



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service



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

## Annual Report 2022-2023





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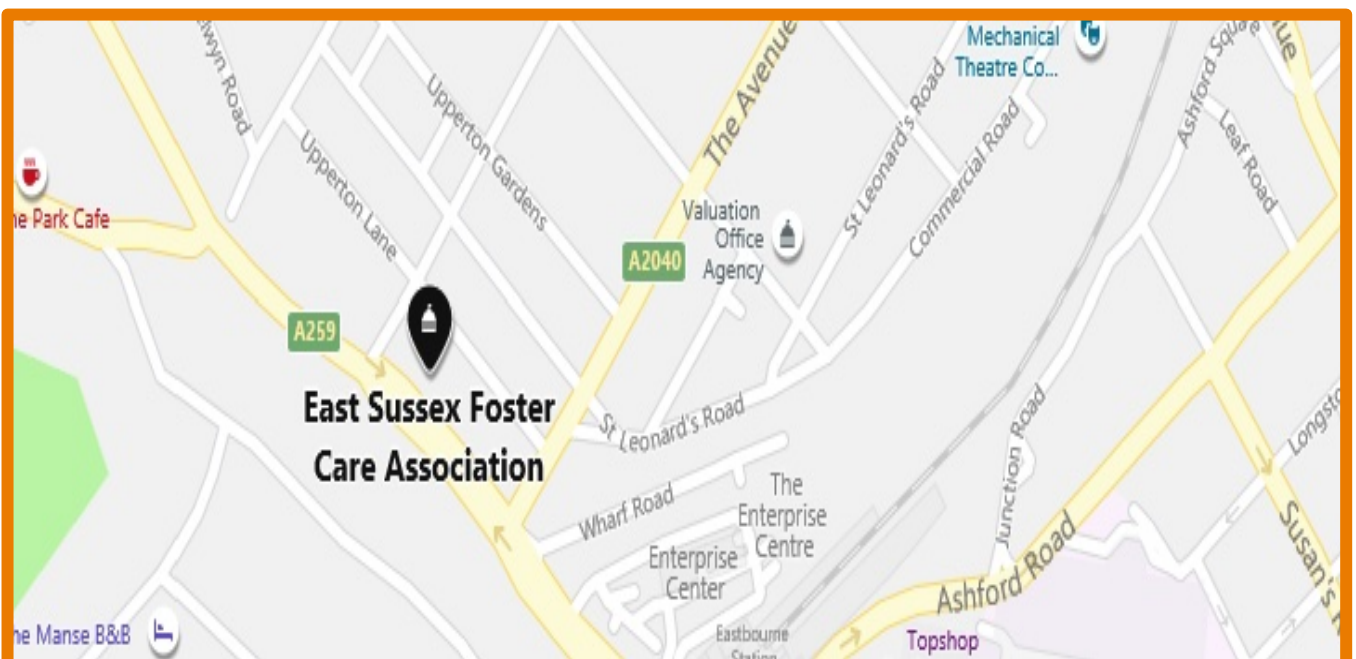
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# Aims & Objectives

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.

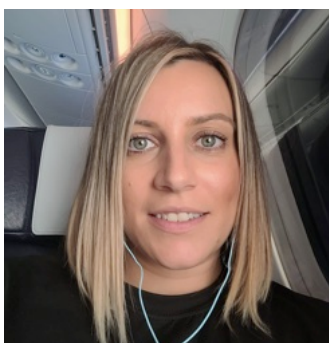


Christine Phillips – Trustee

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.



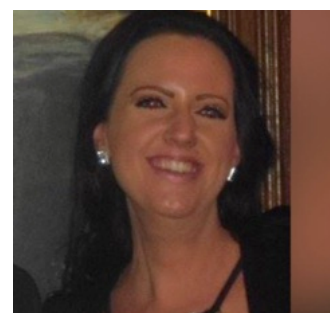
Emily Wells – Trustee

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 residential. 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.

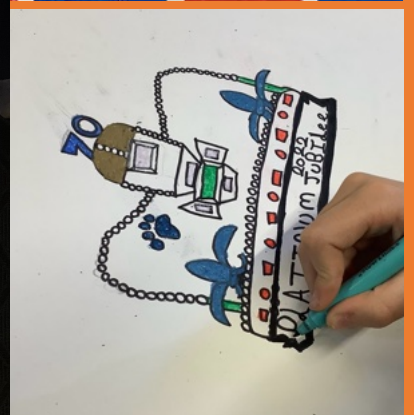
Personally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our trustees, Ann Holder, Tina Henderson, Sandra Maylam, Ru Petraitis – Williams, Anja Leeves, Christine Phillips, Kim Phillips, Veronica Archer, Emily Wells and Samantha Turner. I am very grateful for their continued support; the association 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](mailto: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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto: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.

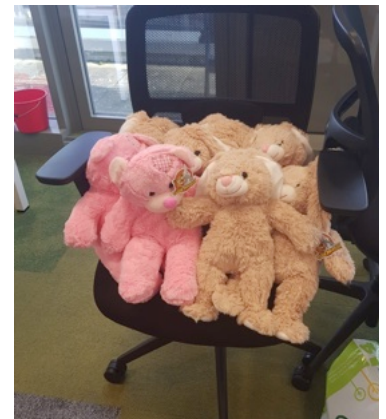


The project ensures that backpacks are available to all children who need them within the county. Foster carers, social workers & family support teams have access to crates filled with backpacks suitable for various age ranges and genders. This thoughtful approach allows us to address the unique needs 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](mailto: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 Eids 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 1<sup>st</sup> trip to London, 1<sup>st</sup> journey on an underground train, 1<sup>st</sup> walk around the sights of London finished by the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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."**

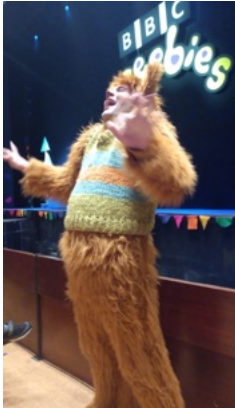
**"We really liked making fajitas... oh and the brownies!"**

**"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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 as 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 they 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 £
<b>Incoming Resources</b>					
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
Pantomime		1,490	-	1,490	2,329
CiN youth		-	-	-	3,883
Event contributions		459	-	459	1,630
Interest		87	-	87	4
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>41,791</b>	<b>8,723</b>	<b>50,514</b>	<b>46,007</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
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
<b>Total outgoing resources</b>		<b>43,737</b>	<b>10,914</b>	<b>54,651</b>	<b>55,305</b>
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/ Net income/(expenditure) for the year</b>		<b>(1,946)</b>	<b>(2,191)</b>	<b>(4,137)</b>	<b>(9,298)</b>
Transfers		2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Total funds brought forward		72,551	23,393	95,944	105,242
<b>Total resources</b>		<b>72,605</b>	<b>19,202</b>	<b>91,807</b>	<b>95,944</b>



# 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 them 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](mailto: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 Vuillemeay  
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



Members  
&  
Volunteers



Sainsbury's

Eastbourne  
&  
Hampden Park



Lewes

VISIT  
EASTBOURNE





Lewes  
&  
Eastbourne

Osmington  
Bay



**More**  
RADIO  
Mid Sussex

TRIPP



EBMR

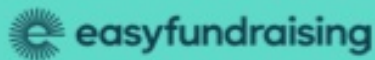
**THE BERWICK INN**  
FREE HOUSE • PUB • CAFÉ • DINING



MAKE IT REEL POSTER GALLERY



# How you can support us

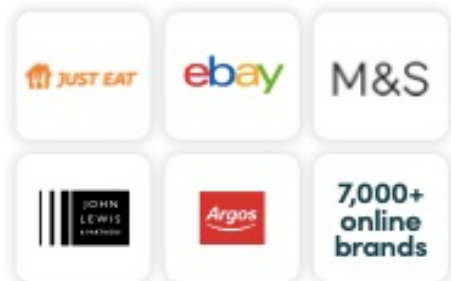


You shop, brands donate to

**East Sussex Foster Care Association**

It won't cost you any extra!

Search for us on [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://easyfundraising.org.uk)



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



[WWW.esfca.co.uk](http://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](mailto: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** 4<sup>th</sup> 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 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 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 remuneration).

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.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Susanne Beesley', with a vertical line extending downwards from the bottom of the signature.

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 £
<b>Incoming Resources</b>					
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
Pantomime		1,490	-	1,490	2,329
CiN youth		-	-	-	3,883
Event contributions		459	-	459	1,630
Interest		87	-	87	4
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>41,791</b>	<b>8,723</b>	<b>50,514</b>	<b>46,007</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
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
<b>Total outgoing resources</b>		<b>43,737</b>	<b>10,914</b>	<b>54,651</b>	<b>55,305</b>
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/ Net income/(expenditure) for the year</b>		<b>(1,946)</b>	<b>(2,191)</b>	<b>(4,137)</b>	<b>(9,298)</b>
Transfers		2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Total funds brought forward		72,551	23,393	95,944	105,242
<b>Total resources</b>		<b>72,605</b>	<b>19,202</b>	<b>91,807</b>	<b>95,944</b>

## East Sussex Foster Care Association

### Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2023

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

**East Sussex Foster Care Association**  
**Balance sheet (continued)**

**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.

## East Sussex Foster Care Association

### 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	-	-
	<u>18</u>	<u>33</u>

#### 3. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Accountancy	1,593	1,374
Pension	105	-
	<u>1,698</u>	<u>1,374</u>

#### 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	-
	<u>72,551</u>	<u>41,791</u>	<u>43,737</u>	<u>2,000</u>	<u>72,605</u>

## East Sussex Foster Care Association

### Notes to financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

#### 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	-	-	-	-	-
	<u>23,393</u>	<u>8,723</u>	<u>10,914</u>	<u>(2,000)</u>	<u>19,202</u>

#### 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)
	<u>72,605</u>	<u>19,202</u>	<u>91,807</u>	<u>95,944</u>

#### 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** 4<sup>th</sup> 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 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 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 remuneration).

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susanne Beesley', with a vertical line extending downwards from the center of the signature.

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 £
<b>Incoming Resources</b>					
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
Pantomime		1,490	-	1,490	2,329
CiN youth		-	-	-	3,883
Event contributions		459	-	459	1,630
Interest		87	-	87	4
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>41,791</b>	<b>8,723</b>	<b>50,514</b>	<b>46,007</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
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
<b>Total outgoing resources</b>		<b>43,737</b>	<b>10,914</b>	<b>54,651</b>	<b>55,305</b>
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/ Net income/(expenditure) for the year</b>		<b>(1,946)</b>	<b>(2,191)</b>	<b>(4,137)</b>	<b>(9,298)</b>
Transfers		2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Total funds brought forward		72,551	23,393	95,944	105,242
<b>Total resources</b>		<b>72,605</b>	<b>19,202</b>	<b>91,807</b>	<b>95,944</b>



## East Sussex Foster Care Association

### Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2023

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

**East Sussex Foster Care Association**  
**Balance sheet (continued)**

**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.

## East Sussex Foster Care Association

### 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	-	-
	<u>18</u>	<u>33</u>

#### 3. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Accountancy	1,593	1,374
Pension	105	-
	<u>1,698</u>	<u>1,374</u>

#### 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	-
	<u>72,551</u>	<u>41,791</u>	<u>43,737</u>	<u>2,000</u>	<u>72,605</u>



## East Sussex Foster Care Association

### Notes to financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

#### 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	-	-	-	-	-
	<u>23,393</u>	<u>8,723</u>	<u>10,914</u>	<u>(2,000)</u>	<u>19,202</u>

#### 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)
	<u>72,605</u>	<u>19,202</u>	<u>91,807</u>	<u>95,944</u>

#### 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.