



# **Annual Report**

## **1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021**

**Supporting children, young people and their families living in North Devon and the Torridge area who have experienced the death of someone close to them.**

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## **Legal and administrative information**

### **Status**

Families in grief was registered with the Charity Commission in 2006 as a Charitable Trust with a trust deed as our governing document. It is governed by constitution.

### **Charity Number**

1116474

### **Charity objectives**

- To support children, young people and their families, living in North Devon and Torridge who have experienced the death of someone close to them through phone/video calls, home or school visits, digital resources and through support group sessions
- To support and coach professionals who come into contact with bereaved children and young people through phone support, training, resources.
- To recruit, train and manage volunteers to support bereaved children young people and their families
- To regularly raise awareness of our service through various platforms such as social media, website, presentations and community meetings.
- To ensure we have the correct governance, resources and funding to fulfil the support we offer families and professionals.

### **Organisational Structure**

#### **Trustees**

The Trustees serving during the year were as follows:

Tracey Elliot (Chair of Trustees since December 2019)

Toby Slater (Treasurer)

Alison Smith

Lesley Rolfe

Jane Kivlin (Until April 2021)

Dale Hall (Until December 2020)

Stuart Allman (Until April 2021)

John Lewis (Since March 2021)

Ali Jackson (Since March 2021)

#### **Employees**

General Manager - Emma Marston

Administrator - Anne Newman (Until October 2020)

Administrator - Karen Hutton (Joined us in November 2020)

Family Service Coordinator - Abi Mandeville (From September 2020 - Present)

Family Service Coordinator - Ellie Mackay (From September 2020 - Present)

*All employees work part-time. Emma works 30 hours per week. Abi and Ellie are a job share working in total 40 hours per week, and Karen works 22.5 hours per week.*

**Address:**

Families in Grief (FiG),  
The Old School House,  
13 Bridgeland Street,  
Bideford  
Devon  
EX39 2QE

**Independent Examiner**

Brian Buteano  
5 College Green,  
Bideford,  
EX39 3JY

**Bank**

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 kings Hill Ave, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ

**Trustees Report**

The trustees are pleased to present their report and the financial statements for the year ended April 2021.

**Principal Activity**

Families in Grief (FiG) provides bereavement support for bereaved children and their families living in Northern Devon (North Devon and Torridge District Council areas).

Many areas of North Devon contend with low salaries and high levels of unemployment. According to Devon County Council figures, at least one in five children live in income deprived families in Barnstaple and Ilfracombe. Without additional support from FiG the problems of deprivation on top of bereavement make these children especially vulnerable to poor outcomes. We offer this crucial bereavement support completely free to ensure that families, regardless of social-economic circumstances, can get the help they need.

We aim to continue to provide a credible and high quality bereavement support service to all bereaved children, young people and their families in need of our help, and to better educate and support professionals who come into contact with bereaved children, young people and their families.

We understand that all families are unique and have different needs when they are bereaved. We meet families wherever they are on their journey through grief by offering different individualised pathways of support to help them.

## **Our vision**

To help all bereaved families living in North Devon and the Torridge area feel better and less alone in their grief

## **Our aims**

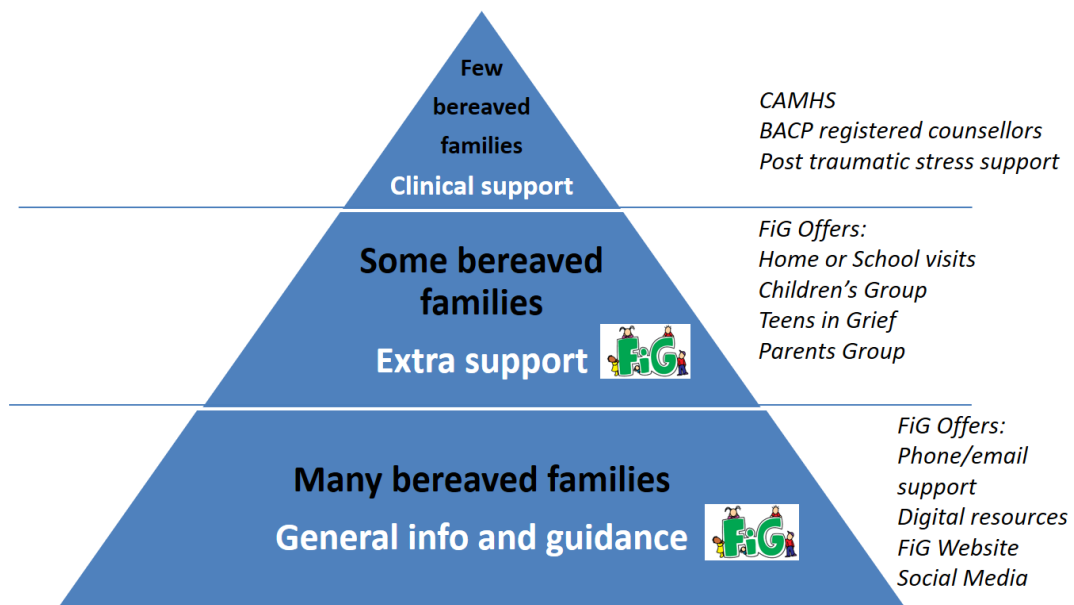
- To provide a credible and high quality bereavement support service to all grieving families in need of our help.
- To better educate and support professionals who come into contact with bereaved children and young people.
- To improve family relationships after a member of the family dies, to reduce social isolation and improve a child or young person's engagement with school.
- To ensure all families and professionals working with families in North Devon and the Torridge area are aware of FiG's services.

## **Our objectives**

- To support children, young people and their families, living in North Devon and Torridge who have experienced the death of someone close to them through phone/video calls, home or school visits, digital resources and through support group sessions
- To support and coach professionals who come into contact with bereaved children and young people through phone support, training and resources.
- To recruit, train and manage volunteers to support bereaved children young people and their families
- To regularly raise awareness of our service through various platforms such as social media, website, presentations and community meetings.
- To ensure we have the correct governance, resources and funding to fulfil the support we offer families and professionals.

The strategies, advice and activities we offer families and professionals are devised over many years of being alongside bereaved children and adults. We use the 'Three component model of bereavement care' (please refer to diagram below) as a guide to how we develop the different types of support we offer.

# What do bereaved families need?



Based on the 'Three component model of bereavement care' (NICE 2003)

*We meet families at the point that they need us, individually assessing their needs and together planning the appropriate support. This often fits into the following three areas on the following page, which may not necessarily be sequential.*

## The support we offer bereaved families

## The support we offer professionals working with bereaved families

	Pathway for family through FiG	Pathway for teaching staff and other professionals through FiG
<b>Type of Support Offered:</b>  <b>General Info and Guidance</b>	<b>Pathway 1</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Families become aware of our service and the support it offers via digital platforms, published materials, presentations, meetings</li> <li>2. Download digital booklets or resources from website and look at FiG website for ideas and info</li> </ol> <b>Pathway 2</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enquiry: A family calls/emails us</li> <li>2. Follow-up assessment call and support from FSC</li> <li>3. Relevant digital resources sent</li> </ol>	<b>Pathway 1</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professionals become aware of our service and the support it offers via digital platforms, materials, presentations, meetings</li> <li>2. Download digital booklets or resources from FiG website and look at FiG website for ideas and info</li> </ol> <b>Pathway 2</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enquiry: A teacher or social worker etc. calls/emails us</li> <li>2. Follow up phone or video call coaching/ supporting professional</li> <li>3. Relevant digital resources sent</li> </ol>
<b>Type of Support Offered:</b>  <b>Further Support through home and school visits</b>	<b>Pathway 1</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment call and signpost/ referral on to another service where necessary</li> <li>2. Two or three follow up support calls to parent/carer</li> <li>3. Relevant digital resources sent</li> </ol> <b>Pathway 2</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment call and referral on where necessary</li> <li>2. Three or four follow up support calls to a parent/carer</li> <li>3. Relevant digital resources sent</li> <li>4. One or two home visits to family</li> </ol>	<b>Pathway 1</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment call</li> <li>2. FiG staff attend multi-agency meeting</li> <li>3. Phone or video call coaching/ supporting professional working with child, or working with them in situ e.g. youth centre, school etc.</li> <li>4. Relevant digital resources sent</li> </ol>

<p>Type of Support Offered:</p> <p><b>FiG Groups and Bereavement Training</b></p>	<p><b>Pathway 1</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment Call and referral on where necessary</li> <li>2. Two or three follow up support calls to a parent/carer</li> <li>3. Relevant digital resources sent</li> <li>4. One or two home visits</li> <li>5. Family attend a Children's Group or Teens in Grief: Including one pre-group visit, six group sessions and one post group visit.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Pathway 1</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Assessment call</li> <li>2 Two or three calls to professional and family</li> <li>3 FiG staff attend multi-agency meeting</li> <li>4 Phone or video call coaching/ supporting professional working with child, or working with them in situ e.g. youth centre, school etc.</li> <li>5 Relevant digital resources sent</li> </ol> <p><b>Pathway 2</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FiG advertises training session to professionals</li> <li>2. FiG delivers 3 hour training session for maximum 12 professionals called: 'Introduction to Supporting Bereaved Children, Young people and their Families' or other training</li> </ol>
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## Our service

We offer three areas of support to bereaved families:

The first area is 'General information and Advice'. This may be advice or information families or professionals obtain by accessing the digital resources on our website or by calling FiG for support or advice over the phone. We listen and offer advice and resources where needed.

The second phase of our support is for families needing extra help or support. We provide this by visiting family members at home or providing advice or strategies to teaching staff at school. During our home visits we reassure the child, young person and their family that they are safe and have our



support to say things out loud that they previously haven't been brave enough to say. During these conversations children start to open up, unlocking previously unheard feelings in front of their parent or carer. Children and their families talk to us about how their life has been impacted since the death. In response we tailor our support to suit the needs of the family in their home or at school. We work closely with all of our local schools and should the family need extra support in other areas we liaise with local services including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), the North Devon Hospice, Pete's Dragon's, GP's, Social Services to put bespoke plans in place.

Here is an example of how we helped Molly aged 7 during a home visit: Molly was very quiet to start with. She had previously not spoken about the death of her Dad to her Mum. A member of FiG brought out her colourful 'Worry Monster' toy to help Molly to relax. Molly loved the toy and started to talk to it about her worries. She then rushed upstairs and brought down a letter she had written to her Dad, as well as photos of him. Following the visit Mum said "My daughter has never spoken about her Dad like that, it was very moving to hear and she is now talking about him a lot at home, thank you FiG!"

Our final area of support for families is our support groups. We have two group programmes, the 'Children's Group' for primary school aged children lasting six weekly sessions, and 'Teens in Grief' for young people aged 11 - 18 lasting seven weekly sessions. These group sessions are held one evening a week. We encourage the children to explore their feelings about the death of their parent or relative

through creative and physical activities. At these sessions the children or teens are together in one room, while their parent or carer is in another nearby.



During our group sessions we bring families together to reduce feelings of isolation, build resilience by teaching them healthy ways to cope with overwhelming feelings and empowering families to come to terms with their changed lives.

We also offer bereavement training to professionals as we aim to educate and support professionals in contact with bereaved children and young people about grief, loss and strategies to support children and their families. We offer courses and resource packs to schools and next year launch our 'School Bereavement Champion' programme. This programme will aim to train and create a network of 'School Bereavement Champions' across North Devon and the Torridge area, ensuring there is one 'bereavement champion' per learning community or school.

Our service has developed over the year 2020-2021 as we have identified further what our families need, new staff have joined our team and in January 2020 developed our new three- year strategic plan.

## **The Trustees**

The Trustees are named on page 3 and if they have served for less than 1 year this is indicated.

The constitution states that the Charity shall have a minimum of three trustees. Every trustee shall be appointed for a term of two-four years by a resolution of the trustees passed at a meeting of the trustees. Trustees may be re-elected at the AGM, we have had no trustees re-elected in this last year.

Our constitution states that in selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity. Therefore, when recruiting trustees this year, a skills audit was undertaken of the current trustees and particular attention was taken to recruit trustees who through occupation, employment, experience or by virtue of his or her personal or professional qualifications or experience is able to make a contribution in pursuit of the objects of Families in Grief.

Every New Trustee receives in house induction, a trustee pack, and training as a new volunteer including the areas of safeguarding and GDPR.

The Trustees have been meeting 10 times a year as this was necessary to help stabilise the charity after its turbulent time last year. However, we now feel that we are in a more stable situation, so plan in the next financial year to reduce this to 6 meetings with productive working party groups in between.

Salaries are reviewed and agreed by the Trustees annually. Changes and proposals recommended by the manager are discussed and agreed at Trustee meetings.

## **Financial Statements**

FiG's income generation comes from a range of sources, including grants from the National Lottery, local councils, charitable foundations, and donations from both businesses and individuals. The charity's financial sustainability relies on all these sources of income, large and small and we are so grateful for all of their generosity.

The COVID pandemic has had quite an impact on our community fundraising this year, stopping many of the sporting events, school fundraisers, etc from happening. Hopefully the next year will see all of these return, especially with our increased social media presence and FiG awareness raising plans for next year we hope that fundraising will get a boost.

The results for the year and the financial position of FiG are shown in the financial statement (page 29). However, in summary, income in the last year amounted to £134,600. Almost £127,000 was received in restricted grants, £4,800 in donations, £2,100 from fundraising and just over £1,000 came from other sources (Gift Aid, bank interest and an HMRC employment allowance rebate from the previous year).

Expenditure for the year amounted to just over £70,300. Salary and associated staff costs amounted to just over £60,200, Fixed costs were almost £4,700 and operating costs were slightly above £5,400.

The largest cost base within the charity is staff salary costs (86%). These are supported by (1) the **National Lottery** (General Manager and Administrator) and (2) the **Anonymous Donor** (Family Service Coordinators). Funding for these costs are secured until March 2023. Applications for future support of these positions will begin later this year. Our second largest expenditure is overhead costs, however these remain relatively low. The trustees regularly review the finances in the trustees meetings to ensure the charity is operating both efficiently and within an appropriate environment of financial controls. This includes close monitoring of expenditure to ensure best value is achieved.

Several town council grants (£3,118) were received to help with the costs of group sessions or family journeys and £700 was secured from the Devon County Council to help support the creation of digital bereavement support content for the new website. A total of five government grants were received in the year (£3,818).

Grants were received from Fullabrook (£1,000) and the Devon Community Foundation (£600) to support costs for the creation of family activity packs. This allowed the charity to adapt to the government restrictions and continue to support families in a new way. An additional grant was received from the Devon Community Foundation (£3,376) to help with core costs for a four month period.

The Devon Community Foundation also provided the second (£2,000) of a three year grant award towards rental costs for the office.

Restricted funds currently held by the charity will help fund the fixed and operating costs into the next year. Other grant applications that have been (or will be) made to support these costs include: all the local town councils, Leathersellers, Postcode Lottery, Tesco (Bags of help).

The net movement in total funds for the year was a profit of £64,300

The focus for 2021 will be to continue to ensure sustainability, increase donations, the charity's community profile and therefore fundraising activities and look to the next round of grant applications needed to cover staff costs beyond 2023. However, at this point in time with the world still managing the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications, we cannot predict how it will affect FiG's financial position for the future and so note this as a substantial risk.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in 'Notes to the Accounts' and comply with Families in Grief's governing document. The Charities Act of 2011 and the relevant version of the statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts

in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

### Reserves

The Trustees annually review the charity's need for reserve funds in line with the guidance issued by the Charity Commission. It has been highlighted in our Risk assessment that the greatest risk to the effectiveness of the charity is loss of grant income. It has been decided that a minimum of 4 months running costs should be held in reserves. The trustees have committed to increasing this fund to a minimum of 6 months running costs (£52,000) by the end of the next financial year. This increase will largely be supported by the Big Lottery restricted fund and unrestricted funds. The reserve will help provide assurances for the continuance of charitable operations in the event of a large reduction in funding, redundancy costs or unexpected legal costs (particularly as the risk has increased in the light of the COVID pandemic).

Amount currently held in reserves: £28,000.

### Risk

Families in Grief have completed a risk register covering Governance, Financial and Operational matters. This is in accordance with guidelines issued by the Institute of Risk Management and the Charity Commission and is available on request.

### Staffing

This year we have seen our staff team grow to meet the demand for bereavement services in North Devon and the Torridge area. FiG now employ four part-time members of staff, an increase of 2 this year (and a change of staff member in a third post).

- Emma Marston is employed as **General Manager** (30 hours per week). Emma has changed job title and role from FiG Coordinator to General Manager 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. She advises the board on strategy and then operationally implements the strategic plan by overseeing the administration, finance, staff management, referrals and fundraising. Emma's role is funded by the National Lottery.
- We have two **Family Service Coordinators** who joined the team in August 2020. Abi Mandeville and Ellie Mackay (both on 20 hours a week). Together they carry out the main areas of family support and evaluation. Their roles are funded by an anonymous donor.
- Our **Administrator** sadly left FiG in October after having been with us for many years and a new administrator Karen Hutton joined us in November on a 22.5 hour contract. Karen's role is funded by the National Lottery.

In addition to staff, we have four types of volunteer roles at FiG:

- **Family Support Volunteers:** Experienced volunteers, making initial calls to families, initial home visits, leading support group sessions;

- **Group Volunteers:** Supporting bereaved families within our support group sessions, attending home visits on either side of the group.
- **Marketing Volunteer :** Having experience in marketing, close liaison with General Manager to create content to promote the charity and its work, to encourage donations and so on.
- **Fundraising Volunteers:** Close liaison with the General Manager creating and delivering new ways of raising money for FiG.

They all volunteer their time on a sessional basis. We currently have 25 volunteers, but have seen over the past year of the pandemic quite a flux in numbers with many volunteers stepping back and new volunteers starting. This year has seen us say goodbye to many valued long standing volunteers, necessitating then a big recruitment drive and training programme this year to induct a new cohort. We are so very grateful for the hard work, support and dedication of all our volunteers old and new, without whom we could not provide the wonderful bereavement support to families that is so needed. **Thank you!!**

Volunteers and staff all undergo initial and then regular, in- house training and Safeguarding training. All staff, trustees and volunteers have enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring service) checks.

### **Review of Activities**

A review of the activities that took place in the year can be found in the General Manager's report (see page 18)

### **Fundraising and Marketing**

With much of the year being in lock down, fundraising has been mainly confined to two areas; through the application for grants from funders, and through social media. During the pandemic the need for a greater online presence was recognised, and the role of 'Marketing Volunteer' was formed. We now have more followers on Facebook, Twitter and now Instagram due to the help of our fantastic marketing volunteer and the staff team and this in turn has boosted the number of donations we have received. We have been able to let our online community know what we are up to, use it for signposting bereavement support and as a source for fundraising. We were able to promote a wonderful team from Pathfield's School who raised money for us by doing the Croyde Ocean Triathlon. We also did our first short online fundraising campaign in December in the lead up to Christmas raising over £300.



You can see all the grants we have applied for and been successful in getting in our financial report. We would like to take this opportunity to **thank all of our local councils and funders** for their kind support of our work this year. Particularly with adapting to the challenges of COVID and continuing to support families through this time, these grants have been invaluable.

#### **Trustees Responsibilities in relation to the Financial statements**

Charity law requires that the trustees prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the Charity and of the profit or loss of the charity for that year. In preparing these, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

We have fulfilled these requirements.

#### **Risk Assessment**

The trustees have identified the major risks to which FiG is exposed and have established systems to mitigate these risks. Our current main risks are:

- Staff and volunteer stress or sickness.
- Future reduction in income due to COVID 19 pandemic.
- Insufficient Grant income.
- Lack of experienced volunteers.

The trustees consider the financial position at the end of the year to be satisfactory. They also do not consider there to be any material uncertainties regarding FiG's ability to continue as a going concern.

### **Voluntary Help and Gifts in Kind.**

The trustees are very grateful to the volunteers who support FiG through supporting families, volunteering at groups, raising funds and marketing, without them we could not provide the service we do to bereaved Families in North Devon and the Torridge area. This year the volunteers put in over 3000 hours of service.

### **Statement of Public benefit**

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's General Guidance on public benefit.

### **GDPR**

In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation, which came into effect on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018, FiG set out its approach to handling and protecting personal data in our 'Data Protection' policy available on request or on our website.

### **Chair of Trustees Review of the Year**

This has been another extraordinary year for FiG, looking back I cannot quite believe what this small but very dedicated team of staff and volunteers have achieved during such a time of tremendous change. Change both within the charity itself and responding to the external landscape of the COVID 19 pandemic. I feel so proud to be part of this amazing charity and to have witnessed the dedication, hard work, determination and passion of our staff and volunteers. I want to take this opportunity to say a **huge thank you** to each and every staff member and volunteer. A particular thank you needs to go to Emma Marston, our General Manager, who has worked tirelessly on the colossal amount of work it has taken to meet the needs of both stabilising and growing FiG as a charity and meeting the needs of our bereaved families with an excellent service in challenging times. You are all amazing!

I just want to highlight just a few of the things we have been up to this year:

- We have worked hard at stabilising the charity's staffing, governance and funding. We now feel that we are in a stable place with documentation, structure and procedures in place to enable the charity flourish.
- We have recruited, inducted and set up all the relevant systems and documentation to support our wonderful, now 4 strong staff team. The expertise, passion, compassion and stability they have brought to our family work already has been wonderful to see.
- We have recruited, trained and inducted 8 new volunteers, whilst also putting in place new support, training and communication structures for our volunteer team.
- We have built an excellent team of trustees with pertinent skills who are keen and hard working. We have seen some changes again to this team but have been able to recruit and are now inducting new members to take their place.
- We have worked hard to address the balance and plan for funding to ensure that we can meet the operational medium to long term costs of the charity. The trustees and General Manager have done this in three ways.



Firstly, we have developed an enhanced grant identification and application process which will help to identify and match any potential future funding gaps to suitable grants. Secondly, we have been operationally implementing the programme of grant applications. Thirdly, we have committed to diversification of our income streams with a new fundraising, social media, and marketing strategy that involves a relaunch of the charity website, enhanced presence on social media and new fundraising initiatives in time for our 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in September 2021.

- We have restarted groups and home visits with COVID risk assessments and mitigations in place. This has taken a lot of extra work to try and provide a service that meets the needs of families whilst keeping them and our staff/ volunteers safe. We have been very aware of how isolating both bereavement and COVID restrictions is and so have worked hard to get these contact opportunities up and running as soon as it was safe to do so.

I am now hugely excited with what lays ahead, not just in meeting the needs of families with all that we already provide but we also plan to:

- Recruit and offer bereavement training to a number of 'School Bereavement Champions' across North Devon and the Torridge area, ensuring one 'Bereavement Champion' per learning community or school. Therefore, increasing the number of professionals able to help and support bereaved children and young people in their communities.
- We will improve our evaluation systems and processes for our family service to ensure feedback is consistently captured at all stages. We will also have our Children's group independently evaluated this year.
- We have identified that the biggest area of growth and development for the charity is our digital offer including social media and our website. We want to help bereaved families and teaching staff/professionals 24/7, so that they can access general information and guidance following a bereavement when they need it, rather than waiting for the FiG office to open. We will be focusing on building a new website with downloadable digital resources. We also want to ensure that the community knows about all of the support we can offer them (not just about our groups) by raising awareness of the different types of support we offer and ensuring all messaging across printed materials as well as digital platforms is consistent.
- We want to listen to the voice of bereaved families when implementing any developmental project. In order to do this better, we will aim to increase the number of FiG Ambassadors, so that we have a greater pool of experience and feedback to draw on when developing these new areas of FiG.

So we have lots to do in the year ahead to make sure we are providing the very best we can for bereaved families in North Devon and the Torridge area. We look forward to reporting back next year on all the developments.

Tracey Elliott  
Chair of Trustees



## **General Manager's Report**

This has been an incredibly challenging and exciting year for FiG. We have faced all of the challenges 'head on' flexing and adapting quickly to ensure our bereaved families continue to get the support they need in these difficult times.

Here are some of the challenges we faced and how we overcame them:

Due to lockdown and Government guidance between April and August 2020 we were unable to run our two planned group programmes. However, we came up with a creative alternative for families waiting to attend a support group. We created two activity packs for families. One for primary school aged children to help with sleep problems, anxiety and to make a worry doll. The other was for young people to create an emotional first aid kit to help them to think of ideas and ways to help themselves manage big feelings. We sent out a total of 48 activity packs to 48 bereaved families throughout May to September.

During this time, we were also unable to offer 'face to face' home visits or school visit for support due to the restrictions. In April myself and the Administrator had moved out of the FiG office, and started working remotely at home. We had to quickly set up systems and processes to receive calls from families needing our help. We were very stretched and family support was provided by six experienced volunteers who we trained to have their own case loads.

As an alternative to providing support to a family at their house, we started to provide support through video calls made via Zoom. We trained the volunteers on using Zoom and talked through the best way to support a family digitally. We also wrote instructions and training for families on how to use Zoom, so that they could connect to FiG and utilise the support available. We were then able to offer support to families via video calls or 'video visits' as we called them from May 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. Some families didn't want to receive our support via video calls, and wanted to wait until we could meet face to face, and so the number of phone calls we made increased during this period to accommodate this. We started supporting families through

'video visits' from 1st May and made 19 video calls to families for the next six months until October 31st.

We recruited and employed two new part time Family Service Coordinators as a job-share who started in September 2021. As they settled into their new role Government guidance changed again, allowing us to run our 'face to face' support group sessions. Due to Government restrictions there was a limit on the numbers attending. We had to limit the number of children taking part to 10 and the number of adults in our 'parents' group' to 8.

We spent September organising a Children's Group for bereaved primary school aged children and their parents or carers. We coordinated the volunteers taking part in the group, ensured all health and safety protocol were in place, adapted our activities to allow for social distancing, bought resources for the group sessions, and so on. This was a huge task as we had to create new activities for the children that would be 'covid secure'.



We then ran the 'real life' programme made up of six group sessions for bereaved families between October and November. Some of these sessions took place during lockdown number 2. The group included four families: four parents with two volunteers in the parents' group, and nine children with three volunteers and one member of staff in the children's group. The positive impact on these families was huge and the volunteers also benefitted too.

Some of our experienced volunteers stepped down from FiG as they found that juggling the impact of Covid on their families i.e. home schooling, working from home with their volunteering role was too much. In response we recruited and trained eight new Family Support volunteers and they took part in a training course made up of six weekly sessions, including one day of activities. Some of our new volunteers were able to take part in our 'real life' *Teens in Grief* group sessions and have continued to take part in our support groups since then.

Our Administrator resigned in October, and we advertised and recruited a new Administrator who started in November. She started during the second National lockdown. This was challenging for the new staff team, as we were unable to meet up in 'real life'. Staff worked remotely from home, and our daily Zoom meetings became an essential 'lifeline' to our team getting to know one another as well as work together. I am happy to say that we have managed to build a successful supportive and hardworking team 'virtually'.

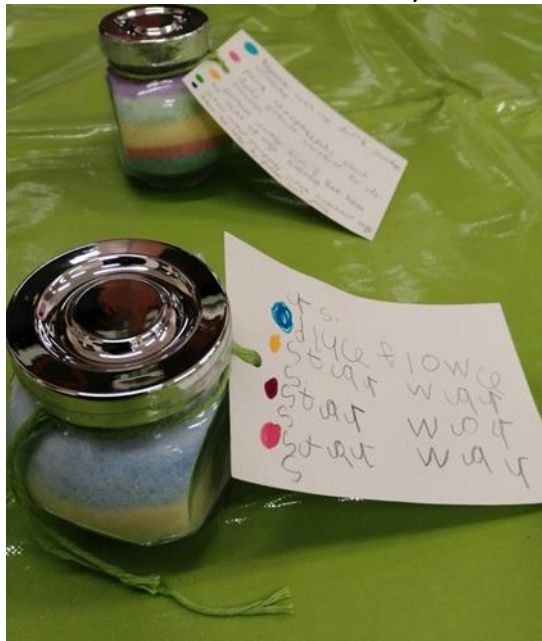
From November 1<sup>st</sup> (due to a change in Government guidance) charities were allowed to offer some 'face to face' support. We then offered support to families either through video calls or by meeting them in 'real life'. Between 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 we offered support to bereaved families via twenty seven home visits and video calls

In total we provided forty two visits to families via video calls and some face to face. Although our referral numbers dropped during this period, we found that each family referred needed more support. We consequently had an enormous increase in the number of support phone calls made to both professionals and families. We made two hundred and seventy one support phone calls between April 1<sup>st</sup> '20 - March 31<sup>st</sup> '21. Many of our families have needed and received double or three times the support we would ordinarily offer a family as the impact of the National lockdowns meant that everyday conversations with people on the street or at the school gates didn't happen and so our families needed to talk more than ever before, as feelings of isolation were compounded by their grief.

We ran our second 'real life' group between February and March for bereaved teens and their parents which took place over six weekly sessions. Six teenagers with three volunteers took part in activities in one room, whilst their parents formed a support group with two FiG volunteers in a room nearby. For both 'real life' groups we had to follow strict Covid guidelines, wear PPE and adapt all of our activities to ensure that they were 'Covid secure'.



During this year we have developed our resource bank for staff and volunteers to access online and send out to families and professionals. We received a grant in January to create digital booklets which would be uploaded to our website, for families and professionals to download free of charge. In February we created a booklet specifically for teaching staff who come into contact with bereaved children and young people and uploaded the finished booklet to our website in March and promoted it via social media. We will be able to monitor the number of people who download the booklet and in our next report we will be able to feedback about the response. We are also planning to write two other booklets, one for parents of bereaved children and young people and one for bereaved teenagers. All booklets will be available to download from our website next year.



I am so proud of how the charity has continued to support bereaved families this year. I'd like to say a **huge thank you** to all of the volunteers who adapted to the changes we had to make, and for their continued efforts with our families. We offered 'real life' support from October, which was so beneficial to all of the families *and volunteers* involved, with many telling us that they felt better and 'less alone' attending the group sessions at a time of National lockdown. Families in Grief has gone from strength to strength this year, we now have a greater number of staff and volunteers all who are able to help bereaved families that come to us. We have a new and skilled board of trustees who have the relevant skills to support me. I know that if we have survived this year, then we will be able to weather any future storms that come our way!

## Reaching out for FiG's help

Below are tables of the support we have provided

<b>Number of referrals received</b>	44
<b>Number of children and young people referred to FiG</b>	84
<b>Number of enquiries received from families</b>	31
<b>Number of enquiries received from professionals</b>	40

## Offering Support

<b>Number of families we have supported</b>  <i>Includes all referrals, any families active on case load, and families taking part in a group</i>	68
<b>Number of children and young people we have supported?</b>	125
<b>Number of parents we have supported?</b>	94
<b>Number of professionals we have supported outside family referrals?</b>	40
<b>Number of times we have supported professionals via email, calls etc?</b>	88
<b>Number of times we have supported families via calls, email etc?</b>	183
<b>Number of video visits/ home visits/ school visits</b>	46
<b>Number of support group sessions for children/young people</b>	12
<b>Number of support group sessions for parents/carers</b>	12
<b>Number of FiG volunteers at end of the year (inc. trustees)</b>	25

## Our impact on bereaved families

**The three main differences we would like to make to a child or young person:**

- Improve Family Relationships
- Improve Engagement with School
- Reduce Social Isolation

**The two main differences we would like to make to parent/carer:**

- Improve Family Relationships
- Reduce Social Isolation
- 

We measure the difference we make to bereaved children, young people and their parent/carer by using these three categories:

- Significant progress
- Progress
- Yet to experience progress

We decide on the progress made, through noting down conversations or feedback from family members, making observations and evaluating questionnaires completed by the children, young people and parents/carers that we support.

***\*All names in this report are disguised for confidentiality purposes***

### **Improving Family Relationships**

During this year, family relationships were tested as we were told to 'Stay at Home' by the Government due to the Covid-19 pandemic. During three National lockdowns, families had to juggle home schooling and work, and some key workers had to isolate from their families to stop the spread of Covid. Experiencing grief on top of these challenges further impacted family relationships.

### **How do we help to improve family relationships?**

We help to improve family relationships by offering strategies and resources to parents and carers over the phone or via email. Parents then start to implement what they have learnt, or pass on strategies to their children, to help them to manage their feelings better.

It is common for family members to want to protect each other from sadness or pain by not talking to one another about the person that died. We help to facilitate conversations between family members during home visits, sometimes separating a child from their parent to help them to talk more openly without the other overhearing. This year was challenging as we met the whole family online via Zoom, rather than at home. This meant that each family member could overhear what the other was saying. We used creative strategies to help to unlock conversations such as pointing at pictures of emojis to describe feelings, reading the family stories depicted on Powerpoint slides and asking them whether they had felt any of the things in the story.

We were able to run two Covid secure groups this year once restrictions opened up and we could meet up in small groups in 'real life', the first our Children's Group



and then Teens in Grief, at both of these groups we had our Parents Group which runs alongside it. During our group sessions parents and children gain confidence talking about their feelings and memories about the person that died within their support groups. After the session, conversations between family members open up on the way home and by talking more openly together about their feelings and family relationships improve. We have so many examples of where family relationships have improved. Just to give a couple of examples; Dan, father of two boys, reported a new openness from his boys in talking about their Mum saying in his final evaluation questionnaire that FiG's support had helped him to manage day-to-day family life better, enabling him and his children to support one another with their grief: "Now the kids are opening up everything has become more comfortable."

Another family with two teenage girls reported that they now feel less alone, Jenny (one of the sisters) said that she had made new friends and can now talk more easily about Mum to her family which has helped to improve their life together at home.



### **Improving engagement with school**

This year was extraordinary as schools were only open to all children and young people for one term this year due to Covid-19 (Sept-December 2020). Families 'home schooled' their children for the other two terms in the academic year.

### **How do we help to improve engagement with school?**

We talk to teachers about how they can help the child, offer them resources and strategies. We also talk to children and young people about how they feel about school. We improve a child or young person's self-awareness with body mapping, self-care kit, emotional first aid kit, these tools help the child or young person understand how to manage big emotions and strategies to work through them, to help to prevent them from becoming overwhelmed in class. We call the school



before and after a child or young person takes part in one of our group programmes. We also support and help teaching staff where required at any point in a child's journey with us.

One example of the positive changes we have seen in children after FiG support this year would be Stephen, age 9, whose Mum died when he was 8. He joined our six week children's group. At the parents' group, Stephen's Dad said during the second session that Stephen was "like a different boy" and that he had had no calls from school about difficult behaviour, which was a great improvement. This continued throughout the six weeks, with Dad describing his son as being "transformed" in our final group session. At a TAF (Team Around the Family) session with Stephen's school after four weeks of group sessions, Stephen's teaching assistant reported that "Stephen is coming in much happier in the mornings this last month" – he says 'hello' to her voluntarily, and seems much calmer and not "dragging a heavy bucket overflowing with stresses" before he starts class unlike before. He was slamming chairs on the floor and regularly choosing to leave the classroom when upset last term, but they are not seeing that behaviour any more. He is now much calmer at school, this has had a positive impact on Stephen, his class mates and the teaching staff around him.

### **Reducing social isolation**

Due to Covid-19 and three national lockdowns, families were isolated more than ever. Bereaved families wanting to reach out to others for a hug, or a chat in 'real life' were unable to do this. Funerals had limited numbers, and following a death, families couldn't meet up to grieve together. Video calling each other via Zoom quickly became the way everyone connected however we saw that this wasn't as satisfying, and many of the bereaved parents we spoke to on the phone needed much more support than pre-Covid-19. The intensity of support for each family that contacted FiG increased, with each family receiving four or five support phone calls on average, as well as many more video calls (instead of our usual home visits) to meet and talk to the children.



### **How do we reduce social isolation?**

We offer support in 'groups', whether it's facilitating conversations between family members at home, or by bringing together bereaved families at our group sessions. During our home visits or video calls we unlock conversations previously unheard by family members which help them to feel less 'alone' with their feelings, and more confident to share them with each other.

Many of the children, young people and their parents/ carers who attend one of our groups make lasting friendships which they tell us helps them to feel more relaxed and confident that they are not alone or the 'only one'. Some groups continue to meet up after the sessions finish. Some have also arranged whole group outings to local attractions during the school holidays to continue their friendships.

Many of the teens swap phone numbers during the second or third sessions of the TiG group and talk about meeting up between group sessions in town or messaging each other when they're feeling alone later in the evening. They talk about the fun they're having together outside our sessions and seem happier and more confident as the group sessions continue.

Just to give a couple of examples of the types of changes families experience; Sue's husband died 1.5 years before Sue and her children came to FiG. Sue reported in her evaluation that the parents group was the turning point for her, she said that "It's the first time I've talked and your support is the first thing that's helped in two years".

Emily a teen and her Mum attended a TiG group. Emily participated fully in all of the activities and quickly made friends with other girls in the group. She was really open and honest throughout the six weekly sessions and also opened up about being bullied at school. In the last group session Emily said that she now felt that she was "not alone" She seemed 'lighter' and experienced significant progress following the group saying in the final evaluation questionnaire: "I am now happy and have motivation to get up in the morning" She also said "I can now talk more easily about my Dad, and have made friends at the group who understand me - thank you"

### **The challenges we faced running groups in restricted times.**

It was very hard to find a venue which was able to host the groups – most of our usual venues were unavailable because of restrictions on venues, and groups because of Covid-19. \_

We had to ensure that government guidelines about numbers, cleaning and social distancing were closely followed. This was made particularly tricky as Government guidelines changed constantly in the run-up to the groups (for example, a short lockdown began on the first week of the group and was only announced the previous weekend). Pre-group home visits had to be done online because of COVID restrictions which was also not ideal for building trust and familiarity for the children before the group.

In the children's group it was noticeable that social distancing measures meant that the children did not interact with each other outside their family groups. It was a

shame that the children were not able to share more amongst themselves and the distancing meant that new friendships were not really formed. However the children all seemed to still get lots from the group and still found it helpful hearing and seeing other children who were bereaved even if they did not interact as they normally would in a group. The adults' group also seemed to really benefit from the social contact after many months of lockdown and limitations and managed to talk together as a group despite social distancing. Despite these challenges, volunteers and staff all worked really hard to make the groups happen and run well despite the difficulties and from the feedback they certainly were hugely beneficial and appreciated by the families that came.

### **Additional benefits we had not expected**



It was not just the families that benefitted from the groups, we found that the volunteers really benefitted from meeting up with each other in 'real life' too. Many told us how beneficial volunteering for FiG and TiG (particularly during this time) was to their wellbeing.

"I just need to remind myself to 'trust the process' because sometimes it's hard to know whether you are making a difference, and then after a few weeks you start seeing changes in a parent's confidence or you get some really positive feedback about their child, and it suddenly all makes sense!"

"Thank you for this opportunity to do something positive and hopefully useful for people in my community. Being there for others helps me feel better about myself, so it's a win-win!"

# Statement of Financial Activities and Notes to the Accounts

## Report of the Independent Examiner

 <b>CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES</b>		<b>Independent examiner's report on the accounts</b>	
<b>Section A Independent Examiner's Report</b>			
<b>Report to the trustees/ members of</b>	Charity Name <b>FAMILIES IN GRIEF</b>		
<b>On accounts for the year ended</b>	<b>31 MARCH 2021</b>	<b>Charity no (if any)</b>	<b>1116474</b>
<b>Set out on pages</b>	<b>1</b> <small>(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)</small>		
<b>Responsibilities and basis of report</b>	<p>I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended <b>31 03 2021</b></p> <p>As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").</p> <p>I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.</p>		
<b>Independent examiner's statement</b>	<p>I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below,*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or</li><li>• the accounts do not accord with the accounting records</li></ul> <p>I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.</p> <p><small>* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.</small></p>		
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	<b>4/5/21</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>BRIAN BUTLAND</b>		
<b>Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):</b>			
<b>Address:</b>	<b>5 COLLEGE GREEN BIDEFORD DEVON EX39 3JY</b>		

# Families in Grief

## Receipts and Payments Accounts 2020-21

<b>Receipts</b>		<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>
Grants	5	-----	£126,635	£126,635	£23,471
Donations		£4,835	-----	£4,835	£41,614
Fundraising		£2,113	-----	£2,113	£2,405
Other	6	£1,039	-----	£1,039	£9,854
<b>Total Receipts:</b>		<b>£7,987</b>	<b>£126,635</b>	<b>£134,622</b>	<b>£77,343</b>

<b>Payments:</b>		<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>
Salaries	7	£15,142	£43,604	£58,746	£39,188
Direct Group Costs	8	£68	£2,068	£2,136	£2,567
Training		£65	£20	£85	£62
Travel		£530	£321	£851	£1,370
Fundraising		-----	-----	-----	£41
Office		-----	£1,620	£1,620	£1,950
Rent		-----	£2,700	£2,700	£2,700
Phone		£72	£693	£765	£736
IT and Support		£300	£714	£1,014	£503
Insurance		-----	£1,014	£1,014	£990
Advertising and Marketing		£195	-----	£195	-----
Memberships		-----	£70	£70	£50
DBS		£65	£250	£315	£159
Bank Charges		-----	£69	£69	£60
Sundries		-----	-----	-----	£276
		<b>£16,438</b>	<b>£53,142</b>	<b>£69,580</b>	<b>£50,652</b>

### Asset Purchases:

Equipment		-----	£589	£589	£380
Fixtures and Fittings		-----	£164	£164	-----

<b>Total Payments:</b>		<b>£16,438</b>	<b>£53,895</b>	<b>£70,333</b>	<b>£51,032</b>
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	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>
Net receipts / Payments	<b>-£8,452</b>	£72,740	£64,288	£26,311
Cash funds brought forward	£56,183	£9,787	£65,970	£39,659
<b>Cash funds carried forward:</b>	<b>£47,731</b>	<b>£82,527</b>	<b>£130,258</b>	<b>£65,970</b>

### Cash at bank and in hand:

Cash Account	£19,641	£82,527	£102,167	£37,872
Gold Account (Reserves)	£28,089	-----	£28,089	£28,076
Petty Cash	£2	-----	£2	£23
<b>Total Cash Funds at Year End:</b>	<b>£47,731</b>	<b>£82,527</b>	<b>£130,258</b>	<b>£65,970</b>

## Notes to the Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021

### 1. Preparation of the accounts:

These accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with section 133 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Charities Act').

### 2. Reserves Policy:

The Trustees annually review the charity's need for reserve funds in line with the guidance issued by the Charity Commission. It is highlighted that the greatest risk to the effectiveness of the charity is loss of Grant Income. It has been decided that a minimum of 4 months running costs should be held in reserves (increasing to 6 months by 2022) to help provide assurances for the continuance of charitable operations in the event of a large reduction in funding, redundancy costs or unexpected legal costs.

Amount currently held in reserves: **£28,089**

### 3. Risk Policy:

Families in Grief has completed a risk register covering Governance, Financial and Operational matters as part of the overall business plan. This is in accordance with guidelines issued by the Institute of Risk Management and the Charity Commission and is available to view in the Families in Grief office.

### 4. Depreciation Policy:

Tangible fixed Assets costing more than £100 are capitalised with depreciation commencing in the first full year of ownership using the straight-line method over a 5 year period.

Fixed Asset opening Balance:	£1,683
Purchases	£754
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£2,437</b>
<i>Less Depreciation charge for the year:</i>	<i>£733</i>
<b>Closing NBV of Fixed Assets:</b>	<b>£1,704</b>

<b>Fixed Assets by Category:</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Equipment	£1,572
Fixtures and Fittings	£132
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£1,704</b>



## 5. Restricted Income:

Restricted Funds are received for a specific purpose within the objects of the charity and have been accounted for separately. All income has therefore been shown as restricted where the donor has stated it can only be used for a specific purpose. Restricted Fund movements were as follows:

<b>Funding Body:</b>	<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Closing Balance</b>
Morrison's	£1,900	----	----	£1,900
Torrige District Council	£3,703	----	£913	£2,790
South Molton Town Council	£200	----	£200	----
Davie-Barnstaple Trust	£492	----	£492	----
Bideford Bridge Trust	£1,600	----	£422	£1,178
Norman Family Trust	£567	----	£567	----
Devon Community Foundation	£1,325	£5,976	£5,951	£1,350
Lottery	----	£84,555	£41,775	£42,780
Anonymous Donor	----	£31,286	£2,262	£29,024
Northam Town Council	----	£650	£387	£263
Ilfracombe Town Council	----	£318	£219	£99
Bideford Town Council	----	£850	£303	£547
Barnstaple Town Council	----	£1,300	£182	£1,118
Fullabrook	----	£1,000	£221	£779
Devon County Council	----	£700	----	£700
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£9,787</b>	<b>£126,635</b>	<b>£53,895</b>	<b>£82,527</b>

Grants are restricted to help with the following projects:

<b>Funding Body:</b>	<b>Restrictions</b>
<b>Morrison's</b>	Staff Training
<b>Torrige District Council</b>	(1) Website redevelopment costs (2) Resources
<b>Lottery</b>	Salaries and associated costs and various evaluations
<b>Anonymous Donor</b>	Salaries and associated costs
<b>Davie-Barnstaple Trust</b>	Group Session (x1)
<b>Bideford Bridge Trust</b>	Group Session (x2)
<b>Norman Family Trust</b>	Family Journey (x2)
<b>Northam Town Council</b>	Family Journey (x1)
<b>Ilfracombe Town Council</b>	Family Journey (x1)
<b>Bideford Town Council</b>	Family Journey (x2)
<b>Barnstaple Town Council</b>	Family Journey (x2)
<b>South Molton Town Council</b>	Family Journey (x1)
<b>Fullabrook</b>	Covid-19 response and rental
<b>Devon Community Foundation</b>	(1) Rental (2) Covid-19 response (3) Core costs
<b>Devon County Council</b>	Digital Bereavement Resource Development

Government grants received in this financial year: **£3,818** (5)

**6. Other Income:**

Other Income for the year is as follows:

Other Income	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Training	-----	-----	-----
Gift Aid	£397	-----	£397
Bank Interest	£13	-----	£13
HMRC*	£629	-----	£629
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£1,039</b>	<b>-----</b>	<b>£1,039</b>

\*2019/20 Employment Allowance

**7. Salaries and associated costs:**

Salaries and associated costs for the year is as follows:

Salaries	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Salaries	£14,987	£42,739	£57,726
Employer's NI Contributions	£4,000	£11	£4,011
<i>Employment Allowance</i>	<i>-£4,000</i>	<i>-----</i>	<i>-£4,000</i>
Employer's Pension Contributions	£113	£729	£842
Payroll Charges	£42	£126	£168
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£15,142</b>	<b>£43,604</b>	<b>£58,746</b>

**8. Direct group costs:**

The direct group and Covid-19 activity pack costs for the year is as follows:

Direct Group Costs	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Child: Venue and Activities	-----	£180	£180
Child: Resources	-----	£660	£660
Child: Food and Drink	-----	-----	-----
Child: Travel	-----	£22	£22
Teen: Venue and Activities	-----	-----	-----
Teen: Resources	-----	£109	£109
Teen: Food and Drink	-----	-----	-----
Teen: Travel	£68	£51	£120
<i>Activity Packs (Covid-19)</i>	<i>-----</i>	<i>£1,046</i>	<i>£1,046</i>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£68</b>	<b>£2,068</b>	<b>£2,136</b>

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by:

*UJ Elliott* Tracey Elliott

Dated: 16/6/2021