WAKEFIELD AND DISTRICT DOWN'S SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP

England & Wales · Charity number 1155866

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2014-02-20
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	2 Moor Top Avenue Ackworth Pontefract WF7 7JR
Phone	07814367594
Email	info@downsyndrome-wakefield.co.uk
Website	www.downsyndrome-wakefield.co.uk

Activities

Objects: THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION AMONG PEOPLE WITH DOWN'S SYNDROME AND THOSE WITH OTHER LEARNING / ADDITIONAL NEEDS INCLUDING THEIR FAMILIES AND CARERS WITHIN WAKEFIELD AND DISTRICT AND ITS IMMEDIATELY BORDERING AREAS WHO ARE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED AS A RESULT OF THEIR CONDITION BY PREVENTING THEM FROM BECOMING SOCIALLY EXCLUDED, RELIEVING THEIR NEEDS AND ASSISTING THEM TO INTEGRATE INTO SOCIETY BY:-1.PROVIDING INFORMATION, FORUMS, ADVOCACY AND GENERAL SUPPORT; AND2.BY PROVIDING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

Activities: We offer support to families and we run activities and events to enable those families to have fun, develop friendships and, ultimately, to support each other. We aim to make a positive difference by improving understanding and positive awareness of Down's syndrome in our community through social media, training/information for families and professionals and through participation in local events.

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Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Disability
- **Who:** Children/young People, People With Disabilities, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** WITHIN WAKEFIELD AND DISTRICT
- City Of Wakefield

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-02-17	£7,881	£5,856	-	-
2024-02-17	£4,177	£15,342	-	-
2023-02-17	£4,958	£11,935	-	-
2022-02-17	£5,370	£4,785	-	-
2021-02-17	£7,705	£4,119	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
ANN-MARIE SHEARD	Chair	2014-01-22
ALISON BROWN		2014-01-22
ANDREA JAYNE ARNOLD		2014-01-22
Ann Aylward		2019-01-11
Christopher Sharp		2024-06-07
John Crawshaw		2015-09-01
NEIL COURTMAN		2014-01-22
Nigel Le Page		2023-03-10
RUTH NOBLE		2014-01-22

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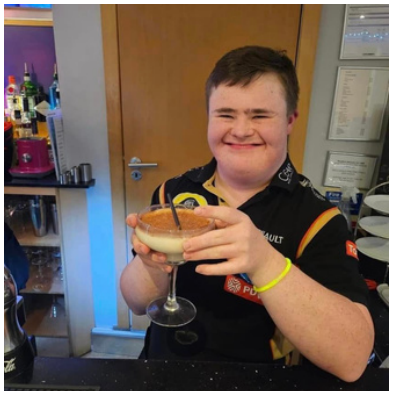
ANNUAL REPORT

February 2024-February 2025

Wakefield and District Down's Syndrome Support Group



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A brighter future through better understanding

Wakefield and District Down's Syndrome Support Group
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WELCOME

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The Annual General Meeting provides an important opportunity to pause and reflect on the past year. Throughout this period, the trustees have remained mindful of the vulnerabilities within our membership, and every decision regarding activities has been taken with careful consideration. While previous years presented significant challenges, this year has seen a continuation of stability and a welcome return to a sense of normality. We have been able to deliver a range of activities that strengthen the connections which make our community so special.

This report outlines the activities and support provided during the year, but I wish to highlight the remarkable commitment behind these achievements. From family events and awareness campaigns to practical support and signposting, everything we do is powered by volunteers. These dedicated individuals give generously of their time and energy, and without them, our work would not be possible. On behalf of the trustees, I extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you.

Our group thrives on ideas from members, and we actively encourage participation in shaping our future activities. Where proposals align with the charity's objectives and individuals are willing to assist in their implementation, we will always endeavour to make them happen. This collaborative spirit is what makes WDDSSG unique.

We recognise that the needs of our families continue to evolve. Balancing resources, safeguarding, and accessibility remains a priority. The trustees are committed to listening, learning, and adapting to ensure that our support remains relevant and impactful.

The year ahead promises further opportunities to connect, share, and grow together. We aim to expand our activities, strengthen partnerships, and continue raising awareness of Down syndrome within our communities. Most importantly, we look forward to creating more moments of joy—the milestones, the laughter, and the experiences that remind us why we do what we do.

Finally, I am immensely proud of this charity and of the families who form its foundation. Our guiding principle remains as relevant today as ever: "A brighter future through better understanding."

Thank you for your continued support and commitment. Together, we are making a difference.

Ann-marie Sheard, Chair of Trustees

OUR CHARITY

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Our charity, guided by our trustees, continues to be shaped by the families that are in it – by what they want, by what they are able to set up, and by what they create between them.

We are always limited by time, as all of our volunteers are busy parents and cannot always achieve what they would like to, but we continue to do our best to keep on supporting, creating opportunities for fun and friendship, raising awareness and making a difference.

Our charitable objects

The promotion of social inclusion among people with Down's syndrome and those with other learning/additional needs including their families and carers within Wakefield and District and its immediately bordering areas who are socially excluded as a result of their condition by preventing them from becoming socially excluded, relieving their needs and assisting them to integrate into society by:

1. providing information, forums, advocacy and general support; and
2. by providing recreational facilities and opportunities.

We achieve our objects with a focus on four key areas: **support; fun and friendship; making a difference; raising awareness.**

We offer a mixture of regular and one-off activities and events which enable families to have fun and develop friendships and, ultimately, to support each other. We aim to make a difference by improving understanding of Down's syndrome in our community in as many ways as we can, and we are steadily increasing the opportunities for children and young people with Down's syndrome in our area. We also work to raise awareness of Down's syndrome and our charity in our area, and to the wider world on the internet and on social media.

WHAT WE DO

This year saw a change in some of our activities, due to funding concerns and the need to secure our charity's existence for both our current and future families.

We are proud that we run our regular social activities with minimal costs, so we have been able to maintain **Saturday Club**, which is always there to provide families with a way to make contact with others when they are ready, and many lifelong friendships have been formed this way! Our **Facebook group** remains an important way for our families to keep in touch, ask questions, get support and give support to others.

We created different ways to get together and, although we couldn't manage the annual summer trip this year, we arranged a **family meet-up** at Heath Common, which was loads of fun and still allowed families to come together.

Christmas is always a wonderful time for WDDSSG, and we were able to maintain our much-loved annual **Christmas party**, and continue with **Doorstep Santa**, a newer tradition that has become important to many families.

We were saddened by the closure of the Playstation, a venue that we have loved for our group's parties and for **Sunday Funday**. We celebrated World Down Syndrome Day there in March 2024, which turned out to be our last session.

Changes can lead to new beginnings, and this year we were able to find an alternative to our annual pantomime, with our very own performance of **Dewsbury Arts Group's pantomime**! It was a special day, with our ice cream treats too!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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We have also found ways of **creating opportunities** for our members to learn skills and feel valued taking a part in organising our events - here's Zoe taking tea and coffee orders at Saturday Club!

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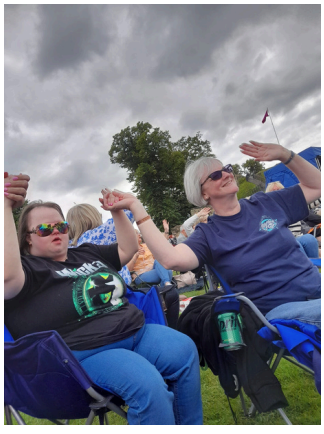
This year also saw a focus on developing our **Brighter Futures** group! As well as our wonderful annual Valentine's disco, the group organised a cinema trip in May, and enjoyed Musicals at the Park in June as well as an ABBA tribute band. They also attended a Michael Jackson tribute event with a restaurant meal in October, and a special performance at The Junction in Goole in December with a meal out at Pizza Express - lots of fun while building supportive friendships!



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THE YEAR AHEAD

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CHARITY DETAILS

Structure, governance and management

Our group has run as a voluntary group since 2000, with a small committee of volunteers, and we became an affiliated local group of the Down's Syndrome Association in 2003. Our charity has been formed as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which is governed by a constitution which was adopted on 20 February 2014.

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Wakefield and District Down's Syndrome Support Group

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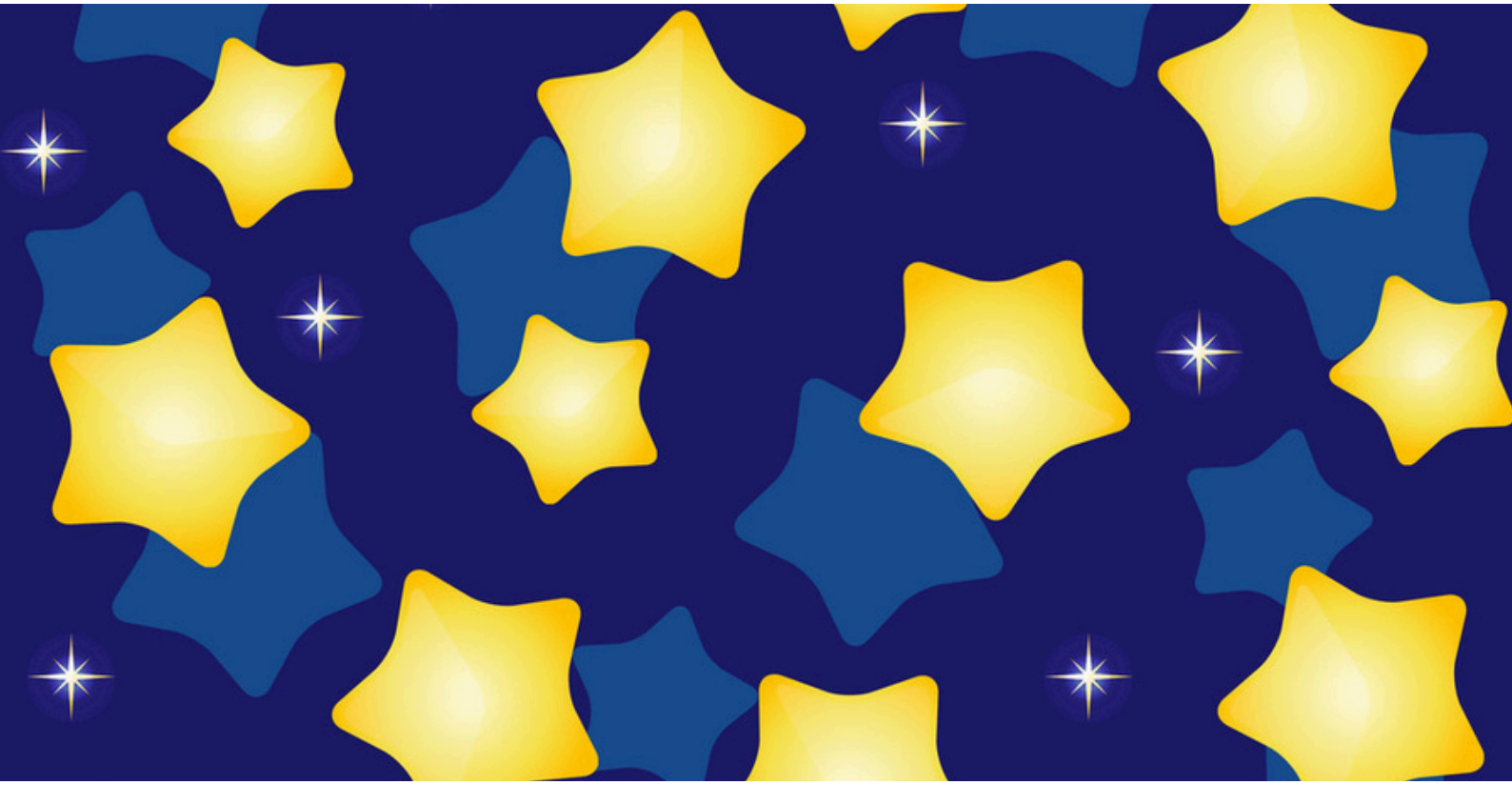

Expenditure over the year totalled £5,855.59 which was significantly lower than previous years and reflects our careful approach to managing our reduced income for the year and the decisions we made last year. Incoming monies were £7,881.35.

The charity's balance at the end of this year was £13,113.02. Of that balance, £2,898.48 is funds restricted for specific purposes by the donors, leaving free cash reserves of £10,214.54.

There is no formal reserves policy, as the charity's ongoing core costs are minimal due to being fully volunteer-led, although we prefer to maintain reserves to cover all of our annual activities. The majority of our income and reserves is available to be allocated to maintaining current projects for the future, and to creating new projects.

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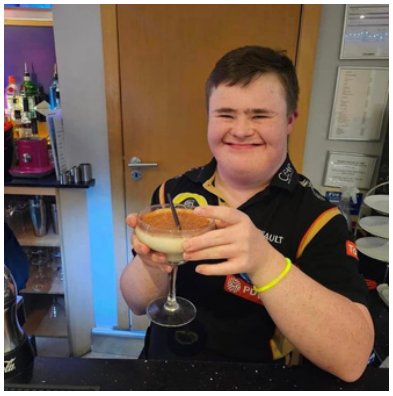

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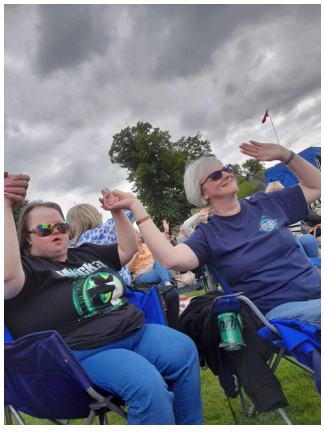

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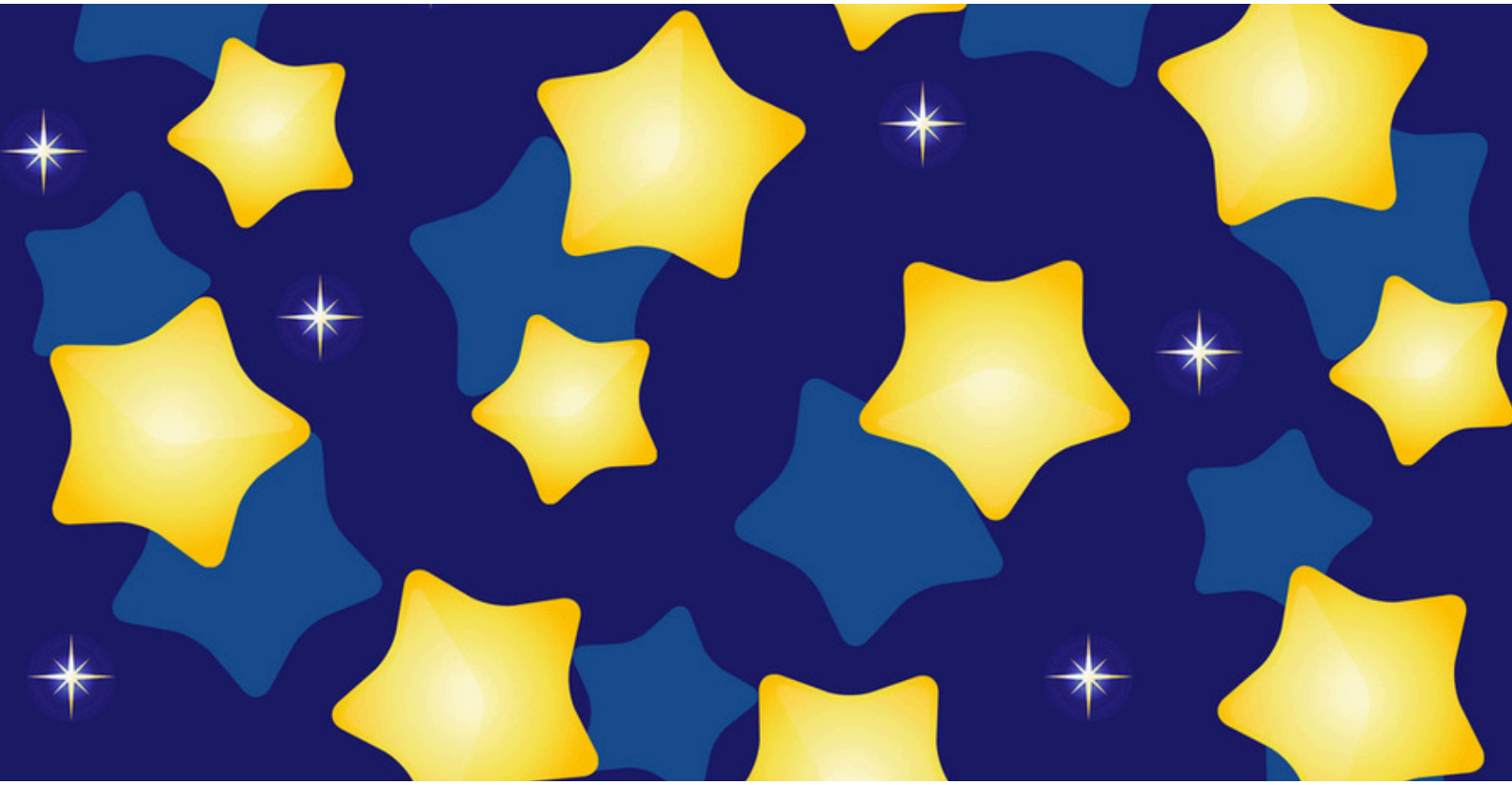

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SUPPORT

Saturday Club is one of the cornerstones of our support group - it's held on the first Saturday of every month, and is a valuable opportunity to meet other families in person which can be so important. There are lots of opportunities for playing together and having fun, and parents get to chat and build friendships too.

"This group is a great support whenever you need it."
"Thank you for making us feel so welcome."
"Life is a journey for everyone. It's the people you meet along the way that make it special and this group is full of special people!"

We unfortunately had to cancel a session this year as currently only one family are volunteering to "lead" Saturday Club with welcoming people and they caught Covid. The session doesn't take much, as it is supported by our independent trustees and our SLT, it just needs the friendly face of a DS parent to say hello and check everyone is okay! We hope that other volunteers will step forward to back up our current family and make sure Saturday Club can always be there for others.

SUPPORT

Our **Facebook** group is a great support for families – the group enables families to offer support to each other and ask/answer questions. There's always people ready to offer answers and support, and we are very proud of the positive attitude that is always maintained across our social media with the help of all of our families. We also use the group to keep everyone informed about our events. Last year we created our **WDDSSG Little Stars** group in response to families telling us that a gentle introduction to their DS journey may be easier than the main group for all families. This year, we created **Brighter Futures**, our group for high-school children to adults. We met up in October to make plans!!

We have our **Supersibs** group, that meet up to build friendships with others that have something in common and have fun together. We held a Supersibs event at Yorkshire Wildlings in August which was lots of fun!

FUN AND FRIENDSHIP

Our group has an essential role in creating opportunities for our families to socialise and have fun together. Meeting other people on the same journey as you is one way to make life easier, and to build connections that can be a support throughout the journey.

Events such as our **summer trip in August**, our full family trip to **Yorkshire Wildings** in October and our family **pantomime** event at Wakefield's Theatre Royal in January are very popular, and create amazing opportunities to have fun together and make memories.

Sunday Funday is our soft play session - open to every family and a brilliant opportunity for socialising and fun with others, as well as a chance for older children to feel comfortable accessing the benefits of soft play. We held four sessions this year - in March, May, July and November, but were also disappointed this year at the closure of our favourite venue, as it can be very difficult to find a soft play venue that is able to accommodate all of our families, and we hope to find a replacement soon.

FUN AND FRIENDSHIP

We always love a party at WDDSSG! Our **World Down Syndrome day party** was one of this year's best days, and we truly celebrated in style!

"We had a great time and my daughter made new friends. Thank you."

"Our first time coming, we loved every minute... thank you."

"We all had a lovely time so good to see everyone again, massive thank you to everyone who organised and for fabulous goodie bags."

Our **Valentine's disco** for our Brighter Futures group was a fantastic night for all, with some delicious food, loads of amazing raffle prizes to be won, and everyone dancing the night away!

"It was a really fab night. Lovely to see everyone enjoying themselves. The pie and peas were delicious and the homemade muffins were gorgeous. Thanks for arranging it."

FUN AND FRIENDSHIP

We held our annual **Christmas party** at Carleton Grange this year, and it was a brilliant afternoon for everyone. We're always grateful to our special guest in the red suit (seen on our Welcome page!) for taking the time out of his busy December schedule to visit WDDSSG!

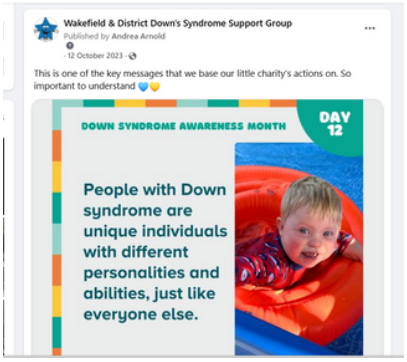
"Had the best time at the Xmas party! Thank you so much for organising"
Lovely party yesterday!! Great fun for all! Thank you so much"

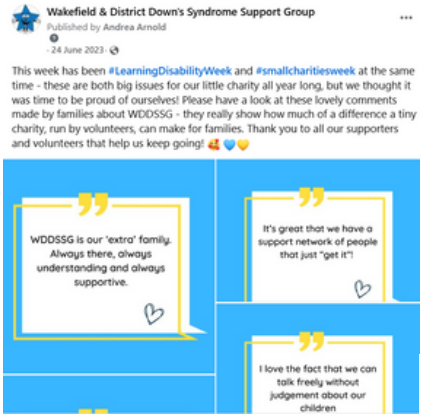
Doorstep Santas has become an important feature of the WDDSSG calendar, and brought smiles to everyone's faces! Our teams jingled their way around 23 families across the day, delivering presents and some wonderful memories! This year was a special year as we were able to include our first ever elf with DS - hopefully there will be more to come!!

"Thank you for a lovely Santa visit, my daughter's had the best weekend"

RAISING AWARENESS

We use our **public Facebook page** to raise awareness of our achievements and abilities and to participate in national awareness events such as World Down Syndrome Day. Here's a selection of our positive publications!





We love to show off our fabulous young people participating in all of the national events, such as Halloween and World Book Day, just like everyone else...

...and we really love to celebrate the truly special achievements of the young Superstars in our group, such as Oliver, who received TWO trophies for his street dance class, and Sophie, who achieved all the criteria for the Chief Scout Gold Award in her mainstream scout group, including a two day expedition. Absolutely awesome!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

It has been another great year with our fab **speech and language therapist** Cath, who has offered bookable 1:1 sessions and informal support conversations with our families at Saturday Club on a regular basis. This has been so helpful to families.

We were able to offer some helpful support sessions for families, including **Level 3 Makaton training** in March and **First Aid sessions** in May this year.

T*hank you so much for organising the Makaton course today, Andy was fantastic a great teacher*

We were then saddened when Andy passed away this year, he was an excellent Ambassador for Makaton and will be missed by WDDSSG.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

"All children are capable of developing and progressing if people have the time to invest in them and understand them"

TriStars Active is our monthly informal sports session, usually held on the third Saturday of each month. Active is a great way of trying new and accessible activities, and we always have a mixture of familiar activities to build skills and new activities to try.

Active gives young people that find it hard to cope with mainstream sessions a place to be welcome and included. This can be so important for some of our families - inclusion in mainstream groups has increased so much since our charity was formed, and it works for some families and can be highly beneficial. Other families tell us that they can't find anywhere that their child can feel comfortable, or be successful. Everyone fits in at Active!

FUNDRAISING

Special thanks to Keeley Handlovics and her amazing team that raised an amazing amount for us again with their event!

We also extend our thanks to many others, including Team Reggie, Watersheds, those that have raised money with sales such as World Down Syndrome Day merchandise and birthday fundraisers, and those that have supported the charity in memory of their loved ones.

This year more than ever, we are very grateful for every penny raised for us - **thank you!**

THE YEAR AHEAD

As young people get older, our **Brighter Futures** group is going from strength to strength.

We hope over the next year that some families with younger children can get involved to create opportunities for our younger children, and continue the good work of this group.

CHARITY DETAILS

Structure, governance and management

Our group has run as a voluntary group since 2000, with a small committee of volunteers, and we became an affiliated local group of the Down's Syndrome Association in 2003. Our charity has been formed as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which is governed by a constitution which was adopted on 20 February 2014.

We hold regular trustee meetings and our annual AGM was held on 8th September this year. Our trustees have remained mostly the same from the previous year, and we now have our two independent trustees. We try to provide a named trustee to support events organised by volunteers outside of the trustee board, and will only be able to expand our activities if further volunteers step forward.

The Trustees have taken the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance into account when making all decisions and will continue to do so.

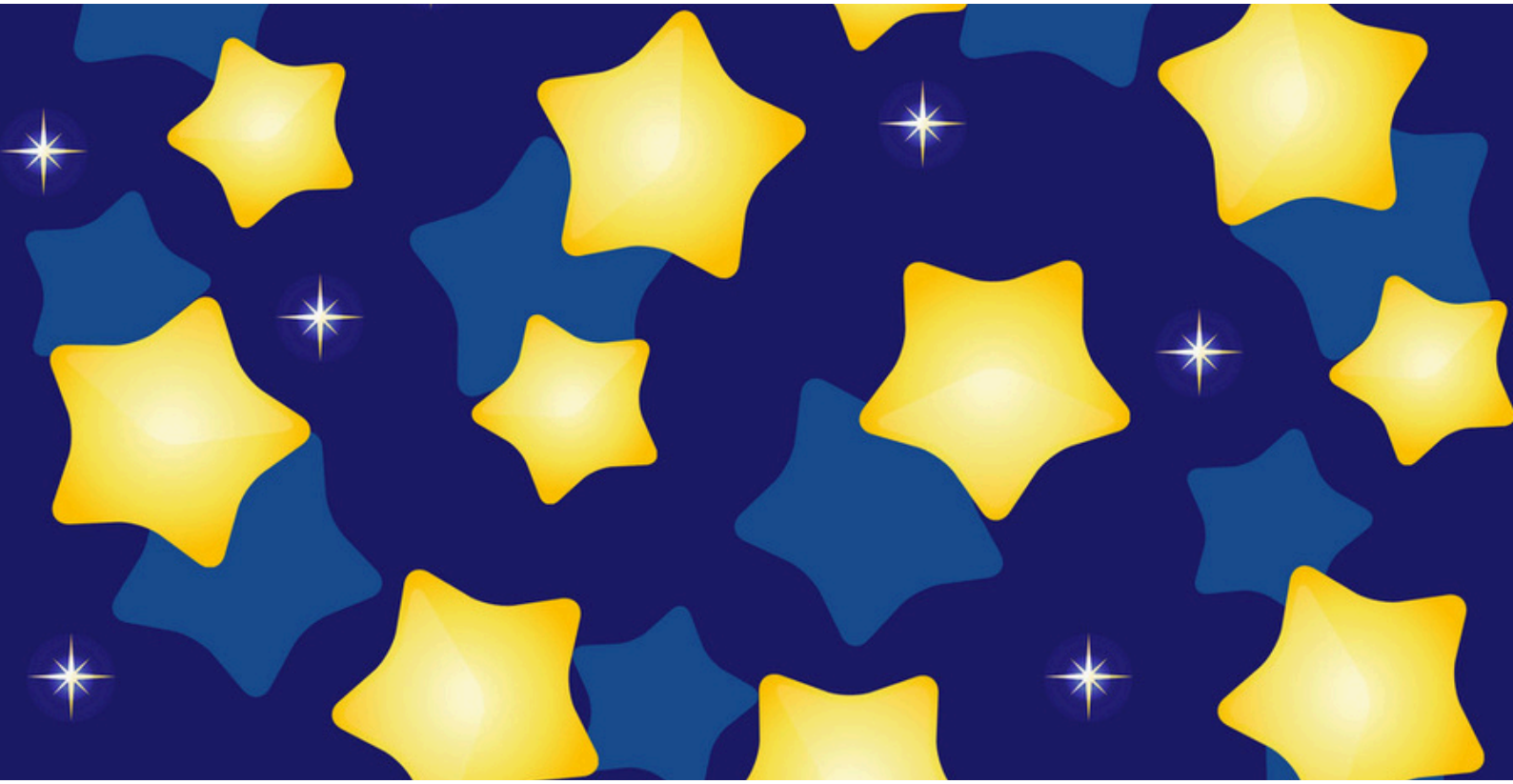
Trustees 19 Feb 2023 - 18 Feb 2024

Ann-Marie Sheard - Chair of Trustees
Neil Courtman - Vice Chair of Trustees / Secretary
Ruth Noble - Treasurer
Andrea Arnold - Parent Trustee / Communications
Alison Brown - Parent Trustee / Fundraising
Ann Aylward - Parent Trustee / Brighter Futures
John Crawshaw - Independent Trustee
Nigel LePage - Independent Trustee (10 March 2023)

Wakefield and District Down's Syndrome Support Group

Charity number: 1155866
Address: c/o 4 Fennel Court, Methley, LS26 9LG

FINANCIAL INFORMATION



Expenditure totalled £15,078. Like everyone else, we have found that the cost of everything has increased. Incoming monies were £4,177. The charity's balance at the end of this year were £11,087.26. Of that balance, £2,868 is funds restricted for specific purposes by the donors, leaving free cash reserves of £8,219.

There is no formal reserves policy, as the charity's ongoing core costs are minimal due to being fully volunteer-led, although we prefer to maintain reserves to cover all of our annual activities. The majority of our income and reserves is available to be allocated to maintaining current projects for the future, and to creating new projects.

For next year, we have had to make some difficult decisions. As a result of our reduced income, we clearly cannot afford to fund all of the same events as last year and have to focus on those activities which provide specific benefits to our families. Our much-loved summer trip and pantomime trip cost thousands of pounds each, and we hope that by not funding these two events, it will allow all of the charity's other activities to continue. We also hope that support in the form of volunteers and fundraisers increases in the year to come.

Signed by the Chair on behalf of all trustees:

.....

Ann-Marie Sheard, Chair of Trustees for WDDSSG

Wakefield & District Down's Syndrome Support Group

Income & Expenditure Accounts for the year 18th February 2023 to 17th February 2024

Balance B/Fwd				**22253.07**			
Income							
Donations	£4,176.59						
Total Income		**£4,176.59**					
Expenses							
Parties	£1,812.00						
Speech and language	£756.00						
Panto	£3,762.20						
Trips and visits	£4,598.57						
Storage	£1,414.40						
Training	£1,985.00						
Gifts	£358.09						
Software	£99.00						
Misc	£18.00						
Professional Fees	£267.55						
Stationery	£271.59						
Total Expenses		**£15,342.40**					
Surplus(Deficit) for the year		**-£11,165.81**					
Balance C/Fwd				**£11,087.26**			

Independent Examiners Report for Wakefield & District Downs Syndrome Support Group

Accounting period; 18th February 2023 to 17th February 2024

Independent Examiner; Nicola Baldwin

Report

With a gross income of less than £25,000 there is no statutory requirement for the charity to have an external examination of the accounts, however, this has been carried out at the request the charity.

In my examination of the accounts, I have checked the bank statements and found all transactions to have been entered into the accounts. All transactions have a relevant document, not necessarily a point of sale receipt.

I have no concerns and have not come across any matters in connection with the examination to which attention needs to be drawn in this report.

Date 24th June 2024

Signed N Baldwin

Name Nicola Baldwin

NVQ Level 3 Accounting

19 years accumulated experience of accounting employment.

WAKEFIELD AND DISTRICT DOWN'S SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1155866

Accounts

ANNUAL REPORT

February 2022-February 2023

Wakefield and District
Down's Syndrome Support Group

Wakefield and District Down's Syndrome Support Group
Charity number: 1155866

WELCOME

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our new families who have joined us since the last AGM. Welcome to your new, extended family. We are all here to support each other in whatever way is needed – and if we can't help, we can probably signpost you to someone who can.

Our AGM is a wonderful opportunity to reflect and give thanks for the past year in our WDDSSG life. As trustees, we were very mindful of the vulnerability of many within our group and every decision made about what activities we could offer was made with the utmost consideration but this year we have been able to return to some 'normality'.

Our report details some of the activities and support we have offered over the past year. What I would like to add to this is the massive thanks I would like to extend to the amazing people who put in hours of their own time to allow this to happen. We have a core group of volunteers, who are already busy people, and without them, we would struggle to run any activities. Thank you! As the saying goes, if you want anything doing, ask a busy person and I also support the theory that those who want something to happen enough will always push to make it happen. Our group prides itself on welcoming ideas from our members but where we do need some help is for those with the ideas to be willing to help put them into practice. Wherever possible, whenever it is in the best interests of the charity, and people are prepared to put plans into action, it will happen.

So thank you, thank you to the doers, the checkers, the helpers and the participants - because without participants the activities would be a bit boring! We all have very busy home lives and I really do appreciate your commitment. Next year will bring yet more opportunities, more fun and more awareness of that I am sure not to mention the giggles and melt-your-heart moments.

To close, I would like to reiterate how proud I am of this charity and the families that make up our group. Our tag line remains very poignant - A brighter future through better understanding.

Ann-marie Sheard, Chair of Trustees

INTRODUCTION

We are a very small, voluntary-run charity. We work to raise awareness in the hope of reducing social stigma and discrimination, and maximising opportunities and potential of children and young people with Down's syndrome.

Our charity, guided by our trustees, continues to be shaped by the families that are in it – by what they want, by what they are able to set up, and by what they create between them.

We are always limited by time, as all of our volunteers are busy parents and cannot always achieve what they would like to, but we continue to do our best to keep on supporting, creating opportunities for fun and friendship, raising awareness and making a difference.

Our charitable objects

The promotion of social inclusion among people with Down's syndrome and those with other learning/additional needs including their families and carers within Wakefield and District and its immediately bordering areas who are socially excluded as a result of their condition by preventing them from becoming socially excluded, relieving their needs and assisting them to integrate into society by:

1. providing information, forums, advocacy and general support; and
2. by providing recreational facilities and opportunities.

We achieve our objects with a focus on four key areas: **support; fun and friendship; making a difference; raising awareness.**

We offer a mixture of regular and one-off activities and events which enable families to have fun and develop friendships and, ultimately, to support each other. We aim to make a difference by improving understanding of Down's syndrome in our community in as many ways as we can, and we are steadily increasing the opportunities for children and young people with Down's syndrome in our area. We also work to raise awareness of Down's syndrome and our charity in our area, and to the wider world on the internet and on social media.

SUPPORT

Saturday Club returned in May 2022 after closing during the pandemic. Saturday Club is held on the first Saturday of every month, and is a great chance to meet other families and have fun together!

"Thank you for the lovely session. We had a wonderful time. Thanks everyone. It was just what we needed."

Our annual summer trip is always a success! Families with children and young people of all ages enjoyed a trip to Flamingoland in August.

"Fantastic day at Flamingo Land. Thank you to all the Trustees for making it possible, and massive thanks to everyone who raises funds for this wonderful group"

SUPPORT

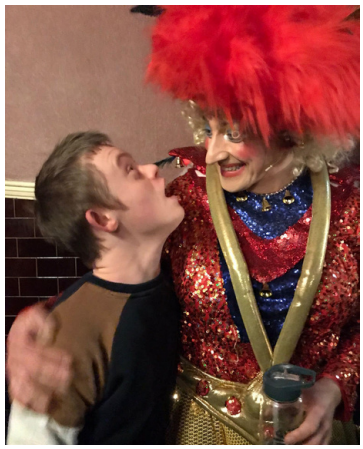
We use our Facebook groups for support for families – the group enables families to offer support to each other and ask/answer questions. There's always people ready to offer answers and support, and we are very proud of the positive attitude that is always maintained across our social media with the help of all of our families. We also use the group to keep everyone informed about our events. Our WDDSSG Little Stars Facebook group was created in November 2022 in response to families telling us that a gentle introduction to their DS journey may be easier than the main group for all families. The ongoing success of this group will depend on families with younger children supporting it.

Doorstep Santas brought smiles to everyone's faces! Our teams jingled their way around 25 families across the day!

FUN AND FRIENDSHIP

Our family Christmas party was also able to return in December, and was as much fun as it always was! We're always grateful to our special guest for taking the time out of his busy December schedule to visit WDDSSG!

"Lovely afternoon, well organised and lots of lovely, familiar faces. Happy Xmas everyone!"



We were thrilled to return to pantomimes after missing them so much during the pandemic! The annual trip to Wakefield Theatre Royal is a highlight of our year!

FUN AND FRIENDSHIP

January 2023 saw the return of Sunday Funday, our soft play session held every other month. Sunday Funday is open to every family and is a brilliant opportunity for socialising and fun with others, as well as a chance for older children to feel comfortable accessing the benefits of soft play. There were some fantastic activities for our older group this year, including social walks and a trip to the National Mining Museum.

"So lovely to meet up today with old friends and make new ones."

And this year was also a welcome return for the Valentine's disco!!

"What a good night our young people had!"

RAISING AWARENESS

We use our public Facebook page to raise awareness of our achievements and abilities and to participate in national awareness events such as World DS Day.

We love to show off our fabulous young people participating in all of the national events, such as Halloween and World Book Day, just like everyone else!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

It has been a great year with our fab speech and language therapist Cath, who has offered 1:1 sessions for families from September and started to attend our Saturday Club on a regular basis from February.

TriStars Active is our monthly sports session, usually held on the third Saturday of each month. Active is a great way of trying new and accessible activities, and it gives young people that find it hard to cope with mainstream sessions a place to be welcome and included.

FUNDRAISING

Special thanks to Keeley Handlovics and her amazing team that raised an amazing amount for us again with their event!

We also extend our thanks to many others, including Watersheds, Upton MC, Fletcher's family and Gabriel's family for their kind donations and fundraising.

And our thanks to everyone that raised funds for us this year – always very much appreciated!

THE YEAR AHEAD

We are very much looking forward to the year ahead, and hoping for more opportunities to bring back our much loved activities, like our Supersibs!

We are pleased to confirm that we already have our Makaton Level 3 course booked for families, requested by families and arranged by our families. Thank you!

CHARITY DETAILS

Structure, governance and management

Our group has run as a voluntary group since 2000, with a small committee of volunteers, and we became an affiliated local group of the Down's Syndrome Association in 2003. Our charity has been formed as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which is governed by a constitution which was adopted on 20 February 2014.

We hold regular trustee meetings as well as any additional sub-group meetings where necessary. Our trustees have remained mostly the same from the previous year, we have one independent trustee and have actively sought to appoint another one to strengthen our board. We try to provide a named trustee to support events organised by volunteers outside of the trustee board, and will only be able to expand our activities if further volunteers step forward.

The Trustees have taken the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance into account when making all decisions and will continue to do so.

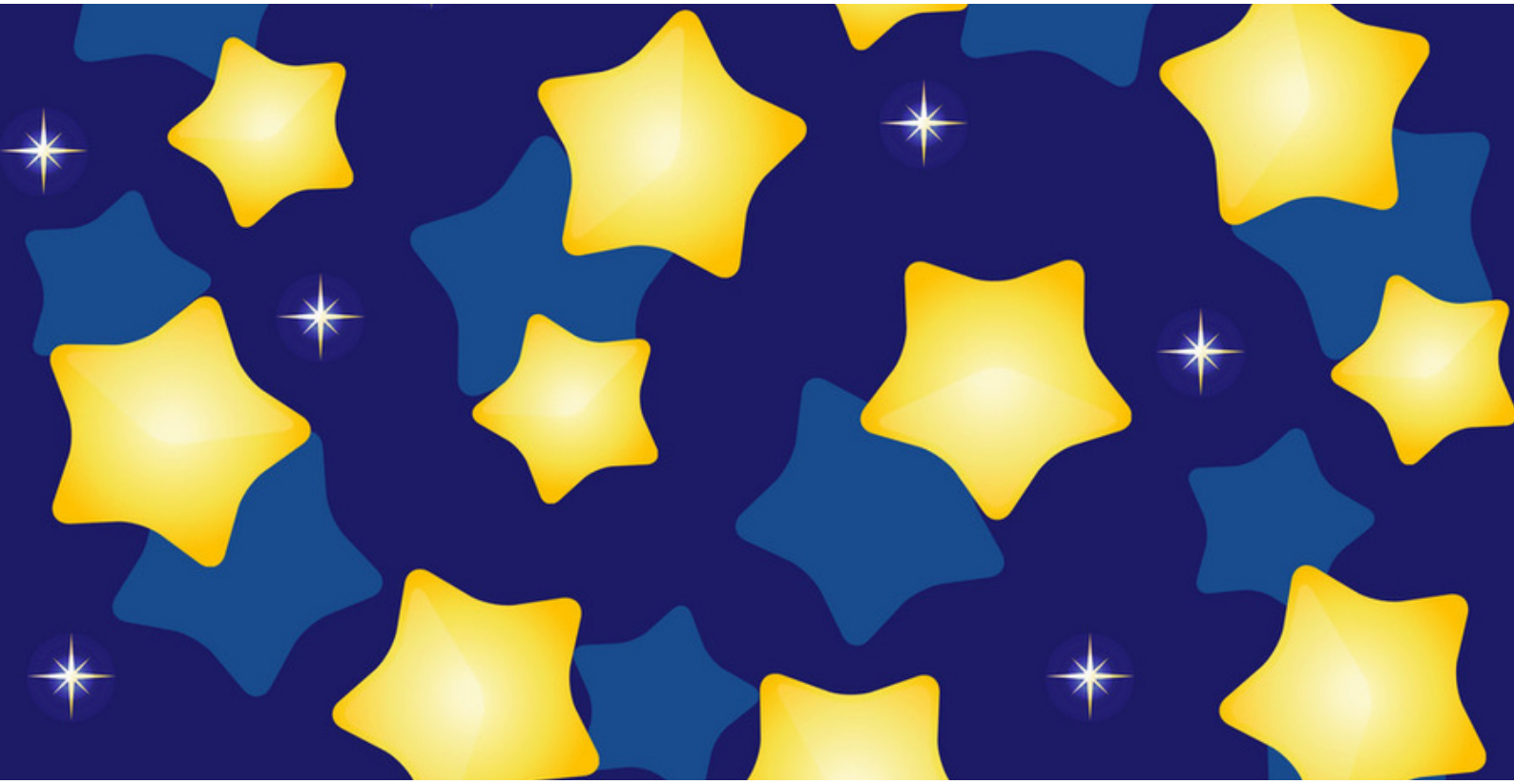
Trustees 19 Feb 2022 - 18 Feb 2023

Ann-Marie Sheard - Chair of Trustees
Neil Courtman - Vice Chair of Trustees / Secretary
Ruth Noble - Treasurer
Andrea Arnold - Parent Trustee / Communications
Ann Aylward - Parent Trustee
Alison Brown - Parent Trustee
John Crawshaw - Independent Trustee

Wakefield and District Down's Syndrome Support Group

Charity number: 1155866
Address: c/o 4 Fennel Court, Methley, LS26 9LG

FINANCIAL INFORMATION



Expenditure totaled £11,934.64 which has increased significantly on last year, as the group returned to funding more events post-pandemic. Incoming monies were £4958.43. Fundraising was also reduced during the pandemic, and is hoped to return to increased levels accordingly.

The charity's balance at the end of this year were £22,253.07. Of that balance, £12,013.94 is funds restricted for specific purposes by the donors, leaving free cash reserves of £10,239.13.

There is no formal reserves policy, as the charity's ongoing core costs are minimal due to being fully volunteer-led, although we prefer to maintain reserves to cover all of our annual activities. The majority of our income and reserves is available to be allocated to maintaining current projects for the future, and to creating new projects.

Signed by the Chair on behalf of all trustees:

.....

Ann-Marie Sheard, Chair of Trustees for WDDSSG

Wakefield & District Downs Syndrome Group
Income & Expenditure Accounts for the year 18th February 2022 to 17th February 2023

Income		
Donations	£4,858.43	
Other Receipts	£100.00	
Total Income		**£4,958.43**
Expenses		
Rent	£1,164.80	
Insurance	£30.00	
Donations Sent	£0.00	
Entertainment	£9,410.13	
Training	£0.00	
Gifts	£503.27	
Software	£36.02	
Postage	£28.75	
Professional Fees	£750.00	
Stationary	£11.67	
Total Expenses		**£11,934.64**
Surplus/Defecit for the year		**-£6,976.21**
Opening Balance	£29,229.28	
Closing Balance	£22,253.07	
Difference		**-£6,976.21**

WAKEFIELD AND DISTRICT DOWN'S SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1155866

Accounts

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the year 19 February 2021 - 19 February 2022

Wakefield and District
Down's Syndrome Support Group

Registered charity number: 1155866

A welcome from our Chair of Trustees

Our AGM is a wonderful opportunity to reflect and give thanks for the past year in our WDDSSG life. The world continued to be a strange and scary place for many especially as the world began to open back up after a long period of restrictions and shielding. As trustees, we were very mindful of the vulnerability of many within our group and every decision made about what activities we could and could not offer
was made with the utmost consideration.
That said, we did begin to open up, slowly and tentatively. My favourite moment saw us at This Green Moon where the children (and some adults!) ran, built, laughed and relaxed together. The place is truly magical and it was an honour to be able to see the happiness emanating from so many. Love and compassion really did shine out throughout the day. It was the first time some of our newer families were able to join us and finally put faces to names and get a taste of the WDDSSG experience in all of its glory.
Christmas was a difficult decision, as we know how much the Christmas party is enjoyed by so many. To reduce risks to everyone involved, we introduced Doorstep Santa who visited families with his entourage of festive friends. As trustees, we felt we needed to make a personal gesture to you all, to let you know we were still there for you all, that we care deeply and that we will always do what we can to be a part of your lives. That and the fact that one of our trustees had a burning urge to wear tights and dress up as an elf (I'll let you work out who)!

Our panto trip was a virtual one this year thanks to Wakefield Theatre going over and above for our families recording the performance and giving us access.
As a group, we continue to do what we do very well despite the difficult times faced.
Our group is growing in numbers, we continue to raise awareness and most importantly, we continue to support one another in many ways. I would never attempt to list people to thank as there are far too many (and inevitably I will miss someone out) however I would like to thank you, all of you. We all contribute in what way we can. We must continue to recognise this as we go forward. Those who want something to happen enough will always be given the opportunity to propose this to trustees. Wherever possible, whenever it is in the best interests of the charity, and people are prepared to put plans into action, it will happen. So thank you, thank you to the doers, the checkers, the helpers and the participants (not the goers!) We all have very busy home lives and I really do appreciate your commitment.
Next year will bring more opportunities, more fun and more awareness of that I am sure.

To close (just as I did last year) I would just like to reiterate how proud I am of this charity and the families that make up our group. Our tag line remains very poignant …
A brighter future through a better understanding.

Ann-Marie Sheard
Chair of Trustees

OUR CHARITABLE OBJECTS

We are a small, voluntary-run charity, with big ideas!
We work to raise awareness in the hope of reducing social stigma and discrimination, and maximising opportunities and potential of children and young people with Down's syndrome.
We held our AGM on 9 July.
Our charity, guided by our trustees, continues to be shaped by the families that are in it – by what they want, by what they are able to set up, and by what they create between them.
We are always limited by time, as all of our volunteers are busy parents and cannot always achieve what they would like to, but we continue to do our best to keep on supporting, creating opportunities for fun and friendship, raising awareness and making a difference.

THE OBJECTS OF OUR CIO ARE:

The promotion of social inclusion among people with Down's syndrome and those with other learning/additional needs including their families and carers within Wakefield and District and its immediately bordering areas who are socially excluded as a result of their condition by preventing them from becoming socially excluded, relieving their needs and assisting them to integrate into society by:-

1. providing information, forums, advocacy and general support; and
2. by providing recreational facilities and opportunities.

We achieve our objects with a mixture of regular and one-off activities and events which enable families to have fun and develop friendships and, ultimately, to support each other.
We aim to make a difference by improving understanding of Down's syndrome in our community in as many ways as we can, and we are steadily increasing the opportunities for children and young people with Down's syndrome in our area.
We also work to raise awareness of Down's syndrome and our charity in our area, and to the wider world on the internet and on social media.

This year...

Supporting each other

The Covid pandemic continued for most of this period, meaning that we were still unable to resume our regular activities. We did what we could, holding our first outdoor meetings.

We are proud of the decisions we made to be cautious around resuming activities, as we made the health of our vulnerable families the highest priority.

As we were unable to hold our much-loved annual Christmas party, we made a decision to spread the joy in a way that we could manage - socially distanced Doorstep Santas!!!

We had some wonderful feedback, here's just some of it:

"Thank you so much, Santa and helpers. This was such a lovely thing that you have done. Miss you all deeply."

"You guys are just amazing thank you for what you do for our lovely group."

"Thank you team for arranging Santa to come and make a young man very happy. We do appreciate all the Trustees and volunteers do for our group not just at Christmas but all year round - thanks again"

"When Santa calls and makes your day! Thank you Wakefield & District Down's Syndrome Support Group I have a happy boy tonight!"

Support

Our Facebook group, which facilitates communication between our parents and offers a forum for advice and support whenever it is needed, has been the key to keeping our charity going while we were unable to meet. The group provides a network, reinforced every day by the families within it, where questions are always answered or people are signposted to a service that will help them, people who have concerns are listened to, and people who have things in common come forward and make contact with each other, if they choose to. The Facebook group is a precious resource that didn't disappear regardless of the state of the world around us.

We weren't able to meet up for our annual pantomime trip, but we were lucky enough to negotiate a filmed version of the pantomime at Wakefield Theatre for our families, with a special link for WDDSSG that we could all watch at the same time!

During the pandemic, the volunteers that keep our charity going faced as many difficulties as every other family we support, and we are proud of what they did to keep the support group there to support others when it was needed.

Our What I Wish I'd Known book remains available to new parents in our area and for sale across the country, and our new parent support systems remain in place.

Raising awareness

We always create special awareness posts in March to celebrate World Down's Syndrome Day, and in October for DS Awareness Month. We focus on what has become one of the key values of our charity - valuing and accepting all people with DS as they are.
For World Down Syndrome Day our posts follow the themes of the international WDSD - this year the theme was ""Inclusion Means". Inclusion is improving, but there is much more to do. We asked our families what they would like to tell others - here's some examples:
"just having the same opportunities as everyone else"
"being welcome and being valued"
"we should all be equally valued for our own gifts and talents"
"understanding that we all have a part to play in society"
"with the right support, anything can be possible".

Fun and friendship

Our first face to face meetings

We made our first tentative steps back into meeting up in August, holding an open meeting at Heath Common. The rain didn't stop us having fun!!

We had a fantastic time at one of our favourite places, This Green Moon, which enabled us to meet up outdoors. We were able to meet new babies that we'd not had chance to meet yet, and families were ale to talk to each other for the first time in ages!!

And our older group started outdoor walks together!

Making a difference

Speech and language therapy

We had money that was ringfenced for speech and language and so, although we were unable to organise face to face sessions, we were able to recruit an experienced speech and language therapist to offer online parent advice sessions to support families.

We offered a block of sessions for early years and Key stage 1, plus catch up sessions on a Saturday for those who couldn't attend, and a block for Key Stage 2. The sessions covered a different topic each time, for example Attention and Listening, Creating Opportunities to Communicate, Developing Vocabulary or Word Levels.

This is a great opportunity for families to learn more about how to support their own children's speech and language development. It was well-received by the families that attended, but we had hoped more families would attend.

We collected comments after the sessions, for example, was it useful to share your session with other families:

"Yes because our experiences are often similar and you realise we all have similar struggles".

"Please keep this session in the program as very, very good thank you"

Fundraising

with many thanks...!!!

The Covid pandemic continued to have a considerable impact on the opportunities for fundraising this year. We are in a favourable position as a very small charity that our outgoings are similarly limited, but the fundraising activities are often a great opportunity for raising awareness, which is so vital for our charity, and so we hope this can increase again next year.

Every donation is gratefully received and very much appreciated, and are all documented in our Treasurer's report. We wish to send particular thanks to Keeley Handlovics and her team for her spectacular fundraising event and also to Team Reggie - you are all Superstars!

The year ahead

We are looking forward to the coming year, and hoping that we are able to resume some of our much-loved activities.

We are hoping that Saturday Club will return in 2022, with more opportunities for our families to meet each other and have fun.

As well as resuming current activities, we are hoping to start new projects - recruiting new parent supporters and increasing our contacts with local hospitals and maternity services, for example.

We have substantial reserves available to support new projects - our current volunteers are stretched and we are hopeful that new volunteers will step forward to support the charity and allow its good work to continue.

OUR ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity name: Wakefield and District Down's Syndrome Support Group
Charity registration number: 1155866
Address: c/o 4 Fennel Court, Methley LS26 9LG

OUR TRUSTEES 19 FEB 2021 - 18 FEB 2022

Ann-Marie Sheard - Chair of Trustees
Neil Courtman - Vice Chair of Trustees / Secretary
Ruth Noble - Treasurer
Andrea Arnold - Parent Trustee / Communications
Ann Aylward - Parent Trustee
Alison Brown - Parent Trustee
John Crawshaw - Independent Trustee
Paula Rose - Grandparent Trustee (resigned September 2021)

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Our group has run as a voluntary group since 2000, with a small committee of volunteers, and we became an affiliated local group of the Down's Syndrome Association in 2003. Our charity has been formed as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which is governed by a constitution which was adopted on 20 February 2014.

We hold regular trustee meetings as well as any additional sub-group meetings where necessary. Our trustees have remained mostly the same from the previous year, we have one independent trustee and have actively sought to appoint another one to strengthen our board. We provide a named trustee to support events organised by volunteers outside of the trustee board.

The Trustees have taken the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance into account when making all decisions and will continue to do so.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The net receipts for this year were £5,369.57, and net expenditure was £4,784.91. The Treasurer's full report was presented at our AGM. It was noted that the Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on both our income and our opportunities to use our donations.

RESERVES

The charity's balance at the end of this year were £29,229.28. Of that balance, £16,420.14 is funds restricted for specific purposes by the donors, leaving free cash reserves of £12,809.14.

There is no formal reserves policy, as the charity's ongoing core costs are minimal due to being fully volunteer-led. The majority of our income and reserves is available to be allocated to maintaining current projects for the future, and to creating new projects.

DECLARATION

Signed by the Chair on behalf of all trustees:

.....

Ann-Marie Sheard, Chair of Trustees for WDDSSG

Wakefield & District Downs Syndrome Group
Income & Expenditure Accounts for the year 18th February 2021 to 17th February 2022

Income		
Donations	£5,369.57	
Total Income		**£5,369.57**
Expenses		
Rent	£1,040.00	
Insurance	£30.00	
Donations Sent	£300.00	
Entertainment	£634.75	
Training	£126.00	
Gifts	£990.32	
Software	£178.83	
Postage	£42.11	
Professional Fees	£1,420.00	
Stationary	£22.90	
Total Expenses		**£4,784.91**
Surplus for the year		**£584.66**

WAKEFIELD AND DISTRICT DOWN'S SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1155866

Accounts

A brighter future through better understanding

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the year 19 February 2019 - 19 February 2021

Wakefield and District
Down's Syndrome Support Group

Registered charity number: 1155866

A welcome from our Chair of Trustees

I am writing this report at what I'm sure everyone will agree is a strange and difficult time for everyone. However, the report looks back positively at the last year and what we have achieved.

Our guiding principles are Support, Fun and Friendship, Making a Difference, and Raising Awareness and, as ever, I think we have been successful, with considerable help from many people, in achieving a lot this year.

The events that we have run throughout the year have been well attended and successful in bringing together many of our families. Our parties and trips continue to be enjoyed by many of our families, giving them the opportunity to meet and share friendships both for the young people and the parents/carers.

Can I once again thank all of our families for helping to make this group the wonderful group it is and for the friendship, support and advice you all willingly offer to each other. Thanks also go to the Trustees for the continuing hard work they put in and all those people who have given their time and effort to organise or support events. To all the people who have helped raise funds for us, thank you for ensuring this group is able to offer the support we do.

The coming year will be challenging but we will continue to support each other and look forward to a time when we can meet together again - that is going to be some party!!

Ann-Marie Sheard

Chair of Trustees

OUR CHARITABLE OBJECTS

We are a small, voluntary-run charity, with big ideas!
We work to raise awareness in the hope of reducing social stigma and discrimination, and maximising opportunities and potential of children and young people with Down's syndrome.
We held our AGM in September this year, delayed due to the pandemic.
Our charity, guided by our trustees, continues to be shaped by the families that are in it – by what they want, by what they are able to set up, and by what they create between them.
We are always limited by time, as all of our volunteers are busy parents and cannot always achieve what they would like to, but we continue to do our best to keep on supporting, creating opportunities for fun and friendship, raising awareness and making a difference.

THE OBJECTS OF OUR CIO ARE:

The promotion of social inclusion among people with Down's syndrome and those with other learning/additional needs including their families and carers within Wakefield and District and its immediately bordering areas who are socially excluded as a result of their condition by preventing them from becoming socially excluded, relieving their needs and assisting them to integrate into society by:-

1. providing information, forums, advocacy and general support; and
2. by providing recreational facilities and opportunities.

We achieve our objects with a mixture of regular and one-off activities and events which enable families to have fun and develop friendships and, ultimately, to support each other.
We aim to make a difference by improving understanding of Down's syndrome in our community in as many ways as we can, and we are steadily increasing the opportunities for children and young people with Down's syndrome in our area.
We also work to raise awareness of Down's syndrome and our charity in our area, and to the wider world on the internet and on social media.

This year...

Supporting each other

During the pandemic, support has never been more needed.

Despite the many restrictions and additional fears and stresses faced by all of our families, we kept going!!

We were not able to meet, but we sent out little gifts of wooden Superstars to everyone with messages of support, and we held a fantastic virtual Christmas quiz night to offer our families the opportunity to come together in the only way that was possible.

Our Facebook group, which facilitates communication between our parents and offers a forum for advice and support whenever it is needed, was the key to keeping our charity going. The group provides a network, reinforced every day by the families within it, where questions are always answered or people are signposted to a service that will help them, people who have concerns are listened to, and people who have things in common come forward and make contact with each other, if they choose to. The Facebook group is a precious resource that didn't disappear regardless of the state of the world around us.

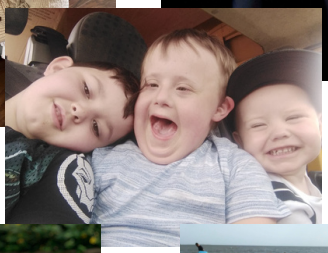
During the pandemic, the volunteers that keep our charity going faced as many difficulties as every other family we support, and we are proud of what they did to keep the support group there to support others when it was needed.

Raising awareness

During the pandemic, we still maintained our annual awareness posts on our public Facebook page. We posted positive and inclusive images every day of October, sharing our group's Superstars with comments from their families.

We post in October, because it is Down's Syndrome Awareness Month - a chance for us at WDDSSG to celebrate everything that people with DS teach us about life, love, ourselves, diversity, inclusion, and the true meaning of awesomeness.

We maintained our engagement with the followers of our public Facebook page through the national lockdown engagement - sharing some of our homeschooling activities while social distancing!



New parent support

What I Wish I'd Known

Our What I Wish I'd Known book continues to be popular. Our decision to spread the positivity of our book far and wide, by selling it at cost price to anyone who wants it, has made it very accessible. We sell it via eBay and direct to other support groups around the country who use it in their own new parent welcome packs. Our families can be very proud of what they have achieved by contributing to this book!

Congratulations!

It is very important to us to support new parents at the start of their journey. We continue to build relationships with local midwives and have provided information and resources as well as being a local point of contact.

Our Congratulations cards are available in the local hospital to be passed on to new families.

Although support during the pandemic has been virtual, we are very much still here for new families.

Our group has a specific named new parent contact volunteer, Jo Elvidge, for people who are in need of someone to talk to after they have received a diagnosis, who is able to signpost to others as well.

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Fun and friendship

Singing Hands!!

Our absolute best moment of this year was our fabulous concert from Singing Hands, held shortly before the country went into lockdown.
The concert hall was full of families having such a wonderful time and it was a true celebration of the inclusive joy of Makaton signing.

Special thanks go to Ann-Marie Sheard for making this happen for us - a truly special event!

Fundraising

with many thanks...!!!

The Covid pandemic had such an impact on the opportunities for fundraising this year.

We raised money from raffles at our Valentine's Disco and Signing Hands events which happened before the lockdown, and from Amazon Smile, which gives donations when people buy online and name us as their charity.

We received a donation of £250 from Watersheds, and we received £400 from the Barnsley DS support group as they wound their group down, and we are very proud to welcome families from the Barnsley area to WDDSSG while they are without a support group in their area.

Every donation is gratefully received and very much appreciated.

Feedback

We asked for feedback from our members...

We introduced a new membership system, with annual survey, shortly after this financial year, and asked for feedback.

Every single comment was positive - these are some of our favourites:

"The group are always there to advise, direct and support, which is very comforting and reassuring, a lovely group of people".

"Congratulations to the team for keeping going in extraordinary circumstances"

"We would just like to thank everyone for making us feel welcome and including us"

"Thank you so much for all your help and support".

The pandemic has severely limited our possibilities, but the backbone of our charity remains strong - creating opportunities for families to link together to support one another.

OUR ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity name: Wakefield and District Down's Syndrome Support Group
Charity registration number: 1155866
Address: c/o 4 Fennel Court, Methley LS26 9LG

OUR TRUSTEES 19 FEB 2020 - 18 FEB 2021

Ann-Marie Sheard - Chair of Trustees
Neil Courtman - Vice Chair of Trustees / Secretary
Sara Beaumont - Secretary (resigned 23 March 2020)
Ruth Noble - Treasurer
Andrea Arnold - Parent Trustee / Communications
Ann Aylward - Parent Trustee
Alison Brown - Parent Trustee
John Crawshaw - Independent Trustee
Paula Rose - Grandparent Trustee
Alexis Sharp - Parent Trustee

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Our group has run as a voluntary group since 2000, with a small committee of volunteers, and we became an affiliated local group of the Down's Syndrome Association in 2003. Our charity has been formed as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which is governed by a constitution which was adopted on 20 February 2014.

We hold regular trustee meetings as well as any additional sub-group meetings where necessary. Our trustees have remained mostly the same from the previous year, we have one independent trustee and have actively sought to appoint another one to strengthen our board. We provide a named trustee to support events organised by volunteers outside of the trustee board.

The Trustees have taken the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance into account when making all decisions and will continue to do so.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The net receipts for this year were £7,705.23, and net expenditure was £4,119,38. The Treasurer's full report was presented at our AGM. It was noted that the Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on both our income and our opportunities to use our donations.

RESERVES

The charity's balance at the end of this year were £28,644.62. Of that balance, £17,820.14 is funds restricted for specific purposes by the donors, leaving free cash reserves of £10,824.48.
There is no formal reserves policy, as the charity's ongoing core costs are minimal due to being fully volunteer-led. The majority of our income and reserves is available to be allocated to maintaining current projects for the future, and to creating new projects.

DECLARATION

Signed by the Chair on behalf of all trustees:

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Ann-Marie Sheard, Chair of Trustees for WDDSSG

Return

Wakefield & District Downs Syndrome Support Group

Accounts

17 February 2021

Wakefield & District Downs Syndrome Support Group

Accountants' report on the unaudited accounts
to Wakefield & District Downs Syndrome Support Group

You have approved the accounts for the year ended 17 February 2021 which comprises the Profit and Loss Account and the related notes. In accordance with your instructions, we have compiled these unaudited accounts from the accounting records and information and explanations supplied to us.

Stephens Accountants Ltd
Accountants

Southgate Business Centre
32 Gillygate
Pontefract
West Yorkshire
WF8 1PQ

22 June 2021

Wakefield & District Downs Syndrome Support Group
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 17 February 2021

1 Accounting basis

The accounts have been compiled on a basis that enables profits to be calculated in accordance with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

2 Profit and loss account analysis

	2021 £	2020 £
Income	2,303	17,595
Cost of Sales		
Purchases		
Wages, salaries and other staff costs		
Staff training and welfare		
Rent, rates, power and insurance costs		
Room Hire	90	1,149
Storage	764	764
	854	1,913
Expenditure		
Activities	1,875	10,575
Coach Hire		540
Website Maintenance	24	11
Postage and stationery	240	93
Family Fun Day		
Repairs and maintenance		
Workwear		
	2,139	11,219
Accountancy, legal and other professional fees		
Accountants fees	240	240
Other business expenses		
Refreshments		138
Sundry expenses		122
	-	260