

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.

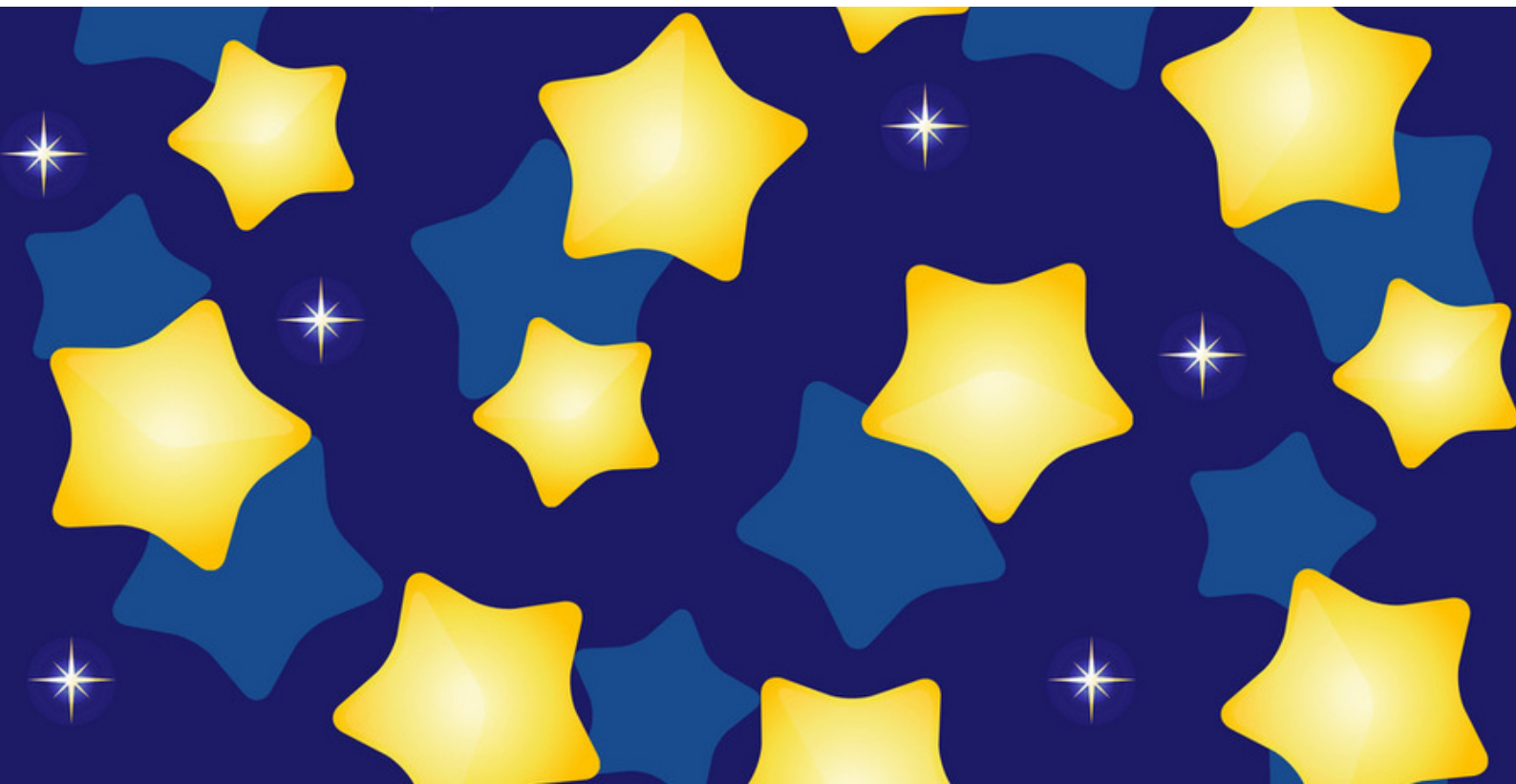
Trustees 19 Feb 2022 - 18 Feb 2023

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
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Opening Balance	£29,229.28	
Closing Balance	£22,253.07	
Difference		-£6,976.21