

Supporting emotionally and socially vulnerable children and young people



2023–2024 Annual report

To educate the public in, and to relieve the needs of, those with autistic spectrum conditions and behaviours associated with them in the Borough of Eastleigh, Hampshire.



Trustees' report

It is with great pleasure to be able to write this report as we celebrate 20 years of Friends of in Touch. This report covers the period from April 2023 until March 2024 which has been a significant and eventful year for our charity. Not only did many children, young people, and young adults benefit from our charity but we have been awarded another five-year grant from The Big Lottery Fund.

When I saw the advert in the paper for a project leader/therapist over twenty years ago, I never dreamed of the impact it would have on my life and for how long! Initially funded by 'Children Fund' and managed by health and education, with support from other statutory and voluntary organizations, the project has gone through many transitions to become the strong, supportive charity that it is today.

When funding ceased and it looked likely that the project would fold, parents stood up to the challenge, with help and support from many organisations and a lot of hard work, to register the project as a charity. Needless to say, many people were involved in this transition, there are too many to name, but they include our first Chair Claire Norcott and David and Rachel Carter who in the early days took on important committee roles and helped us to form the structure we have today.

We continue to have a very experienced team of staff, led by Hayley Halford and supported by enthusiastic volunteers, who work tirelessly throughout the year to ensure all members have a safe, secure and enjoyable experience. Our thanks go to all of them, without whom the groups could not function. This past year Hayley has worked particularly hard in helping secure the lottery funding.

We have also changed the status of how our staff are paid during this period, from being self-employed they are all now on the payroll. This has been a lot of work for Hui Min our treasurer liaising with HMRC and insuring we have the necessary systems in place. I would like to thank Hui Min for taking on this task.

The lottery funding came with an understanding that we would be unlikely to receive another such grant and we should look to becoming sustainable in the future. With advice from Andrew Chapman (lottery advisor) we budgeted for and have employed a fund raiser Claire Stokes who has quickly settled into the role and has begun to make a significant impact.

I thank my fellow trustees for their work and support over the period. We are a small team and therefore look forward to your continued support. We would welcome offers of help with running the charity and fund raising. If you think you can help in any way, however big or small, please let me know. This year we welcome Karen Allen to the team, who in the early days helped run our very first pilot groups, and she has taken on the role of vice chair.

Without the dedication of our trustees the project would not be able to operate, and with your support we are determined to keep the charity running smoothly, enabling us to give support to many more children young people, young adults, and their families in the future. In Touch has a way of getting you hooked, once you become a part of it, it is hard to leave - I liken it to a large extended family.

Chris Parsons, Chair



Project Coordinator's report

As In Touch reaches the 20 year mark I am reflective on the children, young people and their families we have supported over the years.

I have been part of In Touch for the past 17 years in various roles and never thought that when I started running group therapy for the children all those years ago, I would eventually be here running the project! We now have the scope to support our members into adulthood, meaning that some of our members have been part of In Touch for as long as I have and we have watched them grow and flourish. It is wonderful to see existing and past group members today!

This past year the project has supported over 50 children, young people, young adults and their families. The groups continue to provide a welcoming, safe and fun environment for our members to enjoy themselves, socialise, form friendships, grow and develop. The biggest achievement this year has been to secure a huge £225,000 grant from the Lottery, ensuring our services can continue for another 5 years. As part of this funding, we have been able to recruit our fundraiser, Claire Stokes, who has already worked tirelessly to secure grants for the project. This has had a big impact and we have been able to update our technology and sports equipment resources for all the groups to enjoy.

The JYG has run at capacity throughout the year with 12 children attending. Favoured activities have included cooking, games, sports, art, pool, show and tell, treasure hunts, junk modelling and visits to the park. The juniors have also enjoyed sessions out either picnicking, den building, at QE2 activity centre or for the annual Christmas party at Kids2day.

NGS has also run at capacity with 18 young people attending. The young people have enjoyed various activities including film/games nights, cooking, art and games. There were visits to Boulder shack climbing, an escape room and bowling as well as the Christmas meal at Toby Carvery.

Both JYG and NGS have enjoyed visiting workshops from Animal Encounters and the fire service.

The young adult (YAWA) is now our busiest group with 20 young adults attending. This group plan more of their own activities and have enjoyed quizzes, D&D nights, a bake off, plus visits to the cinema, bowling, geo caching and the Christmas meal at Toby Carvery.

All of our groups now take place at Y-Zone and we are lucky to have the same staff working across all the groups, aiding transition and consistency for our members. The need for our service is apparent through our waiting lists, with all the groups currently at capacity we have new members waiting to join us.

Thank you as always to our dedicated and amazing staff team: Carol, Simone, Becky, Steph and Holly. We also have regular volunteer support from Bethan, Olivia, Simon and Matthew. We have staff members who are neurodivergent themselves which provides us with such fantastic insight and role models for our group members.

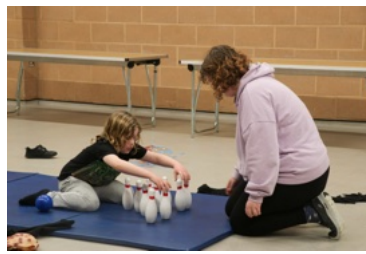
Finally on behalf of all our group members, their families and the staff a big thank you to our chair Chris Parsons, vice chair Karen Allen and all the trustees and committee for your ongoing support and the work that happens behind the scenes to run In Touch.

Hayley Halford, Project Coordinator

What parents have said:

- *"It has been great for my son to be able to socialise with similar peers, free from judgement."*
- *"It has really helped my son and given him somewhere he feels he fits in and belongs in a world that otherwise makes him feel like an outsider."*
- *"This group is the only activity he is easily able to leave the house for, he looks forward to it. His self esteem and confidence has started to grow."*
- *"It is so vital for children with autism as it's very hard to engage in social activities and school holiday activities where their needs are understood."*
- *"It is the highlight of my son's week as he struggles with peer relationships in school with neurotypical children."*
- *"My son really enjoys attending, In Touch is the main time he interacts with people his own age. It has helped him so much."*





Friends of in touch (Registered charity number 1153013)

Trustees:

Chris Parsons (*Chair*)
Hui Min Tseng (*Treasurer*)
Matthew Wakeham
Chris Swales

Karen Allen (*Vice-chair*)
Laura Stephens (*Secretary*)
Anne Rosenfeld

The Trustees would like to express their sincere thanks to:

Co-opted committee members: Hayley Halford

Fundraiser: Claire Stokes

Staff:

Hayley Halford
Carol West
Simone Stewart

Becky Stewart
Steph Matthews
Holly Chamberlain

Volunteers:

Olivia Edwards (Sep 2023 to Present) Bethan Evans (Jun 2018 to Present)
Simon Hockney (Sep 2023 to present) Matthew Barry (Sep 2023 -Dec 2023)

Venue providers: Y-Zone Youth Centre, Fair Oak



What children and young people have said:

"It has helped me form many good relationships."

"Through the FOIT project I have met so many wonderful people who I might not have met otherwise."

"It brings me so much joy getting to have fun with my friends."

"It is good, I have fun."

"It has helped massively with my socialising difficulties."

"It has helped me a lot, it's a safe, fun space where I can make friends with people who won't judge me because I'm autistic."

"I felt really welcomed into the group straight away."

"I have been attending the youth group for several years now and I have made some great friends and it has given me opportunities."

"I feel I belong and can be myself."

"It is fantastic, I can be myself without anyone thinking bad things about me."

"I am accepted as I am and the group makes me happy."

"It's a place where I feel like I can really cut loose and expose my true self because there are people who know how locking that part of yourself away feels. Plus most autistic people are just way nicer."



Friends of In Touch (Charity No. 1153013)
Financial Statement for the year ended 31st March 2024

Receipts and Payments

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Previous Year</u>
Lottery Grant	£39,642.00		£39,642.00	£0
Other Restricted Grants	£5,500.00		£5,500.00	£0
Other Fundraising		£1,860.00	£1,860.00	£2,015
JYG/NGS/YAWA Subscriptions		£5,674.32	£5,674.32	£5,044
Outings/Activities Contribution		£364.75	£364.75	£240
Bank Interest		£151.50	£151.50	£105
Total receipts	£45,142.00	£8,050.57	£53,192.57	£7,404
<u>Payments</u> ¹				
Staff Costs	£20,961.17	£5,674.32	£26,635.49	£18,755
Outings/Activities ²	£756.74	£364.75	£1,121.49	£1,236
Included Activities	£595.75		£595.75	£685
Group Running Expenses ³	£2,592.04		£2,592.04	£1,360
Admin Expenses	£399.94		£399.94	£520
Travel/Parking Expenses	£26.92		£26.92	£219
Venue Hire	£2,700.00		£2,700.00	£3,289
Training	£40.00		£40.00	£589
Insurance	£535.50		£535.50	£427
AGM			£0.00	£172
Website & File Hosting	£236.39		£236.39	£0
Fundraising Expenses	£100.36		£100.36	£0
Others			£0.00	£210
Asset Purchases ⁴	£1,172.09		£1,172.09	£0
Total payments	£30,116.90	£6,039.07	£36,155.97	£27,463
Net of receipts/(payments)	£15,025.10	£2,011.50	£17,036.60	-£20,059
Cash funds last year end	£0.00	£19,775.68	£19,775.68	£39,835
Cash funds this year end	£15,025.10	£21,787.18	£36,812.28	£19,776

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

<u>Cash Funds</u>	<u>Brought Forward</u>	<u>In</u>	<u>Out</u>	<u>Carried Forward</u>
Lottery Grant	£0.00	£39,642.00	£27,848.38	£11,793.62
EBC Covid Recovery Grant	£0.00	£2,800.00	£990.61	£1,809.39
Sovereign Grant	£0.00	£1,000.00	£973.91	£26.09
Abri Grant	£0.00	£1,500.00	£304.00	£1,196.00
EBC Grant for AGM	£0.00	£200.00	£0.00	£200.00
Unrestricted	£19,775.68	£8,050.57	£6,039.07	£21,787.18
Total	£19,775.68	£53,192.57	£36,155.97	£36,812.28

Breakdown of cash funds carried forward

Current account	£12,877.57
Savings account	£23,893.51
Petty cash	£41.20

<u>Assets</u>	<u>Funded By</u>	<u>Date Purchased</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Laptop for admin	Lottery Grant (expired)	Apr-17	£449.99
Laptop for project co-ordinator	Lottery Grant	Nov-23	£431.00
Nintendo Switch	Sovereign Grant	Jan-24	£291.99
iPad	Sovereign Grant	Jan-24	£449.00

Notes

(1) Unless otherwise stated, all payments using restricted funds are funded by Lottery grant.

(2) Also funded by Abri grant.

(3) Also funded by EBC Covid Recovery and Sovereign grants.

(4) Also funded by Sovereign grant.

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Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Friends of In Touch

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Friends of In Touch (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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 all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act;
or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Mark Pyne MAAT
Genio Accountants
33a Portsmouth Road
Woolston
Southampton
SO19 9BA

Date: 16 July 2024