaustive).

Young People Who Foster (YPWF) - These include the biological and adopted children of foster families, who share their homes and parents with fostered children. They make numerous sacrifices to support these children and do so with minimal complaints. This group provides them with a voice and an opportunity to share their experiences in a safe environment.

Children in Care Council - The Children in Care Council (CiCC) is a dedicated group of Looked After Children (LAC) from across East Sussex, serving as their collective voice and advocate throughout the county. They represent the interests of these children at significant events, such as the Children and Young Peoples Trust (CYPT) conference, where they engage with organisations supporting youth in East Sussex.

Through Care Service - The Through Care Service (TCS) at East Sussex County Council (ESCC) plays a pivotal role in supporting individuals transitioning from the care system into independent adulthood. Social workers and specialists provide comprehensive support plans for young people aged 16-25. The TCS's responsibilities include creating tailored care plans, offering emotional and practical support, facilitating access to education, employment, and housing resources, and ensuring the well-being and safety of these young adults.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children - The TCS also incorporates the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) team, which provides specialized care and legal support for vulnerable minors seeking asylum, ensuring their welfare and legal rights are upheld.

Advocacy - Our Trustees are actively involved with other organizations in networking, debating, promoting, and raising the profile of Foster Carers in East Sussex. We lobby government departments and attend meetings and debates to advocate for our members and our Looked After Children (LAC).

Independent allegation advice & Support - We continue to receive annual funding from East Sussex County Council (ESCC), which is held in a restricted fund. This Allegations Fund is used to provide independent support for any of our member foster parents who may be subject to allegations or concerns regarding standards of care. These investigations can be complex and lengthy, often leaving foster families feeling isolated due to the confidentiality required. In conjunction with ESCC fostering services, we have created and supply a specialist Allegation pack that breaks down the process into manageable parts, helping ensure the carer does not become overwhelmed and signposts them to areas of help and support.

Monthly Surgeries - ESFCA offers monthly surgeries where foster parents can present difficult or complex issues that require fast-track resolution from senior managers in Children's and Fostering services. A trustee is also available to attend these meetings, supporting the foster carer in presenting their problem. This approach helps all parties find a way forward or address complaints in a face-to-face and professional manner.

Lobbying - Our trustees and members are actively engaged with other organisations where they network, debate, and promote the profile of foster carers both in East Sussex and nationally. We lobby central and local government departments, attend meetings and debates to advocate for our members, their families, and our Looked After Children (LAC). ESFCA maintains regular contact with East Sussex County Council (ESCC), ESCC Children's Services, and Fostering Services, reporting annually on behalf of fostering families to the ESCC Corporate Parenting Committee.

Our trustees also attend regular meetings with the Fostering Network charity and often participate in their campaigns and research initiatives.

Projects

The following projects run throughout the year and are accessible to foster parents and LAC social worker teams.

Make it Reel Project - East Sussex Foster Care Association has a special pot of money in a restricted fund available to support LAC. The money has been donated from The Reel Poster Company and they would like the money to go directly to benefit LAC where a small amount of money could make a real difference. During 2023 we provided a new racing BMX helmet to one of our looked after children who is an upcoming racer (and talks of a future Olympic rider), Our Patron Dame Jacqueline Wilson joined us to present the Helmet and enjoy a sometime chatting to the family.

Suitcase Initiative – Dignity and self-esteem are fundamental for a looked after child's self-perception. Unfortunately, this can be shattered when they are forced to leave their home with only a bin bag, which strips them of their possessions, and self-worth. Black bags are for rubbish, not children's personal items. ESFCA proudly spearheads an initiative providing suitcases to carers, social workers and assessment teams. Over 200 cases have been distributed, preserving pride for children entering the care system and offering dignity to care leavers (16-25) embarking on their independent journey.

Gift Bag Project – Each year, our friends at the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) donate backpacks filled with essential gifts to children entering the care system. These thoughtful contributions come from DWP staff, their families, and friends across the country. The backpacks are packed with a variety of items, including toiletries, stationery, books, clothes, toys, and a cuddly companion. These items provide comfort and a sense of ownership during a challenging time in a child's life.

Foster carers, social workers, and family support teams have access to crates of these backpacks, which cater to various ages and genders. Our ESFCA trustees also maintain small collections of backpacks for emergency placements, ensuring every child's unique needs are met.

Carer Welfare and contingency fund – This fund has been set up to help support foster parents during challenging times (i.e. a placement that is breaking down, or a long-term placement moving on). It may be a bunch of flowers, or being taken out for a coffee, cake and a chat. This fund allows us to offer some support at a moment when it is most needed.

Achievements 2023-2024

Easter Egg Donation – April 2023

During the Easter holidays, one of our community partners, Mark Hopgood, dressed as the Easter Bunny and delivered over 30 Easter eggs for us to distribute to the young adults under the care of the Through Care Team.

Bluebell Walk – 11th & 12th April 2023

With the arrival of spring, ESFCA returned to the Arlington Bluebell Walk, completing two duty days running the refreshments in the Bluebell Barn and marshalling the walk itself. Volunteers donated home-baked goods and attended the event to support the association. After costs, the two days raised over £1543.48, including visitor donations and a donation from ticket sales.

Wellbeing – Carers Painting Session – 2nd May 2023

In a joint project between ESFCA and ESCC foster carer training department, we held our first wellbeing day. This project was designed to help foster carers take a few hours' respite and enjoy some time for themselves. In a safe environment where they could chat openly with other foster parents, enjoy a creative activity, and have some light refreshments, the carers were able to relax, recharge, and reflect. This event featured a painting session led by Maureen Wells, a friend of ESFCA, and was held at the Bright Foundation's Theatre and Museum of Toys in Hastings. All costs for this project were shared equally between ESFCA and ESCC.

Bluebell Walk – 8th May 2023

In addition to our duty days in April, we were invited to participate on the extra Bank Holiday created by the King's Coronation. The warm and dry weather brought over 1400 visitors. Once again, our volunteers supported us on the day by baking scones, cakes, and homemade soup. Some volunteers joined as part of King Charles's "Big Help Out" initiative. After costs, we raised £3649.27, including donations and a share of gate sales.

Climbing Mount Snowdon – 28th May 2023

Over the May bank holiday weekend, while many people relaxed and enjoyed the good weather, one of our foster families put on their walking boots and climbed Mount Snowdon, the highest peak in Wales. They raised over £1000 for ESFCA, which will go towards the Carer Welfare and Contingency Fund.

Bright Foundation – Family Festival – 17th & 18th June 2023

Our community partners, The Bright Foundation, held a family festival on the 17th and 18th of June. The weekend featured music, drama, crafting, and outdoor activities for families. They kindly donated a limited number of free family tickets for our members.

Art Session – 24th June 2023

Throughout the year, we offered art sessions run by Maureen Wells, an art teaching consultant and friend of ESFCA. These classes provided children of all ages the chance to spend a couple of hours painting and drawing under Maureen's guidance and support, while giving carers a well-deserved respite. ESFCA funded the art supplies and subsidised the venue hire. Maureen donated her time for free, along with a volunteer trustee or staff member. These lessons were intended to be held once a month, subject to Maureen's and the venue's availability, with class sizes typically ranging from 4 to 11 children.

Toddler Support Group – 29th June 2023

We aimed to hold our Baby & Toddler group at least four times a year (ideally quarterly). Foster carers with LAC under the age of 5 met in a safe and secure environment. The support group was organized and run by trustees, with the entrance fee and first drink (tea, coffee, etc.) paid for by ESFCA.

Family First Nights – July-August 2023

Each summer, ESFCA members had the opportunity to participate in "Family First Nights" and enjoy a trip to a London theatre. Organized by Go Live Theatre Projects, a charity dedicated to making theatre accessible and affordable for families and young people, Family First Nights is an annual summer program that offers families from diverse backgrounds the chance to see live theatre shows for just £8.00 per ticket. ESFCA acted as the referring organization, handling all bookings and payments. The event was subsidized by Go Live Theatre Projects, with a contribution from the attending carers.

Theatre Trip – Dragons & Mythical Beasts – 18th July 2023

We offered a limited number of subsidised tickets to our foster families for an end-of-term performance of Dragons & Mythical Beasts at the Congress Theatre in Eastbourne. Carers paid half price for the tickets, and ESFCA covered the remaining amount. Over ten families participated, with more than 25 children attending.

PGL Day Camps – 7th August 2023

Thanks to funding from Children in Need (the final year of a three-year grant), we were able to run five-day camps at the East Sussex PGL Activity Centre in Windmill Hill. Groups of children, supported by volunteers and social workers, enjoyed activities such as zip lining, aero ball, giant swing, and archery, along with impromptu games of Frisbee golf, basketball, and football. The funding allowed us to run five days over four weeks, with over 80 children attending in August.

Donation from HMD Seal-Less Pumps – August 2023

We were delighted to receive a donation of £900 from local East Sussex company HMD Seal-Less Pumps. One of our foster parents recommended us, and the company reached out with this generous donation as part of their community support efforts.

ESFCA – Get Together – 15th August 2023

We held a summer "Get Together" at Alexander Park in Hastings, inviting our foster families for fun and games. We provided ice creams, teas, coffees, and other soft drinks, allowing the children to play and the carers to chat.

Bright Foundation – Dance & Design Summer Performance Project – 21st August 2023

Our friends at the Bright Foundation (Hastings) held a week-long workshop with a team of amazing artists, developing skills in dance, performance, art, and design. Places were open for children aged 8-11, and the Bright Foundation generously offered three places free of charge to our members, equivalent to £375.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)– 20th September 2023

ESFCA supported the UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children) with a trip to London. Thirty young adults and UASC team members visited key tourist areas, traveling by river taxi and underground. This trip was a great opportunity for these children to build friendships, have fun, and create a connection with the country they chose to settle in.

Seafront Soapbox Race – 24th September 2023

ESFCA participated in the 3rd Eastbourne Soapbox Race. Volunteers helped marshal the course, keeping roads closed near the finish line and ensuring safe routes for emergency vehicles. This event is a fundraising activity, and the Eastbourne Borough Council Events Team made a donation in gratitude for our support.

Beachy Head 10k & Ultramarathon – 21st October 2023

Eastbourne Borough Council's "Visit Eastbourne" team invited us once again to marshal the Beachy Head 10K & Ultra Marathon in October, and a dedicated team of our volunteers braved the unpredictable weather to take on the challenge. Our volunteers cheered on the runners, kept everyone safe, and ensured they stayed on course to reach the finish line. In return, ESFCA received a donation to support future projects, helping us continue to make a positive impact in our community.

Bright Foundation – Puppet Performance & Workshop – 26th October 2023

The Bright Foundation held puppet shows followed by puppet workshops during the October Half Term. Children watched and participated in a performance by the Longnose Puppet Theatre, followed by a workshop where they created and learned how to perform with their puppets. The Bright Foundation once again donated a limited number of places for our members.

Annual General Meeting – 13th November 2023

We held our Annual General Meeting on Monday, 13th November, where we celebrated the year 2022-23. Susanne Beesley (Chair – ESFCA) and Michael Kim Phillips (Treasurer) spoke, giving an overview of ESFCA and fostering in general. Attendees included trustees, member foster parents, social workers, fostering service management, ESCC Councillors, and our Patron Dame Jacqueline Wilson.

More Radio – Toy Appeal - December 2023

Every Christmas, More Radio collects toys and gifts for underprivileged children living in Sussex. ESFCA is honoured to be among the charities and organizations that More Radio supports, helping to ensure these toys reach the neediest children. The donated toys and gifts were used at our children's Christmas party, distributed to children coming into care during December and January, and given to the children of young adults under the care of the Through Care Team. A small number were also kept for children coming into care throughout the year.

Asda Foundation – Donation – December 2023

We successfully bid for a grant from the Asda Foundation and received £400 towards our Children's Christmas Party.

Christmas Party – 3rd December 2023

Sunday, the 3rd of December, was party time once again for our children and foster parents. The afternoon featured a disco, party games, and a visit from Father Christmas, who delivered an early present for each child attending. Members of the Eastbourne & Lewes Soroptimist's kindly donated their time and gifts for the children to give their carers at Christmas. The party was funded by ESFCA, including a £400 donation from the Asda Foundation, covering costs for food and entertainment. The venue was donated by the Kings Centre, and we are truly thankful for their continued support.

Carol Concert – 4th December 2023

For the second year, our friends, the Widows & Sons Masonic Bikers Association, joined Masonic lodges across Sussex to hold a Christmas Carol Service at St Saviours Church in Eastbourne. The concert was held in aid of ESFCA and WOLO (We Only Live Once – a local charity). We received a donation of £300.

Ashdown Day School – Father Christmas Appearance – 6th December 2023

Through our friend Mark Hopgood, we provided a father Christmas appearance for the Ashdown Day Nursery festive party, receiving a donation of £120 for helping the nursery and ensuring the young children could meet Santa Claus.

Pantomime – Beauty & the Beast – 6th January 2024

Our first event of 2024 was the annual trip to the pantomime, this year featuring Beauty & the Beast. This festive trip to the Devonshire Park Theatre is always a highlight of our calendar, with over 40 foster families joining us for the Saturday morning performance. Each year, ESFCA subsidises the tickets, allowing carers to pay half price to attend.

Hall & Woodhouse – Community Chest Donation – 12th January 2024

During the summer of 2023, we placed a bid with the Hall & Woodhouse Community Chest Fund, a local Sussex-based brewery, to start the "My Things Matter" project. This initiative aims to provide storage boxes, suitcases, and gift bags to children coming into care, enabling them to move their belongings with dignity. We were successful and received £2500.

PGL Reunion – Jump Party – 14th January 2024

Due to an underspend on our PGL day camps during August, our community partners, Children in Need, agreed to create three reunion events, bringing the children who attended back together for a few hours of fun. The events were held at Urban Jump Trampoline Park in Heathfield, where the children enjoyed two hours of trampolining fun and a lunch.

Crazy Fun Sensory Music & Fun – 17th February 2024

This was our first event exclusively for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The aim was to offer a range of activities that would assist them in their growth and development of social skills in a safe and nurturing environment. Future events are planned for 2024-25.

Easter Eggs – Through Care Team – 25th March 2024

We ended the year as we started it, by supplying over 50 Easter eggs for the young adults under the care of the Through Care Team. These eggs were given to the young adults living in supported lodgings or on their own, funded by ESFCA.

Financial review

This charity, like many charities, is used to the need for change in order to navigate the demands of an economy under stress, the cost-of-living crisis, the environment post Covid and environmental problems and human problems of the world, from which the members of this charity and those we serve, are by no means immune. Change, however, is not ad hoc process. The charity can, through careful review and planning, manage its way through the difficulties and come out capable of delivering the vital support and service that it renders, year in and year out.

That careful planning and review began in 2023 and will reach its finalisation in 2024. First it is essential to acknowledge the considerable benefit the Coronation Holiday in May contributed to the income of ESFCA through the opportunity it gave us to operate an addition day managing the restaurant and facilities at the Bluebell Wood at Bates Green Farm in Arlington. This gave us an extra day and greatly increased our income at the start of the year. The contribution by the Bluebell Wood was greatly appreciated as it is every year. However, even an extra day requires change and commitment and our members and volunteers rose to this challenge (as, indeed, they have throughout the year) and the hugely popular event ran like a well-oiled machine.

Change management requires the charity and its trustees and patrons to thoroughly review the core purpose and scope of the charity from time to time and the adaptation of its purpose and scope to suit the needs of the time. This process began with a complete review of our Aims and Values as an organisation and will culminate in the creation of a business plan for the future incorporating a new budgetary approach to all aspects of the financial management of the organisation. So alongside the normal work and meetings of the charity in 2023/4, special meetings were held to look at ESFCA's Future needs, a process entitled "Future's Thinking". It is true to say that during this process, no stone has been left unturned in our desire to clearly identify the future needs of our membership, partners and those we directly serve. We have also looked with interest at alternative storage arrangements and alternatives for office space and the potential for a home of our own.

The adaptability and commitment of the trustees and advisors to tackle this task has matched the same approach and commitment shown this year in fundraising events, activities, celebratory events, outreach and support of all kinds and discussions about foster care in general which has had a national dimension expressed in the local and national media.

Organisations funding our projects have also been prepared to adapt to our changing needs and we continue to benefit from the yearly support of East Sussex County Council for administrative support, advocacy support and membership fees. There continued presence and contribution and monthly trustee meetings allows the thorough exchange of views and this dialogue is an essential element of adapting to a changing world. We have also seen an increase in joint projects with local supporters to facilitate awards and recognition for worthy recipients in the world of foster care.

Within the accounts we continue to show a healthy balance in the business account month in and out, and a strong use of funds to support activities, events and functions. We have maintained around £40 000 in a reserve account to cover contingencies and this has remained un touched.

The 2023 to 2024 has been a year of transition and this will lay a foundation for going forward into the years ahead with confidence in our ability to deliver for the foster care community at large.

Kim Phillips
Treasurer
ESFCA

Chairperson's Review

Dear All,

As we reflect on the past year, I want to express my deepest thanks to our foster parents and their families, our esteemed patrons Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE FRSL & Jayne Torvill OBE, friends of ESFCA and our community partners, for their steadfast support of the East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA). Their dedication continues to make a real difference in the lives of looked after children, and our fostering community across East Sussex.

I particularly want to thank our trustees Kim Phillips (treasurer), Ann Holder MBE (founder trustee), Sandra Maylam, Ru Petraitis-Williams BEM, Anja Leeves, Christine Phillips, Veronica Archer & Emily Wells who despite their own busy lives, continue to step up and ensure the association runs smoothly and continues on its mission of "building brighter futures" for our children in care, their foster parents and families, and the invaluable role their own children play.

This January saw Sam Turner step down as a trustee and I would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to Sam's contributions over the year, and we look forward to seeing her at our future events.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank our community partners for their continued collaboration. Your support throughout the year has been essential in helping us deliver services, raise awareness, and create opportunities for the children and families we serve. It is a privilege to work alongside so many compassionate and driven individuals and organisations.

ESFCA continues to consider the two significant challenges that have yet again this year impacted the foster community: the ongoing shortage of foster parents and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. The foster parent shortage remains a critical issue not just in East Sussex but across the country putting a strain on local authorities and their resources.

Throughout this year, ESFCA has continued to Lobby and advocate on our foster parents behalf to address issues as they arise from this growing crisis, we have also continued to offer advice, and advocacy support along with the offer of a monthly surgery between the foster parent and managers from the local authority, to discuss concerns, ask questions, and receive guidance – often accompanied by a ESFCA trustee if requested. These surgeries have been proven to be a crucial resource for our members, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are addressed.

The cost-of-living crisis has placed immense pressure on the charity sector, significantly impacting both operational costs and funding streams. Rising energy prices, increased demand for services, and inflationary pressures have driven up the cost of running charity programs. The double burden of increased costs and reduced income has forced charities to adapt quickly, often cutting back on projects or exploring alternative funding sources, all while trying to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

In response to these challenges, we are incredible grateful to Kim Phillips (ESFCA Treasurer) for his foresight and leadership. Kim, with the support of the trustees and friends of ESFCA has been instrumental in driving a review process that will help us develop a robust business plan. The plan aims to ensure the long-term sustainability of the ESFCA, safeguarding our ability to support our looked after children, foster parents and their families for years to come.

In closing, I want to again thank each of you for your continued support. Whether you are a trustee, a foster parent, a patron, community partner, or a friend of the association, your contributions – both big and small – are what enable us to continue our vital work. Together, we will navigate these challenges and continue to build brighter futures for our looked after children and the families that support them.

Kind regards,
Susanne Beesley - Chair of ESFCA

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Independent examiner's report to the trustees on the unaudited financial statements of East Sussex Foster Care Association.

I report on the accounts of East Sussex Foster Care Association for the year ended 31 March 2024 set out on pages 2 to 19.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and independent examiner
The charity's trustees (who are also the directors of the company for purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), and that an independent examination is needed. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's statement
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
   - to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Peter D Hill FCA Peter D Hill
On Behalf Of
Dominic Hill Associates Limited
Archer House
Britland Estate
Northbourne Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN22 8PW

East Sussex Foster Care Association
Statement of financial activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Incoming Resources					
Donations		4,512	-	4,512	14,696
Core funding		20,000	-	20,000	20,000
Advocacy support		-	4,968	4,968	1,913
Apprentice scheme grant		-	-	-	6,000
Membership		-	1,155	1,155	-
Fundraising		8,118	-	8,118	3,733
Christmas events		738	-	738	896
Keep it reel		-	-	-	75
Jamies farm		-	-	-	430
PGL		-	-	-	735
Theatre visits & pantomine		1,676	-	1,676	1,490
Event contributions		589	-	589	459
Interest		482	-	482	87
Total incoming resources		**36,115**	**6,123**	**42,238**	**50,514**
Resources expended					
Insurance		612	-	612	579
General running expenses		8,734	-	8,734	4,307
Pantomime		3,108	-	3,108	3,330
PGL		-	7,946	7,946	6,351
Through care team		2,280	-	2,280	2,692
Keep it reel		-	134	134	-
Jamies farm		-	-	-	6,789
Events and projects		2,064	-	2,064	2,118
Fundraising		454	-	454	704
Intuitive Horse		-	-	-	480
Advocacy support		-	5,318	5,318	4,563
Salaries & pensions		18,872	-	18,872	19,816
Christmas events		1,019	-	1,019	1,017
Accountancy fees		1,990	-	1,990	1,905
Total outgoing resources		**39,133**	**13,399**	**52,531**	**54,651**
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/ Net income/(expenditure) for the year		(3,018)	(7,276)	(10,293)	(4,137)
Transfers		5,370	(5,370)	-	-
Total funds brought forward		72,605	19,202	91,807	95,944
Total resources		74,957	6,556	81,514	91,807

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Balance sheet
As at 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets			-		-
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		83,503		93,487	
Debtors & prepayments	2	-		18	
		83,503		93,505	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	3	(1,990)		(1,698)	
			81,513		91,807
Net Assets			81,513		91,807
Funds					
Unrestricted funds	4		74,957		72,605
Restricted funds	5		6,556		19,202
Total Funds	6		81,514		91,807

Balance sheet (continued)

Directors statements required by the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2024

In approving these financial statements as trustees of the company we hereby confirm:

(a) that for the year stated above the company was entitled to the exemption conferred by section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 ;

(b) that no notice has been deposited at the registered office of the company pursuant to section 476 of the Companies Act 2006 requesting that an audit be conducted for the year ended 31 March 2024.

(c) that we acknowledge our responsibilities for:

(1) ensuring that the company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006, and

(2) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the provisions of the Companies Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 1A 'Small Entities' of Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The financial statements were approved by the board on 9/12/2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Mrs S Beesley
Director and chair of trustees

Notes to financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year and the preceding year.

1.1. Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 1A 'Small Entities' of Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

1.2. Going concern

The trustees are of the view that the charity is a going concern and will continue for the foreseeable future.

1.3. Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Voluntary income is received by way of donations and gifts and is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included.

Grants and incoming resources from charitable activities are recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are receivable.

Income from investments is included in the year in which it is receivable.

1.3. Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT, which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

1.4. Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Expenditure on individual items of office and computer equipment costing less than £5,000 is written off in the period in which the expenditure incurred.

1.5. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity.
Restricted funds are specifically for particular areas and projects undertaken by the charity.

1.6. Average number of employees

The average number of employees during the year was 1. There are also a number of volunteer support workers.

2. Debtors and Prepayments

	2024 £	2023 £
PAYE debtor	-	18
	-	18

3. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Accountancy	1,632	1,593
Pension	98	105
PAYE creditor	152	-
Other creditor	108	-
	1,990	1,698

4. Unrestricted funds

	Balance at 01-Apr-23 £	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Balance at 31-Mar-24
General fund	72,605	16,115	8,925	(4,838)	74,957
Designated fund	-	20,000	30,209	10,209	-
	72,605	36,115	39,133	5,370	74,957

5. Restricted funds

	Balance at 01-Apr-23 £	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Balance at 31-Mar-24
Advocacy support	5,438	4,968	5,318	-	5,088
CiN PGL events	1,317	-	7,946	6,630	-
Apprenticeship scheme	12,000	-	-	(12,000)	-
Keep it Reel	447	-	134	-	313
Membership	-	1,155	-	-	1,155
	19,202	6,123	13,399	(5,370)	6,556

6. Analysis of net assets by fund

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 Total £	2032 Total £
Current assets	76,947	6,556	83,503	93,505
Current liabilities	(1,990)	-	(1,990)	(1,698)
	74,957	6,556	81,513	91,807

7. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions other than expenditure reimbursement made to trustees. These payments were supported by documentary evidence such as receipts, and approved for payment by a third party.

EAST SUSSEX FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1092668

Accounts

The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

esfca

East Sussex Foster Care Association
An Independent Charity for Fostering Families in East Sussex

Annual Report
2022-2023

East Sussex Foster Care Association
The Independent Charity Supporting Foster Carers

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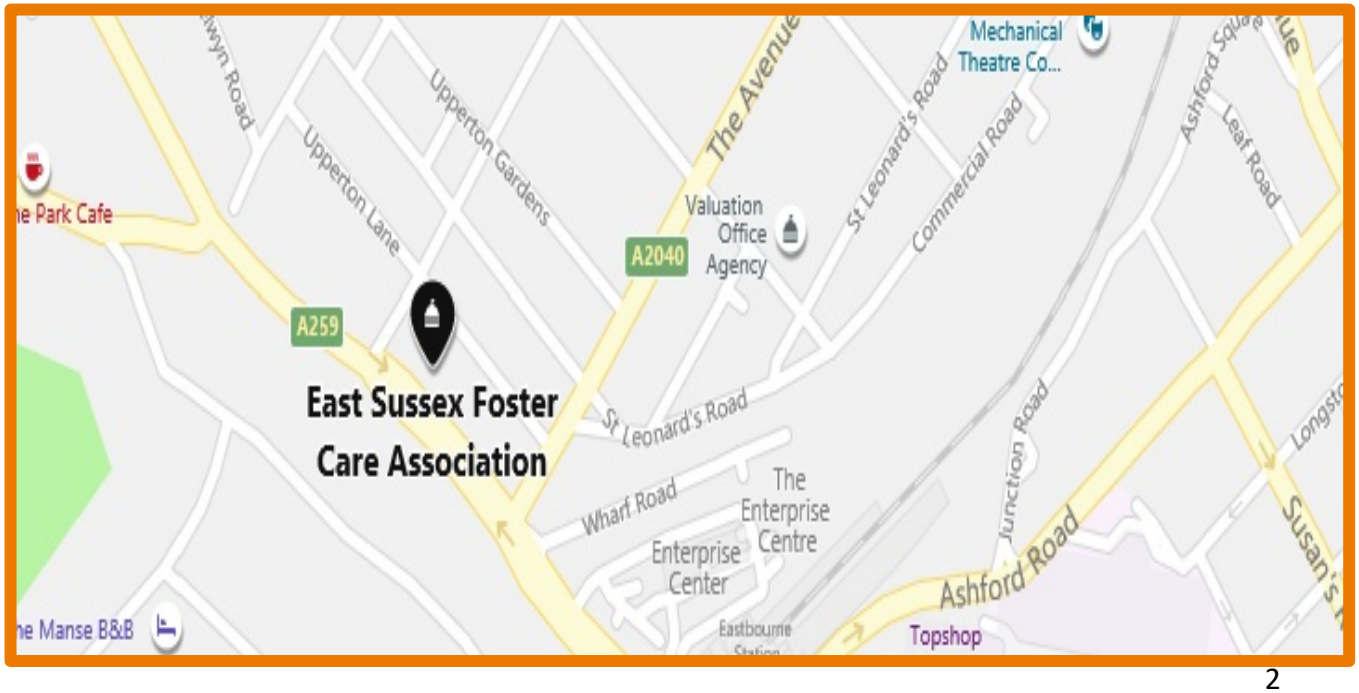

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Aims & Objectives

The East Sussex Foster Care Association, as outlined in its Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association, is committed to advancing various charitable objectives for the betterment of the community, primarily within East Sussex. It seeks to enhance public education on matters related to substitute care. This includes focusing on the education, training, and support of foster carers and their families, as well as alleviating the challenges faced by Looked After Children, their caregivers, and their caregivers' families. The association accomplishes this by providing services and facilities aimed at promoting social welfare and ultimately enhancing the quality of life.

The primary goal of the association is to offer comprehensive support to East Sussex Foster Carers and their families as they strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children in their care. This support is carried out in collaboration with various relevant statutory and voluntary organizations. The association fulfils this mission by organizing a range of events, advocating for foster families, providing training, and offering support to both the families and the children they nurture. Membership in the association is open to East Sussex Local Authority registered Foster Carers.

The association's management group is composed of elected Trustees/Directors, primarily from its membership, although it may also include individuals with backgrounds in children's services who offer invaluable support and expertise to the board.

Welcome to the ESFCA

"Facilitating life changing experiences for fostered children to enable brighter futures for the whole fostering family".

In March 1993, a small group of dedicated foster carers from the Uckfield area began meeting regularly in the back room of a Hailsham retirement home. Their initiative was a response to the pressing needs of children and young individuals under the care of East Sussex County Council (ESCC), and the corresponding challenges faced by foster families.

The East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) has always been driven by the mission to "build brighter futures" for children in care while supporting foster families, recognizing the invaluable role their own children play in this journey. This commitment has been sustained through fundraising efforts, enabling the delivery of a wide range of activities and services.

Over the past 30 years, ESFCA has evolved from a local support group in Uckfield to the substantial organization it is today, serving the entire East Sussex region and over 240 foster families. Despite its independence from ESCC, ESFCA takes pride in the unique and constructive relationship it has established with the fostering service and social workers.

The association hosts monthly surgeries for foster carers, often offering valuable feedback on policies and practices. Social workers actively engage with the community, participating in PGL residential trips with the children and volunteering in various association-run activities throughout the year.

ESFCA places a strong emphasis on training and education, regularly organizing seminars and conferences for foster carers, social workers, and child services across East Sussex. The association's overarching goal is to ignite the imagination of foster carers and volunteers, encouraging children to create their own cherished memories by experiencing fun activities that challenge them and take them out of their comfort zones.

Trustees

Chairperson- Susanne Beesley

I have spent the majority of my working life involved in different roles and capacities as part of the team around the child to Looked After Children. I am social work trained and have learned a lot along the way about supporting the most vulnerable. My roles have crossed over into the Private and Voluntary Sector, as well as the Local Authority.

My husband and I started fostering after the birth of 2 of our sons. During a 32-year fostering journey my own family has grown with a third son and two daughters. We always try to develop strong links the children we have previously cared for to ensure they have the all-important positive support network around them that continues into adulthood. I feel privileged to work with the team at ESFCA alongside ESCC to ensure Looked After Children receive the support they need and deserve.

Treasurer- Michael Kim Phillips

I have a long background in education with specialisms in special education and learning. I have been fortunate to practice these skills in the UK and in the last 15 years, in the Middle East. Since my retirement, I have been delighted to continue working with positive and optimistic foster carers as treasurer of ESFCA. Being able to volunteer skills and service to the betterment of young people gives purpose and direction to a lifelong passion in education. I share this passion with my wife Christine, who is also a trustee. We have worked together in schools and have set up successful multi activity summer camps for young people.

Ann Holder MBE – Founder Trustee

My family and I have been fostering since 1975 (with a short break when my daughter was born) and we also became adoptive parents. We mainly care for babies which I really enjoy.

I also actively get involved with pre-adoptive work and working with families. I received the MBE for services to fostering in 2007.

Sandra Maylam – Trustee

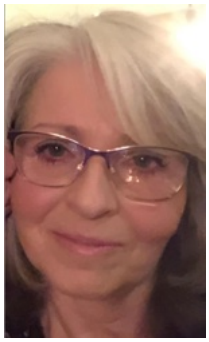
Sandra plays a key role in providing comprehensive support and is a valuable asset to our team. She actively contributes to the Inspire Project, and during her time away, she indulges in a well-deserved break, living the dream exploring the country in comfort in her Motor home.

Ru Petraitis- Williams – Trustee

Ok, my name is Ru, my husband Kevin and our daughter Blue have been fostering for over 15 years. Our life has become so very fulfilled and it's a fantastic journey in so many levels.

We have the privilege to have children coming into our home and share the challenges we face and achievements we conquer. The children who come into care are so resilient teaching us so much in how we can appreciate life in general. We foster children between the ages of 5 to 15 years old and being a foster carer is the most rewarding thing we do.

Trustees



Anja Leeves - Trustee

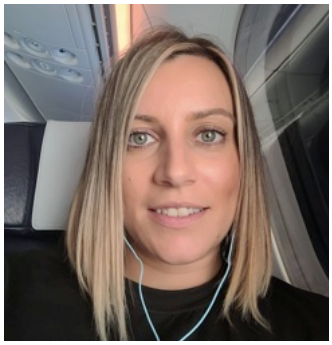
Anja & Nick (Anja's husband) have been offering foster families respite for over 8 years and Anja has also been an active participant in ESFCA. The Baby & toddler meet ups are arranged between Anja & Ann and Anja also leads the way in foster carer wellbeing by running the Relax, Recharge and Reflect.

Christine Phillips – Trustee

During my career as a SEN personal advisor, I became acutely aware of the difficulties faced by looked after children. I was in awe of the foster families love and commitment to these children, many of whom could present significant challenges.

Veronica Archer – Trustee

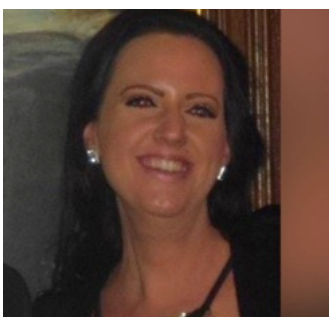
My name is Veronica Archer, and as a child, my parent's fostered. This gave me empathy and insight into how it feels to be a Child that Fosters which now helps me support my own children. Our fostering journey began after our youngest child's birth, leading to the adoption of our former foster son, becoming Special Guardians to his brother, and providing a permanent home for our youngest. My passion originates from a child centred approach regarding SEN, a path which commenced with management type roles, initially in adult social care and finally as acting curriculum leader and course co-ordinator in education. These skills are now vital in my current role, aiding young people in the fostering community. I enjoy working with other foster families committed to making a difference. Every child, regardless of their past, deserves the chance to flourish in a loving home, and it's a privilege to be part of their journey.



Emily Wells – Trustee

Hi, I'm Emily and I have been a foster carer for 3 years. We started off by providing respite and then fell in love. I gave up my job so we could provide short and long-term term care. Having attended some of the activities that the association organised for our young children (which they thoroughly enjoyed), I started volunteering as a way to 'pay it back'. Here I am a year later, a trustee and still volunteering when I can.

Samantha Turner – Trustee



I have been fostering since early 2017, and currently have 4 young people long term with me and my older foster son who is now 20. The love for my role is immeasurable, and I am delighted to see how the children I care for embrace our family life.

It's rewarding just to see how amazing the children flourish and love doing things they haven't had the opportunity to do before. We laugh a lot, and we love a lot.

Goodbye

This year, we bid farewell to three outstanding trustees, Mark Thornborough, Lysette Grosvenor, and Tina Henderson. We express our deepest gratitude for their unwavering dedication and invaluable contributions. Lysette's meticulous financial custodianship, coupled with Mark and Tina's commitment to community engagement through the PGL residential trips, and all three's strategic vision, have profoundly shaped our organisation.

Their leadership has left an enduring mark, motivating us to strive for new heights. While their departure creates a void, we celebrate the legacy they leave behind and wish them boundless success in their future endeavours.

Though we are saying goodbye, we are pleased to say they will remain friends of ESFCA.

Mark Thornborough – Vice Chair

For many years, Mark and his wife, Andrea, have devoted themselves to fostering, demonstrating their steadfast dedication to creating a caring and supportive home. Mark's involvement expanded beyond fostering, playing a crucial role in ESFCA. Collaborating with Tina and a committed team of volunteers, Mark effectively organized PGL trips, significantly contributing to the organization's overall success. Additionally, his active participation in the administrative aspects of ESFCA, where he managed staff and office operations, ensured the smooth functioning of essential functions. Mark's diverse contributions reflected his enthusiasm for making a positive impact both in fostering and the broader administrative framework of ESFCA. Nevertheless, Mark will always be remembered for his playful sense of humour and his renowned Broccoli & Stilton soup (featured at our Bluebell Walk charity duty day).

Lysette Grosvenor – Treasurer

In 2015, Lysette and her husband, Gary, embarked on their journey as foster carers and swiftly integrated themselves into ESFCA, with Lysette assuming the role of a trustee in 2016. As an active member, Lysette played a pivotal role in coordinating various initiatives, including the Bluebell Walk charity duty days, our Inspire project, Jamie's Farm residential programs (including weekend day camps), and numerous fundraising events. Additionally, Lysette took on the responsibility of ESFCA treasurer, excelling in the role by leveraging her prior business experience to manage the association's financial records and bank accounts. Her meticulous stewardship guided the association through the challenging years of 2020 and 2021, (including the Covid lockdowns), ensuring that ESFCA remained robust and well-positioned to support foster families. Lysette and Gary carry on in their fostering journey, providing short-term care, respite cover, and engaging in long-term fostering.

Tina Henderson – Founder Trustee

Tina was a founding member of East Sussex Foster Care Association back in 1983 when it started as a support group for foster carers. Over the last 30 years, Tina has played an instrumental role in the association's growth and success that we see today. Affectionately known as the PGL Queen to hundreds of children and carers who have enjoyed the residential trips to various PGL activity centres across the south of England. Tina was the driving force behind the project along with Mark Thornborough, and together they fundraised, organised, and attended the residentials. Held annually, these trips allow children to experience an array of exciting activities and challenges, creating many happy memories, building their self-esteem, developing social skills, and boosting their confidence. Tina is also known for her continued support for fellow carers, advocating and helping create a support package for those going through the painful experience of an allegation.

Teresa Lavelle- Hill

This year, we bid farewell to Teresa Lavelle-Hill, an extraordinary woman who, alongside Sally Carnie, recognized the needs of children and young people throughout the county and the demands these needs placed on foster families. This remarkable duo played a pivotal role in the establishment of ESFCA in 1993. We are profoundly thankful for how they positively transformed the fostering culture in East Sussex, making foster carers feel appreciated and respected. Teresa served as an exceptional mentor to ESFCA, and her absence will be deeply felt. We express our heartfelt gratitude to Teresa for her years of unwavering dedication and wish her a joyful retirement.

"I wanted to say a big thank you for my bunch of flowers given to me at ESFCA 's AGM. I have worked with foster carers since 1987, and I have always been in awe on how you as carers take children into your home and families and care and parent them with all their challenging presentations of trauma and abuse.

To be honest I think the thank you and respect should go out to all you as foster carers. You are the bedrock of children's lives which without you our children could not learn to grow, develop, and have better futures.

Wishing you all the best to all our foster carers, your families, and your/our children."

Teresa.

Anne Buchan Award
(Spirit of Christmas)

The Anne Buchan Award, also known as the "Spirit of Christmas" award, was established by ESFCA & Anne's family, including her husband Stuart and daughter Penny, in loving memory of Anne. It serves as a heartfelt tribute to honour her enduring dedication and invaluable support to foster families throughout her tenure as a social worker and trustee.

Anne was a genuine advocate for children and young individuals in foster care, consistently recognising and celebrating their crucial role in the fostering community.

The inaugural recipient of the Anne Buchan Award was Kieran Henderson, who began his journey as a foster child at the tender age of 2. Today, he has evolved into a devoted foster carer and supported lodgings provider for ESCC.

Throughout his formative years, Kieran provided a nurturing environment for over 100 young children who became part of his foster family. While the path was not always smooth, he consistently demonstrated empathy and understanding, generously sharing his home, parents, and possessions with numerous young individuals.

As a youth engaged in fostering, Kieran actively participated in various ESFCA residential trips, where he assisted his mother, Tina Henderson (a former trustee), and helped create an inclusive atmosphere for all the children involved. On one memorable occasion, he even bravely ascended an abseiling tower to aid a social worker, guiding them safely back to the ground.

As an adult, Kieran has continued his unwavering support, dedicating much of his annual leave to these residential trips. His infectious sense of humour remains a valuable tool in connecting with the children and fellow volunteers, making a positive impact on their experiences.

Patrons

Jayne Torvill OBE

Olympic gold medal winner Jayne Torvill brings dedication and compassion to her role as a Patron for ESFCA. Beyond her exceptional ice-skating achievements, Jayne's involvement in fostering awareness and support for foster care across East Sussex is truly commendable.

Through her patronage, Jayne not only raises awareness but also inspires others to get involved and make a difference in the lives of children who depend on foster care. Her dedication to ESFCA's mission ensures that foster families receive the recognition and support they deserve and fostering a nurturing environment for children in their care.

In Jayne Torvill, ESFCA has found a dedicated and influential advocate who leverages her fame for a noble cause, offering hope and encouragement to foster children and families across East Sussex.

Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE FRSL

Dame Jacqueline Wilson's role as a patron for the East Sussex Foster Care Association is a testament to her unwavering commitment to the welfare of children and young people. With her esteemed reputation as a beloved author of children's literature, she brings immense credibility and a compassionate heart to the organisation.

Through her patronage, Jacqueline helps ESFCA in our mission to support and empower foster families, ensuring that children in care have the best possible opportunities to thrive. Her advocacy serves as an inspiration, motivating others to get involved and make a difference in the lives of these young individuals.

Jacqueline Wilson's association with ESFCA is a shining example of how influential figures can use their platform to create positive change and provide hope for children in foster care.

Letter From the Chair

Dear All,

I am delighted to present the Chair's Review for the year 2022-23, reflecting on our journey through the year. Once again thanks to our dedicated team of trustees and staff, supported by our Patrons, Jacqueline Wilson, and Jayne Torvill, we have managed to fill the year with events and activities that fulfil our mission of providing a supportive environment for our looked after children (LAC), foster carers and young people who foster (YPWF).

The Core focus of East Sussex Foster Care Association is upon looked after children and the dedicated foster families, who warmly welcome the children into their homes and hearts.

ESFCA continues to look for ways to show Looked After Children that they can recover from past trauma and develop every talent, aptitude, quality, and characteristic needed to reach their potential. ESFCA believes that we can better serve the needs of the children by working with our volunteers and community partners, fostering stronger collaborations.

The financial crises we all face started to bite at the beginning of the financial year, first with the cost of energy and fuel, moving onto the general cost of living and then with the added concern over interest rates. ESFCA started and continues to lobby East Sussex County Council (ESCC) on behalf of the foster carers for support in these testing times. (At the time of writing, ESFCA is waiting for a response from ESCC in relation to the guidance from the central government and foster carer remuneration).

Numbers of children needing foster homes continue to rise and so does the pressure on the fostering families who are often caring for children with complex needs, Unsurprisingly, these children all too often feel a sense of abandonment and carry the burden of low self-esteem which can make fitting in with their more fortunate peer group a struggle. The importance of stability and building consistent and trusted relationships cannot be overstated however, the vital question is, 'How best can we support children to achieve this?'

The answer is by working with others to provide opportunities for young people to make new memories. One example of this is ESFCA bringing siblings together who may have been separated by virtue of the need to be placed in separate placements. Keeping siblings connected is essential to children who have already suffered so much loss.

We also continue to support our foster carers with advice, advocacy, and access to a monthly surgery where they can meet managers from the local authority (with an ESFCA trustee- if requested).

No child should have to face the distressing sight of having their belongings packed into black plastic bags, when being moved either from birth family or to new foster placements. Our suitcase initiative has a stock of luggage available to social workers and assessment teams, helping restore pride to children entering the care system. The cases are available for children moved in an emergency and are available to children moving within the first three months of a new placement.

This year saw several changes on the board of trustees as our Vice Chair Mark Thornborough, treasurer Lysette Grosvenor and founder trustee Tina Henderson stepped down from their roles and from the board of trustees. Mark's presence, drive for PGL, as well as his sense of humour will be missed by the committee. Lysette was an excellent treasurer, and we could always rely on her accuracy as well as readiness to lend a hand wherever needed. Tina will always be known as the Queen of PGL by our children as well as a strong advocate for carers ensuring they were supported through the challenging ordeal of an allegation. However, we are pleased that all three will stay on as friends of ESFCA.

At the Annual General Meeting we had four new trustees join the association, Kim Phillips has adopted the role of treasurer. The transition between Lysette and Kim went very smoothly and there was no disruption for the association. We also welcomed Veronica Archer, Emily Wells and Samantha Turner to the board of trustees, all three are current foster carers and have a great understanding of the issues foster families face as well as the growing cost of living crisis we all face.

In this year we also said goodbye to Teresa Lavell-Hill an incredible lady who together with Sally Carnie recognised the needs of children and young people across the county and the demand these needs placed on fostering families. This fantastic duo encouraged the launch of ESFCA in 1993. We are grateful for the way she and Sally changed the culture of East Sussex Fostering for the better by also helping to make foster carers feel valued and respected. Teresa was an incredible mentor to ESFCA, and she will be sadly missed. We thank Theresa for her years of service and dedication and wish her a happy retirement.

The list of activities and events as detailed in this annual report continues to be supported by a minority of member volunteers. We continue to seek more hands-on volunteers to help with our art classes for example. We are so grateful to Maureen Wells who has provided a therapeutic art class free of charge for the last 2 years. Her classes are highly valued by all who attend and are very inclusive to LAC and CWF as well as other associated young people.

The annual trip to the pantomime, is still one of our all-time favourites after 33 years. A more recent successful community partnership can be seen with John McCutchan in our annual visit to the Arlington Bluebell Walk. John is an ingenious man who runs a hugely successful social enterprise that many charities benefit from. His generosity and cheerful spirit are an inspiration to all, and we are thankful for his continued support in allowing us to not only raise funds, but also to raise awareness of our association and fostering.

Our thanks also go out to More radio and their listeners for their generous donation of toys at Christmas along with Widows & Sons masonic lodge for their annual donation towards our Pantomime. Children in Need continued their support by funding our residential trips to PGL, and this year we took two groups (over 60 children) to the Osmington Bay centre. We worked closely with Jamie's farm and held a residential week for siblings separated by virtue of being in different placements and then again with Jamie's Farm with some experimental weekend day camps allowing small groups of children to take part in woodcraft.

Thanks to Bill Message, a foster carer and member of the Eastbourne Round Table (32) who generously donated £500.00 from a Wine & Whisky Tasting Evening.

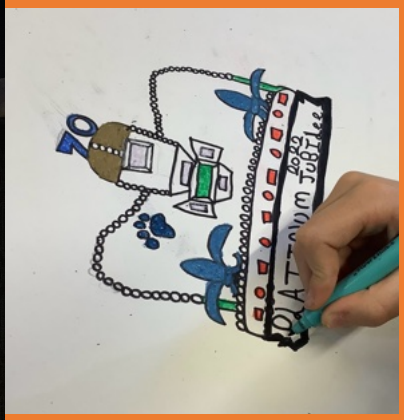
We are forever grateful to all our community partners, donors, and volunteers. Without them stepping up and supporting us not only financially, but with their time, very few of our activities would happen.

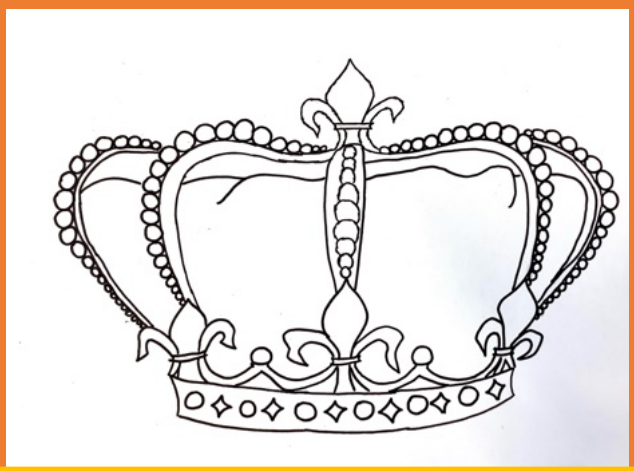
We extend our appreciation to ESCC for their generous grant that assists us with our operational expenses, provides access to a hot desk and office amenities, and offers invaluable support for collaborative projects.

Personally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our trustees, Ann Holder, Tina Henderson, Sandra Maylam, Ru Petraitis – Williams, Anja Leeves, Christine Phillips, Kim Phillips, Veronica Archer, Emily Wells and Samantha Turner. I am very grateful for their continued support; the association is more than the sum of its parts with their dedication to the association. My thanks to the office team Bethany and Nigel who assist the trustees and members with the day-to-day tasks, and to our members who volunteer at the events and activities ensuring we reach the children and families so important to our cause.

It takes a village to raise a child, and every contribution, no matter how small, makes a difference. Each act of kindness is a stepping stone towards a brighter future for the children in our care.

Susanne Beesley – Chair ESFCA





Examples from the art class celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II

Allegation Support

ESFCA recognizes that foster carers facing allegations or undergoing standard of care investigations often experience feelings of isolation, stress, and the need for support.

The role of a foster carer is distinct and demanding. They provide round-the-clock care for some of the most vulnerable and challenging children, making it crucial that they receive adequate support.

Facing a complaint or allegation can be emotionally painful and highly stressful. Complaints can range from minor concerns necessitating informal discussions to more severe complaints requiring formal examination and action, and in the most critical cases, they may fall under Child Protection procedures. Consequently, the outcomes of complaints can range from discussions and advice to concerns, warnings, deregistration, and potential legal prosecution.

To enhance the support system for foster families in such situations, ESFCA and ESCC Fostering Services collaborated on a joint working party. This comprehensive process spanned over two months and yielded an informative allegation document package, which has been distributed to every foster family. This package ensures that they have access to appropriate knowledge, information, guidance, support, and legal advice.

The allegation packs consist of the following components:

- An introductory letter from ESFCA Chairperson Susanne Beesley.
- The Fostering Network guidebook on allegations and legal support.
- A contact sheet featuring a dedicated email address for ESFCA support, a 24/7 contact phone number, and a contact number for free legal support.
- Booklet 1: An easy-to-use guide to the allegation process.
- Booklet 2: A more comprehensive guide to the allegation process.
- A wallet card containing contact phone numbers and an email address.
- A fridge magnet with the contact email address.

These packs have been distributed to all foster families under ESCC Fostering Service, and they are automatically provided to every newly approved foster family.

If you need help or advice, contact us on

01323 747045

advice@esfca.co.uk

Lobbying

Our trustees and members are actively engaged with other organisations to network, debate, and promote the profile of foster carers in East Sussex as well as nationally. We lobby government departments and attend any meetings or debates that enable us to speak up for our members, their families and our Looked After Children (LAC).

ESFCA have regular contact with East Sussex County Council (ESCC), ESCC Child Services and Fostering Services and report on behalf of the fostering families annually to 'the Corporate Parenting Committee" for ESCC.

Trustees also attend regular meetings with the Fostering Network (Charity) and often take part in their campaigns and research.

Advocacy

ESFCA receives funds from East Sussex County Council as an annual grant which is held in a restricted fund (Advocacy Fund). This fund is used to provide independent support as required to assist any of our member foster carers who may be subject to an allegation or concerns around standards of care. These investigations can be complex and lengthy and can feel very isolating to a foster family as they are unable to discuss many of the issues with others due to confidentiality.

ESFCA are aware that if a serious allegation is made against a foster family member, then Supervising Social Workers are unable to support them whilst an investigation is ongoing. ESFCA has worked jointly with the fostering services to provide an extensive Allegation support pack and all foster carers in East Sussex are automatically signed up to The Fostering Network who provides **free independent legal advice**.

Surgeries

ESFCA holds monthly surgeries on the 3rd Thursday of every month where foster carers can bring to the table often complex and difficult issues that needs a fast-track resolution from senior managers in Children's and Fostering Services.

A trustee can attend the meeting to offer support to the foster carer in presenting their problem if requested. This support helps all parties to find a way forward or air complaints in a face to face and professional manner.

Foster carers are encouraged to come and talk through any difficulties in the hope of finding a way of resolving the difficulties quickly and efficiently. If the issue is around Adoption or Education, then ESFCA would seek to bring the relevant manager to the same meeting. For further information please contact.

advice@esfca.co.uk

Young People Who Foster

Young People Who Foster (YPWF) is a remarkable organisation that stands as a voice for the children within foster families, whether they are biological, adopted, or under special guardianship. These extraordinary young individuals share not only their parents but also their childhoods with fostered children, offering them a supportive and nurturing environment.

YPWF plays a crucial role in helping Looked After Children (LAC) adjust to their new surroundings, providing them with a sense of belonging and acceptance. By offering a platform for these children to share their experiences, YPWF empowers them to have a voice and contribute to the foster care community.

Furthermore, YPWF organises various events, including Halloween discos, day trips, and regular meetups, enriching the lives of these children and fostering a sense of camaraderie. ESFCA continues to support these projects financially and offers assistance when needed, reinforcing their commitment to the welfare of foster families and their children.

Children in Care Council

The Children in Care Council (CiCC) is a dedicated group of Looked After Children Across East Sussex, serving as their collective voice and advocate across the county. They represent LAC's interests at significant events such as the Children and Young Peoples Trust (CYPT) conference, where they engage with organisations supporting youth in East Sussex.

These remarkable young individuals have arranged and offered valuable skills and knowledge by participating in first aid and food hygiene courses, equipping them with practical skills for future employment opportunities.

ESFCA takes great pride in supporting CiCC's endeavours, providing financial backing necessary to run these impactful projects. Their dedication and commitment underscore the importance of nurturing the potential of Looked After Children, ensuring they have the resources and support needed to thrive across East Sussex.

Through Care Team

The Through Care Team (TCT) at East Sussex County Council (ESCC) play a pivotal role in supporting individuals transitioning from the Care System into independent adulthood. Social Workers and specialists provide a holistic plan of support to young people aged 16-25. The Through Care Team duties encompass creating tailored care plans, offering emotional and practical support, facilitating access to education, employment, housing resources, and ensuring the young adults well-being and safety.

ESFCA support the TCT on many projects each year including sponsoring a camping trip for a group of young adults (with adult supervision), allowing them the chance to bond with each other as they share stepping out of their comfort zone.

The Through Care Team also incorporates The Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking children (UASC) team, who provide specialised care, legal support for vulnerable minors seeking asylum, ensuring their welfare and legal rights are upheld.

ESFCA has donated to the UASC team allowing them to provide EID celebrations and a trip to London which allowed the young asylum seekers to visit the tourist hot spots. More importantly it allows them to embrace the history and pageantry of the country they have travelled to in a hope of starting a new life.

Suitcase Initiative

Dignity and self-esteem are fundamental for a looked after child's self-perception. Unfortunately, this can be shattered when they are forced to leave their home with only a bin bag, which strips them of their possessions, and self-worth.

No child should ever have their belongings packed in black plastic bags. It's a distressing image that underscores the dire circumstances and lack of dignity experienced by children in vulnerable situations.

First and foremost, the use of black plastic bags to transport a child's belongings is degrading. It sends a powerful message that the child's possessions, often representing their entire world and sense of security, are deemed unworthy of care and respect. This practice can significantly harm a child's self-esteem, fostering feelings of neglect and worthlessness at a time when they need reassurance and support the most.

Black bags are for rubbish, not children's personal items. ESFCA proudly spearheads an initiative providing suitcases to social workers and assessment teams. Over 200 cases have been distributed, preserving pride for children entering the care system and offering dignity to care leavers (16-25) embarking on their independent journey.

Tripp Luggage's generous support made this possible for the past 9 years.

Make it Reel Project

Most families have Grandparents who spoil and make the children feel special by providing the little extras however looked after children often miss out on this. ESFCA acknowledge this and with a very generous donation from the **Reel Poster Company,** can step in and fill the role like a fairy godparent. ESFCA recognises that the East Sussex County Council has the responsibility to provide the needs of its LAC (looked after children) and the "Make it Reel Project" can only be accessed via a foster child's social worker.

ESFCA would like to thank the Reel Poster Company for their support and below are some examples of how a small amount of money can make a real difference.

- Purchasing Weighted Blankets to aid with anxiety
- Spending money for a 14-year-old teenager who lives in a residential home, who went on her very first holiday with an old foster family she had remained in contact with.
- A necklace for a 16-year-old who was attending her Prom.
- Attendance at a Science club for 10 weeks.
- Providing a birthday present for a teenager who had just been received into care as she had been abandoned by her birth family.

Gift Bag Project

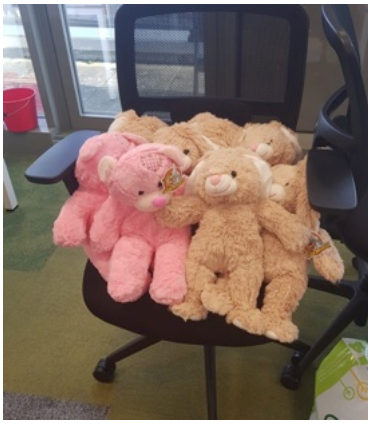
Since 2019, our dedicated friends at the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) have organised an amazing gift bag project. Their initiative involves donating backpacks filled with gifts to children entering the care system. This thoughtful gesture not only comes from the DWP staff but also from their families and friends across the country.

The backpacks lovingly donated by the DWP family are carefully packed with a variety of items, ensuring they cater to the diverse needs and preferences of the children. Each backpack contains essential toiletries, stationery, books, clothes, toys, and a soft, cuddly companion. These items are carefully selected to provide comfort, entertainment, and a sense of ownership during a challenging time in a child's life.

The project ensures that backpacks are available to all children who need them within the county. Foster carers, social workers & family support teams have access to crates filled with backpacks suitable for various age ranges and genders. This thoughtful approach allows us to address the unique needs of every child entering the care system. Our dedicated ESFCA trustees, spread throughout the county, also keep small collections of backpacks to support emergency placements.

These backpacks serve as more than just material gifts. They offer a valuable opportunity for children and their new caregivers to begin their journey together on neutral and positive ground. The act of exploring the backpacks together becomes a useful diversion, creating a shared experience that fosters the building of strong, supportive relationships. It is a moment of connection and comfort during what can be a very trying time for these children.

Moreover, these gifts are a message of hope and care. They demonstrate to Looked After Children (LAC) that there are other caring adults who are thinking about them during this challenging period. The presence of these backpacks signifies that they are not alone and that there is a community of support rallying around them. Possessions like these gifts help children feel a sense of belonging and ownership during a time of uncertainty and upheaval.



The Department of Works & Pensions' Christmas Backpack Initiative is a shining example of love, compassion, and community spirit. Since 2019, this heart-warming project has brightened the lives of children entering the care system, offering them essential items, shared experiences, and a message of hope. We are deeply grateful to the DWP, their staff, and the extended network of donors across the country for their unwavering commitment to making the holiday season a little brighter for these vulnerable children. It is through such acts of kindness that we create a more caring and compassionate society, one backpack at a time.

If you would like to donate, help or both to the Gift Bag Project, please contact our office team who can answer your questions and introduce you to our amazing friends.

nigel.berry@esfca.co.uk

01323 747045

Memories

We are committed to the well-being and development of our vulnerable children, and one of the central missions of ESFCA is to create positive memories for foster children. As you will see over the next few pages, we plan and create events and activities throughout the year for our children and families to help fulfil this mission. Our members, volunteers and staff go above and beyond with these activities, for example, we don't just go to the theatre, the children are met at the door by our very own Pantomime dame, or unicorn, and you never know when you might meet our patrons (Jacqueline Wilson & Jayne Torvill).

Childhood memories have a lasting influence on an individual's life. They shape one's perspective, emotional well-being, and overall development. For looked after children, their early experiences often include trauma, instability, and upheaval. It is imperative to counterbalance these negative memories with positive ones to support their growth and resilience.

In foster care, children are provided with loving, stable, and supportive environments. ESFCA recognizes that positive memories play a crucial role in a child's development by fostering emotional security and self-esteem. Positive memories create:

- Emotional Stability & Resilience.
- Sense of Belonging.
- Building Self-Esteem.
- Encouraging Exploration and Growth
- Healing from Trauma
- Long -term Wellbeing.

Creating positive memories for foster children is not a mere afterthought but a fundamental aspect of the East Sussex Foster Care Association's mission. It is an acknowledgment that fostering is not just about physical care but about nurturing the emotional and psychological well-being of children. Positive memories are the building blocks for a brighter future, offering hope, resilience, and the belief that every child, no matter their past, can experience joy, happiness, and love. The ESFCA's commitment to this mission is a testament to the transformative power of fostering, and it highlights the organization's dedication to the children in its care. Creating positive memories is not just a part of the ESFCA's mission; it is at its very heart.

Positive memories are not just moments in time; they are the building blocks of a brighter tomorrow for foster children, and ESFCA recognizes their significance in this journey of hope and healing.

We would also like to thank our many community partners, friends of ESFCA, volunteers, members and staff who make these events possible and the role they play in creating these memories.

OUR YEAR (2022-23)

Art Sessions

In April, ESFCA held its first art sessions of the year, open to all Looked After Children and Young People Who Foster. The sessions are a joint venture between ESFCA and Maureen Wells (art teaching consultant). The class allows children of all ages to spend a couple of hours painting & drawing with Maureen guiding and supporting them.

We offer art sessions for our children to provide them with a safe and non-verbal outlet to express themselves. Art sessions can also boost self-esteem and confidence. As children create and complete art projects, they experience a sense of accomplishment and pride in their work. (This can be especially important for children who may have low self-esteem due to past experiences). Positive relationships are also created between the children themselves, Maureen and the volunteers who support the group. These relationships can be vital in building trust and attachment, which are crucial for a child's emotional development and well-being, helping them navigate the challenges they may face while in foster care.

ESFCA funds the art supplies for the sessions and subsidises the hire of a venue (with the carers paying a small fee to cover the cost of venue hire). We are incredibly thankful to Maureen and the volunteers who support us for donating their valuable time for free.

The sessions run throughout the year, dependant on the availability of a venue and volunteers. The group sizes vary between 4-11 and children of all ages are welcome (though children aged 5 & under require their carer to stay with them).

Easter

During the Easter holiday season ESFCA paid for and donated over 190 Easter eggs to the Through Care Team to be distributed amongst the young adults living in supported lodgings or on their own.

Providing gifts to these young adults helps them feel included and valued during a holiday that is traditionally associated with joy and celebration. It reinforces the idea that they are part of a caring and supportive community. This caring gesture has a positive impact on their emotional well-being, sense of belonging, and overall experience during a holiday season.

ESFCA was also delighted to receive a generous donation of 50 Easter Eggs from our valued community partners at Sainsbury's (Hampden Park-Eastbourne). Our enduring partnership continues to flourish, and this year we were able to bring joy to 50 children with delightful chocolate treats courtesy of our wonderful friends at Sainsburys.

EID Celebrations

During the holy month of Ramadan, the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children unit (UASC) approached ESFCA and asked if we would be willing to support them with an Eid celebration for their young people.

Eid is a worldwide festival and celebration for Muslims. There are two Eid's through the year and Eid ul Fitr means "festival to break the fast" which is celebrated at the end of Ramadan.

"This was the most successful Eid celebration that we have had. Over 40 young people from different parts of the world came together to celebrate Eid. It was a lovely afternoon, and the young people had a great time, the food was delicious and well appreciated. Some of these young people have been finding Ramadan especially hard because it reminds them of the family and everything that they have lost. In a small way this helps to create a sense of community and family within East Sussex. Thank you again!"

Family First Nights

Attending the theatre enhances the well-being of looked after children by fostering creativity, imagination, and social interaction. It provides a safe and immersive environment where they can explore diverse stories, cultures, and emotions, aiding in their emotional development, empathy, and a sense of belonging in society.

ESFCA are privileged to work with community partner Go live Theatre Projects (previously known as Mousetrap theatre projects) on their Family First Nights campaign, which allows children from blended families to attend a West End (other options are available) theatre performance, where everyone can get lost in the magic of storytelling and the outside world can be forgotten for a while.

(Go live Theatre Projects, is a charity dedicated in making theatre accessible and affordable to families and young people.)

"On a lovely summer's day in August, we took the opportunity (from ESFCA & Family First Night) to take our foster child (A) to the West End performance of Wicked. A trip to the theatre is exciting enough, but we decided to go to London early and allow (A) to be a tourist for a few hours, before going for dinner and then the show. (A) was so excited as we travelled to the capital by train knowing that once there, they would also use the famous underground for the first time.

We spent an amazing afternoon with (A) wandering around Covent Garden (and the surrounding area), window shopping and watching the street performers before finally finding a suitable restaurant for dinner (what a choice!). Then on to the show, (A) was in awe and became fully enveloped in the performance playing out before her as she moved ever closer to the edge of her seat engrossed in the show.

We want to thank everybody at Go Live Theatre Projects, The Family First Nights was more than just night at the theatre, it was a 1st trip to London, 1st journey on an underground train, 1st walk around the sights of London finished by the 1st time at a London theatre, but it will not be (A's) last (we are already planning another trip."

SB

Bluebell Walk

As spring arrived, the East Sussex Foster Care Association enthusiastically reengaged with the Arlington Bluebell Walk, taking charge of refreshments at the Bluebell barn and efficiently coordinating the walk's operations over a two-day period (and a third day, when requested to help as another charity had dropped out of their rotation at short notice). Unlike in 2021, there were no Covid-related restrictions, resulting in a higher turnout of visitors,

The Arlington Bluebell Walk is crucial for ESFCA as it serves as a vital fundraising event. The generated funds support the associations programs and initiatives, enabling us to provide essential resources, support, and services to foster families and children in their care, ultimately improving their well-being and outcomes.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of ESFCA's charity duties at the Arlington Bluebell Walk, enhancing the event's effectiveness by preparing refreshments and light lunches, serving visitors, clearing tables, and washing up along with selling tickets at the gatehouse and marshalling the walks through the ancient woodland. We thank everyone who volunteered and supported us over our days and the army of volunteers who baked cakes, scones cupcakes and made soup providing an amazing array of homemade baked goods to offer our visitors to the walk.

Our special thanks also go to John McCutchan (organiser of the Arlington Bluebell Walk) for his continued support and generosity, he is a true friend of ESFCA.

PGL Osmington Bay

In the absence of Covid restrictions, East Sussex Foster Care Association organised 2 separate residential trips for children aged 11 and under, and those aged 12 and above. We opted to take the children to the Osmington Bay PGL activity centre in Dorset, offering them a much-needed sense of adventure after enduring two challenging years of uncertainty. The groups travelled to and from the camp via Worthing Coaches, with supervision provided by dedicated volunteer trustees, carers, and social workers.

The activities encompassed an array of exciting experiences, including raft building, Jacobs Ladder, Zip lines, campfires, capture the flag, and some leisure time for enjoying toys and sports equipment brought along for the trips. Over the course of these two trips, a total of 50 children were accommodated, each trip benefiting from the support of over 10 adult volunteers. This memorable experience was made possible through the generous three-year grant extended by their steadfast supporters, Children in Need.

Attending these trips is extremely beneficial for looked -after children. These centres offer a transformative experience, fostering personal and social development. Firstly, they provide a break from the challenges faced in their daily lives, allowing them a chance to escape and enjoy a sense of adventure. Engaging in outdoor activities, and team challenges builds self-confidence and resilience. Interaction between their peers and the adult volunteers and PGL instructors promotes positive social skills, developing their communication and teamwork.

These experiences also expand the children's horizons, by taking them out of their comfort zone and creates challenges that encourage personal growth. Overall, PGL activity centres provide a safe and nurturing environment where looked -after children can develop crucial life skills, build self-esteem, and create cherished memories, offering a much -needed respite to the difficulties they may face in their everyday lives.

More Radio

Once again, ESFCA proudly sponsored the Gold Award at More Radio's Child of Sussex Awards. This award offers the opportunity for listeners to nominate children deserving of recognition across various categories. The Gold Award specifically allows for the nomination of a child whose story may not neatly fit into these predefined categories.

ESFCA secured a table at the awards ceremony, and the event was graced by the presence of esteemed individuals, including Susanne Beesley (Chair), Mark Thornborough (Vice Chair), Sandra Maylam (Trustee), and Christine Phillips (Trustee). They were joined by distinguished guests, including Dame Jacqueline Wilson (Patron) and her partner Trish, Councillor Bob Bowdler, Andrew Gordon (Project Worker- Children's Services department), Emily Wells (foster carer), and Bethany (a new office team member).

Many people, including adults and children, were delighted that Dame Jacqueline Wilson was there and were eager to have a conversation or photo with her. It is moments like this that we treasure and are incredibly proud to have someone on board that is so adored for her writing and relatability in many circumstances.

We hugely value our ongoing community partnerships and our relationship with More radio is one that we have continued over the last few years. Our participation in the event enables us to create awareness for ESFCA, as well as to support a wonderful cause.

Dame Jacqueline Wilson, on behalf of ESFCA, had the honour of presenting the Gold Award and engaged in photo opportunities with all the award winners.

Jamie's Farm

During July ESFCA funded a 5-day 4-night residential trip to Jamie's Farm (Lewes). Jamie's farm is a charity that equips young people to thrive using farming, family, therapy, and legacy.

ESFCA attended Jamie's Farm to take part in the daily farm life. This included attending to the animals, gardening, and cooking. As the trip was organised to bring siblings separated in the system together, it was wonderful to witness them working with each other in a constructive way. This opportunity enabled them to create memories with one another that they'll be able to cherish for years to come.

As part of a typical day, the young people took part in varied tasks that involved getting completely stuck into life on the farm. They woke up, went out to tend the animals, collected eggs and accomplished the necessary tasks before going back to the farmhouse to cook their breakfast. They then took part in tasks throughout the morning which included picking vegetables, planting new ones, and clearing out/feeding the animals. After lunch, they took part in another form of activity such as fun in the woods, going for a walk or building new fencing for the animals. These afternoon tasks also consisted of one group helping to cook the evenings dinner such as homemade pizza! When the day was done, the children were rewarded with games evenings and treats like brownies made by their peers.

A therapeutic tool Jamie's Farm used throughout the experience was something called 'shoutouts'. Each child was asked to give one to a peer/adult based on what they liked about them and what they did each day. This method was perfect for enabling a morale boost, encouraging self-esteem, and giving confidence to our young people.

Jamie's Farm have a big garden and the young people were able to get stuck into the upkeep whilst learning how to do basic tasks. Some of the vegetables picked were used in the meals eaten throughout the week. This enriching experience allowed them to spend quality time with their siblings as well as to discover the joys of getting stuck into nature.

As many people may discover, animals can be extremely therapeutic. Our young people were fascinated with the various animals on the farm as they were able to pet the goats, feed the pigs and have fun with the farm dogs. There were many situations where the young people shared calm and special moments when interacting with the animals.

Overall, the week was a fun and jam-packed experience full of new opportunities and time well spent with siblings and friends.

Through Care Team- Camping Trip

During 2020, ESFCA committed to funding a camping for the Through Care Team, unfortunately this had to be postponed due to the Covid Pandemic and the restrictions we all faced. However, 2022 was a great year and the trip to Avon Tyrell Activity Centre went ahead. Below is a report from one of the TCT organisers who attended the trip.

I am writing to thank ESFCA for their contribution to the trip to Avon Tyrell Activity Centre for young people from the Through Care Service. Eight staff accompanied 22 young people ranging from 17 to 22 (including 4 UASC young men).

We camped in the tents provided and activities were offered to the young people and staff (if they were brave enough), including archery, abseiling, climbing, canoeing, paddle boarding and a night walk. We would have had a campfire but due to the dry conditions they had been banned by the site. We instead had a lot of fun in the lake which most of the young people took part in. We had a huge paddle board that took 10 people (I was daft enough to get on it).

The young people had a wide variety of needs and abilities and once again showed the staff how accepting and understanding they can be of each other. They were all happy and keen to join in and even managed to get to breakfast in time both days, a real achievement for this age group!

One of the young people who struggles to make friends wanted to go home on the 2nd day as he felt so overwhelmed. He sat chatting to staff, the young people seeing him missing out helped him feel part of the group and he was one of many that wanted to stay another night. Since returning home staff in his supported accommodation say that he cannot stop talking about the trip and is keen to attend again next year.

Several other young people have also said that they are looking forward to the next camping trip, with one volunteering to oversee the barbecue next time to ensure she can have some chicken cooked "her way".

The young people were challenged by sharing a tent, being part of a large group as well as smaller activity groups, not knowing anyone, the food as well as the activities themselves.

All the staff could sense the changes and could see the young people's anxieties fall away and just be part of the group and have fun. There was much laughter, and it was a joy to see the smiles on the young people's faces.

We would like to make this camping trip a yearly event due to the benefits to young people's emotional health and well-being.

Young People Who Foster – Chessington World of Adventures Trip

ESFCA was very happy to sponsor a day trip for the Young People Who Foster (YPWF) group allowing them to take a few hours away for themselves. YPWF benefit from positive experiences like these along with a sense of normalcy.

Young people Who Foster share their home and their parents with fostered children and make lots of sacrifices while supporting looked after children. The YPWF is a support group that allows these amazing young people to get together with and talk freely with other children sharing their homes.

Trips like this are an opportunity for the foster carers to reward their children for their continued support. 25 Young People attended the trip, accompanied with 6 adults made up of social workers and support workers.

UASC – London Trip

ESFCA was once again proud to support the UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children) with a trip to London. 20 children (young adults) and 4 UASC team members visited the key tourist areas travelling by river taxi & underground. This trip is a great opportunity for these children to build friendships (the UASC are some of the most isolated in the service, with no family networks), to have fun and to create a connection with the country they have chosen to settle.

On 1st September I had the pleasure of being one of the staff members supporting a trip to London with twenty UASC.

We arranged to meet at Eastbourne station at 11am and started our journey to London all the young people were so excited and in good spirits.

They had lots of questions on the train about the day ahead, the Queens house, Big Ben, what they would see on the day and how much they were looking forward to visiting London. When we arrived in London, we visited Madam Tussauds. The young people were so happy, they took lots of photos of each other with the wax works, one young person said his dreams have come true!

They found it funny posing with the wax works and sending photos to friends pretending they had met someone famous.

We also visited The London eye, again they all found this a memorable experience and thoroughly enjoyed the views of London.
This was a wonderful day that gave the young people an opportunity to visit London and experience seeing some of the famous landmarks, they were all so grateful and could not be more thankful.
The day also saw young people engage with each other and make new friends.

Eastbourne Soapbox Race

Once again, ESFCA was very excited to volunteer for the Eastbourne Soapbox race. 2022 was the second year for the event and it was bigger and better as you would expect.

The event is free to watch and is always great fun seeing these wacky creations as they hilariously whizz around corners with the hope of staying in one piece as they reach the finish line.

The course is just under 350m long starting at Wellcombe crescent and finishing at Helen Garden and is full of jumps, crazy bends, and hay-bale chicanes.

ESFCA Volunteers helped marshal the course, keeping roads closed near the finish line and ensuring there were safe routes in for emergency vehicles if needed. This event is a fundraising activity and Eastbourne Borough Council Events Team donate £100.00, thanking us for our support.

Pictures from: Media Attention

Jamie's Farm – Day camp

Over four individual days during September and October we trialled a new joint venture with Jamie's Farm (Lewes). These day camps would differ from the residential trips and concentrated on woodland crafts & outside cooking.

Eight children (supported by carers & the team from Jamie's Farm) attended and the projects aim was increasing their confidence, resilience and boost their self-esteem. They took part in a varied schedule on each day, which provided them the opportunity to explore new skills.

Jamie's Farm predominantly functions outdoors, working with nature, as well as the farm animals and farm life, operating to the same routines regular farms follow.

These day camps however, focused on spending time in the forest, with a change of location on each day the children were able to get stuck into tasks such as finding wood and creating a campfire, cooking meals, and ensuring the site was safe for everyone to use.

The children who were tasked in scouting for danger had to feedback what they saw and what everyone would need to do to keep safe. This role gave the children a taste of responsibility along with a sense of pride as they were keeping everyone safe.

There was also ample opportunity to have fun by playing games, baking brownies over the campfire, and releasing their artistic through colouring and painting. Some of the games played focused on the children using their senses and one meant they had to try and ignore all other noises but focus in on one sound and identify where it came from.

Off course there was plenty of opportunities to run through the woods enjoying the colours, sounds, smells and enjoying the fresh air. These activities gave the children time to build friendships, talk openly and share stories.

Each day started with a circle where each child was secretly given someone to observe throughout the day and told not to reveal who they were watching. They were told to focus on things that the things they did well what they liked about the about them. At the end of the day, they would reveal who they were watching and all the positive actions they had witnessed.

This feedback not only helped boost their self-esteem, but also showed how good it feels to look for the positive in someone and the feeling it gives you as you compliment rather than criticise.

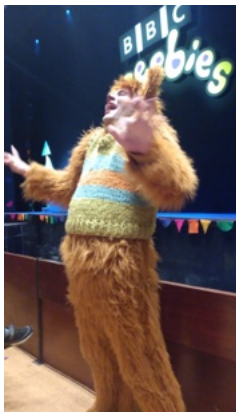
"I'm sad it won't be on next week."

"My favourite thing was trying nettle tea."

"We really liked making fajitas… oh and the brownies!"

"I really enjoyed watching everyone become more settled and building friendships with each other"

CBeebies Pantomime



BBC CBeebies (BBC children's television) donated over 70 tickets to their dress rehearsal of their Pantomime "Dick Whittington and his Cat". The Kids & Family production team (CBeebies) took two days at the Eastbourne Congress Theatre to rehearse their pantomime, the show would be filmed later in a theatre in London. The production had lots of guest appearances from the CBeebies tv channel and was an overwhelming success with the foster families attending. We were very fortunate to receive another group of tickets kindly donated by our friends at Eastbourne Theatres, over 130 children and carers were able to attend. All the tickets were donated free by BBC CBeebies & Eastbourne Theatres.

PGL - Bowling

During the PGL trip in August, the children were not able to hold their end of trip awards (at the end of each PGL trip, the children are celebrated, highlighting their successes and achievements). The decision was made to create a small trip to the Eastbourne 10 pin bowling alley, allowing the children (young adults) to have a small reunion and hold the PGL celebration. The children bowled two games, had a light lunch, and then received their certificates and medals. This event was funded by ESFCA covering the costs of the bowling, refreshments, and awards.

Beachy Head – 10k & Ultra Marathon

On Saturday 22nd October ESFCA volunteers braved the elements once again and marshalled the Beachy Head 10k race and the Ultra Marathon (where competitors complete the Beachy Head Marathon along with the 10k course).

12 volunteers took positions over the course that covers a circular route sharing the starting line with the Marathon (kings' parade) heading along the South downs to Belle Tout Lighthouse. It then circles back along the stunning coastal route and returning to the start/ finish line (Dukes Drive).

The 10K is a regular fundraising event for ESFCA and the volunteers always have a great time cheering on the runners as they cross the scenic countryside (whatever the weather). In return for supporting this event, ESFCA receives a donation to put towards future projects supporting our looked after children, young people who foster, and foster families.

Baby & Toddler Group

In November, we saw ESFCA return to our baby & toddler group, allowing foster families looking after under 5's to meet and play in a safe & secure environment.

There are regular baby and toddler groups that carers can go to, however, the nature of fostering means the carer may not look after the child for long before they move onto their next placement. These groups enable the carers to take part in a positive method of interaction with others in a similar position, regardless of the length of the placement.

The groups meet regularly and change location to embrace children from across East Sussex.

Christmas Carol Service

Our friend David Oakenfold from The Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association organised a traditional family Christmas Carol at St Saviours church in Eastbourne. Joined by masonic lodges across Sussex the event was created to raise funds for ESFCA and for St Saviours Church organ repair fund.

The Carol Service was full of well-known Carols, readings, and Christmas songs with an emphasis on family and especially children. David also created a small choir of children who sang two songs for the congregation.

This was the perfect start of the festive season and a great way of raising much needed funds.

More Radio – Toy Appeal

Every Christmas, More Radio collects toys and gifts for underprivileged children living in Sussex.

ESFCA is honoured to be amongst the charities and organisations that More Radio donates these toys to, helping ensure they reach the neediest of children. The donation of toys and gifts are distributed to children coming into care during December and January as well as the children of the young adults under the care of the through care team.

These toys continue to be distributed through the year to help children transition in the care system.

EBMR – Santa Run

Eastbourne Motorcycle Rideout (EBMR) Once again took to the roads dressed a Santa Claus, Mrs Clause, Elf, and reindeer continuing their annual Santa run.

EBMR is a group of motorcycle enthusiasts who meet regularly and ride together, and each Christmas they dress up and ride across East Sussex donating toys to the children in Eastbourne District Hospital and Hastings Conquest Hospital. During the Santa Run they also donate to ESFCA.

Christmas Party

The initial Sunday of December marked a joyous occasion with our Christmas Party for our foster families. Once again, we received generous support from Soroptimist's UK (Lewes & Eastbourne), who dedicated their time and contributed gifts for the children to present to their caregivers. The day was filled with a lively disco and various party games, courtesy of Starlight Disco, and featured a special visit from Father Christmas, who brought early presents for all the attending children.

Notably, Alison Jeffery, ESCC Director of Children's Services, and Cllr Bob Bowdler of ESCC graced us with their presence, taking the time to meet the caregivers and extend warm Christmas wishes to all.

The holiday season can be challenging for children in foster care, and the ESFCA party serves as a wonderful distraction, allowing the children to unwind and simply have fun. The children departed with cherished memories, with some even reuniting with siblings who may be in different foster families or connecting with peers who share similar circumstances.

This heart-warming event saw the participation of over 70 children. ESFCA covered the expenses for food and entertainment, while the venue, generously provided by the Kings Centre, earned our heartfelt appreciation for their ongoing support.

Left: Trustees & Soroptimists.
Above: Penny Smith, Kieran Henderson & Stuart Buchan

Christmas Quiz

In December, our community collaborators at The Berwick Inn organized a festive Christmas Quiz to support upcoming ESFCA Projects.

The quiz embraced the holiday spirit, with our host donning the attire of one of Santa's trusted helpers. There were six rounds, each consisting of ten questions, all revolving around Christmas jokes, songs, and general holiday knowledge.

The event garnered a strong turnout, and we are looking to host another quiz in December 2023. If you're interested in joining us for this delightful event, please don't hesitate to reach out and secure your spot by contacting us.

Pantomime

We successfully secured more than 180 tickets for the performance of Aladdin at the Devonshire Park Theatre in Eastbourne. To make the experience more accessible, we provided subsidies for the foster families, allowing them to enjoy the show at a significantly reduced cost.

On the 7th of January at 11:00am, we were delighted to welcome over 40 families, and as they approached the theatre entrance to collect their tickets, their anticipation was joined by a look of surprise as they were met by our very own pantomime dame.

Paul Beesley (husband of Susanne Beesley – ESFCA Chair), celebrated his birthday by dressing up as Dame Melons handing out the tickets to our families as thev arrived at the theatre, and posed for photographs ensuring everyone was already in the Pantomime spirit before the performance had started.

It brings us immense joy to report that the auditorium resounded with the enthusiastic sounds of our families. Laughter, cheers for the heroes, boos for the villains, and lively participation in songs with the cast filled the air. This lively atmosphere provided a brief escape from the world outside, allowing the adults to embrace the delightful pandemonium that a pantomime brings.

The theatre was filled with an electric atmosphere, and the performers once again captivated the children, who became utterly absorbed in the enchanting moments of the show.

As previously mentioned, ESFCA makes pantomime tickets more affordable through subsidies, thanks to the generous contributions from our community partners. One noteworthy group is the Widows Sons Masonic Bikers, who have once again demonstrated their generosity by donating over £350.00 towards our annual pantomime excursion.

Following the pantomime, we were gratified to receive several messages expressing gratitude to our community partners, who consistently support both the attendees and ESFCA, ensuring the success of this event.

Letter from the Treasurer

The charity has benefitted during the 2022-23 financial year from a seamless transfer of responsibility for the management of ESFCA accounts between the outgoing treasurer, Lysette Grosvenor and myself and I am very appreciative of Lysette's guidance and training provided between August and December last year. One of the special characteristics of working with volunteers in ESFCA, whether they be Trustees or participants, is their strong drive to be constantly working in the interests of the charity, its members, fostering families and the children in the care of those families.

The role of the Finance Treasurer is to not only to ensure sound and visible management of the accounts but also to make sure that the funds of the charity are available to feed the creative drive of the membership and our partners as they design and execute events and activities that bring opportunities for development, bonding, and fellowship for young people. These funds are attracted to the charity through the good offices of trustees and friends of the charity who give of their time to raise funds in activities like the Bluebell Wood cafe and walk, helping to marshal events such as the Eastbourne box car event and the Eastbourne 10K run; through the individual efforts of friends of the charity who raise funds by their own voluntary efforts; local companies who donate and funds that come into the charity from larger initiatives such as the BBC's Children in Need that are used to support the PGL activity camp places for young people. Funds are allocated to support activities such as Jamie's Farm, PGL (as mentioned), the Toddler Group, Picnics in the Park, The Christmas Event, The Pantomime, and many other events. Funds are also received from partner organisations such as East Sussex County Council who support the need for the professional representation of members in matters of dispute and dispute resolution. ESCC also support our administrative costs.

The picture I am illustrating here is by no means complete but it does illustrate the complexity of a vibrant, wide-ranging charity working tirelessly to meet the needs of those it represents. It is a success story worth promoting, we all have for hope for a better world in the future. We are by our collective effort a strong force for hope and positive action. That makes working alongside our trustees to achieve the goals of the organisation both exciting and rewarding and allows the financial management structure to play its important role in the following ways:

- To facilitate accurate and regular communication on balances and major income and expenditure actions.
- To advise and assist the trustees on matters of fund raising and financial strategy.
- To advise the trustees on the issue of financial risk.
- To manage accurately the accounts and the financial auditing process in line with the articles of association and the regulations of the Charities Commission.

As we conclude this successful year in the life of the ESFCA, it is people we celebrate, for their teamwork and collective efforts, their empathy and concern for others and their optimistic and proactive approach to all matters concerning Foster Care.

Kim Phillips
Treasurer.

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Statement of financial activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Incoming Resources					
Donations		14,696	-	14,696	3,446
Core funding		20,000	-	20,000	20,000
Advocacy support		-	1,913	1,913	2,697
Apprentice scheme grant		-	6,000	6,000	-
Fundraising – inc Bluebell walk		3,733	-	3,733	1,588
Christmas events		896	-	896	-
Keep it reel		-	75	75	-
Jamies farm		430	-	430	-
PGL		-	735	735	10,430
Pantomine		1,490	-	1,490	2,329
CiN youth		-	-	-	3,883
Event contributions		459	-	459	1,630
Interest		87	-	87	4
Total incoming resources		**41,791**	**8,723**	**50,514**	**46,007**
Resources expended					
Insurance		579	-	579	567
General running expenses		4,307	-	4,307	4,079
Pantomime		3,330	-	3,330	3,900
PGL		-	6,351	6,351	13,267
Through care team		2,692	-	2,692	4,796
Keep it reel		-	-	-	-
Jamies farm		6,789	-	6,789	-
Events and projects		2,118	-	2,118	6,123
CiN youth		-	-	-	4,014
Fundraising		704	-	704	134
Intuitive Horse		480	-	480	480
Advocacy support		-	4,563	4,563	1,214
Salaries & pensions		19,816	-	19,816	14,108
Christmas events		1,017	-	1,017	980
Accountancy fees		1,905	-	1,905	1,644
Total outgoing resources		**43,737**	**10,914**	**54,651**	**55,305**
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/ Net income/(expenditure) for the year		(1,946)	(2,191)	(4,137)	(9,298)
Transfers		2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Total funds brought forward		72,551	23,393	95,944	105,242
Total resources		72,605	19,202	91,807	95,944

Volunteers

"It takes a village to raise a child." This age-old proverb underscores the collective responsibility of a community in nurturing and supporting the well-being of its youth. In the context of the East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA), this adage remains especially relevant.

ESFCA, like many organisations relies on the contributions of volunteers to help fulfill its mission. These individuals, driven by their commitment to improving the lives of foster children, offer their time, skills, and compassion to ensure that events and activities run smoothly and effectively.

Volunteers for ESFCA are drawn from diverse backgrounds and professions. They include foster carers (and retired foster carers), social work professionals, community partners, work colleagues, and family.

The "village" in the proverb represents the community, and it signifies that the more people involved, the more comprehensive and robust the support system becomes. Volunteers significantly expand ESFCA's capacity to serve the foster care community during events and activities. Their presence allows the association to provide a broader range of services and create a stronger sense of community. Members of ESFCA (foster carers), resemble a close-knit community (or village). They share a common purpose, provide support, and foster a sense of belonging. Their collective commitment to nurturing foster children creates a warm and inclusive environment, where empathy and care flourish.

In a real village, residents bring a diverse range of skills and experiences to the table. Similarly, volunteers offer a wealth of expertise that enhances the quality of events and activities. A key example of this is our relationship with Maureen Wells, Maureen's profession is as a consultant art teacher, working with school art departments and teachers across the country. Through volunteering at our Christmas Party with Soroptimist's international, helping children choose and wrap presents for their carers, Maureen subsequently offered her time to run art classes and sessions for children over the year.

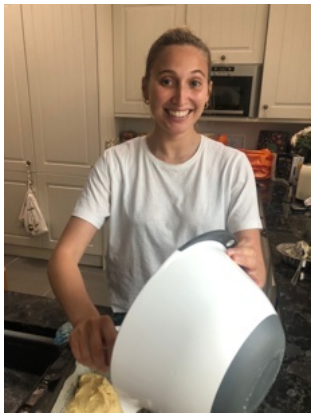
In a village, adults serve as role models for children. Similarly, volunteers become role models and mentors for our children, showing them kindness, dedication, and the importance of giving back to the community. These positive influences can have a lasting impact on the children's lives, helping them build resilience and self-esteem.

The village concept emphasizes the importance of a close-knit community. Volunteers play a significant role in building and strengthening the sense of community within ESFCA. Through helping on activities like our PGL trips and the Christmas party, foster carers involvement creates connections and relationships amongst the fostering community that extends beyond the specific events and activities. Foster families create their own network of buddies and support each other when needed.

Volunteers

Volunteers lead by example, inspiring others to give back and contribute to the welfare of the foster care community. This ripple effect encourages more individuals to get involved, expanding the "village", and reinforcing the sense of collective responsibility. This is seen with our amazing friends at the DWP and their friends, families, and work colleagues across the country. The gift bag projects show our children and families that there is a bigger community across wishing then well and willing to support them, even though they will never meet.

Our Volunteers generously offer their time and skills without monetary compensation, making it cost-effective for ESFCA to run events and activities. This cost-efficiency allows the organisation to allocate more resources to its core mission of supporting foster children and families. One of our biggest fundraisers during the year are our charity duty days at the Arlington Bluebell Walk which would not be possible without our small army of volunteers donating their time helping at the event, as well as home baking a series of cakes, scones cupcakes and more. We are always amazed by everyone's generosity as they go above and beyond to ensure our days at the walk are a success.



Just as the village is a place where residents feel a sense of belonging, volunteers help foster children and caregivers feel connected to a larger community. This sense of belonging is essential for their emotional well-being and overall development.

The proverb "It takes a village" encapsulates the essence of the East Sussex Foster Care Association's reliance on volunteers. These dedicated individuals create a village of support, compassion, and strength, which is instrumental in enhancing the lives of looked-after children and their caregivers during events and activities. Their contributions are invaluable, reinforcing the idea that by working together, we can create a brighter and future for foster children, demonstrating the profound impact that a committed village can have on the well-being of its youngest members.

East Sussex Foster Care Association faces a shortage of volunteers, impacting its ability to provide essential support and services. The growing demand for assistance in fostering and related activities outstrips the number of available volunteers, highlighting the urgent need for more dedicated individuals to step forward and make a positive difference.

If you would like to volunteer or would like more information on how you could help, please contact our office team.

nigel.berry@esfca.co.uk

01323 747045

Thank You

On behalf of our members, trustees, and staff we wish to extend our deepest gratitude for the generous amount of support we have received from our community partners, volunteers, friends, and family over the year. Your commitment to our cause has been instrumental in helping us make a positive impact on the lives of foster children and families throughout East Sussex.

Your contribution has allowed us to strengthen our programs, provide essential resources, and create a supportive community for those in need. It is through the generosity of our supporters that we can continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of vulnerable children, offering them a chance for a brighter future.

THANK YOU

Alison Jeffery
Kathy Marriott
Sally Carnie
Fiona Lewis
Adrian Sewell
Peter Richards
Mandy Lewis
Suzie Ives
Siobhan Edwards
Samantha Casey
Stacey Quanstrom
Donna Collins
Clare spencer
Tracey Millen
Sinead Roche
Phil Smith
Chelsea Walsh
Meshelle Carmody
Cllr Bob Bowdler
Cllr Colin Belsey
Cllr Keith Glazier
Paul Beesley
Bethany Beesley
Maya Beesley
Andrea Thornborough
Gary Shirley
Peter Henderson
Dennis Holder

Roger Maylam
Stuart Buchan
Penny Smith
Kevin Williams
Blue Williams
Nick Leeves
Mason Leeves
Ben Wells
Mark Turner
Natalie Paul
John Darling
Lucy Chatterton
Julie Tabone
Jo Broocks
Sheelagh Golding
Laura Franks
Fiona Emsey
Patricia Jackson
Liz Pucci
Sam Reilly
Kate Lewis
Kieran Henderson
Ella Vuillemey
Bobbie Attew
Andy Sears
John McCutchan
Bill Message
George Message
Dave Oakenfold

Julie Bell
Hugh Bell
Vera Gajic
Lara Khoury
Anja St Clair Jones
Louise Chalmers
Deborah Miarkowska
Claire Woolf
Alex Berry
Emily Berry
Margaret Woolf
Janice West
Lauren Hesmer
Donna Clayton
Graham Durey
Emily Wells
Julie Bell
Hugh Bell
Andrew Gordon
Jay Ivens
John Charles
George Carpenter
Jacqueline Ridge
Sue Hartley
Maureen Wells
Graham Tuthill

Everybody at the Kings Centre

And the many other volunteers that have helped over the year.

Thank you for your continued support, without people like yourself and your colleagues stepping forward and aiding the association, these critical projects would not be able to continue.

Thank You

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

esfca

East Sussex Foster Care Association
An Independent Charity for Fostering Families in East Sussex

East Sussex County Council

Members & Volunteers

BBC Children in Need

Sainsbury's

Eastbourne & Hampden Park

JAMIE'S FARM
CULTIVATING CHANGE

Lewes

VISIT EASTBOURNE

Soroptimist International Surulere

Lewes & Eastbourne

Osmington Bay

EASTBOURNE THEATRES
CONGRESS THEATRE | DEVONSHIRE PARK THEATRE | WINTER GARDEN

DEVONSHIRE QUARTER

PRINTERS PLAYHOUSE
PPH
live music & theatre venue

More RADIO Mid Sussex

TRIPP

WIDOWS SONS MASONIC BIKERS ASSN.

EBMR

EBMR

THE BERWICK INN

FREE HOUSE • PUB • CAFÉ • DINING

MAKE IT REEL POSTER GALLERY

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If you would like to make a donation, you can visit our website, and use the DONATE button.

WWW.esfca.co.uk

If you would like to run a fundraising event on our behalf or if you would like to sponsor one of our activities, events, or an operational cost (printing, stationary supplies etc), Please contact our office team.

fundraising@esfca.co.uk

Charity number: 1092668
Company number: 04216137

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Directors' report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

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Charity number	1092668
Company registration number	4216137
Registered office	4th Floor St Mark's House 14 Upperton Road Eastbourne East Sussex BN21 1EP
Independent Examiner	Dominic Hill Associates Limited Archer House Britland Estate Northbourne Road Eastbourne East Sussex BN22 8PW

The directors present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Structure, governance and management

The charity is an incorporated association governed by its memorandum and articles of association, together with its constitution.

The following persons served as directors/trustees during the year;

Mrs S Beesley BA (hons) - Chair
Mrs A H D Holder MBE
Mr M Thornborough – (Retired Nov 2022)
Ms T M Henderson
Ms L Grosvenor – Treasurer (Retired Nov 2022)
Mrs A Leeves
Mrs S Maylam
Mrs R Petraitis-Williams
Ms R Smith – (Retired Nov 2022)
Mrs C Phillips
Mr M K Phillips – Treasurer (Appointed Nov 2022)
Mrs V Archer – (Appointed Nov 2022)
Mrs E Wells – (Appointed Nov 2022)
Mrs S Turner – (Appointed Nov 2022)

Trustees are appointed at the AGM with there being a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve. At the AGM one third of the trustees must stand down, often the longest serving trustees stand down first, but may choose to stand for re-election. All trustees must be members of East Sussex Foster Care Association and members can nominate themselves for election.

Objectives of the charity

The objectives of East Sussex Foster Care Association as set out in the Memorandum of Association are to promote all or any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community mainly but not exclusively within the County of East Sussex and in particular the advancement of the education of the public in matters relating to substitute care. The education, training and support of foster carers and their families, the relief of Looked After Children, their Carers, and their Carers' families by providing facilities and services in the interests of social welfare with a view to improving their conditions of life.

The Association is to support East Sussex Foster Carers and their families in their efforts to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children in their care by working in partnership with all appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies. It undertakes this task by offering a range of events, advocacy, training, and support for the both the families and the children they care for. Its membership is comprised of East Sussex Local Authority registered Foster Carers and the managing group is formed by elected Trustees/Directors' from within that membership.

Activities, achievements, and performance

ESFCA is proud to help different groups of young people that operate within the care system.

Young People Who Foster (YPWF)

These are the biological and adopted children of foster families who share their home and parents with fostered children. They make lots of sacrifices to support looked after children, and there is rarely a complaint. This group allows them to have voice and an opportunity to share their experiences inside a safe environment.

Children in Care Council (CiCC)

This council represents the looked after children in foster families. Children of different ages sit on the council and help provide a voice for those that need it.

Through Care Team

These are the young adults leaving the care system who need support getting their start in life. Aged between 16-25 the young people are supported by a specialist team of social workers who also provide financial, legal and wellbeing support.

Make It Reel project.

East Sussex Foster Care Association has a special pot of money in a restricted fund available to support LAC. The money has been donated from The Reel Poster Company and they would like the money to go directly to benefit LAC where a small amount of money could make a real difference.

Lobbying Government & Local Authorities

Our Trustees are actively engaged with other organisations in networking, debating, promoting, and raising the profile of Foster Carers in East Sussex. We lobby Government departments and attend any meetings or debates that enable us to speak up for our members and our Looked After Children (LAC).

Independent allegation advice & support

We continue to receive funds from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) as an annual top up which is held in a restricted fund. This Allegations fund is used to buy in independent supposed as required to assist any of our member foster carers who may be subject to an allegation of concerns around standards of care. These investigations can be complex and lengthy and can feel very isolating to a foster family as they are unable to discuss many of the issues with others due to confidentiality.

Monthly Fostering Surgeries with Heads of Department

ESFCA hold monthly Surgeries one evening a month whereby Foster Carers can bring to the table a difficult, complex, or issue that needs a fast-track resolution from senior managers in Children's and Fostering Services. A trustee will attend the meeting to offer support to the Foster Carer in presenting their problem. This can really help all parties to find a way forward or air complaints in a face to face and professional manner.

Achievements 2022 – 2023

Art Classes 9th April.

In April, ESFCA held its first art class, open to all looked after children and young people who foster. The classes are a joint venture between ESFCA and Maureen Wells (Art teaching consultant). The class allows children of all ages to spend a couple of hours painting & drawing with Maureen guiding and supporting them, this also allows the carers to have a couple of hours respite. ESFCA funds the art supplies for the classes and subsidises the hire of a venue, carers pay £5.00 per child to help cover the cost of venue hire and Maureen donates her time for free along with a volunteer trustee or member of staff. The lessons aim to be once a month; however, this is dependent on Maureen and the venues availability. Classes can vary on size between 4-11 children.

Easter Eggs – Throughcare Team – 17 April.

During the Easter holiday season ESFCA paid for and donated 197 Easter Eggs to the Through Care Team. The eggs were given to the young adults living in supported lodgings or on their own. ESFCA made the donation from their own funds.

ESFCA received a donation of 50 Easter eggs from our friends in Sainsbury's (Hampden Park). The long-term community partnership with Sainsbury's continues to grow stronger, and this year 50 children under the ESFCA umbrella received chocolate treats. ESFCA thanks Sainsbury's for its generous donation and continued support.

EID Celebration 2nd May.

ESFCA are proud to have supported once again the Through Care Team and the Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking children (UASC) team by funding a feast to celebrate EID (a feast that celebrates the end of Ramadan). Over 40 young people attended the celebration and ESFCA donated £340.00 towards the cost of the food.

Bluebell Walk 9th, 10th & 17th May.

The arrival of spring saw ESFCA back at the Arlington Bluebell Walk completing two duty days running the refreshments in the Bluebell barn and marshalling the walk itself. Unlike 2021, there were no Covid restrictions to the walk which meant a larger number of visitors attended. The strong community partnership between ESFCA & Bluebell Walk led us to take in a third day at short notice due to another charity cancelling at the last minute. The three days raised over £1,900 (including donations).

PGL – Osmington Bay 28th – 30th May

With no Covid restrictions in place, ESFCA were able to run a residential trip for LAC aged 11 and under. The decision was made to take the children to the Osmington Bay PGL camp (in Dorset), allowing the children a sense of adventure, after tough couple of years of uncertainty. The group travelled to and from the camp by coach (Worthing Coaches) and were accompanied/ supervised by volunteer trustees, carers, and social workers. Activities included raft building, Jacob's ladder, zip wire, archery, low level ropes, rifle shooting and climbing, with evening entertainment including a campfire, capture the flag and some free time to enjoy the toys & sports equipment taken with the group. 25 children attended, accompanied by 10 adults. The trip was funded by the 3-year grant (£30,000) from BBC Children in Need.

Art Class – 28th May

(See entry – 9th April)

Family First Nights (Mousetrap Theatre Projects) – Summer

Mousetrap Theatre Projects (now known as Go Live Theatre Projects) is a theatre charity dedicated to making theatre accessible and affordable to families and young people. Family First Nights is their annual summer programme which offers families with blended backgrounds an opportunity to see live theatre shows for just £8.00 per ticket. ESFCA acted as the referring organisation and all bookings & payments had to go through us. The event was subsidised by Mousetrap Theatre Projects and a payment from the cares attending. Over 8 foster families took part in this year's offer.

Lloyds Bank Donation – 28/06/2023

One of our volunteers at the Arlington Bluebell arranged a Lloyds bank match funding donation of £500.00.

More Radio – Child of Sussex Awards 15th July

ESFCA had once again sponsored the Gold Award at More Radio's Child of Sussex Awards. Listeners are asked to nominate children that deserve to be recognised in a host of categories, the Gold Award allows a child to be nominated, but whose story does not fit these categories. ESFCA took a table at the awards ceremony and Susanne Beesley (Chair), Mark Thornborough (Vice Chair), Sandra Maylam (Trustee), Christine Phillips (Trustee) hosted our distinguished guests Dame Jacqueline Wilson (Patron) & her partner Trish, Cllr Bob Bowdler, Andrew Gordon (Project Worker- Children's Services department), Emily Wells (foster carer) and Bethany (new office team member).

Dame Jacqueline Wilson presented the Gold Award on ESFCA's behalf and had photo opportunities with all award winners. The sponsorship was funded by ESFCA.

WI Presentation – 21st July

Trustees Ann Holder MBE and Anja Leeves gave a presentation to Rotherfield WI, discussing the association and fostering. The WI donated £50.00 as a thank you.

Jamie's Farm – 25 July

On w/c 25th July ESFCA funded a 5 day (4 night) residential trip to Jamie's at the foot of the South Downs near Lewes. Jamie's Farm is a Charity that equips young people to thrive using farming, family, therapy, and legacy. The children attending (and adults) worked on the farm, learning animal care, vegetable growing, cooking, woodland skills and found time to have fun & games. Each day included a check-in meeting to see how everybody was and during each day the children receive therapeutic support from the highly trained team at the farm. A group of 10 children and 5 adults (including a daily rotation of Social Workers) attended the farm. The residential week was funded by ESFCA.

Art Class – 30 July

(See entry – 9th April)

Through Care Team – Camping Trip – 9th August

During 2020, ESFCA committed to funding a camping trip for the Through Care Team, unfortunately this had to be postponed due to the Covid Pandemic and restrictions. However, 2022 was a great year and the trip to the Avon Tyrell Activity Centre went ahead. During the trip the young people were able to take part in archery, abseiling, climbing, canoeing, paddle boarding and a night walk. The trip took everyone outside of their comfort zone and ensured they all had to work together honing their social skills, communication, and self -esteem. 22 young people attended the trip aged 17 to 22 with 8 staff accompanying. The trip was Funded by ESFCA.

YPWF – Chessington World of Adventures Trip – 13 August

ESFCA was very happy to sponsor a day trip for the Young People Who Foster (YPWF) group allowing them to take a few hours away for themselves. Young people Who Foster share their home and their parents with fostered children and make lots of sacrifices while supporting looked after children. The YPWF is a support group that allows these amazing young people to get together with and talk freely with other children sharing their homes. Trips like this are an opportunity for the foster carers to reward their children for their continued support. 25 Young People attended the trip, accompanied with 6 adults made up of social workers and support workers.

PGL – Osmington Bay 26 - 28 August

This was the second PGL residential trip, this one was for LAC 11 and over. Once again the residential was held at the Osmington Bay PGL camp (in Dorset), travelling with Worthing Coaches. The activities included raft building, Jacob's ladder, zip wire, archery, low level ropes, rifle shooting and climbing. 25 children (young adults) attended, accompanied by 10 adults, made up of trustees, carers, and social workers. The trip was funded by the 3-year grant (£30,000) from BBC Children in Need.

UASC – London Trip 1st September

ESFCA was once again proud to support the UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children) with a trip to London. 25 children (young adults) and 4 UASC team members visited the key tourist areas travelling by river taxi & underground. This trip is a great opportunity for these children to build friendships (the UASC are some of the most isolated in the service, with no family networks), to have fun and to create a connection with the country they have chosen to settle. The trip was funded by ESFCA and included travel, entry fees, food & drink.

Art Class – 10TH September

(See entry – 9th April)

Jamie's Farm -Day camp- 24 September

Jamie's Farm (Lewes) approached ESFCA with the opportunity of running a series of day camps through September and October. The days would differ from the residential trips and concentrated on woodland crafts & cooking (outside). 8 children attended 4 Saturdays across September & October accompanied with 2 adults (1 carer & 1 trustee rotating on each visit). This was an exploratory venture to see if this was a viable opportunity for future visits. ESFCA funded the visits.

Eastbourne Soapbox Race 25th September

Once again, ESFCA was very excited to take part in the 2nd Eastbourne Soapbox race. Volunteers helped marshal the course, keeping roads closed near the finish line and ensuring there were safe routes in for emergency vehicles if needed. This event is a fundraising activity and Eastbourne Borough Council Events Team donate £100.00, thanking us for our support.

CBeebies Pantomime – 30th September

BBC CBeebies (BBC children's television) donated over 70 tickets to their dress rehearsal of their Pantomime "Dick Whittington and his Cat". The Kids & Family production team (CBeebies) took two days at the Eastbourne Congress Theatre to rehearse their pantomime, the show would be filmed later in a theatre in London. The production had lots of guest appearances from the CBeebies tv channel and was an overwhelming success with the foster families attending. We were very fortunate to receive another group of tickets kindly donated by our friends at Eastbourne Theatres, over 130 children and carers were able to attend. All the tickets were donated free by BBC CBeebies & Eastbourne Theatres.

Jamie's Day Camp (2nd day) 1st October

(See entry – 24th September)

Jamie's Day Camp (3rd day) 8th October

(See entry – 24th September)

Art Class -17th October

(See entry – 9th April)

PGL Bowling – 17th October

During the PGL trip in August, the children were not able to hold their end of trip awards (at the end of each PGL trip, the children are celebrated, highlighting their successes and achievements). The decision was made to create a small trip to the Eastbourne 10 pin bowling alley, allowing the children (young adults) to have a small reunion and hold the PGL celebration. The children bowled two games, had a light lunch, and then received their certificates and medals. This event was funded by ESFCA covering the costs of the bowling, refreshments, and awards.

Jamie's Day Camp (4th – final day) 22nd October

(See entry – 24th September)

Beachy Head 10K – 22nd October

On Saturday 22nd October ESFCA volunteers braved the elements once again and marshalled the Beachy Head 10K. 12 volunteers took their positions ensuring the runners taking part got back to the finish line safely. Though a fun event to take part in, it is also a fund raising as Eastbourne Borough Council Events Team donate £200.00 for our support.

Baby & Toddler Group – 3rd November

Thursday 3rd November saw a welcome return to our Baby & Toddler group. Foster carers with LAC under the age of 5 can meet up in a safe & secure environment. Over 5 foster carers were able to attend with their children which was funded by ESFCA including costs for attending (entrance fee) and refreshments.

Wine & Whisky Tasting – Fundraiser – 12th November

Eastbourne Roundtable (32) held a Wine & Whisky tasting evening raising money for ESFCA and other charities. The event was attended by Susanne Beesley (Chair) who gave a brief speech talking about the association and the work it does in support of foster carers across East Sussex. The event was a great success, and we thank the members of the Eastbourne Roundtable (32) for their support and generous donation of £500.00.

Annual General Meeting – 14th November

On Monday 14th November, ESFCA held its Annual General Meeting (AGM). The event is attended by trustees, members, patron's, friends of ESFCA, Children's Services managers, social workers & support workers. Over the year we had three trustees step down, Mark Thornborough, (vice chair) Lysette Grosvenor (Treasurer) and Ruma Smith. At the AGM we received nominations for Michael Kim Phillips, Veronica Archer, Emily Wells, and Sam Turner to become trustees. All nominations were accepted. It was also an opportunity to say goodbye to Teresa Lavelle-Hill (joint head of service- Children's Services Department).

Christmas Party – 4th December

Sunday 4th was party time for our foster families. Once again we were supported by Soroptimist's UK (Lewes & Eastbourne), who donated their time & gifts for the children to give their careers. There was a disco and party games throughout the afternoon and a visit by Father Christmas delivering an early present for all the children attending. Over 70 children attended the party which was funded by ESFCA covering costs for food and entertainment and the venue was donated by the Kings Centre, who we are truly thankful for their continued support.

Ann Buchan Award – 4th December

During January 2022 ESFCA trustees and members lost a dear friend, Anne Buchan had been a trustee since 2019 and before that a much-loved social worker. Anne was a true champion for children and young people who foster.

One of her greatest skills was her ability to make foster carers feel valued and we wanted to honour Annes memory with an Award. With Anne's families blessing we created an award that would recognise a child/ young adult who has shown exceptional care and support towards their foster sibling/s. The Award was presented to Kieran Henderson during the Christmas Party by Stuart Buchan (Anne's husband) and Penny (Anne's Daughter).

Christmas Carol Service – 5th December

Our friends, The Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association joined masonic lodges across Sussex to hold a Christmas Carol Service at St Saviours Church in Eastbourne with the aim of raising money for ESFCA and the St Saviours Church Organ fund. Susanne Beesley attended the event and gave a brief speech on ESFCA and the support the association gives to our foster carers over East Sussex.

More Radio – Toy Appeal – 9th December

Every Christmas, More Radio collects toys and gifts for underprivileged children living in Sussex. ESFCA is honoured to be amongst the charities and organisations that More Radio donates these toys, helping ensure they reach the neediest of children. The donation of toys and gifts are distributed to children coming into care during December and January as well as the children of the young adults under the care of the through care team.

Art Class – 10th December

(See entry – 9th April)

EBMR – Santa Run – 18th December

Eastbourne Motorcycle Rideout (EBMR) took to the roads dressed a Santa Claus, Mrs Clause, Elf, and reindeer continuing their annual Santa run. EBMR is a group of motorcycle enthusiasts who meet regularly and ride together, each Christmas they dress up and ride across East Sussex donating toys to the children in Eastbourne District Hospital and Hastings Conquest Hospital. During the Santa Run they also donate to ESFCA.

Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association – 18th December

Once again the Widows Sons Masonic Bikers generously donated to ESFCA, gifting £350.00 to go towards the annual Pantomime trip.

Christmas Quiz – 21st December

For a second year ESFCA's community Partners at the Berwick Inn held a Christmas Quiz to raise funds for future projects. The Quiz raised over £230.00.

Backpack Donations – December

Our friends from the DWP (and their family & friends) once again donated over 220 backpacks (gift bags) for children coming into care. Each bag is filled with gifts (notebooks, pens/ pencils, socks, pyjamas, toiletries, and toys).

Throughcare team – Drusilla's Xmas Trip – December

This Christmas ESFCA committed to supporting the Throughcare Team take some of their young mothers to Drusilla's with their children. The trip involved taking 10 care leavers and 6 children (there is no charge for children under the age of 2). ESFCA provided £390.40 covering the entry cost for the care leaver and child attending.

Throughcare team – Xmas Party's – December

Each Year the Through Care Team provide two parties for young care leavers. The party's take place in Eastbourne and Hastings and allow the care leavers to celebrate the holidays, have some fun and receive a few gifts. ESFCA donates a large range of gifts for over 70 young care leavers as well as a range of gifts for the children of care leavers.

Pantomime – 7th January 2023

We secured over 170 tickets for this year's production of Aladdin at the Devonshire Park Theatre. These tickets were subsidised for our members, allowing of foster families to enjoy the show at a much lower price.

Corporate Parent Panel – 20th January

ESFCA Chair – Susanne Beesley and founder trustee Tina Henderson presented at the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) – Corporate Parenting Panel. Representing the foster carers across East Sussex and the work ESFCA performs on their behalf along with our community partners, strengthening our relationship with ESCC.

Financial review

The financial year 2022-2023 saw the retirement of Lysette Grosvenor after long service as trustee and treasurer of ESFCA. The system of spreadsheet entries she had created has been maintained under the current treasurer, Kim Phillips who joined the Charity in October 2022. The transfer of the role of treasurer took place smoothly and Kim enjoyed a period of training and orientation under Lysette's guidance so that by end December 2022, the system was operating independently under new direction. The current Treasurer and the Trustees of ESFCA wish to record their appreciation of Lysette's efforts and her professional approach which is still available to the association if Lysette is approached as a consultant.

The ESFCA continued to bank with Barclays bank during the 2022-2023 financial year. The services used were chiefly online and the payments continued to require dual authorisation. On the whole, the level of service provided by the bank was good. The ESFCA maintained two accounts for the financial year, namely the Community Account for everyday transactions(Two signatures are required for every outgoing transaction), and a Reserve Account.
The Reserve Account balance has remained constant throughout the 2022-2023 financial year for the following reasons:

i. The reserve balance is maintained to provide a safety net for the provision of regular annual events such as holiday activities, PGL weekends, The Christmas Party and Pantomime; should the expected donations and grants that help fund these events not be forthcoming for whatever reason.
ii. The reserve balance also ensures the continued payment of salaried staff as well as pensions and HMRC revenue payments.
iii. The Reserve balance also ensures that if the Charity is wound up or placed in dormancy, ESFCA is able to pay redundancies, accounting, auditing and HMRC costs that ensue.

Certain Funds donated to the charity are ring fenced for specific purposes and activities. Children in Need contributions have been ring fenced to support PGL activities. An administrative grant is made annually by the East Sussex County Council to cover wages, pensions and administrative costs for employed members of the charities administration. The advocacy role of supporting ESFCA members in disputes is also supported by an ESFCA grant which is duly ring fenced for this purpose only.

Salary and Pension support in the accounts has been provide by Dominic Hill of Eastbourne and the Trustees have been pleased to maintain this association during this financial year.

Procedural changes have been made to the way financial information is distributed to Trustees in preparation for monthly meetings and for general understanding of the accounts. The focus has been on informing trustees of key monthly data in advance of meetings, thus facilitation discussion and debate and the fielding of questions. Thus a printed statement of the major movements on accounts over the preceding month, is delivered to trustees in advance of the monthly trustees meeting. The statement is distributed on paper and electronically for those attending meetings on Zoom.

There has been a move to make expenditure under the categories of mileage and expenditure reflective of actual amounts spent by encouraging trustees to submit mileage and expenditure claims where previously they have tended to not submit them as a charitable act. The charity is aware that trustees travel considerable distances in carrying out the charities activities and a more realistic reflection of this should be reflected in the accounts.

ESFCA continues store both new toys and back packs for the benefit of fostered children accessed through their respective Social Workers.

In November 2022, the Trustee body Committee of ESFCA launched the Roadmap "towards the future" initiative which will involve Trustees meeting over several key sessions to reflect on the charities total activity from core values to its internal operational and administrative structure and procedure and its outreach to the fostering community at large. This "future's thinking" exercise will reconnect the charities core purpose and mission with the changing world of fostering and further prepare us for the challenges ahead. The finance department is central to this exercise and the optimal outcome of this review is a new business plan to take this vital charity into the future as an effective support for Foster Carers and their families and the UK Foster Carer world at large.

Kim Phillips
Treasurer
ESFCA

Chairperson's Review

Dear All,

I am delighted to present the Chair's Review for the year 2022-23, reflecting on our journey through the year. Once again thanks to our dedicated team of trustee's, foster families, and staff we have managed to fill the

year with events and activities that fulfil our mission of providing a supportive environment for our looked after children (LAC), foster carers and young people who foster (YPWF).

Over the past year we have continued to enhance our support for our foster families and worked with our community partners, fostering stronger collaborations to better serve the needs of our looked after children.

At the heart of ESFCA are our foster families who open their hearts and homes to children in need. Looked after Children (like every child) need and deserve to feel loved and cared for. Many of these children will have experienced some type of emotional trauma and will be dealing with the aftermath of neglect or abuse in its many guises.

ESFCA continued support does not rest at activities and events. We also continue to support our foster carers with advice, advocacy, and access to a monthly surgery where they can meet managers from the local authority (with an ESFCA trustee- if requested).

The financial crises we all face started to bite at the beginning the financial year, first with the cost of energy and fuel, moving onto the general cost of living and then with the added concern over interest rates. ESFCA started and continues to lobby East Sussex County Council (ESCC) on behalf of the foster carers for support in these testing times. (At the time of writing, ESFCA is waiting for a response from ESCC in relation to the guidance from the central government and foster carer renumeration).

No child (especially foster children) should have to face the distressing sight of having their belongings packed into black plastic bags, when being moved either from birth family or to new foster placements. ESFCA are proud to continue to run an initiative that helps restore pride to the children entering the care system and has stock of luggage available to social workers and assessment teams ready for children that have had to be moved as an emergency or travelling to respite.

This year saw several changes on the board of trustees as our Vice Chair Mark Thornborough and treasurer Lysette Grosvenor stepped down from their roles and from the board of trustees. Marks presence, his drive for PGL as well as his sense of humour will be missed. Lysette was an excellent treasurer, and we could always relay on her accuracy as well as reediness to lend a hand wherever needed. We are pleased that both Mark and Lysette will stay on a of friend of ESFCA. However, at the Annual General Meeting we had four new trustees join the association, Kim Phillips has adopted the role of treasurer. The transition between Lysette and Kim went very smoothy and there was no disruption for the association. We also welcomed Veronica Archer, Emily Wells and Samantha Turner to the board of trustees, all three are current foster carers and have a great understanding of the issues foster families face as well as the growing cost of living crisis we all face.

As mentioned, our year was full of events and activities (see achievements 2022-2023), starting with our art classes for looked after children and young people who foster and finishing with our annual trip to the pantomime. We would however like to highlight our annual visit to the Arlington Bluebell Walk and thank John McCutchan for his continued support. Which once again gave us a fantastic opportunity to not only raise funds, but also to raise awareness of our association and fostering.

Our thanks also go out to More radio and their listeners for their generous donation of toys at Christmas along with Widows & Sons masonic lodge for their annual donation towards our Pantomime. Children in Need continued their support by funding our residential trips to PGL, and this year we took two groups (over 60 children) to the Osmington Bay centre. We worked closely with Jamie's farm and held a residential week for siblings separated by virtue of being in different placements and then again with Jamie's Farm with some experimental weekend day camps allowing small groups of children to take part in woodcrafts.

As you will read, ESFCA managed to create another year full of events and we are forever thankful to all our community partners, donors, and volunteers. Without them stepping up and supporting us not only financially, but with their time, very few of our activities would happen.

A special thanks to all our community partners who continue to donate funding, equipment, gifts, and their time, and ESCC who give a grant to help with our running costs, access to a hot desk and office facilities as well as support on joint projects.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our trustees, Ann Holder, Tina Henderson, Sandra Maylam, Ru Petraitis – Williams, Anja Leeves, Christine Phillips, Kim Phillips, Veronica Archer, Emily Wells and Samantha Turner. I am very grateful for their continued support; the association is more than the sum of its parts with their dedication to the association. My thanks to the office team Bethany and Nigel who assist the trustees and members with the day-to-day tasks, and to our members who volunteer at the events and activities ensuring the show goes on.

It takes a village to raise a child, and every contribution, no matter how small, makes a difference. Each act of kindness is a steppingstone towards a brighter future for the children in our care.

Kind regards,
Susanne Beesley
Chairperson of ESFCA

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Independent examiner's report to the trustees on the unaudited financial statements of East Sussex Foster Care Association.

I report on the accounts of East Sussex Foster Care Association for the year ended 31 March 2023 set out on pages 2 to 19.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and independent examiner
The charity's trustees (who are also the directors of the company for purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), and that an independent examination is needed. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's statement
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
   - to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Peter D Hill FCA
On Behalf Of
Dominic Hill Associates Limited
Archer House
Britland Estate
Northbourne Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN22 8PW

East Sussex Foster Care Association
Statement of financial activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account)
For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Incoming Resources					
Donations		14,696	-	14,696	3,446
Core funding		20,000	-	20,000	20,000
Advocacy support		-	1,913	1,913	2,697
Apprentice scheme grant		-	6,000	6,000	-
Fundraising – inc Bluebell walk		3,733	-	3,733	1,588
Christmas events		896	-	896	-
Keep it reel		-	75	75	-
Jamies farm		430	-	430	-
PGL		-	735	735	10,430
Pantomine		1,490	-	1,490	2,329
CiN youth		-	-	-	3,883
Event contributions		459	-	459	1,630
Interest		87	-	87	4
Total incoming resources		**41,791**	**8,723**	**50,514**	**46,007**
Resources expended					
Insurance		579	-	579	567
General running expenses		4,307	-	4,307	4,079
Pantomime		3,330	-	3,330	3,900
PGL		-	6,351	6,351	13,267
Through care team		2,692	-	2,692	4,796
Keep it reel		-	-	-	-
Jamies farm		6,789	-	6,789	-
Events and projects		2,118	-	2,118	6,123
CiN youth		-	-	-	4,014
Fundraising		704	-	704	134
Intuitive Horse		480	-	480	480
Advocacy support		-	4,563	4,563	1,214
Salaries & pensions		19,816	-	19,816	14,108
Christmas events		1,017	-	1,017	980
Accountancy fees		1,905	-	1,905	1,644
Total outgoing resources		**43,737**	**10,914**	**54,651**	**55,305**
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/ Net income/(expenditure) for the year		(1,946)	(2,191)	(4,137)	(9,298)
Transfers		2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Total funds brought forward		72,551	23,393	95,944	105,242
Total resources		72,605	19,202	91,807	95,944

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Balance sheet
As at 31 March 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £	2022 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets			-		-
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		93,487		97,285	
Debtors & prepayments	2	18		33	
		93,505		97,318	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	3	(1,698)		(1,374)	
			91,807		95,944
Net Assets			91,807		95,944
Funds					
Unrestricted funds	4		72,605		72,551
Restricted funds	5		19,202		23,393
Total Funds	6		91,807		95,944

Directors statements required by the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2023

In approving these financial statements as trustees of the company we hereby confirm:

(a) that for the year stated above the company was entitled to the exemption conferred by section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 ;

(b) that no notice has been deposited at the registered office of the company pursuant to section 476 of the Companies Act 2006 requesting that an audit be conducted for the year ended 31 March 2023.

(c) that we acknowledge our responsibilities for:

(1) ensuring that the company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006, and

(2) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the provisions of the Companies Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 1A 'Small Entities' of Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The financial statements were approved by the board on 13-11-23 and signed on its behalf by:

Mrs S Beesley
Director and chair of trustees

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Notes to financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year and the preceding year.

1.1. Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 1A 'Small Entities' of Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

1.2. Going concern

The trustees are of the view that the charity is a going concern and will continue for the foreseeable future.

1.3. Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Voluntary income is received by way of donations and gifts and is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included.

Grants and incoming resources from charitable activities are recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are receivable.

Income from investments is included in the year in which it is receivable.

1.3. Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT, which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

1.4. Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Expenditure on individual items of office and computer equipment costing less than £5,000 is written off in the period in which the expenditure incurred.

1.5. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity.
Restricted funds are specifically for particular areas and projects undertaken by the charity.

1.6. Average number of employees

The average number of employees during the year was 2. There are also a number of volunteer support workers.

Notes to financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

2. Debtors and Prepayments

	2023 £	2022 £
PAYE debtor	18	33
Prepayments	-	-
Accrued income	-	-
Overpaid bank charges	-	-
	18	33

3. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Accountancy	1,593	1,374
Pension	105	-
	1,698	1,374

4. Unrestricted funds

	Balance at 01-Apr-22 £	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Balance at 31-Mar-23
General fund	72,551	21,791	17,130	(4,607)	72,605
Designated fund	-	20,000	26,607	6,607	-
	72,551	41,791	43,737	2,000	72,605

5. Restricted funds

	Balance at 01-Apr-22 £	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Balance at 31-Mar-23
Advocacy support	8,088	1,913	4,563	-	5,438
CiN PGL events	6,933	735	6,351	-	1,317
Apprenticeship scheme	6,000	6,000	-	-	12,000
Keep it Reel	2,372	75	-	(2,000)	447
CiN youth	-	-	-	-	-
	23,393	8,723	10,914	(2,000)	19,202

6. Analysis of net assets by fund

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Current assets	74,303	19,202	93,505	97,318
Current liabilities	(1,698)	-	(1,698)	(1,374)
	72,605	19,202	91,807	95,944

7. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions other than expenditure reimbursement made to trustees. These payments were supported by documentary evidence such as receipts, and approved for payment by a third party.

Charity number: 1092668
Company number: 04216137

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Directors' report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

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Charity number	1092668
Company registration number	4216137
Registered office	4th Floor St Mark's House 14 Upperton Road Eastbourne East Sussex BN21 1EP
Independent Examiner	Dominic Hill Associates Limited Archer House Britland Estate Northbourne Road Eastbourne East Sussex BN22 8PW

The directors present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Structure, governance and management

The charity is an incorporated association governed by its memorandum and articles of association, together with its constitution.

The following persons served as directors/trustees during the year;

Mrs S Beesley BA (hons) - Chair
Mrs A H D Holder MBE
Mr M Thornborough – (Retired Nov 2022)
Ms T M Henderson
Ms L Grosvenor – Treasurer (Retired Nov 2022)
Mrs A Leeves
Mrs S Maylam
Mrs R Petraitis-Williams
Ms R Smith – (Retired Nov 2022)
Mrs C Phillips
Mr M K Phillips – Treasurer (Appointed Nov 2022)
Mrs V Archer – (Appointed Nov 2022)
Mrs E Wells – (Appointed Nov 2022)
Mrs S Turner – (Appointed Nov 2022)

Trustees are appointed at the AGM with there being a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve. At the AGM one third of the trustees must stand down, often the longest serving trustees stand down first, but may choose to stand for re-election. All trustees must be members of East Sussex Foster Care Association and members can nominate themselves for election.

Objectives of the charity

The objectives of East Sussex Foster Care Association as set out in the Memorandum of Association are to promote all or any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community mainly but not exclusively within the County of East Sussex and in particular the advancement of the education of the public in matters relating to substitute care. The education, training and support of foster carers and their families, the relief of Looked After Children, their Carers, and their Carers' families by providing facilities and services in the interests of social welfare with a view to improving their conditions of life.

The Association is to support East Sussex Foster Carers and their families in their efforts to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children in their care by working in partnership with all appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies. It undertakes this task by offering a range of events, advocacy, training, and support for the both the families and the children they care for. Its membership is comprised of East Sussex Local Authority registered Foster Carers and the managing group is formed by elected Trustees/Directors' from within that membership.

Activities, achievements, and performance

ESFCA is proud to help different groups of young people that operate within the care system.

Young People Who Foster (YPWF)

These are the biological and adopted children of foster families who share their home and parents with fostered children. They make lots of sacrifices to support looked after children, and there is rarely a complaint. This group allows them to have voice and an opportunity to share their experiences inside a safe environment.

Children in Care Council (CiCC)

This council represents the looked after children in foster families. Children of different ages sit on the council and help provide a voice for those that need it.

Through Care Team

These are the young adults leaving the care system who need support getting their start in life. Aged between 16-25 the young people are supported by a specialist team of social workers who also provide financial, legal and wellbeing support.

Make It Reel project.

East Sussex Foster Care Association has a special pot of money in a restricted fund available to support LAC. The money has been donated from The Reel Poster Company and they would like the money to go directly to benefit LAC where a small amount of money could make a real difference.

Lobbying Government & Local Authorities

Our Trustees are actively engaged with other organisations in networking, debating, promoting, and raising the profile of Foster Carers in East Sussex. We lobby Government departments and attend any meetings or debates that enable us to speak up for our members and our Looked After Children (LAC).

Independent allegation advice & support

We continue to receive funds from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) as an annual top up which is held in a restricted fund. This Allegations fund is used to buy in independent supposed as required to assist any of our member foster carers who may be subject to an allegation of concerns around standards of care. These investigations can be complex and lengthy and can feel very isolating to a foster family as they are unable to discuss many of the issues with others due to confidentiality.

Monthly Fostering Surgeries with Heads of Department

ESFCA hold monthly Surgeries one evening a month whereby Foster Carers can bring to the table a difficult, complex, or issue that needs a fast-track resolution from senior managers in Children's and Fostering Services. A trustee will attend the meeting to offer support to the Foster Carer in presenting their problem. This can really help all parties to find a way forward or air complaints in a face to face and professional manner.

Achievements 2022 – 2023

Art Classes 9th April.

In April, ESFCA held its first art class, open to all looked after children and young people who foster. The classes are a joint venture between ESFCA and Maureen Wells (Art teaching consultant). The class allows children of all ages to spend a couple of hours painting & drawing with Maureen guiding and supporting them, this also allows the carers to have a couple of hours respite. ESFCA funds the art supplies for the classes and subsidises the hire of a venue, carers pay £5.00 per child to help cover the cost of venue hire and Maureen donates her time for free along with a volunteer trustee or member of staff. The lessons aim to be once a month; however, this is dependent on Maureen and the venues availability. Classes can vary on size between 4-11 children.

Easter Eggs – Throughcare Team – 17 April.

During the Easter holiday season ESFCA paid for and donated 197 Easter Eggs to the Through Care Team. The eggs were given to the young adults living in supported lodgings or on their own. ESFCA made the donation from their own funds.

ESFCA received a donation of 50 Easter eggs from our friends in Sainsbury's (Hampden Park). The long-term community partnership with Sainsbury's continues to grow stronger, and this year 50 children under the ESFCA umbrella received chocolate treats. ESFCA thanks Sainsbury's for its generous donation and continued support.

EID Celebration 2nd May.

ESFCA are proud to have supported once again the Through Care Team and the Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking children (UASC) team by funding a feast to celebrate EID (a feast that celebrates the end of Ramadan). Over 40 young people attended the celebration and ESFCA donated £340.00 towards the cost of the food.

Bluebell Walk 9th, 10th & 17th May.

The arrival of spring saw ESFCA back at the Arlington Bluebell Walk completing two duty days running the refreshments in the Bluebell barn and marshalling the walk itself. Unlike 2021, there were no Covid restrictions to the walk which meant a larger number of visitors attended. The strong community partnership between ESFCA & Bluebell Walk led us to take in a third day at short notice due to another charity cancelling at the last minute. The three days raised over £1,900 (including donations).

PGL – Osmington Bay 28th – 30th May

With no Covid restrictions in place, ESFCA were able to run a residential trip for LAC aged 11 and under. The decision was made to take the children to the Osmington Bay PGL camp (in Dorset), allowing the children a sense of adventure, after tough couple of years of uncertainty. The group travelled to and from the camp by coach (Worthing Coaches) and were accompanied/ supervised by volunteer trustees, carers, and social workers. Activities included raft building, Jacob's ladder, zip wire, archery, low level ropes, rifle shooting and climbing, with evening entertainment including a campfire, capture the flag and some free time to enjoy the toys & sports equipment taken with the group. 25 children attended, accompanied by 10 adults. The trip was funded by the 3-year grant (£30,000) from BBC Children in Need.

Art Class – 28th May

(See entry – 9th April)

Family First Nights (Mousetrap Theatre Projects) – Summer

Mousetrap Theatre Projects (now known as Go Live Theatre Projects) is a theatre charity dedicated to making theatre accessible and affordable to families and young people. Family First Nights is their annual summer programme which offers families with blended backgrounds an opportunity to see live theatre shows for just £8.00 per ticket. ESFCA acted as the referring organisation and all bookings & payments had to go through us. The event was subsidised by Mousetrap Theatre Projects and a payment from the cares attending. Over 8 foster families took part in this year's offer.

Lloyds Bank Donation – 28/06/2023

One of our volunteers at the Arlington Bluebell arranged a Lloyds bank match funding donation of £500.00.

More Radio – Child of Sussex Awards 15th July

ESFCA had once again sponsored the Gold Award at More Radio's Child of Sussex Awards. Listeners are asked to nominate children that deserve to be recognised in a host of categories, the Gold Award allows a child to be nominated, but whose story does not fit these categories. ESFCA took a table at the awards ceremony and Susanne Beesley (Chair), Mark Thornborough (Vice Chair), Sandra Maylam (Trustee), Christine Phillips (Trustee) hosted our distinguished guests Dame Jacqueline Wilson (Patron) & her partner Trish, Cllr Bob Bowdler, Andrew Gordon (Project Worker- Children's Services department), Emily Wells (foster carer) and Bethany (new office team member).

Dame Jacqueline Wilson presented the Gold Award on ESFCA's behalf and had photo opportunities with all award winners. The sponsorship was funded by ESFCA.

WI Presentation – 21st July

Trustees Ann Holder MBE and Anja Leeves gave a presentation to Rotherfield WI, discussing the association and fostering. The WI donated £50.00 as a thank you.

Jamie's Farm – 25 July

On w/c 25th July ESFCA funded a 5 day (4 night) residential trip to Jamie's at the foot of the South Downs near Lewes. Jamie's Farm is a Charity that equips young people to thrive using farming, family, therapy, and legacy. The children attending (and adults) worked on the farm, learning animal care, vegetable growing, cooking, woodland skills and found time to have fun & games. Each day included a check-in meeting to see how everybody was and during each day the children receive therapeutic support from the highly trained team at the farm. A group of 10 children and 5 adults (including a daily rotation of Social Workers) attended the farm. The residential week was funded by ESFCA.

Art Class – 30 July

(See entry – 9th April)

Through Care Team – Camping Trip – 9th August

During 2020, ESFCA committed to funding a camping trip for the Through Care Team, unfortunately this had to be postponed due to the Covid Pandemic and restrictions. However, 2022 was a great year and the trip to the Avon Tyrell Activity Centre went ahead. During the trip the young people were able to take part in archery, abseiling, climbing, canoeing, paddle boarding and a night walk. The trip took everyone outside of their comfort zone and ensured they all had to work together honing their social skills, communication, and self -esteem. 22 young people attended the trip aged 17 to 22 with 8 staff accompanying. The trip was Funded by ESFCA.

YPWF – Chessington World of Adventures Trip – 13 August

ESFCA was very happy to sponsor a day trip for the Young People Who Foster (YPWF) group allowing them to take a few hours away for themselves. Young people Who Foster share their home and their parents with fostered children and make lots of sacrifices while supporting looked after children. The YPWF is a support group that allows these amazing young people to get together with and talk freely with other children sharing their homes. Trips like this are an opportunity for the foster carers to reward their children for their continued support. 25 Young People attended the trip, accompanied with 6 adults made up of social workers and support workers.

PGL – Osmington Bay 26 - 28 August

This was the second PGL residential trip, this one was for LAC 11 and over. Once again the residential was held at the Osmington Bay PGL camp (in Dorset), travelling with Worthing Coaches. The activities included raft building, Jacob's ladder, zip wire, archery, low level ropes, rifle shooting and climbing. 25 children (young adults) attended, accompanied by 10 adults, made up of trustees, carers, and social workers. The trip was funded by the 3-year grant (£30,000) from BBC Children in Need.

UASC – London Trip 1st September

ESFCA was once again proud to support the UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children) with a trip to London. 25 children (young adults) and 4 UASC team members visited the key tourist areas travelling by river taxi & underground. This trip is a great opportunity for these children to build friendships (the UASC are some of the most isolated in the service, with no family networks), to have fun and to create a connection with the country they have chosen to settle. The trip was funded by ESFCA and included travel, entry fees, food & drink.

Art Class – 10TH September

(See entry – 9th April)

Jamie's Farm -Day camp- 24 September

Jamie's Farm (Lewes) approached ESFCA with the opportunity of running a series of day camps through September and October. The days would differ from the residential trips and concentrated on woodland crafts & cooking (outside). 8 children attended 4 Saturdays across September & October accompanied with 2 adults (1 carer & 1 trustee rotating on each visit). This was an exploratory venture to see if this was a viable opportunity for future visits. ESFCA funded the visits.

Eastbourne Soapbox Race 25th September

Once again, ESFCA was very excited to take part in the 2nd Eastbourne Soapbox race. Volunteers helped marshal the course, keeping roads closed near the finish line and ensuring there were safe routes in for emergency vehicles if needed. This event is a fundraising activity and Eastbourne Borough Council Events Team donate £100.00, thanking us for our support.

CBeebies Pantomime – 30th September

BBC CBeebies (BBC children's television) donated over 70 tickets to their dress rehearsal of their Pantomime "Dick Whittington and his Cat". The Kids & Family production team (CBeebies) took two days at the Eastbourne Congress Theatre to rehearse their pantomime, the show would be filmed later in a theatre in London. The production had lots of guest appearances from the CBeebies tv channel and was an overwhelming success with the foster families attending. We were very fortunate to receive another group of tickets kindly donated by our friends at Eastbourne Theatres, over 130 children and carers were able to attend. All the tickets were donated free by BBC CBeebies & Eastbourne Theatres.

Jamie's Day Camp (2nd day) 1st October

(See entry – 24th September)

Jamie's Day Camp (3rd day) 8th October

(See entry – 24th September)

Art Class -17th October

(See entry – 9th April)

PGL Bowling – 17th October

During the PGL trip in August, the children were not able to hold their end of trip awards (at the end of each PGL trip, the children are celebrated, highlighting their successes and achievements). The decision was made to create a small trip to the Eastbourne 10 pin bowling alley, allowing the children (young adults) to have a small reunion and hold the PGL celebration. The children bowled two games, had a light lunch, and then received their certificates and medals. This event was funded by ESFCA covering the costs of the bowling, refreshments, and awards.

Jamie's Day Camp (4th – final day) 22nd October

(See entry – 24th September)

Beachy Head 10K – 22nd October

On Saturday 22nd October ESFCA volunteers braved the elements once again and marshalled the Beachy Head 10K. 12 volunteers took their positions ensuring the runners taking part got back to the finish line safely. Though a fun event to take part in, it is also a fund raising as Eastbourne Borough Council Events Team donate £200.00 for our support.

Baby & Toddler Group – 3rd November

Thursday 3rd November saw a welcome return to our Baby & Toddler group. Foster carers with LAC under the age of 5 can meet up in a safe & secure environment. Over 5 foster carers were able to attend with their children which was funded by ESFCA including costs for attending (entrance fee) and refreshments.

Wine & Whisky Tasting – Fundraiser – 12th November

Eastbourne Roundtable (32) held a Wine & Whisky tasting evening raising money for ESFCA and other charities. The event was attended by Susanne Beesley (Chair) who gave a brief speech talking about the association and the work it does in support of foster carers across East Sussex. The event was a great success, and we thank the members of the Eastbourne Roundtable (32) for their support and generous donation of £500.00.

Annual General Meeting – 14th November

On Monday 14th November, ESFCA held its Annual General Meeting (AGM). The event is attended by trustees, members, patron's, friends of ESFCA, Children's Services managers, social workers & support workers. Over the year we had three trustees step down, Mark Thornborough, (vice chair) Lysette Grosvenor (Treasurer) and Ruma Smith. At the AGM we received nominations for Michael Kim Phillips, Veronica Archer, Emily Wells, and Sam Turner to become trustees. All nominations were accepted. It was also an opportunity to say goodbye to Teresa Lavelle-Hill (joint head of service- Children's Services Department).

Christmas Party – 4th December

Sunday 4th was party time for our foster families. Once again we were supported by Soroptimist's UK (Lewes & Eastbourne), who donated their time & gifts for the children to give their careers. There was a disco and party games throughout the afternoon and a visit by Father Christmas delivering an early present for all the children attending. Over 70 children attended the party which was funded by ESFCA covering costs for food and entertainment and the venue was donated by the Kings Centre, who we are truly thankful for their continued support.

Ann Buchan Award – 4th December

During January 2022 ESFCA trustees and members lost a dear friend, Anne Buchan had been a trustee since 2019 and before that a much-loved social worker. Anne was a true champion for children and young people who foster.

One of her greatest skills was her ability to make foster carers feel valued and we wanted to honour Annes memory with an Award. With Anne's families blessing we created an award that would recognise a child/ young adult who has shown exceptional care and support towards their foster sibling/s. The Award was presented to Kieran Henderson during the Christmas Party by Stuart Buchan (Anne's husband) and Penny (Anne's Daughter).

Christmas Carol Service – 5th December

Our friends, The Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association joined masonic lodges across Sussex to hold a Christmas Carol Service at St Saviours Church in Eastbourne with the aim of raising money for ESFCA and the St Saviours Church Organ fund. Susanne Beesley attended the event and gave a brief speech on ESFCA and the support the association gives to our foster carers over East Sussex.

More Radio – Toy Appeal – 9th December

Every Christmas, More Radio collects toys and gifts for underprivileged children living in Sussex. ESFCA is honoured to be amongst the charities and organisations that More Radio donates these toys, helping ensure they reach the neediest of children. The donation of toys and gifts are distributed to children coming into care during December and January as well as the children of the young adults under the care of the through care team.

Art Class – 10th December

(See entry – 9th April)

EBMR – Santa Run – 18th December

Eastbourne Motorcycle Rideout (EBMR) took to the roads dressed a Santa Claus, Mrs Clause, Elf, and reindeer continuing their annual Santa run. EBMR is a group of motorcycle enthusiasts who meet regularly and ride together, each Christmas they dress up and ride across East Sussex donating toys to the children in Eastbourne District Hospital and Hastings Conquest Hospital. During the Santa Run they also donate to ESFCA.

Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association – 18th December

Once again the Widows Sons Masonic Bikers generously donated to ESFCA, gifting £350.00 to go towards the annual Pantomime trip.

Christmas Quiz – 21st December

For a second year ESFCA's community Partners at the Berwick Inn held a Christmas Quiz to raise funds for future projects. The Quiz raised over £230.00.

Backpack Donations – December

Our friends from the DWP (and their family & friends) once again donated over 220 backpacks (gift bags) for children coming into care. Each bag is filled with gifts (notebooks, pens/ pencils, socks, pyjamas, toiletries, and toys).

Throughcare team – Drusilla's Xmas Trip – December

This Christmas ESFCA committed to supporting the Throughcare Team take some of their young mothers to Drusilla's with their children. The trip involved taking 10 care leavers and 6 children (there is no charge for children under the age of 2). ESFCA provided £390.40 covering the entry cost for the care leaver and child attending.

Throughcare team – Xmas Party's – December

Each Year the Through Care Team provide two parties for young care leavers. The party's take place in Eastbourne and Hastings and allow the care leavers to celebrate the holidays, have some fun and receive a few gifts. ESFCA donates a large range of gifts for over 70 young care leavers as well as a range of gifts for the children of care leavers.

Pantomime – 7th January 2023

We secured over 170 tickets for this year's production of Aladdin at the Devonshire Park Theatre. These tickets were subsidised for our members, allowing of foster families to enjoy the show at a much lower price.

Corporate Parent Panel – 20th January

ESFCA Chair – Susanne Beesley and founder trustee Tina Henderson presented at the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) – Corporate Parenting Panel. Representing the foster carers across East Sussex and the work ESFCA performs on their behalf along with our community partners, strengthening our relationship with ESCC.

Financial review

The financial year 2022-2023 saw the retirement of Lysette Grosvenor after long service as trustee and treasurer of ESFCA. The system of spreadsheet entries she had created has been maintained under the current treasurer, Kim Phillips who joined the Charity in October 2022. The transfer of the role of treasurer took place smoothly and Kim enjoyed a period of training and orientation under Lysette's guidance so that by end December 2022, the system was operating independently under new direction. The current Treasurer and the Trustees of ESFCA wish to record their appreciation of Lysette's efforts and her professional approach which is still available to the association if Lysette is approached as a consultant.

The ESFCA continued to bank with Barclays bank during the 2022-2023 financial year. The services used were chiefly online and the payments continued to require dual authorisation. On the whole, the level of service provided by the bank was good. The ESFCA maintained two accounts for the financial year, namely the Community Account for everyday transactions(Two signatures are required for every outgoing transaction), and a Reserve Account.
The Reserve Account balance has remained constant throughout the 2022-2023 financial year for the following reasons:

i. The reserve balance is maintained to provide a safety net for the provision of regular annual events such as holiday activities, PGL weekends, The Christmas Party and Pantomime; should the expected donations and grants that help fund these events not be forthcoming for whatever reason.
ii. The reserve balance also ensures the continued payment of salaried staff as well as pensions and HMRC revenue payments.
iii. The Reserve balance also ensures that if the Charity is wound up or placed in dormancy, ESFCA is able to pay redundancies, accounting, auditing and HMRC costs that ensue.

Certain Funds donated to the charity are ring fenced for specific purposes and activities. Children in Need contributions have been ring fenced to support PGL activities. An administrative grant is made annually by the East Sussex County Council to cover wages, pensions and administrative costs for employed members of the charities administration. The advocacy role of supporting ESFCA members in disputes is also supported by an ESFCA grant which is duly ring fenced for this purpose only.

Salary and Pension support in the accounts has been provide by Dominic Hill of Eastbourne and the Trustees have been pleased to maintain this association during this financial year.

Procedural changes have been made to the way financial information is distributed to Trustees in preparation for monthly meetings and for general understanding of the accounts. The focus has been on informing trustees of key monthly data in advance of meetings, thus facilitation discussion and debate and the fielding of questions. Thus a printed statement of the major movements on accounts over the preceding month, is delivered to trustees in advance of the monthly trustees meeting. The statement is distributed on paper and electronically for those attending meetings on Zoom.

There has been a move to make expenditure under the categories of mileage and expenditure reflective of actual amounts spent by encouraging trustees to submit mileage and expenditure claims where previously they have tended to not submit them as a charitable act. The charity is aware that trustees travel considerable distances in carrying out the charities activities and a more realistic reflection of this should be reflected in the accounts.

ESFCA continues store both new toys and back packs for the benefit of fostered children accessed through their respective Social Workers.

In November 2022, the Trustee body Committee of ESFCA launched the Roadmap "towards the future" initiative which will involve Trustees meeting over several key sessions to reflect on the charities total activity from core values to its internal operational and administrative structure and procedure and its outreach to the fostering community at large. This "future's thinking" exercise will reconnect the charities core purpose and mission with the changing world of fostering and further prepare us for the challenges ahead. The finance department is central to this exercise and the optimal outcome of this review is a new business plan to take this vital charity into the future as an effective support for Foster Carers and their families and the UK Foster Carer world at large.

Kim Phillips
Treasurer
ESFCA

Chairperson's Review

Dear All,

I am delighted to present the Chair's Review for the year 2022-23, reflecting on our journey through the year. Once again thanks to our dedicated team of trustee's, foster families, and staff we have managed to fill the

year with events and activities that fulfil our mission of providing a supportive environment for our looked after children (LAC), foster carers and young people who foster (YPWF).

Over the past year we have continued to enhance our support for our foster families and worked with our community partners, fostering stronger collaborations to better serve the needs of our looked after children.

At the heart of ESFCA are our foster families who open their hearts and homes to children in need. Looked after Children (like every child) need and deserve to feel loved and cared for. Many of these children will have experienced some type of emotional trauma and will be dealing with the aftermath of neglect or abuse in its many guises.

ESFCA continued support does not rest at activities and events. We also continue to support our foster carers with advice, advocacy, and access to a monthly surgery where they can meet managers from the local authority (with an ESFCA trustee- if requested).

The financial crises we all face started to bite at the beginning the financial year, first with the cost of energy and fuel, moving onto the general cost of living and then with the added concern over interest rates. ESFCA started and continues to lobby East Sussex County Council (ESCC) on behalf of the foster carers for support in these testing times. (At the time of writing, ESFCA is waiting for a response from ESCC in relation to the guidance from the central government and foster carer renumeration).

No child (especially foster children) should have to face the distressing sight of having their belongings packed into black plastic bags, when being moved either from birth family or to new foster placements. ESFCA are proud to continue to run an initiative that helps restore pride to the children entering the care system and has stock of luggage available to social workers and assessment teams ready for children that have had to be moved as an emergency or travelling to respite.

This year saw several changes on the board of trustees as our Vice Chair Mark Thornborough and treasurer Lysette Grosvenor stepped down from their roles and from the board of trustees. Marks presence, his drive for PGL as well as his sense of humour will be missed. Lysette was an excellent treasurer, and we could always relay on her accuracy as well as reediness to lend a hand wherever needed. We are pleased that both Mark and Lysette will stay on a of friend of ESFCA. However, at the Annual General Meeting we had four new trustees join the association, Kim Phillips has adopted the role of treasurer. The transition between Lysette and Kim went very smoothy and there was no disruption for the association. We also welcomed Veronica Archer, Emily Wells and Samantha Turner to the board of trustees, all three are current foster carers and have a great understanding of the issues foster families face as well as the growing cost of living crisis we all face.

As mentioned, our year was full of events and activities (see achievements 2022-2023), starting with our art classes for looked after children and young people who foster and finishing with our annual trip to the pantomime. We would however like to highlight our annual visit to the Arlington Bluebell Walk and thank John McCutchan for his continued support. Which once again gave us a fantastic opportunity to not only raise funds, but also to raise awareness of our association and fostering.

Our thanks also go out to More radio and their listeners for their generous donation of toys at Christmas along with Widows & Sons masonic lodge for their annual donation towards our Pantomime. Children in Need continued their support by funding our residential trips to PGL, and this year we took two groups (over 60 children) to the Osmington Bay centre. We worked closely with Jamie's farm and held a residential week for siblings separated by virtue of being in different placements and then again with Jamie's Farm with some experimental weekend day camps allowing small groups of children to take part in woodcrafts.

As you will read, ESFCA managed to create another year full of events and we are forever thankful to all our community partners, donors, and volunteers. Without them stepping up and supporting us not only financially, but with their time, very few of our activities would happen.

A special thanks to all our community partners who continue to donate funding, equipment, gifts, and their time, and ESCC who give a grant to help with our running costs, access to a hot desk and office facilities as well as support on joint projects.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our trustees, Ann Holder, Tina Henderson, Sandra Maylam, Ru Petraitis – Williams, Anja Leeves, Christine Phillips, Kim Phillips, Veronica Archer, Emily Wells and Samantha Turner. I am very grateful for their continued support; the association is more than the sum of its parts with their dedication to the association. My thanks to the office team Bethany and Nigel who assist the trustees and members with the day-to-day tasks, and to our members who volunteer at the events and activities ensuring the show goes on.

It takes a village to raise a child, and every contribution, no matter how small, makes a difference. Each act of kindness is a steppingstone towards a brighter future for the children in our care.

Kind regards,
Susanne Beesley
Chairperson of ESFCA

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Independent examiner's report to the trustees on the unaudited financial statements of East Sussex Foster Care Association.

I report on the accounts of East Sussex Foster Care Association for the year ended 31 March 2023 set out on pages 2 to 19.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and independent examiner
The charity's trustees (who are also the directors of the company for purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), and that an independent examination is needed. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's statement
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
   - to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Peter D Hill FCA
On Behalf Of
Dominic Hill Associates Limited
Archer House
Britland Estate
Northbourne Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN22 8PW

East Sussex Foster Care Association
Statement of financial activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account)
For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Incoming Resources					
Donations		14,696	-	14,696	3,446
Core funding		20,000	-	20,000	20,000
Advocacy support		-	1,913	1,913	2,697
Apprentice scheme grant		-	6,000	6,000	-
Fundraising – inc Bluebell walk		3,733	-	3,733	1,588
Christmas events		896	-	896	-
Keep it reel		-	75	75	-
Jamies farm		430	-	430	-
PGL		-	735	735	10,430
Pantomine		1,490	-	1,490	2,329
CiN youth		-	-	-	3,883
Event contributions		459	-	459	1,630
Interest		87	-	87	4
Total incoming resources		**41,791**	**8,723**	**50,514**	**46,007**
Resources expended					
Insurance		579	-	579	567
General running expenses		4,307	-	4,307	4,079
Pantomime		3,330	-	3,330	3,900
PGL		-	6,351	6,351	13,267
Through care team		2,692	-	2,692	4,796
Keep it reel		-	-	-	-
Jamies farm		6,789	-	6,789	-
Events and projects		2,118	-	2,118	6,123
CiN youth		-	-	-	4,014
Fundraising		704	-	704	134
Intuitive Horse		480	-	480	480
Advocacy support		-	4,563	4,563	1,214
Salaries & pensions		19,816	-	19,816	14,108
Christmas events		1,017	-	1,017	980
Accountancy fees		1,905	-	1,905	1,644
Total outgoing resources		**43,737**	**10,914**	**54,651**	**55,305**
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/ Net income/(expenditure) for the year		(1,946)	(2,191)	(4,137)	(9,298)
Transfers		2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Total funds brought forward		72,551	23,393	95,944	105,242
Total resources		72,605	19,202	91,807	95,944

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Balance sheet
As at 31 March 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £	2022 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets			-		-
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		93,487		97,285	
Debtors & prepayments	2	18		33	
		93,505		97,318	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	3	(1,698)		(1,374)	
			91,807		95,944
Net Assets			91,807		95,944
Funds					
Unrestricted funds	4		72,605		72,551
Restricted funds	5		19,202		23,393
Total Funds	6		91,807		95,944

Directors statements required by the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2023

In approving these financial statements as trustees of the company we hereby confirm:

(a) that for the year stated above the company was entitled to the exemption conferred by section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 ;

(b) that no notice has been deposited at the registered office of the company pursuant to section 476 of the Companies Act 2006 requesting that an audit be conducted for the year ended 31 March 2023.

(c) that we acknowledge our responsibilities for:

(1) ensuring that the company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006, and

(2) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the provisions of the Companies Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 1A 'Small Entities' of Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The financial statements were approved by the board on 13-11-23 and signed on its behalf by:

Mrs S Beesley
Director and chair of trustees

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Notes to financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year and the preceding year.

1.1. Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 1A 'Small Entities' of Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

1.2. Going concern

The trustees are of the view that the charity is a going concern and will continue for the foreseeable future.

1.3. Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Voluntary income is received by way of donations and gifts and is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included.

Grants and incoming resources from charitable activities are recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are receivable.

Income from investments is included in the year in which it is receivable.

1.3. Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT, which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

1.4. Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Expenditure on individual items of office and computer equipment costing less than £5,000 is written off in the period in which the expenditure incurred.

1.5. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity.
Restricted funds are specifically for particular areas and projects undertaken by the charity.

1.6. Average number of employees

The average number of employees during the year was 2. There are also a number of volunteer support workers.

Notes to financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

2. Debtors and Prepayments

	2023 £	2022 £
PAYE debtor	18	33
Prepayments	-	-
Accrued income	-	-
Overpaid bank charges	-	-
	18	33

3. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Accountancy	1,593	1,374
Pension	105	-
	1,698	1,374

4. Unrestricted funds

	Balance at 01-Apr-22 £	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Balance at 31-Mar-23
General fund	72,551	21,791	17,130	(4,607)	72,605
Designated fund	-	20,000	26,607	6,607	-
	72,551	41,791	43,737	2,000	72,605

5. Restricted funds

	Balance at 01-Apr-22 £	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Balance at 31-Mar-23
Advocacy support	8,088	1,913	4,563	-	5,438
CiN PGL events	6,933	735	6,351	-	1,317
Apprenticeship scheme	6,000	6,000	-	-	12,000
Keep it Reel	2,372	75	-	(2,000)	447
CiN youth	-	-	-	-	-
	23,393	8,723	10,914	(2,000)	19,202

6. Analysis of net assets by fund

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Current assets	74,303	19,202	93,505	97,318
Current liabilities	(1,698)	-	(1,698)	(1,374)
	72,605	19,202	91,807	95,944

7. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions other than expenditure reimbursement made to trustees. These payments were supported by documentary evidence such as receipts, and approved for payment by a third party.

EAST SUSSEX FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1092668

Accounts

The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

East Sussex Foster Care Association

The Independent Charity Supporting Foster Carers

ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022

East Sussex Foster Care Association
The Independent Charity Supporting Foster Carers

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BN21 1EP

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Company No: 04216137

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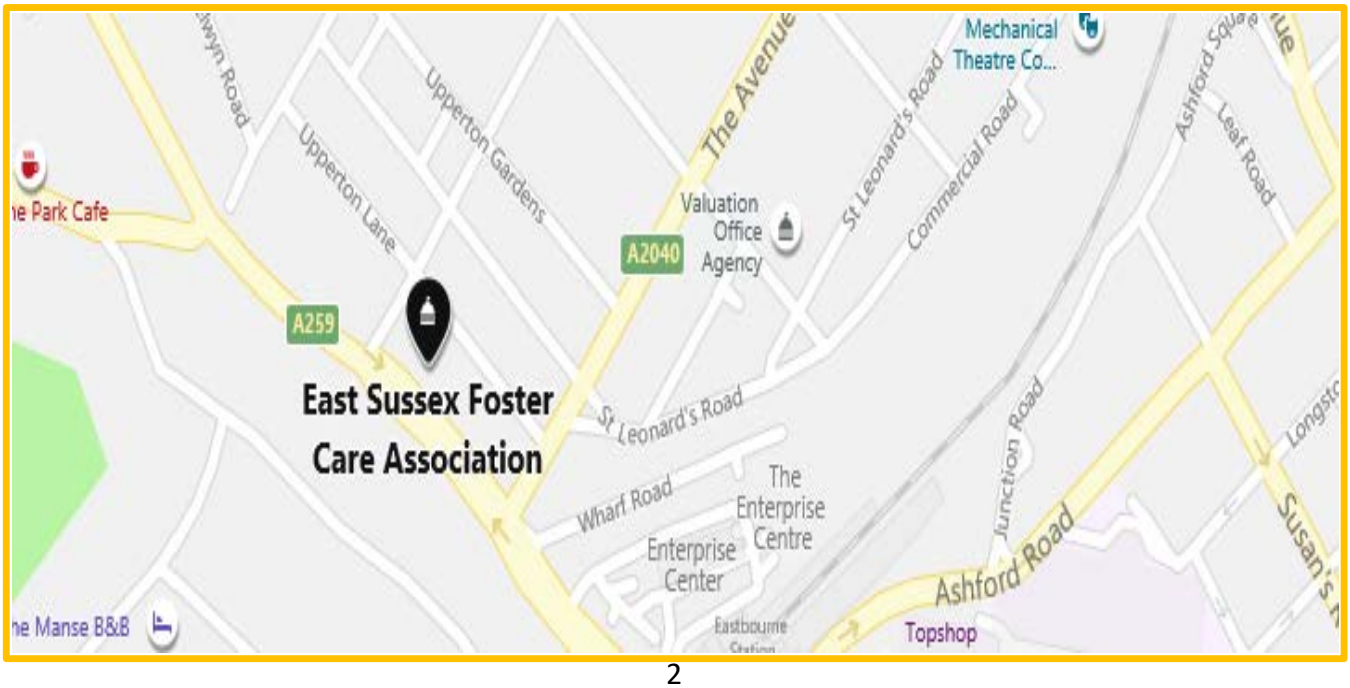

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Welcome to the ESFCA

"Facilitating life changing experiences for fostered children to enable brighter futures for the whole fostering family"

In March 1993 a small group of foster carers in the Uckfield area started to meet regularly in a back room of a retirement home in Hailsham. It was created in response to the needs of the children and young people in the care of East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and the demands this placed on foster families.

East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) aim has always been to "build brighter futures" for children in care and to support foster families in their role, including recognising the contribution our own children make. This continues to be done through fundraising so that we can deliver a large range of activities and services.

Over the last 28 years ESFCA has grown from the Uckfield support group to the association we are today, covering the whole of East Sussex and over 240 foster families.

ESFCA has always remained proudly independent of the ESCC, but we are also very proud of the very special relationship it has created with the fostering service and social workers.

The association arranges surgeries monthly for foster carers to attend and is often asked to provide feedback on policies and practices. Social workers take part and join the children on PGL residential trips and volunteer to help on some of the activities the association run throughout the year.

The association feels strongly about training and education for the members and regularly provides training seminars and conferences for the carers, social workers, and the various child services across East Sussex.

ESFCA has a goal that grabs the imagination of all foster carers and volunteers, and that is to allow the children to create their own happy memories by having fun and taking on activities by bringing them out of their comfort zone.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The objectives of East Sussex Foster Care Association as set out in the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association are, to promote all or any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community mainly but not exclusively within the County of East Sussex and in particular the advancement of the education of the public in matters relating to substitute care. The education, training and support of foster carers and their families, the relief of Looked After Children, their Carers, and their Carers' families by providing facilities and services in the interests of social welfare with a view to improving their conditions of life.

The Associations aim is to support East Sussex Foster Carers and their families in their efforts to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children in their care by working in partnership with all appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies. It undertakes this task by offering a range of events, advocacy, training, and support for the both the families and the children they care for. Its membership comprises of East Sussex Local Authority registered Foster Carers. The management group is formed from elected Trustees/Directors', largely from within that membership but not exclusively as the board benefits from the ongoing support of others with backgrounds in children's services.

TRUSTEES

Chairperson- Susanne Beesley

My family and I have been fostering for over 30 years, our second son was only a few months old when we began, and our third son was born some years into our fostering journey.

Our family grew through the adoption of our 2 daughters and long-term fostering. Our goal has always been to provide longer term stability to the children we have fostered, and we are always delighted to be able to keep in touch with these young people and see them as extended members of our family today.

Vice Chairman- Mark Thornborough

Mark and his wife Andrea have been fostering for many years, Mark is very active in ESFCA as he runs the very successful PGL trips with Tina and the team of dedicated volunteers. Mark also takes an active part in the administration of ESFCA and manages the staff and office to ensure things run smoothly.

Treasurer- Lysette Grosvenor

Myself and my husband Gary have been Foster Carers since 2015. We have looked after over 30 children. We do this full time together. We have done short term care, respite cover, emergency placements and more recently long-term fostering.

Every child is different, and it is so rewarding when they learn and develop new skills and accomplishments like reading, swimming, and riding a bike. I also enjoy helping them become independent with skills like shopping, saving money and cooking.

Founder Trustee- Tina Henderson

Hi, my name is Tina Henderson and my family, and I have been fostering for over 30 years. We are also adoptive parents to our wonderful son.

My start in life was not the best and I use this experience to try and help other children. We can offer long- and short-term home for children and enjoy doing assessment placements and respite.

Founder Trustee- Ann Holder MBE

My family and I have been fostering since 1975 (with a short break when my daughter was born) and we also became adoptive parents. We mainly care for babies which I really enjoy.

I also actively get involved with pre-adoptive work and working with families. I received the MBE for services to fostering in 2007

TRUSTEES

Trustee- Ru Petraitis-Williams

Ok, my name is Ru, my husband Kevin and our daughter Blue have been fostering for over 14 years. Our life has become so very fulfilled and it's a fantastic journey in so many levels.

We have the privilege to have children coming into our home and share the challenges we face and achievements we conquer. The children who come into care are so resilient teaching us so much in how we can appreciate life in general.
We foster children between the ages of 5 to 15 years old and being foster carers is the most rewarding thing we do.

Trustee- Anja Leeves

Anja & Nick (Anja's husband) have been offering foster families respite for over 7 years and Anja has also been an active participant in ESFCA. The Baby & toddler meet ups are arranged between Anja & Ann and Anja also leads the way in foster carer wellbeing by running the Relax, Recharge and Reflect.

Trustee- Sandra Maylam

Sandra has been instrumental in offering all-round support and is an asset our team. Sandra takes an active role on the Inspire Project and when she isn't with us, she is enjoying a well-deserved break living the dream along the canals in her narrowboat.

Trustee- Christine Phillips

During my career as a SEN personal advisor, I became acutely aware of the difficulties faced by looked after children. I was in awe of the foster families love and commitment to these children, many of whom could present significant challenges.

Could this be you?

We are currently seeking new Trustees and would welcome expressions of interest if you feel you would be able to contribute to the planning & development of the charity.

If you think you would be interested, in becoming a trustee please contact.

Susanne.beesley@esfca.co.uk

Anne Buchan

1953-2022

On January 2nd 2022, East Sussex Foster Care Association trustees and members lost a dear friend.

Anne was an amazing social worker with a hugely positive outlook and a great sense of humour. One of her greatest skills was her ability to make foster carers feel valued.

After many years of being one of our beloved social work supporters, we were delighted when Anne became a trustee for East Sussex Foster Care Association, we valued her contribution greatly.

Anne was a true champion for children and young people who foster and always acknowledged their very important contribution to fostering. Anne will be truly missed by all who knew her.

We are planning to celebrate her life and keep her memory alive with the launch of a new award. The award will involve ESFCA requesting nominations for a child / young adult who has shown exceptional care and support towards their foster sibling/s.

PATRONS

Jayne Torvill OBE

Once again, we would like to thank Jayne Torvill OBE for her continued support and Patronage. Jayne has been a Patron for ESFCA since 2012 and has taken part in many events and fundraising activities. Jayne is a strong advocate of ESFCA and feels passionate about making a difference in young people's lives.

"I feel passionate about making a positive difference to the lives of children. The opportunity to work with a local charity that offers opportunities to move children forward in their lives is incredibly important. I am looking forward to contributing to their experiences and helping to create special memories".

Jayne Torvill

Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE, FRSL

We also thank Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE, FRSL (Fellowship of the Royal Society of Literature) for her continued support. Jacqueline became a patron in 2018 after meeting the trustees at our annual Bluebell Walk event and has continued to support the association at many events including our Christmas message sent to the foster families on Dec 24th 2020, and launching our book club in January 2021.

"I've been involved with foster care associations ever since I wrote my book The Story of Tracy Beaker and I'm always impressed by the care and dedication of foster carers, but I think everyone at ESFCA are the absolute best. I love the sound of the residential breaks, the thoughtful provision of new luggage, the arts project, the library, and the day trips."

"All power to ESFCA"

Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE, FRSL

Letter From the Chair

Dear all,

During the 21-22 financial year, the fostering community have come under increased pressure both locally and nationally, as wider social issues impact our communities. Unsurprisingly, many of our families have reported that life with our children has felt more challenging. The pressure on fostering families has increased, as we experience the inevitable retirement of many long serving carers, at a time when the numbers of children entering the care system has risen and the number of new carers has decreased.

This has a twofold impact as case workers responsibilities have intensified, alongside the increased needs of fosters families. Unsurprisingly, families report dealing with children who are often presenting with more complex needs, at a time when the support available has been diluted both in terms of the respite care available and other accessible professional support, such as children's mental health. Whist we must acknowledge the number of families who have railed round to offer extra placements for some of our counties most vulnerable children; sadly, we also must recognise the link between the intensified pressure upon households and increase number of complex and often serious allegations experienced by our carers.

In a bid to achieve the best possible outcome for our children and the families who care for them, we continue to partner up with other appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies, to support our children and the loyal families who care for them. In just this financial year ESFCA has yet again been recognised by grants received both from BBC Children In Need and the Youth development fund. Many other funders also acknowledge us as the deliverers of the much-needed extras, children need and deserve. Our PGL residentials (funded by BBC children) is one example which has been substantially overprescribed this year; meaning we sadly do not have the capacity to meet the full needs of our children.

Whilst we recognise the importance of East Sussex County Council (ESCC) as the Corporate Parents and taking responsibility for the overall picture, ESFCA has quickly adapted to the exceptional circumstances with which we were faced, again working unrelentingly in close partnership with ESCC. Considering the importance of working closely with the team around the child and keeping our current difficulties in perspective, we can still feel very proud of our service as East Sussex Fostering Service is still one of highest achieving fostering services in respect of the numbers of in-house fostering placements achieved.

In an ongoing dialogue with Children Services, all professionals acknowledge the vital and highly valued service our families bring to the children we care for. Importantly, they have acknowledged that the rises in the cost of living predicted early last year, are now a reality and families are now feeling the financial pressure. Furthermore, our Local Authority recognise carers as having an ever-increasing professional presence, considering the level of

skills needed to manage the increasingly complex needs of the children we care for. Importantly, they also recognise the need of increase financial support.

Our trustees are people who lead very active lives and often face their own adversities while staying committed to delivering our much-loved projects and thanks to our financial stability, this year has brought no exception. - Please do read on, in this annual report, carefully put together by Nigel Berry.

This year, East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) was made up of mainly busy foster carers, but not exclusively. We have several other trustees and friends of the Association who offer great insight and who we are proud to call part of our team of dedicated supporters. Please see page 45.

In January this year we lost a very special lady. ESFCA will always be grateful to Anne Buchan for all her years of service, not only as a Social Worker but also a valued member of our team and trustee. Anne was a champion for children of carers and had an exceptional understanding of the importance of their role within the fostering family. Alongside Anne's zest for life, her positive spirit and stoic energy never faltered, as she continued to offer up her time to support others right up to her untimely passing. Anne's presence will be greatly missed. You will read about an award in this report that we are planning on launching in partnership with Annes family, to keep her memory alive.

My sincere gratitude goes out to all our trustees and supporters who are named on page 45. We are extremely privileged to have such a dedicated team of individuals including our community partners who continue to serve and support and improve upon the projects we deliver year after year.

This year ESFCA's ability to flex and adjust to unprecedented times, has been tested more than ever before, however this prepares us for the challenges ahead in uncertain times.

Finally, despite the current climate meaning we need to continue to prioritise and re prioritise, to achieve the best outcomes, we must remember that we have come a long way and achieved much. We have always learnt from the projects and other support services we deliver, and we will continue to work with our Local Authority to seek solutions to the bigger, systemic problems our children and families face.

Yours

Susanne

Fred Livings Youth Foundation (Fly Foundation)

The FLY Foundation has been set up by the late Fred Livings wife Bruni, and family to continue his tireless work of improving the lives of looked-after children. Fred was a former Chair of ESFCA.

The Foundation is designed to foster new or existing extra-curricular skills, with the overarching aim of helping to further develop each child's self-confidence and self-esteem. This will be achieved by the granting of funds for either an essential item (such as an instrument or dance shoes) or a service (such as lessons or a subscription), which will be awarded based on the child's application.
Equity, diversity, and inclusion are at the heart of the award, so whilst the application is important in the family's view to demonstrate the child's passion and commitment to their chosen discipline/hobby, there will be several ways to submit the application to make sure every eligible child feels confident and able to enter.

As well as annuities from the family, we are proud to say that the ESFCA will be making an annual donation; we can think of no better way to honour Fred's memory and commitment than by supporting the work his family continue to do in his name.

Computer Donation

ESFCA were incredibly grateful to receive six computers (refurbished) kindly donated from Sussex estate agent Phillip Mann. The donation was arranged by friend (and ex-trustee) of ESFCA ,Chris Thornton, who also refurbished the computers for the association.

The Computers were donated to foster families who needed the extra support for home schooling. The trustees and members wish to thank Phillip Mann for their generous gift and to Chris Thornton for facilitating the donation.

phillipmann
we do more

Lobbying

Our trustees and members are actively engaged with other organisations to network, debate, and promote the profile of foster carers in East Sussex as well as nationally. We lobby government departments and attend any meetings or debates that enable us to speak up for our members, their families and our Looked After Children (LAC).

ESFCA have regular contact with East Sussex County Council (ESCC), ESCC Child Services and Fostering Services and report on behalf of the fostering families annually to 'the Corporate Parenting Committee" for ESCC.

Trustees also attend regular meetings with the Fostering Network (Charity) and often take part in their campaigns and research.

Advocacy

ESFCA receives funds from East Sussex County Council as an annual grant which is held in a restricted fund (Advocacy Fund). This fund is used to provide independent support as required to assist any of our member foster carers who may be subject to an allegation or concerns around standards of care. These investigations can be complex and lengthy and can feel very isolating to a foster family as they are unable to discuss many of the issues with others due to confidentiality.

ESFCA are aware that if a serious allegation is made against a foster family member, then Supervising Social Workers are unable to support them whilst an investigation is ongoing. ESFCA has worked jointly with the fostering services to provide an extensive Allegation support pack and all foster carers in East Sussex are automatically signed up to The Fostering Network who provides **free independent legal advice**.

Surgeries

ESFCA holds monthly surgeries on the 3rd Thursday of every month where foster carers can bring to the table often complex and difficult issues that needs a fast-track resolution from senior managers in Children's and Fostering Services.

A trustee can attend the meeting to offer support to the foster carer in presenting their problem if requested. This support helps all parties to find a way forward or air complaints in a face to face and professional manner.

Foster carers are encouraged to come and talk through any difficulties in the hope of finding a way of resolving the difficulties quickly and efficiently. If the issue is around Adoption or Education, then ESFCA would seek to bring the relevant manager to the same meeting.
For further information please contact.

advice@esfca.co.uk

Allegation Support

ESFCA understands that any foster carer who is subject to an allegation or standard of care investigation, often feels isolated, stressed and in need of support.

The role of a Foster Carer is a unique and challenging one. We look after some of the most vulnerable and challenging children, 24 hours a day and it is essential that we are properly supported.

Being subjected to a complaint or allegation can feel both hurtful and very stressful. Complaints can range from very minor concerns which require informal discussion, through to more serious complaints which need more formal consideration and action, to very serious allegations which fall within Child Protection procedures.

The outcome of complaints can therefore vary from discussion and advice, through to concerns and warnings, to deregistration and possible prosecution through the courts.

ESFCA and ESCC Fostering Services put together a joint working party to review, assess and improve the allegation support package available to the foster families. This process took over two months and resulted in an informative allegation document pack given to every foster family to ensure they have appropriate knowledge, information, guidance, support, and legal advice.

The allegation packs include:

- Introduction letter from ESFCA Chairperson Susanne Beesley
- Fostering Network guidebook to allegations and Legal Support
- Contact sheet including a dedicated email address to ESFCA support, 24/7 contact phone number and the contact number to free Legal support
- Booklet 1- Containing an easy-to-use guide to the allegation process
- Booklet 2- Containing a more in-depth guide to the allegation process
- Wallet Card with the contact phone numbers and email address
- Fridge magnet with the contact email address.

These packs were sent to every foster family under ESCC Fostering Service and automatically sent out to every newly approved foster family.

If you need help or advice, contact us on

01323 747045

advice@esfca.co.uk

Young People Who Foster

This is a group that represents the birth, adopted and special guardianship children of foster families. These children share their parents and their childhood with the children who are fostered within their families. These incredible children help LAC coming into their home adjust to their new environment. The YPWF allow these children to have a voice and a place to share their experiences. They also organise events (Halloween discos) and day trips out and regular meetups. ESFCA are again able to help finance some of these projects and help when asked.

Children in Care Council

The Children in Care Council (CiCC) is a group of looked after children which represents LAC across East Sussex and allows them to have a voice across the county. They represent LAC at events such as the Children and Young People's Trust conference. The CYPT conference is where they meet other organisations that help and support young people in East Sussex.

CiCC also looks for ways to help young people plan, prior to the Covid lockdowns they had attended first aid and food hygiene courses which will help the children when they are looking for their first job (part/ full time).

These amazing children also provide backpacks which are gender and age appropriate, each backpack contains a toothbrush, socks, soft toy, hairbrush, pen, notepad, and a newsletter explaining who they are.

ESFCA is extremely proud of these children and supports them by providing the financial support to run some of the projects above.

Through Care Team

The Through Care Team (TCT) support young people and adults who are leaving the care system and help them to adjust to the realities of being independent. Young adults aged 16-25 with varying needs are supported by key workers to adjust to the big changes' adulthood brings. ESFCA is there to help on projects so they can continue to develop self-esteem and create positive memories.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children (UASC) is a department that sits under the umbrella of the TCT, and again ESFCA are proud to support some of the projects provided for these children. These projects support the education, integration, and the wellbeing of these children (young adults) who are adjusting to life in a new country.

Suitcase Initiative

Dignity and self-worth are key in the way a looked after child views and values themselves. This can be torn away from a child when they must leave their home with nothing but a rubbish/bin bag carrying the few possessions and clothes they have.

No child (especially foster children) should have to face the distressing sight of having their belongings packed into black plastic bags, when being moved either from birth family or to new foster placements. Black plastic bags are designed for rubbish and not for children's personal belongings.

ESFCA are proud to run an initiative that can help restore pride to the children entering the care system and have stock of luggage available to social workers and assessment teams and have already distributed over 200 suitcases to children that have had to be moved as an emergency or travelling to respite.

This initiative has also involved supporting the looked after children leaving the care system (16-25). The "Through Care Team", distribute luggage bags, hold-all's, and sports bags to help the leavers enter the community with dignity. Over 50 bags this year have been distributed to care leavers and in turn allowed them to maintain their dignity when moving to assisted lodgings or their own home.

This has been made possible by the amazing generosity from **Tripp Luggage** who has continued to support ESFCA over the last 7 years.

Make it Reel Project

Most families have Grandparents who spoil and make the children feel special by providing the little extras however looked after children often miss out on this influence. ESFCA acknowledge this and with a very generous donation from the **Reel Poster Company,** are able to step in and fill the role like a fairy godparent. ESFCA recognises that the East Sussex County Council has the responsibility to provide the needs of its LAC (looked after children) and the "Make it Reel Project" can only be accessed via a foster child's social worker.

ESFCA would like to thank the Reel Poster Company for their support and below are some examples of how a small amount of money can make a real difference.

- Purchasing Weighted Blankets to aid with anxiety
- Spending money for a 14-year-old teenager who lives in a residential home, who went on her very first holiday with an old foster family she had remained in contact with.
- A necklace for a 16-year-old who was attending her Prom.
- Attendance at a Science club for 10 weeks.
- Providing a birthday present for a teenager who had just been received into care and she had been abandoned by her birth family.

Book Club

At the end of January 2021, (during the Covid Lockdown) ESFCA started an online book club allowing children to meet on-line (under adult supervision) to read and discuss books of their choice.

The book club started with a video from our patron Jacqueline Wilson launching the club and introducing the first book "**I Dare You- Tracy Beaker**". Jacqueline then went on to speak about the character "Tracy Beaker" and the storyline we would all be following.

We decided to open the book club membership to all children. This would allow our looked after children and young people who foster to invite their friends (who are not in the care system or a carer) and enjoy the club together.

Once again, our friends at "Much Ado Books" stepped forward and donated a copy of the book to every member free of charge through their Prospero's Project. We extend a massive thank you from the association and on behalf of the children from the club.

The Club continued into the summer of 2021 where it was decided to take a break and enjoy the summer months and then to return in the Autumn.

Easter Eggs

During the Easter holiday season, ESFCA paid for & donated over 197 Easter eggs to the Through Care Team (the department looking after young adults leaving the care system). The eggs were given to the young adults living in supported lodgings or on their own. The last year full of Covid restrictions meant 2020 was a particularly lonely year and small gifts (advent calendars at Christmas, chocolate eggs at Easter) help remind these care leavers that they are being thought of and people care.

This holiday period also saw our friends at Sainsbury's (Hampden Park) donate 50 Easter Eggs and games. This long-term community partnership with Sainsbury's continues to grow stronger and this year, 50 children under the ESFCA umbrella received chocolate treats and games. We thank Sainsbury's for its generous donation and continued support.

Arlington Bluebell Walk

During the spring of 2021 Covid restrictions started to relax, which allowed the Arlington Bluebell Walk to operate (though at a reduced offering). Another strong community partner, the Bluebell walk is one of the most popular events of the ESFCA calendar, and it was great to be back. This year we could not supply refreshments due to limited Covid restrictions, however ESFCA volunteers rallied together after 2020's event being cancelled (due to lockdown) and marshalled the walk for visitors enjoying the Anemones, Bluebells, and the fresh country air.

Intuitive Horse

ESFCA fund sessions with Intuitive Horse for traumatised children offering a one-to-one session with specially trained horses that bond with the child and assist in developing trusting and emotional connections.

During May, ESFCA were asked to support a request for a child to be accepted onto the Intuitive Horse programme. The project involves looked after children attending 6 sessions individually to help the young person, depending on their needs, explore confidence building, emotional awareness, impulse control, building trust in relationships, learning how to calm themselves, developing empathy and overcoming fears.

Eid Celebration

During the holy month of Ramadan, the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children unit (UASC) approached ESFCA and asked if we would be willing to support them with an Eid celebration for their young people.

Eid is a worldwide festival and celebration for Muslims. There are two Eid's through the year and Eid ul Fitr means "festival to break the fast" which is celebrated at the end of Ramadan

UASC arranged to meet at a park in Eastbourne and with the support from ESFCA and some local restaurant's the group celebrated with a hot Halal buffet, fruit, and sweet treats. Games were played and friendships were formed.

Over 24 young adults (children) attended the celebration.

PGL Day Camp

One of the most popular activities ESFCA runs is the residential weekends each year using PGL activity centres. This is only made possible with the continued support from our community partner Children in Need.

We aim to run two residential weekends for our looked after children for ages 7-11 and 12-17 and one residential for our Young People Who Foster, each residential takes 25 (approx.) children and over 10 supervising adults, and they are always oversubscribed.

These are more than a few days holiday though. They help create confidence, resilience, and a positive attitude by taking the children through a series of activities and experiences. These activities take the children out of their comfort zone and make them face their phobias. To enable a stronger relationship between the children, they share in the activities and help each other survive the death-defying challenges that team PGL creates.

During 2020 the PGL trips were cancelled due to the Covid Lockdowns, however during 2021 and the lifting of restrictions, we were able to run five day-camps at the PGL Windmill Hill activity centre.

As there were still no residential bookings allowed at the time of creating the event, the decision was made to create 5 activity days and invite more children. Giant swing, zip wire, obstacle course & canoeing were on offer and the children had a great time. Over 130 looked after children attended the days accompanied by over 50 adults (Social workers & foster carers) joined them.

Like every child, Looked After Children need and deserve to feel loved cared for and supported and children entering the care system are no exception. At the very least, these children and young people will be feeling the effects of emotional trauma. Many will have experienced neglect or abuse in its many guises and are very likely to be dealing with the aftermath of witnessing domestic violence. Unsurprisingly, these children often also feel a sense of abandonment and carry the burden of a low self-esteem which makes fitting in with their more fortunate peer group a struggle.

We are very thankful to the social workers and foster carers who volunteer to join us on these trips as it creates a very positive bond between the children and the adults. Self-esteem and confidence are re-enforced as they help each other through the activities. The children cheer the adults on when they are flying on a zip wire or paddling like mad to win a race in the canoes just as much as the adults are cheering on the children.

These trips create bonds between the children themselves, which we see when they meet up at the Christmas party or other activities through the year. They also create positive memories that will stay with them for the rest of their life. Certificates and medals are handed out at the end of the visit where we hold our own award ceremony and there are very often tearful farewells. (though no-one sheds more tears than Tina, our trustee, who organises the PGL trips).

Bates Green Garden

Bates Green Garden is found at the same location of the Arlington Bluebell Walk, and from May until October remains open to the public (on Wednesdays). The garden was planted by Carolyn McCutchan who was an award-winning horticulturist and acclaimed Plants-woman and was often featured in publications such as "The English Garden", "The Sunday Telegraph", and "Homes & Gardens" to name but a few.

Carolyn became ill in 2012 and the garden became neglected, however after undergoing restoration, led by Emma Reece, the decision was made to re-open the garden to the public in Carolyn's memory and raising funds for the local hospital. Volunteers from ESFCA ran the refreshments on 30th June

More Radio – Child of Sussex Awards

The 15th of July saw the launch of the More Radio Child of Sussex Awards. ESFCA once again took the opportunity to sponsor the Gold Award. More Radio listeners were asked to nominate children that deserved recognition in a host of categories. The Gold Award allows an extra special child to be nominated, but whose story does not fit this existing category. Due to covid restrictions, the Award ceremony was postponed until the summer 2022.

Go Ape! (Through Care Team)

The Go ape treetop challenge was the event that bought over 40 young adults together for the first time in over a year. The Through Care Team organised the event and ESFCA was very happy to sponsor the activity.

The young adults, accompanied by support staff, took to the treetops above Bedgebury National Pinetum where they engaged with each other, worked as a team, and had fun in the process.

Soapbox Race

ESFCA were thrilled to take part in the inaugural Soap box race, held at the base of the Southdown's along Kings Parade. Though not racing this year, volunteers helped marshal the course and kept closed roads clear for emergency vehicles (if needed).

Pictures courtesy of "Media Attention"

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children London Visit

ESFCA was proud to support the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children with their trip to London. 42 children (young adults) visited the key landmarks of London including the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, the Tower of London and more. As most of the children had not ventured outside of East Sussex the experience was awe-inspiring and allowed the children to embrace the history and pageantry of the country they have travelled to and hope to start a life for themselves.

Below are a few quotes form the children who attended the trip and on the page opposite a letter from a social worker who also went on the trip with the children.

EM, KS, and YA have asked me to express just how much fun they had today with the trip to London, and they wanted me to send a big thank you to those who made the trip possible.

EM said he was in a bad place emotionally, prior to the trip and said the day out has helped him think so much more positively and to send you, his love.

I had a lot of fun yesterday, days ago, my mood was zero, but yesterday a lot of things changed. Thank you so much for that beautiful day. It will stay in my memory forever. The only thing missing from the trip was, I wanted to see one of London's beautiful stadiums, Thank you again. Big love for all of you.

Aseel says that today has been the best day of his life and he is the happiest possible. He wanted me to pass this on to everyone at ESFCA and their supporters. He is "Sooo thankful" and says, "We are the best"

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children London Visit

To all the kind people of the East Sussex Foster Care association.

On behalf of the UASC team and all our young people who attended our recent London Trip, I would like to say a big thank you for supporting this event.

This group of young people can often be overlooked or misunderstood so it was certainly refreshing that your organisation came on board.

For most of our young people London is a dream, a magical place they have seen pictures of and heard about but never though they would ever get the chance to visit.

This trip not only fulfilled that dream but went a long way towards easing some of the anxieties and emotional difficulties they are all facing.

The young people mixed enthusiastically and respectfully with each other and with staff to make it a great day. It was so good to see a togetherness and witness a group of young people who were so supportive and respectful to each other. Some young people were seen to give coins to street homeless people along the way.

First was the early train journey in which any potential chaos was managed and all the young people were in good spirits.

The open top bus trip allowed them to see and take photos of all the major sights. As it was a hop on hop off service, we were able to disembark at Westminster Bridge where we were all able to stretch our legs and walk across Westminster Bridge to our next leg. One highlight was one of our young people doing a drum duet with a street entertainer on the bridge where people were gathered around dancing and cheering.

The river bus from Westminster to the Tower of London was a great way to see some other sights of London from the Thames and again was enjoyed in good spirit.
Then followed a walk past the tower of London and over the famous Tower Bridge and along the embankment to our lunch destination at Borough Market.

Here the young people were able to spend their lunch allowance on street food from all over the world. Something for everyone.

We then picked up the bus again and enjoyed more sightseeing eventually arriving back at Victoria station for our return train journey.

All in all, this was a good day for the young people and strengthened the relationships with those supporting them. For staff it was just so good to see the togetherness and enjoyment and smiles on all the young people faces.

Thank you once again.

Art Class

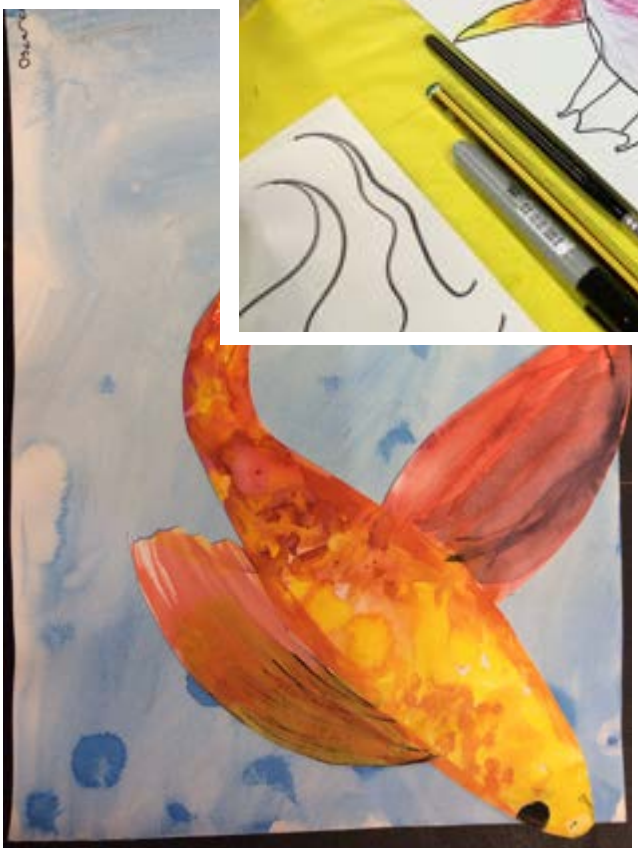
In October 2021, Friend of ESFCA Maureen Wells very kindly offered to run a monthly art class for our looked after children and our young people who foster. Maureen is a qualified art teacher who consults for various education authorities across the country and runs art classes for adults.

The art class meet once a month at Printers Playhouse (Eastbourne), who kindly let us use their performance space at a discounted rate.

Each month, Maureen themes the session and engages with the children in different styles of creating art. Along with the group discussions and demonstrations, Maureen always ensures each child has one to one time where she inspires the children to try a new style or technique in their artwork.

The initial art supplies were provided by ESFCA, and Lady Soroptimists (Lewes) and we would like to thank Maureen Wells, Printers Playhouse and Lady Soroptimists for their generous donation of time, workspace, and art materials.

Art Class



Beachy Head 10K

On Sunday 24th October, ESFCA volunteers once again braved the elements and marshalled the famous Beachy Head 10k. 13 volunteers took their positions over the course that covers a circular route sharing the starting line with the Marathon (kings' parade) heading along the South downs to Belle Tout Lighthouse. It then circles back along the stunning coastal route and returning the start/ finish line (Dukes Drive).

The 10K is a regular fundraising event for ESFCA and the volunteers always have a great time cheering on the runners as they cross the scenic countryside (whatever the weather). In return for supporting this event, ESFCA receives a donation to put towards future projects supporting our looked after children, young people who foster and foster families.

BEACHY HEAD
MARATHON
26.2 | HALF | 10k

Baby & Toddler Group

In October, we saw ESFCA return to our baby & toddler group, allowing foster families looking after under 5's to meet and play in a safe & secure environment.
There are regular baby and toddler groups that carers can go to however, the nature of fostering means the carer may not look after the child for long before they move onto their next placement. These groups enable the carers to take part in a positive method of interaction with others in a similar position, regardless of the length of the placement.
The groups meet regularly and change location to embrace children from across East Sussex.

Horse Riding Project

The beginning of November saw the start of the horse- riding project. With a discount from the equestrian centre and a subsidy from ESFCA, foster families were able to buy vouchers for only £5.00 which entitled the child to ½ hour riding sessions.

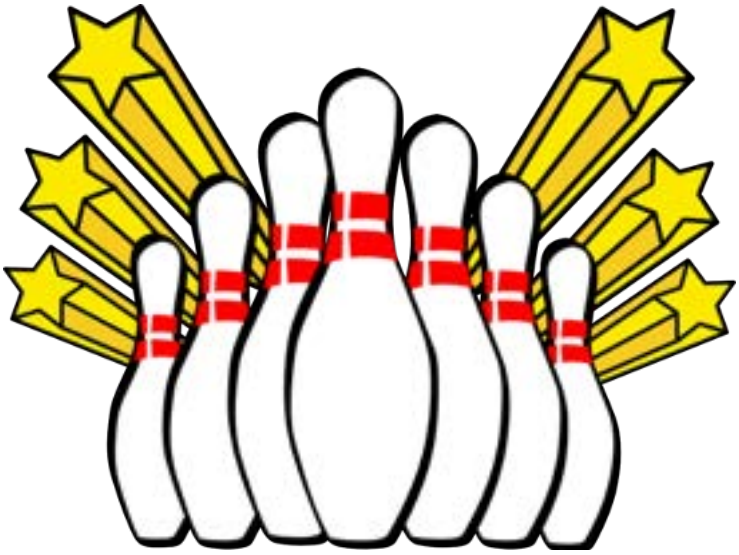
The families then had the opportunity to trek through the East Sussex countryside at a time of their choosing throughout 2022. Over 40 families have participated so far, and we hope to repeat this offer again for 2023.

Relax, Recharge, Reflect

Relax, Recharge, Reflect is a project that allows foster carers to choose an activity that allows a few hours respite, some time with other foster carers and to help with their own personal wellbeing. There are currently three activities to choose from, an afternoon tea, a Chinese meal, or a spa day. Over 72 foster cares took part in these activities and there are plans to introduce options and opportunities over the next year.

ESFCA trustees and members would like to thank Hilliers, Happy Dragon (Pevensey) and Bannatyne's (Eastbourne)

Bowling



During November & February we took over 25 children for an evening of bowling at the Freedom Leisure bowling lanes (Hailsham). Once the children were placed into teams and allocated a lane, competition commenced. Snacks and refreshments were available for the children and the carers.

The evening was a great success, everybody had a fun time, and we look forward to offering more sessions during 2022/23.

Quiz night

In December our community partners at The Berwick Inn held a Christmas Quiz to help raise for future ESFCA Projects.

During the 2020 winter Covid restrictions, the team at The Berwick Inn stepped up to help us when they heard our Christmas Party had been cancelled. They offered us their outside pod (Glass dome/ Bubble) and garden area to ensure Father Christmas could still show up and distribute toys to our foster family children. This was a great success and the team at the Berwick wanted to do more to help us again.

The quiz was Christmas themed, and our host dressed accordingly as one of Santa's helpers, there were 6 rounds of 10 questions (each round) all based around Christmas jokes, songs, and general Christmas knowledge. The event was well attended, and we plan to hold another quiz in December 2022, if you would like to attend, please contact us to book your space.

Christmas Party

Sunday the 5th of December saw the return of the ESFCA Christmas party after cancelling the one in 2020 due to Covid. Over 70 children dressed up in their finest party clothes and once again joined us for an afternoon of festive fun and festive food.

Once again, Graham from Starlight Disco had everyone dancing (including some of the adults) and playing games with prizes for all the winners

This year also saw us introduce a sensory room for children with extra needs to enjoy.

Christmas can be a difficult time for looked after children and the ESFCA party provides a marvellous distraction for the children to relax and just enjoy themselves. The children took away fantastic memories, some even meeting up with siblings who may have been in different foster families, as well as other children from similar circumstances.

The party is self- funded by ESFCA, and the venue was kindly donated by the Kings Centre who we are truly thankful for their long-term and continued support.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers, community partnerships, friends, cake bakers and the foster families. Without their support, we would not be able hold this incredibly important event.

For the 8th year running we were joined by the Lewes and Eastbourne Soroptimist's who, once again generously gave their time and donated presents for the children to wrap for their foster families.

The Soroptimist's clubs are part of an international organisation that aims to help women and girls at a local and international level in many ways. It has been running for nearly 100 years and, as well as helping like-minded people meet, they raise funds locally and support causes as well as giving women more of a voice through the four seats at the UN allocated to the Soroptimist's International Organisation.

More Radio- Toy Donation

Once again, our community partner More radio donated over 600 toys & gifts to ESFCA from its annual toy appeal.

Every year, More radio listeners donate toys and gifts to be distributed over the Christmas period to less fortunate children & families across the county.

This amazing donation played a very important part of our Christmas activities as we were able to ensure every child entering the care system during December had toys and gifts.

With help from social workers, the fostering service duty team, and our staff, we were able to deliver gifts and backpacks across the county where needed.

We also support the Through Care Team and their young adults who have children of their own. This is also with the help from our backpack project and the toys donated from More radio.

We would like to thank every listener of More Radio who generously donated to their Appeal, you will never really know the difference you have made to the children you have supported over the year.

On Friday 11th November 2023, More Radio will start this year's appeal making sure that less fortunate children across the county get a Christmas to remember. Please look for the donation points and remember, every gift no matter how large or small will make a difference.

EBMR (Santa Run)

For the fourth year running, EBMR – a group of motorcycle enthusiasts dressed as Santa, Rudolph & Elves from all over, rode across East Sussex to support local children across the county. The group rode their motorcycles from The Berwick Inn (after enjoying bacon rolls & Coffee) to the Eastbourne District Hospital. Once there, they donated toys & gifts to the children staying in hospital over the Christmas period. They spoke to and posed for photographs with hospital staff and then made a very generous donation to Susanne Beesley (Chair- ESFCA) of £385.00 on behalf of the association. They then took to the roads again heading off to Hastings and the Conquest Hospital to donate more toys & gifts.

David Oakenfold (member of Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association) also presented a very generous donation from Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association of £250.00 to help with costs of our annual pantomime trip in January.

ESFCA feel very privileged to have such great friends and community partners as the EBMR & Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association and would like to thank them for their continued support.

The next Santa run is scheduled for Sunday 18th December 2022 and once again, our friends at the Berwick Inn are hosting the start. If you see them riding by, give them a wave and give them a cheer as they spread a little bit of Christmas spirit.

Pantomime

The end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022 saw Covid restrictions start to relax, which meant that the Pantomime was back. We managed to secure over 200 tickets for the Performance of Sleeping Beauty at the Devonshire Park Theatre (Eastbourne). We subsidised tickets for the foster families so they could enjoy the show at a much more affordable price.

Over 40 families joined us on the 2nd of January, and you could feel the excitement as they walked up to the theatre entrance to pick up their tickets. You could see the raised cheekbones peeking over the top of the facemasks which hinted at the beaming smiles and Cheshire cat grins hidden beneath.

We are very pleased to report that the noise levels our families created by laughing, cheering the heroes, booing the villains, and singing along with the cast was still extremely loud. The grown-ups really enjoy the opportunity to forget the world going on outside for a couple of hours and embrace the chaos that the pantomime brings.

The atmosphere in the theatre was electric and the performers were (once again) amazing, enthralling the children as they got lost in the moment.

We received a few messages after the pantomime, all wanting to send their thanks to our community partners who continue to support them as well as ESFCA and make this event happen.

Our Visit to Goddards (Abinger Green)

East Sussex Foster Care Association were delighted to receive the amazing opportunity to take part in the Landmark's Trust 50 for free scheme, where 50 of The Landmark Trusts venues are offered free to charities and community groups. The venue chosen was the very stately Goddards set in the countryside in Abinger green, hidden in the Surrey Hills.

The date was set for the weekend of 11th March- 14th March and ESFCA Contacted the nominated the children and busily set about preparing for a magical weekend (with no access to TV or the internet-it would certainly be an adventure).

Early Friday evening Susanne (ESFCA Chair), Ann (ESFCA founder trustee) and Anja (ESFCA trustee) arrived at Goddards bringing Ruby, Hannah, Tyler, Freya, Neyaz & Willow (the dog) to enjoy a wonderful weekend away.

Upon arrival the house was explored, and bedrooms were claimed. Once everybody's luggage was put away the children set their own ground rules for the weekend (guided by the adults) and a decision was made (what was dinner going to be?) Once the Shepherd's pie was made and had started to bake in the oven the important art of hide and seek began.

On Saturday morning everybody was up before 9:00am and after a continental breakfast, ready to explore the woods around Abinger village. It was hard to decide who enjoyed the walk more, as the children loved to investigate the paths through the woods and found muddy puddles to jump over (or in) or Willow who enjoyed have the attention of 5 children (as well as the muddy puddles). One thing was certain, everybody enjoyed discovering the first signs of spring as Daffodils were found in and around the gardens of Goddards.

On the return to the house some of the party popped to the shops to stock up on supplies for the rest of the weekend and especially the banquet set for Saturday night. The remaining children baked Fairy cakes and made a start on the activity books supplied by "The landmark Trust". The workbooks were fantastic, and the children enjoyed answering the questions and completing the tasks set.

After lunch the children felt they were not dressed correctly for such a stately building, and everybody dressed up in a more regal style.

Everybody was surprised when they heard a knock on the front door and waiting to come in was Dame Jacqueline Wilson (ESFCA Patron) who had popped by to join the children for the afternoon and join in the fun.

Jacqueline joined in with the dressing up, helped the children with their baking (by licking the bowl) and gave everybody a signed copy of her book "the sleep over" as an amazing keepsake of the weekend.

Everybody then divided into two groups and started a Skittle competition; the adults joined the children in the competition and had a very noisy time as the wooden bowling balls clattered down the alley towards the skittles.

Some of the children used a recipe for treacle tart (found in the activity workbook) and started to bake while afternoon tea was prepared and enjoyed by everyone.

After the excitement of Saturday afternoon, the children continued into the early evening with more hide & seek and then prepared for the evening dinner. Goddards dining room and grand dining table was the ideal setting for a banquet fit for King's & Queen's and as everybody was dressed as royalty it was the perfect match.

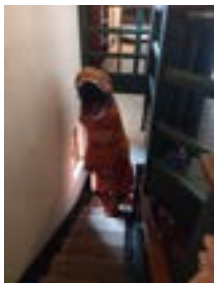
Everybody played their part, Susanne became the "Governess", Ann became "Lady Ann" and Anja became "Countess Anja". The children remained in character (as they had all afternoon) and the evening festivity began.

Sunday morning came around quickly, and everybody was up (a little bit later) by 10:00am, breakfast was home-made pancakes and fresh fruit, and then another adventure was started as Willow led the way on a walk through the woods. Muddy puddles were found, and the garden explored, and rumours of a lone dinosaur started to circulate.

Once Willow had worn the children out it was time to take things a little bit slower and the activity workbooks kept everybody busy. The children that hadn't made a treacle tart were given the opportunity along with the chance of making cookies.

No-one took the rumours of a lone dinosaur seriously, so it was a complete surprise when on Sunday afternoon the peace was shattered as a lone T-rex was seen wandering through the garden. Willow came to the rescue and chased the dinosaur through the garden followed by a few brave children, however their plan backfired when the T-rex decided to join everybody inside the house!

It turns out that a big dinosaur is terrible at hide & seek and was in fact Nigel (ESFCA-admin) in disguise. Nigel had known everyone would be dressing up from the past but took it to far as he turned up as a tyrannosaur (too far back in time).



Sunday afternoon rolled into Sunday evening where a traditional roast dinner was prepared and everybody sat around the dining table sharing tales about the weekend, the adventures, the best hiding places and who was best at skittles.

After the dinner, bags started to get packed, belongings were gathered, and the Activity books were completed. Monday morning came around too soon and after breakfast the cars were packed, and Goddards played its last game of hide & seek of the weekend as everybody searched every room for items that may have been left behind.

Once everybody was ready to head back home (or school) they all agreed to meet up again soon to have another banquet and re -tell their stories from Goddards.

Backpack Project

Since 2019 our friends at the Department of Works & Pensions (DWP) have created a Christmas event where they donate backpacks full of gifts for children coming into the care system.

The bags are donated not only from the staff of the DWP, but from their families and friends across the country. Bags have been donated from as far as Scotland down to South Wales each containing toiletries, stationery, books, clothes, toys, and a soft cuddly toy.

We distribute the backpacks throughout the county ensuring they are available to all; the family support teams have crates containing backpacks suitable for all age ranges and genders. ESFCA trustees across the county also hold small collections of backpacks to support emergency placements. The remaining backpacks are held at the office where they are distributed to social workers directly upon request.

The Backpacks offer a fantastic opportunity for the children and carers to start their journey together on neutral ground. Exploring the bags together creates a useful diversion for a short time and the shared experience helps build their relationship. They also show the LAC that there are other adults thinking about them and sending a positive message so that they have some possessions of their own at this difficult time.

Financial Report

We continue to receive an annual grant of £20,000 from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) which enables us to employ staff and operate back-office services to support the IO Trustees running the charity.

Furthermore, we continue to receive an annual top up of restricted funds from ESCC for the advocacy fund held by ESFCA to support any foster carer facing an allegation. This fund provides independent support, at a most upsetting and worrying time, for all members of the Fostering family for as long as needed, which in some cases involve a lengthy and complex investigation.

In this financial year our membership was 264 households residing in the county of East Sussex.

Our reserves remain constant and at the same level as last year at £40,000. These reserves are held to provide a safety net for the provision of regular annual events such as holiday activities, PGL weekends, the Christmas party and Pantomime, should we be unsuccessful in receiving donations or grants for these cherished activities to proceed.

Should the Local Authority withdraw its annual grant, these reserves ensure we meet our obligations such as paying staff and associated costs including pension, NI and Tax, plus any outstanding creditors. In tandem, if the charity was wound up or placed into dormancy, we hold reserves to pay redundancy, accounting, audit and HMRC costs.

The association can access our reserve fund immediately should the need arise. We can also use the reserves to fund any larger capital need whilst applying for funding. One area we are researching is provision of storage for our equipment.

Where donations are received and the donor has asked for the money to be utilised on a specific project or a certain group of young people, we will honour that request and mark these funds restricted so they are only used for that purpose.

We continue to hold stock of new suitcases donated from Tripp luggage and other providers. These are available to Social Workers needing to move children in an emergency thus ensuring that their personal belongings are carefully packed and transported with the young person.

The lessening of Covid regulation enabled us to resume many aspects of our work, including fundraising activities. Our team were very creative in organising raffles, quiz nights, Christmas grottoes, marshalling events and collecting donations. This enabled a wide range of activities for Foster families from babies and toddlers to primary and secondary age children, young people who foster, unaccompanied asylum seekers, through care young people aged 16 to 25 and foster parents time out treats.

Lysette Grosvenor

Trustee and Treasurer

East Sussex Foster Care Association
Statement of financial activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account) For the year ended 31 March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total £	2021 Total £
Incoming Resources					
Donations		3,446		3.446	2,912
Core funding		20.000		20.000	20.000
Advocacy support			2.697	2.697	2,920
Apprentice scheme grant					6.000
Fundraising - inc Bluebell walk		1,588		1.588	
PGL			10.430	10.430	9.770
Pantomime		2,329		2,329	
CiN youth			3.883	3.883	
Event contributions		1,630		1,630	
Interest		4		4	18
Total incoming resources		28,997	17,010	46,007	41,620
Resources expended					
Insurance		567		567	
General running expenses		4,079		4.079	771
Pantomime		3,900		3,900	
PGL			13.267	13.267	
Through care team		4,796		4.796	109
Events and projects		6,123		6.123	6,992
CiN youth			4.014	4.014	
Fundraising		134		134	
Intuitive Horse		480		480	1.440
Advocacy support			1.214	1.214	3,39S
Salaries & pensions		14.108		14.108	13.298
Christmas party		980		980	
Accountant's fees		1,644		1.644	1.640
Total outgoing resources		36.810	18.495	55,30S	27,64S
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/ Net income/(expenditure) for the year		(7.813)	(1.485)	(9,298)	13.97S
Transfers		(131)	131		
Total funds brought forward		80,49S	24.747	105,242	91,267
Total resources		72,551	23.393	95.944	105,242

Message from Susanne

My sincere gratitude goes out to them all including Mark Thornborough (Vice Chair), Lysette Grosvenor (Treasurer), Ann Holder (MBE), Tina Henderson, Ru Petraitis-Williams, Anja Leeves, Sandra Maylam, Ruma, Smith and Christine Phillips. None of what we achieve would be possible without them.

We are extremely privileged to have such a dedicated team of people behind the scenes. A particular thank you must go to our Treasurer, Lysette Grosvenor, who spends so much of her time ensuring that our finances are kept in order. We will always be incredibly grateful to have the support of some amazing individuals whose experience and dedication to the goals of ESFCA do not go unnoticed. A huge thank you goes to our admin Nigel who works tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that all that we do runs smoothly and always goes the extra mile for us.

The Bluebell walk was a wonderful way to begin our progression away from lockdown. Despite the limited capacity and closure of the cafe, we still marshalled the walk and received a £900 donation. We are very grateful for the continuous support and kindness of John McCutchen, Arlington Bluebell Walk owner. We look forward to everything running at full capacity in the future and we can continue the success of this generous opportunity.

Yet again, we extend our heartfelt thanks to More radio for their donation of toys. We hope our notion of giving back by sponsoring an award for the children of Sussex awards can display our gratitude for their assistance and extend our community presence.

Our friends the Eastbourne Motorcycle Ride Outs (EBMR) made another generous donation, and we enjoyed supporting the event. More generous funds were also donated to us from Widows and sons, and we are incredibly grateful for their ongoing support EBMR also supported us in our other fundraisers and are always willing to get involved.

Sainsburys continue to be one of our steadfast supporters after being their charity of the year. We maintain a close relationship with them, and they gift us donations such as easter eggs or vouchers.

I also want to recognise the very generous grant of £3,883 awarded to us through the Youth investment fund (administered by Children in Need), This allowed us to buy sports equipment, musical instruments, and a couple of gazebos.

The sports equipment will enhance the PGL residential trips and other activities through the year and you will soon see the Gazebos in use as support for our events as well as fundraising and awareness days. My thanks to Tina Henderson for leading this successful bid.

“It takes a village to raise a child”

"It takes a village to raise a child" doesn't really mean the village, but the community coming together. When the wider community engages, teaches, creates a healthy environment and acts as role model, it results in children learning important life-lessons, engaging in the community themselves and developing their confidence and self-esteem. This is reflected with our amazing supporters and volunteers who generously donate their time at our events and activities.

Thank You

Alison Jeffery
Liz Rugg
Kathy Marriott
Teresa Lavelle-Hill
Sally Carnie
Adrian Sewell
Peter Richards
Mandy Lewis
Suzie Ives
Siobhan Edwards
Samantha Casey
Stacey Quanstrom
Donna Collins
Clare spencer
Tracey Millen
Sinead Roche
Phil Smith
Chelsea Walsh
Meshelle Carmody
Cllr Bob Bowdler
Cllr Colin Belsey
Cllr Keith Glazier
Paul Beesley
Andrea Thornborough
Gary Shirley
Peter Henderson
Dennis Holder
Stuart Buchan
Penny Smith
Kevin Williams
Roger Maylam
Nick Leeves
Mason Leeves
Kim Phillips
Bethany Beesley
Maya Beesley
Natalie Paul
John Darling
Lucy Chatterton
Julie Tabone
Jo Broocks
Fiona Emsey
Patricia Jackson
Liz Pucci
Sam Reilly
Kate Lewis
Kieran Henderson
Mark Thornborough
Ella Vuillemey
Bobbie Attew
Claire Woolf
Vera Gajic
Lara Khoury
Anja St Clair Jones
Louise Chalmers
Deborah Miarkowska
Alex Berry
Emily Berry
Margaret Woolf
Janice West
Lauren Hesmer
Donna Clayton
Graham Durey
Emily Wells
Julie Bell
Hugh Bell
Andrew Gordon
Jay Ivens
John Charles
George Carpenter
Jacqueline Ridge
Sue Hartley
Maureen Wells
Graham Tuthill

Everybody at the Kings Centre

And the many other volunteers that have helped over the year

Thank you for your continued support, without people like yourself and your colleagues stepping forward and aiding the association, these critical projects would not be able to continue.

Thank You

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

esfca

East Sussex Foster Care Association
An Independent Charity for Fostering Families in East Sussex

East Sussex County Council

MEMBERS
& VOLUNTEERS

Sainsbury's

Eastbourne
&
Hampden Park

BBC Children in Need

Lottery Grants for Local Groups
AWARDS FOR ALL

LOTTERY FUNDED

VISIT EASTBOURNE

Windmill Hill

Lewes

Lewes

Eastbourne

More RADIO Mid Sussex

TRIPP

WIDOWS SONS MASONIC BIKERS ASSN.

EBMR

EBMR

Eastbourne Motorcycle Rideout.

THE BERWICK INN

FREE HOUSE • PUB • CAFÉ • DINING

MAKE IT REEL POSTER GALLERY

Intuitive Horse
"Seeing you for who you really are"

The
Landmark
Trust

POLEGATE
Equestrian Centre

phillipmann
SALES & LETTINGS

EASTBOURNE THEATRES
CONGRESS THEATRE | DEVONSHIRE PARK THEATRE | WINTER GARDE

PRINTERS
PLAYHOUSE
PPH
live music & theatre venue

How you can support us.

www.esfca.co.uk

Charity number: 1092668
Company number: 04216137

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Directors' report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

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Charity number	1092668
Company registration number	4216137
Registered office	4th Floor St Mark's House 14 Upperton Road Eastbourne East Sussex BN21 1EP
Independent Examiner	Dominic Hill Associates Limited Archer House Britland Estate Northbourne Road Eastbourne East Sussex BN22 8PW

The directors present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Structure, governance and management

The charity is an incorporated association governed by its memorandum and articles of association, together with its constitution.

The following persons served as directors/trustees during the year;

Ms S Beesley BA (hons) - Chair
Mrs A H D Holder MBE
Mr M Thornborough
Ms T M Henderson
Ms L Grosvenor – Treasurer
Mrs A Leeves
Mrs S Maylam
Mrs R Petraitis-Williams
Ms R Smith
Ms A Buchan – 1 April 2021 to 2 January 2022
Ms C Phillips

Trustees are appointed at the AGM with there being a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve. At the AGM one third of the trustees must stand down, often the longest serving trustees stand down first, but may choose to stand for re-election. All trustees must be members of East Sussex Foster Care Association and members can nominate themselves for election.

Objectives of the charity

The objectives of East Sussex Foster Care Association as set out in the Memorandum of Association are to promote all or any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community mainly but not exclusively within the County of East Sussex and in particular the advancement of the education of the public in matters relating to substitute care. In particular the education, training and support of foster carers and their families, the relief of Looked After Children, their Carers and their Carers' families by providing facilities and services in the interests of social welfare with a view to improving their conditions of life.

The Association is to support East Sussex Foster Carers and their families in their efforts to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children in their care by working in partnership with all appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies. It undertakes this task by offering a range of events, advocacy, training and support for the both the families and the children they care for. Its membership is comprised of East Sussex Local Authority registered Foster Carers and the managing group is formed by elected Trustees/Directors' from within that membership.

Activities, achievements and performance

ESFCA is proud to help different groups of young people that operate within the care system.

Young People Who Foster (YPWF)

These are the biological and adopted children of foster families who share their home and parents with fostered children. They make lots of sacrifices to support looked after children, and there is rarely a complaint. This group allows them to have voice and an opportunity to share their experiences inside a safe environment.

Children in Care Council (CICC)

This council represents the looked after children in foster families. Children of different ages sit on the council and help provide a voice for those that need it.

Through Care Team

These are the young adults leaving the care system who need support getting their start in life. Aged between 16-25 the young people are supported by a specialist team of social workers who also provide financial, legal and wellbeing support.

Make It Reel project

East Sussex Foster Care Association has a special pot of money in a restricted fund available to support LAC. The money has been donated from The Reel Poster Company and they would like the money to go directly to benefit LAC where a small amount of money could make a real difference.

Lobbying Government & Local Authorities

Our Trustees are actively engaged with other organisations in networking, debating, promoting, and raising the profile of Foster Carers in East Sussex. We lobby Government departments and attend any meetings or debates that enable us to speak up for our members and our Looked After Children (LAC).

Independent allegation advice & support

We continue to receive funds from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) as an annual top up which is held in a restricted fund. This Allegations fund is used to buy in independent support as required to assist any of our member foster carers who may be subject to an allegation of concerns around standards of care. These investigations can be complex and lengthy and can feel very isolating to a foster family as they are unable to discuss many of the issues with others due to confidentiality.

Monthly Fostering Surgeries with Heads of Department

ESFCA hold monthly Surgeries one evening a month whereby Foster Carers can bring to the table a difficult, complex, or issue that needs a fast-track resolution from senior managers in Children's and Fostering Services. A trustee will attend the meeting to offer support to the Foster Carer in presenting their problem. This can really help all parties to find a way forward or air complaints in a face to face and professional manner.

Achievements 2021-2022

Book Club- (Started Feb 2021)

At the end of February 2021 (during the Covid lockdown) ESFCA started an on-line Book Club. The Club was attended by 11 children and hosted by Susanne Beesley (Chair- ESFCA). The Books were donated by Much Ado Books- Prospero project.

Easter Eggs- 4th April 2022 (Easter break)

During the Easter holiday season ESFCA paid for & donated 197 Easter eggs to the Through Care Team (the department looking after young adults leaving the care system). The eggs were given to the young adults living in supported lodgings or on their own. ESFCA made the donation from their own funds.

During the Easter holiday season ESFCA received a donation of 50 Easter Eggs from Sainsbury's (Hampden Park). The long-term community partnership with Sainsbury's continues to grow stronger, and this year 50 children under the ESFCA umbrella received chocolate treats. ESFCA thanks Sainsburys for its generous donation and continued support.

Bluebell Walk- 28th April 4th May & 5th May

During the spring of 2021 the covid restrictions started to relax, which allowed the Arlington Bluebell Walk to operate (though at a reduced level). Another strong community partner, the Arlington Bluebell Walk is one of the most popular events of the ESFCA calendar, and it was great to be back. This year refreshments were not made available (due to the limited restrictions), however ESFCA volunteers marshalled the Bluebell walk for visitors and received a £900.00 donation.

Intuitive Horse- May

During May ESFCA were asked to support a request for a child to be accepted onto the Intuitive Horse Project. The project involves Looked After Children attending 6 sessions individually to help the young person, depending on their needs, explore confidence building, emotional awareness, impulse control, building trust in relationships, learning how to calm themselves, developing empathy and overcoming fears. ESFCA was very happy to support this activity and sponsor the request.

EID celebration 12th May

ESFCA were approached by Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) – part of the Through Care Team, to help provide a feast to celebrate Eid (Eid is a feast that celebrates the end of Ramadan). 24 young adults (children) attended the feast, and it was held in a local park in Eastbourne. ESFCA donated £100 which covered the cost of the food.

PGL Day camp 2nd, 4th June 30th, July 4th & 6th August.

The lifting of restrictions allowed us to run 5 day-camps at the PGL Windmill Hill activity centre. Normally ESFCA would run 2 residential weekends at PGL activity centres across the south taking 25 children and 10 adults each time. As there were still no residential bookings allowed at the time of creating the event, the decision was made to create 5 activity days and invite more children. Giant swing, Zip Wire, Obstacle course & canoeing were on offer and the children had a
great time. Over 130 looked after children attended the days accompanied by over 50 adults (social workers & foster carers) joined them. The cost of all 5 days was paid for from the 3-year £30,000 grant provided by Children in Need.

Bates Farm – 30th June

Bates farm is the location of the Arlington Bluebell walk, and from May until October is also the home of Bates Garden. This garden is attached to the residence of John McCutchan (who runs the Bluebell Walk), his Wife (Carolyn) was an award-winning horticulturist, and the decision was made to open her garden in her memory and to raise funds for local hospital. Volunteers from ESFCA ran the refreshments on 30th June and together with a small donation from Bates farm made £104.

Allegations Review – 5th July

After the complete revision of the foster carer Allegations support document during 2020, it was decided to revisit the document and add an addendum to the new documentation. Susanne Beesley (Chair- ESFCA), Tina Henderson (Founder trustee- ESFCA), Adrian Sewell (Fostering Service-operations manager) & Peter Richards (Fostering Service operations Manager).

More Radio – Child of Sussex Awards- 15th July

The 15th of July saw the launch of the More Radio Child of Sussex Awards. ESFCA once again took the opportunity to sponsor the Gold Award. More Radio listeners are asked to nominate children that deserve recognition in a host of categories, the Gold Award allows an extra special to be nominated, but whose story does not fit these existing categories. Due to covid restrictions the Award ceremony was postponed until the summer 2022.

Through Care Team- Go Ape – 4th August

The Go ape treetop challenge was the event that bought over 40 young adults together for the first time in over a year. The Through Care team organised the event and ESFCA was very happy sponsor the activity. The Young adults accompanied by support staff, took to the treetops above Bedgebury national Pinetum where they engaged with each other, worked as a team, and had fun in the process.

Computer donation – 13th August

ESFCA were incredibly grateful to receive six computers (refurbished) from the Sussex estate agent Phillip Mann. The donation was arranged by Chris Thornton (ex- treasurer ESFCA), who also refurbished the computers for the association. The computers were donated to foster families who needed the extra support for home schooling. ESFCA wishes to thank Phillip Mann for their generous gift and to Chris Thornton for helping to facilitate the donation.

Financial Donation – 7th September

ESFCA were once again overjoyed to receive another donation from their Community Partner Sainsbury's (Eastbourne). Thanks to their fund raising the Eastbourne Sainsburys team donated £893.00. Thank you again Sainsbury's.

Soapbox Race- 26th September

ESFCA were thrilled to take part in the inaugural Soap box race, held at the base of the Southdown's along Kings Parade. Though not racing this year, volunteers helped marshal the course and kept closed roads clear for emergency vehicles (if needed). This activity earned the association a donation of £100.00

UASC London trip

ESFCA was proud to support the UASC team and helped send 42 children (young adults) & 7 adults (support) to London. The trips' goal was to allow the children (young adults) to visit the key tourist areas (Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, etc.) and embrace the history and pageantry of the country they have travelled to. The trip was funded by ESFCA and included travel, entry fees, food & drink.

Art Class – 16th October

Friend of ESFCA (and Lady Soroptimist) Maureen Wells very kindly offered to run a monthly art class for our children. Maureen is a qualified art teacher and consults for various education authorities across the country. On Saturday 16th October we held our first class at Printers Playhouse (Eastbourne), who gave us a room to use at a reduced rate. 11 children attended (each paying £5.00-per class to help with the running costs). Art supplies were provided by ESFCA & Lady Soroptimists – Lewes.

Beachy Head 10K – 24th October

On Sunday 24th October ESFCA Volunteers once again braved the elements and marshalled the famous Beachy Head 10k race. 13 volunteers took their positions and made sure all the runners taking part got back to the finish safely. Over 453 runners completed the race and ESFCA received a £200.00 donation from Eastbourne Borough Council Events Team for their support.

Baby & Toddler Group – 22nd October

Friday 22nd October saw ESFCA return to running a baby & toddler group, allowing foster families looking after under 5's to meet and play in a safe & secure environment. Over 15 foster families signed up to join our group, which was funded by ESFCA.

Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association - 1st November

Once again, the Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association were incredibly generous and donated £250.00 to help with the costs of our annual pantomime trip.

Horse Riding Project – 2nd November

The beginning of November saw the start of the Horse-Riding Project. ESFCA in partnership with the Polegate Equestrian Centre. With a discount from the equestrian centre and a subsidy from ESFCA, foster families were able to buy vouchers for only £5.00 a session to allow their looked after children to take part in ½ hour riding sessions at their own choice throughout the year (2021-2022). Over 41 children took part in the project.

RRR- Afternoon Tea – 3rd November

Reflect, Recharge and Relax is a project that allows foster carers to choose one activity and receive a few hours respite. Wednesday 3rd saw the first event take place as over 20 foster carers attended the afternoon tea held at Hilliers Garden Centre (Hailsham). The RRR project is funded by ESFCA and appreciates the support of Hilliers and the discount they generously gave the association.

RRR- Chinese Meal – 9th November

The second event of the RRR project was held at the Happy Dragon Chinese restaurant (Pevensey) where foster carers enjoyed a meal and the company of other carers. Over 34 carers attendee the event and ESFCA thanks everyone at the Happy Dragon and for the discount they gave to the association.

AGM – 15th November

ESFCA held the Annual General Meeting on Monday 15th November, the event was attended by trustees, patron's, members, and managers from East Sussex children's services.

Bowling - 26th November

11 Children enjoyed an evening of bowling at the Freedom Leisure bowling lanes (Hailsham). Two lanes were booked, and the children played two games in teams. Snacks and refreshments were also on offer for the children & carers attending. ESFCA thanks everyone at Freedom Leisure for their hospitability and the discount they gave the association.

Christmas Party – 5th December

Sunday the 5th of Dec saw the return of the ESFCA Christmas party after cancelling the 2020 party due to Covid. There was a disco and party games throughout the afternoon and once again we were joined by the lady soroptimists who generously gave up their time and donated gifts for the children to give their carers. Father Christmas made an early appearance for all the children. This year also saw ESFCA introduce a sensory room for children with extra needs to enjoy. The party was self-funded by ESFCA, and the room/s were kindly donated for our use by the Kings Centre who we are truly thankful for their long-term and continued support. Over 70 children attended this year's party.

Quiz Night – 8th December

ESFCA's community partners at the Berwick Inn held a Christmas Quiz to raise funds for future ESFCA projects. Six teams took part and raised £81.00 in entrance fees with a further £117.58 raised by a raffle during the quiz.

More Radio – 10th December

More Radio donated over 600 toys & gifts to ESFCA from its annual Toy donation appeal (Every year More radio listeners donate toys & gifts to be distributed over the Christmas period to children & families). ESFCA distributed toys & gifts to children entering the care system over the month of December and beginning of January, toys were also distributed to the children of young adults under the care of the Through Care Team.

St Luke's Christmas Fayre – 11th December

ESFCA were invited to take part in the St Luke's Christmas Fayre, and we ran a cakes sale & bric-a-brac stall alongside a Santa's Grotto. The event allowed ESFCA to raise funds and awareness. Over £117.00 was raised at the event.

Eastbourne Motorcycle Rideout (Santa Run) – 12th December

For the fourth year running EBMR – a group of motorcycle enthusiasts from across the county, rode across East Sussex to support Local Children across the county. The group rode their motorcycles from The Berwick Inn (after enjoying bacon rolls & Coffee to Eastbourne District Hospital. Their donated toys & gifts to the children staying in Hospital over the Christmas period. They also donated to ESFCA and posed for photographs with hospital staff & ESFCA Chair Susanne Beesley. After this brief stop, they then continued onto Hastings Conquest Hospital. Some were dressed as Santa Claus (or Mrs Claus) and elves £385.00.

Backpack Donation- December 2021

During the final weeks of December ESFCA received a donation of drawstring back packs each one individually filled with gifts (notebooks, pens/ pencils, socks, pyjamas, toiletries, and toys) for children coming into the care system over the next year. Friends from the DWP (Department of Works and Pensions), their families & friends (across the country) donated over 100 back packs.

Pantomime - 2nd January 2022

The end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022 saw Covid restrictions become more relaxed. This allowed Pantomimes to take place across the country. ESFCA secured over 200 tickets for Sleeping Beauty at the Devonshire Park Theatre in Eastbourne. ESFCA subsidised tickets for the foster families so they could enjoy the show at a much more affordable price.

RRR – Spa Day – 20th January 2022

Over 19 ESFCA members took part in the final offering of the Reflect, Recharge, Relax project, which was a spa day held at the Eastbourne Bannatyne health club. The event was run between 09:30 – 24:30, sitting nicely between the school run, allowing all the members taking part to enjoy the day. The full use of the club's facilities was made available, and lunch was also included. ESFCA sponsored the day and is once again thankful for the continued support and their community partnership.

Corporate Parent Panel – 21st January 2022

ESFCA Chair (Susanne Beesley) & Treasurer (Lysette Grosvenor) presented at the East Sussex County Council- Corporate Parenting Panel. The presentation described the work ESFCA accomplishes on behalf of its members and the relationships it has built with its community partners as well as the working relationship it has developed with ESCC.

Bowling – 16th February 2022

14 Children enjoyed an evening of bowling at the Freedom Leisure bowling lanes (Hailsham). Two lanes were booked, and the children played two games in teams. Snacks and refreshments were also on offer for the children & carers attending. ESFCA thanks everyone at Freedom Leisure for their hospitability and the discount they gave the association.

Children in Need Youth Fund – 2nd February 2022

Trustees were successful in a fundraising bid with Children in Need levelling up grant. The grant has provided over £2000 for sports equipment & outside games, £1500 for two gazebos to be used at events and for marketing purposes and over £500 for musical equipment.

Landmark Trust (Goddards)- 11th March-14th March

ESFCA was successful in a request with "The Landmark trust" and was granted a weekend stay at the "Goddard's" house in the surrey Hills. Six children and three trustees spent the weekend enjoying walks, cooking, baking, playing games and dressing up. The highlight of the weekend was a visit from ESFCA patron Jacqueline Wilson who arrived to join in the fun. ESFCA would like to thank "The Landmark Trust" for their very generous donation.

Financial review

We continue to receive an annual grant of £20,000 from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) which enables us to employ staff and operate back office services to support the 10 Trustees running the charity.

Furthermore, we continue to receive an annual top up of restricted funds from ESCC for the advocacy fund held by ESFCA to support any foster carer facing an allegation. This fund provides independent support, at a most upsetting and worrying time, for all members of the Fostering family for as long as needed, which can in some cases involve a lengthy and complex investigation.

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The lessening of Covid regulation enabled us to resume many aspects of our work, including fundraising activities. Our team were very creative in organising raffles, quiz nights, Christmas grottoes, marshalling events and collecting donations. This enabled a wide range of activities for Foster families from babies and toddlers to primary and secondary age children, young people who foster, unaccompanied asylum seekers, through care young people aged 16 to 25 and foster parents time out treats.

Please see the activities and achievements report for full list.

Chairperson's Review

Dear All,

After two years of lockdown and limited human interaction, we have at last begun to emerge from what was for many was a very trying time. Thanks to our dedicated team and its loyal supporters (including the ESCC), we have begun to restart our favourite events, for the children and families in East Sussex. Despite the many changes and challenges, we have had to face over this time, our core values have not changed.

Looking back at the most recent financial year from April 2021 to March 2022, we are delighted to say that funds have been stable and our team have remained predominantly unchanged. We did however, receive the extremely sad news that Anne Buchan, one of our much loved trustees had passed away early in the New Year. Anne was a real champion for all children within fostering families but had a particular heart for Children who foster. She was a valued member of our team, and her presence will be greatly missed.

My sincere gratitude goes out to them all including Mark Thornborough (Vice Chair), Lysette Grosvenor (Treasurer), Ann Holder (MBE), Tina Henderson, Ru Petraitis-Williams, Anja Leeves, Sandra Maylam, Ruma Smith and Christine Phillips. Needless to say, none of what we achieve would be possible without them. We are extremely privileged to have such a dedicated team of people behind the scenes.

A particular thank you must go to our Treasurer, Lysette Grosvenor, who spends so much of her time ensuring that our financials are kept in order. We will always be incredibly grateful to have the support of some amazing individuals whose experience and dedication to the goals of ESFCA do not go unnoticed. A huge thank you goes to our admin Nigel who works tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that all that we do runs smoothly and always goes the extra mile for us.

<u>Funds</u>
The Bluebell walk was actually a wonderful way to begin our progression away from lockdown. Despite the limited capacity and closure of the café, we still marshalled the walk and received a £900 donation. We are very grateful for the continuous support and kindness of John McCutchen Arlington Bluebell Walk owner. We look forward to everything running at full capacity in the future and we can continue the success of this generous opportunity.

Yet again, we extend our heartfelt thanks to More radio for their donation of toys. We hope our notion of giving back by sponsoring an award for the children of Sussex awards can display our gratitude for their assistance and well as extend our community presence.
Our friends the Eastbourne Motorcycle Ride Outs (EBMR) made another generous donation and we enjoyed supporting the event. More generous funds were also donated to us form Widows and sons and we are incredibly grateful for their ongoing support. EBMR also supported us in our other fundraisers and are always willing to get involved.

Sainsbury's continue to be one of our steadfast supporters after being their charity of the year. We maintain a close relationship with them and they gift us with donations such as easter eggs or vouchers.

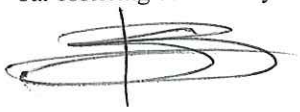
This financial year has involved beginning our events again such as PGL, Christmas party, Jamie's Farm, the Pantomime and others. We soon fell back into the swing of things with the help of our admin team to get things running smoothly. We take immense pleasure in being able to witness the positive enrichment experienced by all involved.

Our PGL trips were thankfully enabled through our grant from Children in Need. PGL is one of our most sought-after events for children. We usually have the facilities to take three groups of children away a year. This year, due to restrictions not allowing residentials, we decided to plan 5-day trips to Windmill Hill which allowed us to take 130 children to enjoy the activities instead. I am so grateful for the dedicated duo we have in Tina Henderson and Mark Thornborough, who take on the immense task of organising and delivering PGL and do such an amazing job.

The Christmas Party brings together our community in the festive season and creates shared memories year upon year for our children. The Lady Soroptimists kindly support this event, as they have for the last 7+ years, by facilitating present wrapping with the children. It is one of our events that is enjoyed by all, and we are thankful to the Kings Centre for providing the space to do this under their charity initiative. In addition to this, the Pantomime also provides our families with a perfect opportunity to spend some quality time together as we were able to give them discounted tickets to enjoy a show alongside other fostering families.

The More Radio Child of Sussex Awards is an event ESFCA sponsor, as our way of giving back to our community and enriching our partnership. Through the generosity of More Radio listeners the radio distributed hundreds of toys over the years to our cause and they are highly appreciated. As the ceremony was postponed this year, it has been moved to 2022/23 and we look forward to participating in this to present an award to a well-deserving individual.

After our first full year of limited restrictions and most things returning to normal, ESFCA have adapted well and taken things in their stride. Our trustees have worked as hard as ever to give our families the support and enjoyment they deserve after such trying couple of years. We are so thankful for all our supporters who continue to offer their backing so that we can extend this support to the deserving children and families within our fostering community.



Kind Regards,
Susanne Beesley
Chairperson of ESFCA

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Independent examiner's report to the trustees on the unaudited financial statements of East Sussex Foster Care Association.

I report on the accounts of East Sussex Foster Care Association for the year ended 31 March 2022 set out on pages 2 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and independent examiner
The charity's trustees (who are also the directors of the company for purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), and that an independent examination is needed. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's statement
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
   - to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Peter D Hill FCA
On Behalf Of
Dominic Hill Associates Limited
Archer House
Britland Estate
Northbourne Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN22 8PW

East Sussex Foster Care Association
Statement of financial activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account)
For the year ended 31 March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total £	2021 Total £
Incoming Resources					
Donations		3,446	-	3,446	2,912
Core funding		20,000	-	20,000	20,000
Advocacy support		-	2,697	2,697	2,920
Apprentice scheme grant		-	-	-	6,000
Fundraising – inc Bluebell walk		1,588	-	1,588	-
PGL		-	10,430	10,430	9,770
Pantomine		2,329	-	2,329	-
CiN youth			3,883	3,883	-
Event contributions		1,630	-	1,630	-
Interest		4	-	4	18
Total incoming resources		28,997	17,010	46,007	41,620
Resources expended					
Insurance		567	-	567	-
General running expenses		4,079	-	4,079	771
Pantomime		3,900	-	3,900	-
PGL		-	13,267	13,267	-
Through care team		4,796	-	4,796	109
Events and projects		6,123	-	6,123	6,992
CiN youth		-	4,014	4,014	-
Fundraising		134	-	134	-
Intuitive Horse		480	-	480	1,440
Advocacy support		-	1,214	1,214	3,395
Salaries & pensions		14,108	-	14,108	13,298
Christmas party		980	-	980	-
Accountants fees		1,644	-	1,644	1,640
Total outgoing resources		36,810	18,495	55,305	27,645
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/ Net income/(expenditure) for the year		(7,813)	(1,485)	(9,298)	13,975
Transfers		(131)	131	-	-
Total funds brought forward		80,495	24,747	105,242	91,267
Total resources		72,551	23,393	95,944	105,242

East Sussex Foster Care Association

Balance sheet
As at 31 March 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2022 £	2021 £	2021 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets			-		-
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		97,285		106,538	
Debtors & prepayments	2	33		87	
		97,318		106,625	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	3	(1,374)		(1,383)	
			95,944		105,242
Net Assets			95,944		105,242
Funds					
Unrestricted funds	4		72,551		80,495
Restricted funds	5		23,393		24,747
Total Funds	6		95,944		105,242

Balance sheet (continued)

Directors statements required by the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2022

In approving these financial statements as trustees of the company we hereby confirm:

(a) that for the year stated above the company was entitled to the exemption conferred by section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 ;

(b) that no notice has been deposited at the registered office of the company pursuant to section 476 of the Companies Act 2006 requesting that an audit be conducted for the year ended 31 March 2022.

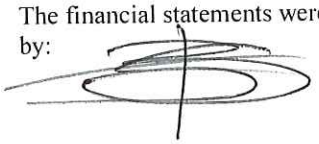
(c) that we acknowledge our responsibilities for:

(1) ensuring that the company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006, and

(2) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the provisions of the Companies Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 1A 'Small Entities' of Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The financial statements were approved by the board on 12/09/2022 and signed on its behalf by:



Ms S Beesley
Director and chair of trustees

Notes to financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022

1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year and the preceding year.

1.1. Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 1A 'Small Entities' of Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

1.2. Going concern

The trustees are of the view that the charity is a going concern and will continue for the foreseeable future.

1.3. Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Voluntary income is received by way of donations and gifts and is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included.

Grants and incoming resources from charitable activities are recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are receivable.

Income from investments is included in the year in which it is receivable.

1.3. Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT, which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

1.4. Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Expenditure on individual items of office and computer equipment costing less than £5,000 is written off in the period in which the expenditure incurred.

1.5. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity.
Restricted funds are specifically for particular areas and projects undertaken by the charity.

1.6. Average number of employees

The average number of employees during the year was 1. There are also a number of volunteer support workers.

Notes to financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022

2. Debtors and Prepayments

	2022 £	2021 £
PAYE debtor	33	87
Prepayments	-	-
Accrued income	-	-
Overpaid bank charges	-	-
	33	87

3. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Accountancy	1,374	1,383
	1,374	1,383

4. Unrestricted funds

	Balance at 01-Apr-21 £	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Balance at 31-Mar-22
General fund	76,330	8,997	16,412	(3,637)	72,551
Designated fund	4,165	20,000	20,397	(3,768)	-
	80,495	28,997	36,810	(131)	72,551

5. Restricted funds

	Balance at 01-Apr-21 £	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Balance at 31-Mar-22
Advocacy support	6,605	2,697	1,214	-	8,088
CiN PGL events	9,770	10,430	13,267	-	6,933
Apprenticeship scheme	6,000	-	-	-	6,000
Keep it Reel	2,372	-	-	-	2,372
CiN youth	-	3,883	4,014	131	-
	24,747	17,010	18,495	131	23,393

6. Analysis of net assets by fund

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total £	2021 Total £
Current assets	73,925	23,393	97,318	106,625
Current liabilities	(1,374)	-	(1,374)	(1,383)
	72,551	23,393	95,944	105,242

7. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions other than expenditure reimbursement made to trustees. These payments were supported by documentary evidence such as receipts, and approved for payment by a third party.