

# ANNUAL REVIEW 2022

January - December 2022

[www.swindondownsgroup.org.uk](http://www.swindondownsgroup.org.uk)

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The Swindon Down's Syndrome Group consists of many families, all volunteering our time and experience as parents and carers to make life that bit more fun and ensure our family with Down's syndrome have all the opportunities and support they need from birth to old age.

We started as a small group of parents who met for coffee and provided each other with support. As time passed, more parents connected with the group and in 2003 we became a charity in our own right.

The Swindon Down's Syndrome Group support people with Down's syndrome in Swindon and the surrounding area including Fairford, Malmesbury, Hungerford, Pewsey, Marlborough, Hullavington, Chippenham, Devizes, Calne, Ashton Keynes, Cirencester, Aldbourne, Bromham, Melksham and Cheltenham.

We are a volunteer led charity, meaning everyone that has an active role in the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group gives up their time because of their love of the group.

We are very fortunate to be supported by our fantastic trustees and volunteers.

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# MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

## “WHAT A DIFFERENT YEAR WE’VE HAD!”

**2022 has brought smiles back to our faces and life is becoming more like it used to be before the pandemic. In the last year we have achieved many of the goals we set and it's thanks to our members that this has been possible. We thank you all for your continued support.**

Now we are enjoying new activities and social events, fundraising has been back at the top of our list creating awareness in the community and showing people what our members are capable of. The group has been lucky to receive fundraising from some amazing events including quiz nights at The Crown Inn Stratton, boxing matches, Christmas tree sales, a Classical concert and even a Mountain climb in extreme weather.

We launched Adult Speech Therapy with the help of a National Lottery grant, and this has become a great success with several members now accessing the online service.

Roy Perrett continues to be the driving force behind the Swindon Down's Syndrome group WorkFit project, securing jobs for our young people and supporting them in their workplace. We have had several new placements this year and some have returned to jobs after restrictions were lifted. We saw our own Todd Scanlon be awarded several outstanding awards for his work through WorkFit and Coles Scaffolding.

In January we ran two training days, one for Early Years and one for Primary level education. Both these sessions were successful in building relationships with schools and SENCOs and being able to give advice where needed. We thank Rebecca Baker from LetsGo who led these informative training sessions.

The group took part in the last SPECTRA Fire course over 5 days. The first three days being the hottest we have ever experienced with the yard reaching temperatures over 40 degrees and due to this we decided to return in October to complete activities that were delayed due to the heat. The group would like to thank Mark Evans and his incredible team for all their support over the years and this course will be missed by all.

Now we are looking towards the next 12 months and more social events and celebrating the charity's twentieth year as an independent charity. Watch your inbox for more details on this soon.

I would like to thank our hard-working trustees that go above and beyond to ensure the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group is on hand to our members when needed and continues to undertake the vital work that is needed to support our members. We hope that the next twelve months sees the group to continue to grow.

**Kim West, Chairperson**  
Swindon Down's Syndrome Group

# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

There was a lot to celebrate in 2022 and here are just a few of our achievements.

**£37,211**

was received by the Group through fundraising in 2022

**156**

people now receive regular information through our mailing list

**£1,399**

was raised through voluntary membership donations

**£17,069**

raised in donations and grants to support adults in the world of work

**£44,726**

raised through donations and grants to provide speech and language therapy to those under 25

**£39,900**

received from the National Lottery to fund speech therapy for those aged over 25 with Down's syndrome

**2,000**

people follow us on Facebook

**31**

members enrolled for Speech and Language Therapy

**533**

online therapy sessions have been delivered through Mable Therapy.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



It was lovely to welcome members to our 2022 Open Day at Justin Tomlinson (MP) community offices at The Orbital retail park. Our open days are an opportunity to remind everyone about the services we provide and the support we offer. It's also a great opportunity to pop along for a cup of tea and a piece of cake and a good old catch up with everyone.



## Off to the circus

Circus Starr kindly donated tickets for members of the group to attend a SEND performance at Lydiard Park on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September. Local companies sponsor the event to allow charities like ours to attend free of charge. It was a fantastic performance and we are so grateful to Circus Starr for giving us the opportunity to experience the circus so close to home.



## Milo hits the green

The theme for Learning Disabilities Week was reconnecting through sport. Milo loves golf and playing with his friends. This is a place where they do not see a young man with a disability, they see a young man with a passion for the sport and an ability to do it.



## Lorni's new flat

Congratulations to Lorni on getting the keys to her new flat. Lorni proudly shared the photos with us of her new place and keeps us updated on how she is getting on. It looks like she is really at home in this very smart place.



## New website and online shop goes live!

Our shiny new website went live at the beginning of February. Its new design and capabilities has been so beneficial to the group. Our favourite

addition is our new online shop. This has allowed us to sell event tickets, promotional products and #lotsofsocks too!



## Pop party for WDS

The fantastic Singing Hands joined us to celebrate World Down's Syndrome Day with two online sessions. Suzanne and Tracy introduced us to the amazing world of signing with Makaton.



## Louis enjoys role at Big Yellow Storage

Louis really enjoyed his role at Big Yellow Storage, Swindon thanks to WorkFit. He even sold #lotsofsocks to celebrate World Down's Syndrome Day.



## Todd has had a fantastic year

2022 has been a year full of achievements for Todd. In February he was accepted on to apprenticeship course to enable him to become a fully qualified scaffolder! Todd also received the British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) 2022 'David Grainger' award in November for outstanding progress at work. Todd has also taken on a couple of boxing fights this year too!



## Pride of Swindon Award

Sam had been nominated for a Pride of Swindon Award and in April this year he went to the County Ground to receive it. An amazing moment for Sam for his fundraising and raising awareness.



## Online training for educational professionals

Our annual early years and primary training days were once again a big success this year. The sessions were run by Rebecca Baxter from LetsGo UK training and we received lots of positive feedback.



Leo was rocking his new suit. We think it's one of the best looks of the year. He certainly knows how to make a statement and it looks amazing.

## A fund time thanks to Zurich Community Trust

The group was treated to a fantastic party by Zurich Community Trust. With entertainment from Clare's Circus, music, balloons and food, it was great to see everyone having a fabulous time. Thank you to Daniel and his team for putting on a great party. It was a great way to spend a Saturday.





# SUPPORTING NEW PARENTS

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Our New Parent Group has been fortunate to meet regularly on the first Saturday of each month for a Stay & Play session.



**We are very fortunate to have parent volunteers who offer their time to support other parents within the Group. Jodie Morris is our New Parent Contact for Swindon, while Cherylin Hempleman is our Wiltshire New Parent Contact.**

It has once again been a busy year welcoming lots of new families to the Group. Cherylin has taken over from Victoria Argue. A big thank you to Victoria for everything you did supporting new families.

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"Another year of being a New Parent Contact for the 0-5 age group and what a great year it has been!

Lots of new family's have been welcomed into the group this year. We have had a few hiccups on the way finding the perfect venue to host our monthly coffee mornings but we have finally found a place where we can feel relaxed and watch our children play together whilst enjoying a chat and coffee with the parents.

We have now moved to The Toddler Zone in Royal Wootton Bassett. They were happy to accommodate us and have a fantastic venue with an age appropriate play area for the children as well as tea and coffee facilities for the parents.

We have a good mixture of Swindon and Wiltshire families, so it was great to find somewhere central for everyone to meet.

Our dedicated WhatsApp group we have for families, is used frequently, with parents asking questions or sharing any concerns they have. We also love seeing pictures of what everyone has been up to - like enjoying their holidays and dressing up for World Book Day.

I am very much looking forward to future coffee mornings and hopefully welcoming more new parents along the way."

**by Jodie Morris**

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"It has been my pleasure to be one of the New Parent Contacts and to pop along to the monthly Stay and Play sessions. My son is now 15 but I remember how much I enjoyed these when Milo was a toddler. Having a teenager with Down's syndrome means that I can answer a lot of the questions new parents have; whether it's about navigating the education system or about health, the support available or medical issues. We all have different experiences and none of our children are the same but talking to each other can be so helpful. Being with other families that understand some of the challenges we may face is supportive and it is lovely to watch friendships blossom between the families.

**by Cherylin Hempleman**



# YOUTH CLUB

Our Youth Club, which meets fortnightly, met for most of the year at Toothill Farmhouse.



**The sessions continue to be a hybrid mix of those attending in person along with a few members who join on a virtual Zoom call to have a chat.**

In the summer, we again had a trip to The Forest School at Ashton Keynes. Everyone loves learning how to start fires (safely), building a water-tight shelter and then standing under it while it is tested using several buckets.

We continued the outdoor theme, and finished the day with a trip to the local outdoor pizzeria.

There was a disruption towards the end of the year when Swindon Borough Council needed to carry out structural surveys so this meant we went back to Zoom for a while.

It failed to spoil our festive plans though as we finished the year with a Christmas party at The Golfing Hole. Our young adults enjoyed a round of adventure golf accompanied by lots of pizza.

Youth Club is open to any members aged 13 and over. We would love to see new faces in 2023!



**31**  
**MEMBERS**  
ACCESS SPEECH  
& LANGUAGE  
THERAPY

# SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY FOR UNDER 25 YEAR OLDS

BY CAILEY WHITCHER



**Regular speech and language therapy gives our young people the opportunity to further develop their speech and comprehension skills. This enables them to go on to achieve far more than might otherwise have been possible, and become better integrated into our community.**

We work tirelessly to raise money to pay for additional Speech and Language Therapy for our members under the age of 25. We currently have 31 members accessing speech either on-line or face to face. These sessions cost us in excess of £40,000 a year.

## **Face-to-face sessions**

C&D Therapy provide sessions primarily to our younger members. Sessions follow the school calendar year and operate during term time.

We found that younger children interact better with face-to-face therapy. Members are placed in groups of similar abilities and these are held at our dedicated therapy room in Swindon.

The speech room is full of resources to aid the therapist in delivering the classes. Reports are produced each term so progress can be monitored and future goals set.





## Online sessions

Online sessions are provided by Mable speech and language therapy. Mable provide a fun and engaging way for members to learn and develop new skills while also supporting opportunities for creativity and problem-solving. Mable sessions are all one-to-one, and their brilliant gamified platform is totally different to Zoom. Each session is twenty minutes long.

It's designed to increase participation in therapy, reduced anxiety, and enhanced motivation and engagement in learning activities. Members can choose the times for their appointments to fit around other commitments.

Mable sessions are offered to our members who are unable to travel to Swindon, or they progress better accessing the online environment. As these sessions are one-to-one, they are more flexible on the day of the week and time.

Mable provides weekly session reports and homework tasks that can be accessed at the click of a button too.



It has been a pleasure continuing our partnership with Swindon Down's Syndrome Group this year. Since September 2022, our Speech and Language Therapy service has provided assessment and intervention for 11 children. Members are seen for fortnightly 45 minute therapy groups wherever possible, with less frequent one-to-one input provided based on the child's needs or practicalities around group session times. Reports are provided following initial assessments, with updated targets sent out as appropriate so parents are in tune with ongoing plans for their child's input. Additional detailed reports are provided upon request and educational settings can access relevant resources used in sessions.

Therapy sessions continue to be a place to support both children and their parents. Sessions have centred around a range of speech, language and communication needs, including: vocabulary development, attention and listening, total communication strategies, speech sounds, sentence building and receptive language support.

Whether a child leaves the session chatting about or signing the word of the week, or a parent comments on a strategy they had success with at home, every win is celebrated so that confidence is built! We are proud of our partnership with the Swindon Down Syndrome group and we look forward to working with more children and families as the year progresses.

**C&D Therapy**

Having the opportunity to work with children and young people in the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group this year has been a delight! We have seen children engaging and making significant progress towards their communication goals, and we couldn't be more proud!

Since last March, 20 young people have had therapy; between them, they have had 405 sessions and achieved 88 of their communication goals. Children have engaged extraordinarily well with Mable Therapy online; the fun, gamified activities have increased engagement and motivation in

learning activities and improved retention of information through active participation with their specialist therapist. Each of the children has clear personalised goals and targets they are working towards to motivate them to succeed and to work towards specific outcomes. Parents have been amazing, too; they have worked collaboratively with their child's therapist to ensure that the strategies and techniques used in therapy are consistent with those used at home. This is so important to maximise the effectiveness of therapy, so well done, guys.

**Mable Therapy**

# A FABULOUS YEAR FOR WORKFIT

WorkFit brings together employers and jobseekers who have Down's syndrome. It is a tailored service dedicated to training employers about how to support people who have Down's syndrome in the workplace.

As many of you will know, the partnership between the Down's Syndrome Association's WorkFit programme and the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group began in 2015 and since then it has been providing a tailored employment programme for people with Down's syndrome in Swindon and the surrounding area.

The Swindon Down's Syndrome Group fund Roy Perrett as our WorkFit Liaison Officer. Roy has been working hard to source and support work opportunities for group members, building important work relationships with candidates and potential employers across Swindon and Wiltshire.



2022 certainly turned out to be a very busy year with 11 work placements secured (10 paid employment) with 17 training sessions delivered to 60 staff, to ensure our candidates receive the best support in their new jobs.

After meeting and completing vocational profiling with our candidates Roy has placed individuals with a range of employers and in many different industry sectors, including Hospitality (hotels, restaurants, cinema) Administration (including finance), Agriculture and Retail (fashion).



"2022 certainly has been a busy and wonderfully rewarding year. I am so proud of our brilliant WorkFit candidates who have started their new jobs. They are a credit to their families and to Swindon Down's Syndrome Group"





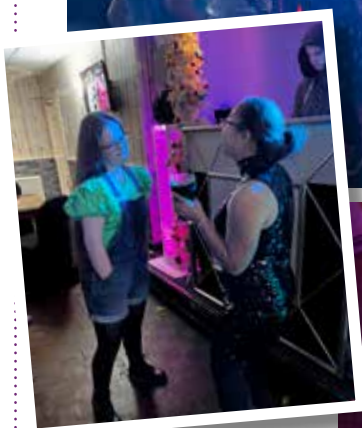
Regular progress reviews are conducted with all our candidates and employers during each placement to ensure that all parties have the support they need. We've had overwhelmingly positive reports on the majority of our candidates with many receiving fantastic customer feedback.

Community engagement has been key activity throughout 2022, with Roy attending a number of local roadshows and conferences to engage with potential employers and also inspire new candidates. These include presenting to Swindon Rotary Club and at the 'Business West' Swindon employers conference. Roy has also attended 'Adult Transitions' roadshows at County Ground, Swindon, Crowdy's School, Swindon and Fairfield Farm College and Dilton Marsh to discuss future options and the support and guidance available to students making the transition to adulthood.

Work has many benefits, including learning new skills, meeting new people and making new friends, improving confidence, earning money and becoming more independent. Roy would be very happy to arrange a meeting to discuss WorkFit with you.

If you're interested please call Roy on 07391 836006 or send him an email at [workfitswindon@downs-syndrome.org.uk](mailto:workfitswindon@downs-syndrome.org.uk)

# CHRISTMAS PARTIES



BY JO MESSENGER

## Let's get this party started...

On 9 December 2022 the Group held their Christmas Party for members aged 12+ at the North Swindon Club. With a great disco and lots of food, the party rocked and the dance floor filled. It was fantastic to see so many young people having a great time and families getting together.

The dance floor was packed all night and everyone joined in. It has been too long since we were able to let our hair down. How lovely it was to see new faces and members we haven't seen for a while all having a good time. Everyone is always greeted with smiles from our young people. Thank you to the North Swindon Club for putting on a great evening.

BY VICTORIA MCGUIRE

2022 saw the welcome return of our much-loved Christmas parties. The under 11s gathered for a few hours of entertainment from Razamatazz and food and drinks. The visit from a very special man in a red suit was the highlight of everyone's afternoon as he handed out presents to our young members and their siblings. The children were also lucky enough to go home with chocolate selection boxes donated by Zurich. It was fantastic to have everyone together for a catch up for the first time since 2019 and we definitely filled everyone with the Christmas spirit!

# KEEPING FIT AND ACTIVE

Keeping fit and active is so important, that's why we offer regular activities for our members to access.

## Swindon DS Active Football

by Jo Messenger

Our DSAActive football team goes from strength to strength and the players continue to learn skills at their weekly sessions. The team meets at The Deanery CE Academy, Swindon from 6 -7pm on a Wednesday during term time.

Each week the team are put through their paces and get to grips with new skills, as well as practicing skills they already use. These skills were put to the test when the team were invited to play on the pitch at Swindon Town FC in January at the biggest game our team had ever experienced.

The atmosphere was electric, and the boys were excited. Swindon were playing Manchester City. Bristol DSAActive joined our team on the pitch at half time and goals were scored in front of an amazing crowd. One of our players was lucky enough while on his lap of honour to get a hug from Kyle Walker! Of course, being part of the Swindon community that day was amazing and the team were proud to be part of this experience.



In March we were invited to go and train with the Bristol DSAActive team and watch a game with them. These two teams have created a real bond and looking forward to playing alongside them on the Swindon pitch again soon.

Our players love being part of such a great team. One of our player's, Barnaby, said ***"I love being part of a team and playing football to keep fit. Playing football with my teammates at Swindon FC makes me happy."*** His mum says, "he would like to play everyday and looks forward to the session."

Lane said, ***"I love training every week and making new friends when we play other team."*** While Oliver enjoys being with his friends and scoring goals.



If you would like to join us please contact [football@swindondownsgroup.org.uk](mailto:football@swindondownsgroup.org.uk)





## Padel Tennis

by John Stow

Our Padel tennis session gained a couple more players during the year. They are all now used to getting up early on Saturday mornings and regularly raise the noise levels at the complex, although not too much that the golfers complain! Padel4All opened a site in Bristol during the year and their hope is to get a similar DS-specific session running there



so that our players can get some matches against them in 2023. You can find out more by emailing [tennis@swindondownsgroup.org.uk](mailto:tennis@swindondownsgroup.org.uk)

## Tennis

by John Stow

The weekly sessions at Delta Tennis Centre did suffer from low numbers at times but attendance has now stabilised with the regular players all showing continued improvement during the year. In the LTA Learning Disability competitions, Lane and Alex again travelled to Newport in October and retained doubles gold in their category. It would be great to see a few more members at the sessions and you can find out more information about the sessions by emailing [tennis@swindondownsgroup.org.uk](mailto:tennis@swindondownsgroup.org.uk)

## Swimming

by John Stow

Our fortnightly swimming sessions at Thamesdown Hydrotherapy Pool ran throughout the year and were again complemented during the summer with some well-attended extra holiday sessions. Vicky Hunt continues to offer coaching to our swimmers and we are always appreciative of the individual attention that she gives them. There are spaces available for any members wishing to give it a try. Contact [swimming@swindondownsgroup.org.uk](mailto:swimming@swindondownsgroup.org.uk) for more information about the sessions.



## Cricket

*by John Stow*

We continued to have plenty of participants attending the “Super I’s” hub in Swindon and now also have a member attending the Chippenham hub. There is a now fantastic level of skills on display, showing just how much can be achieved by our teenagers and young adults when they receive regular coaching. The outdoor sessions in the ‘Summer’ took place in almost every type of weather imaginable but it never stopped the enjoyment. There was also an opportunity for the Wiltshire players to meet up with others from Gloucestershire to show off what they had been learning and have some fun games. In the summer, they also had mini-festivals at Marlborough College and Potterne cricket grounds.



## P4D (Perform 4 Dreams) Dance Group

*by Cathy Brown*

Throughout 2022 the dance group has gone from strength to strength. They now have 12 members who meet at 5pm on Fridays at Bobbi’s Academy of Dance (B.A.D) in Swindon. They are a mixed age group (ranging from Year 4 to adult) who work well as a team. Their teacher is Bobbi Newman, whose enthusiasm, skill and commitment continues to bring out the best in all the dancers. It is great to see the dancers’ confidence and skills growing, and firm friendships being made. They always have lots of fun too! The parents also enjoy the opportunity to socialise.

One of the highlights of the year must be performing at the Wyvern Theatre on 19th June in the B.A.D’s annual show ‘You Don’t Need Wings To Fly’. Another highlight was performing at B.A.D’s Awards Evening on 10th December, where Lane Stow received an award for his commitment to dancing. We are all very proud of all the group has achieved so far and look forward to an exciting future for our dancers!



# FIRE COURSE

**This year brought us temperatures that we had never experienced before!**

*by Jo Messenger*

In August 15 young people embarked on the course after the long break due to lockdown. It was fantastic to see the SPECTRA team and the course members, some new faces, some regulars. With activities such as team building, the smoke house, car cutting and hoses, the group were back in their stride and loving every moment. Day two became the hottest day we had ever seen with the yard at plus 40 degrees at times. This did not stop the participants having fun though.

For the first time ever, we had to call off Nicky's favourite day at Coate Water as the weather had led to green algae and it was not safe to swim in. So, it was off to Westlea Fire Station to abseil down the high tower and crawl through the sewer pipes. Excellent fun! This year we built pools from tarpaulin and filled with lovely cold water. Splashing was so much fun!

Day three the heat continued, and we made the very difficult decision to postpone the Pass Out parade. In that heat pass out would have a whole new meaning. Thanks to the understanding parents we were able to reschedule another two days in October to finish what we missed in August.



October, we returned to the Swindon Fire Station and suited up ready for Coate Water and the water rescue. What a contrast to August! Not that it was freezing, but the dry suits certainly kept us warm. The next day we were able to deliver a fantastic show for family and friends. The young people showed off their skills, wowing their parents as they climbed the ladders and sprayed the hoses from the roof of the smoke house.

Who knew at this point we were to say goodbye to our amazing friends



at the Fire Station? 2022 was the last fire course and we are all so sad that we will not be enjoying it again in 2023. The group thanks Mark Evans, Nicky Parker and the Fire Fighters for their years of hard work in delivering the most incredible experience any of our members have ever had the opportunity to take part in. We hope that we will all be able to join you again one day. Salamander/SPECTRA has brought smiles to our faces, and we will hold it close in our hearts along with the memories.



# IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU, OUR SUPPORTERS

We are so grateful to everyone who has supported us over the past year.

**We owe a huge thank you to every single person, group or business that has helped us to support our young people with Down's syndrome. In particular we'd like to thank the following supporters.**

## **OUR PATRONS**

Cliff Puffett  
Julie Thomas

## **TRUSTEES (2022)**

Kim West  
John Stow  
Sam Harding  
Cailey Whitcher  
Jo Messenger  
Michael Billinge-Jones  
Victoria McGuire  
Lauren Craigie  
Cherylin Hempleman  
Martyn Coles

## **OUR SUPPORTERS**

First City Nursing  
G & M Maitland  
Mark Brooks  
Persimmon Homes  
Charities Trust  
Titan Crew LTD  
Mr Richard William Taylor  
Fairfield Farm Trust  
Rotary Club of Swindon North & Thamesdown  
National Lottery  
Leslye Russell-Pierce & Sam's Challenges  
PPS Accountants  
Lechlade Festival  
Pimms In The Park  
L Taylor  
Syni Musi Ev LTD  
Rotary Club of Swindon  
Magic Touch  
CFWS  
Justin Tomlinson  
Robert Buckland  
The Julia and Hans Rau  
Newsquest  
WRDEUP Festival  
Usay  
Amazon  
The Crown Inn Stratton  
Martyn Coles  
Clare Stow  
Maurice Stow Family & Friends  
Nationwide Building Society  
Terry Williams  
Zurich Community Trust  
All our Jumble helpers  
Cobb's Farm  
Sophie Villis  
Todd Scanlon  
Sam Scanlon  
Cotswold Forest School

Wiltshire & Dorset Fire & Rescue  
Holly Lawson  
Myles Billinge-Jones  
Marina Billinge-Jones  
Cliff Puffett  
Padel4All  
Delta Tennis  
Thamesdown Hydrotherapy Pool  
Bobbi's Dance Academy  
North Swindon Club  
Fairfield Farm College  
Big Yellow  
Roy Perrett  
Asda Walmart  
Swindon Town Football Club  
Copy Color  
Nutmeg Design  
Grange Leisure Centre  
***And... Everyone that purchased a pair of #lotsofsocks from us!***



# FUNDRAISING



## Sophie walks 14 miles for her birthday!

The wonderful Sophie Villis raised funds for the group by walking 14 miles before her 14th birthday. Thank you Sophie and we hope you had a happy birthday!



## Swimathon 2022

A great morning's swim for the sponsored swimathon organised by the North Swindon Rotary Club. Thank you to Martyn Coles and Myles Billinge-Jones.



## Sam completes his 21 challenges on WDSD 2022



Sam has been recognised for his "21 Challenges" where he raised over £6,500 which has been split between two charities, the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group and UET, that have supported him, over the years.

Sam's challenges began on his 30th birthday last year and culminated on World Down's Syndrome Day (21st March) 2022. His challenges have included the fastest sit-down zip wire in the world, flying a plane, falconry, driving a steam train, jet skiing and training with his beloved Swindon Town first team.



## Crown Inn Stratton

The Crown Inn Stratton are long-standing supporters of the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group and throughout the year have organised numerous raffles to raise funds for us. In June they organised a charity quiz night and raised a phenomenal £1040. Thank you to all the amazing staff and customers for their continued support.

## Lechlade festival raises over £200



We would like to thank all involved with the Lechlade Festival and for inviting us to have a stall. The group had the best time, met some amazing people, listened to some incredible acts, danced, sang and raised a fantastic £267.40



## Cobbs Farm Shop open air cinema

Myles and Imogen made themselves comfortable after selling SDSG merchandise at Cobbs Farm Open Air Cinema event. The pair were ready to watch Mama Mia after all their hardwork!



## Football shirts raise over £5,000

We are always truly grateful when people offer to fundraise for the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group. Our Patron, Cliff Puffett, has supported the group's fundraising for many, many years and his latest effort raised £5,000.

Cliff donated two original Swindon Town Football Club shirts signed by the legends Don Rogers and John Trollope and organised an auction to take place at the football club.

With the high-profile game between Swindon Town and Manchester City due to take place on 7th January, Cliff made the brilliant decision to auction the shirts at this game.

## Charity golf day raises over £1,000 for the Group



MagicTouch Promotions, a local company who offer branded clothing and merchandise, organised a charity golf day at Broome Manor Golf Club in Swindon on 5th August 2022. MagicTouch chose the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group to be the beneficiary from the event.

30 golfers took to the course and helped raise over £1000 for the Group. The golfers were treated to 18 holes of golf, followed by a presentation. Each hole was either sponsored or had a prize given for nearest the pin.

Despite the very hot temperatures it was a fantastic day! The ticket sales alone raised £750. Cheryl Hempleman, one of our Trustees, took on collection bucket duty and collected £363.34 in donations too.

MagicTouch Director, Eden Merrylees, presented our Padel Tennis players with a cheque for £1113.34.

The Swindon Down's Syndrome Group would like to say a huge thank you to MagicTouch Promotions for organising such a fantastic event and for supporting our charity.



## Christmas Trees raise over £1,000

We would like to send a big thank you to Terry Williams from the Rotary Club of Swindon North & Thamesdown for his amazing tree selling over the Christmas period. He raised an incredible £1,080 for the our speech and language therapy. Thank you Terry and everyone who bought the trees.



## Christmas Singalong

December 2022 was the third year that we did a Christmas sing-a-long. This year's song was 'We wish you a Merry Christmas'. Fourteen of our members sent in video contributions. I had a great time splicing the videos together to make the final cut. Some people also sent in their outtakes, which were great fun to watch. The final version was put on Facebook with a donation page as before. We raised £180 for speech therapy for our members.

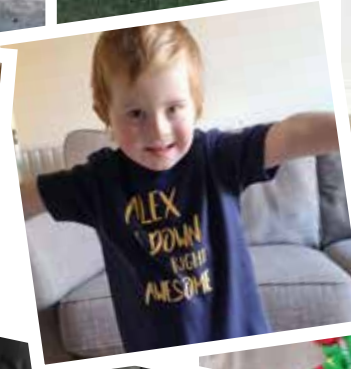


# #LotsofSocks

## Down's Awareness Week 2022

▼ Fairfield College have been huge supporters of the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group each year choosing to sell socks for us. This year they raised £549.50!

Once again in 2022, the Group sold #LotsofSocks to help fund our local DS WorkFit officer. The socks had a new 'electric shock' design for 2022, as always designed by a person with Down's Syndrome. Everyone donned their socks for World Down's Syndrome Day on 21st March. The day also marked the end of "Sam's 21 Challenges" which our member Sam Russell-Pierce had undertaken during the previous 12 months, raising a fantastic amount of money for the Group.



# GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

**Charity name:** Swindon Down's Syndrome Group

**Charity number:** 1158449

**Principal office:** 34 Periwinkle Close, Swindon SN2 2QH

## Governing document

Swindon Down's Syndrome Group is constituted as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission. It is governed by a constitution last updated in 2018.

## Charitable objects:

The objects of the CIO are to relieve the charitable needs of people with Down's syndrome, and their families, helpers and carers in particular but not exclusively by the provision of support and information and speech and language therapy so that they are able to attain their full potential and to undertake any other charitable activities in connection with the relief of Down's syndrome in the SN postcode and the surrounding area. (Area of Benefit)

Surrounding area to be defined as – "post code areas associated to Fairford, Malmesbury, Hungerford, Pewsey, Marlborough, Hullavington, Chippenham, Devizes, Calne, Ashton Keynes, Cirencester, Aldbourne, Bromham, Melksham and Cheltenham."

## Activities:

We are a parent-led charity supporting people with down's syndrome, their families, carers and all those with an interest in down's syndrome in Swindon and the surrounding area. We are an independent charity, affiliated to the national down's syndrome association.

## Organisation structure

The charity trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity. The trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits.

The trustees meet together as a body monthly and are responsible for all decisions taken in relation to running the charity. The charity can have a maximum of 10 trustees.

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year
Kim West	Chair	
Michael Billinge-Jones	Vice Chair	
Sam Harding	Treasurer	
Cailey Whitcher	Secretary	
John Stow	Vice Treasurer	
Joanna Messenger		
Victoria McGuire		
Cherylin Hempleman		
Martyn Coles		
Lauren Craigie		24/4/2021 - 7/12/2022

## Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The existing trustees are responsible for the recruitment of new trustees. In appointing new trustees we seek people who are part of our local community. Potential trustees are invited to trustees' meetings or to meet with the chairperson to learn more about the charity's aims and objectives. If all trustees agree they are proposed as new trustees. New trustees are required to complete a DBS check and given a three month trial. This process allows due consideration of the person's eligibility, personal competence, specialist knowledge and skills.

## Public benefit

The trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in deciding what activities the charity should undertake. The trustees consider that they have acted in the public benefit.

## Conflicts of Interest

The Trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on Conflicts of Interest and the Trustees only act in the best interests of the Charity. The Swindon Down's Syndrome Group have strong systems in place to identify conflicts of interest and we ask each Trustee to declare any conflicts at the beginning of every meeting.

## Financial review and reserves policy

At 31 December 2022 the charity held total funds of £94,162 of which £84,404 are restricted and £9,758 are unrestricted. Unrestricted funds include designated funds of £5,000 for Speech. Free reserves are £4,758. The charity has minimal overheads as it is run by volunteers and so does not need to build up free reserves. The main commitment and the charity's highest cost is paying for Speech therapy, which will cost some £40,000 for 2023. Therefore any excess free reserves are designated to the Speech fund. The restricted funds comprise:

**Speech**  
Donations and grants to provide speech therapy **£51,928**

**Salamander**  
Donations and grants to run fund the fire course **£3,620**

**WorkFit**  
Donations and grants to support adults in the world of work **£6,394**

**Other smaller funds** **£22,462**

**Total restricted funds** **£84,404**

Approved by the trustees and signed on its behalf by:



**Kim West, Chairperson**  
Swindon Down's Syndrome Group



# THE FUTURE

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**2023 marks our twentieth year as an official charity. It's great to look back to see how far the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group has come in that time but as always we must look to the future.**

It's fair to say that the world has changed quite a lot of the past few years and we are now negotiating more challenging times. Our lives have become busier, the cost of everything is increasing and it's getting more challenging to get the support we've been so used to.

We need to future proof our charity so that we can be here to support you and all the families that have someone with Down's syndrome in our area.

Our biggest struggle at the moment is finding volunteers to help us. What makes the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group so unique is that we are run solely by volunteers. People who give up their time to make things happen.

We know how precious everyone's time is but by offering just an hour of your time at one of our events, selling some of our merchandise or even sharing one of our fundraising messages can be so beneficial and goes a huge way to helping us continue to do what we do.

While we would love to say we can to continue offer all the services we currently do, without volunteers that's just not possible. We have decided to share with you how we will prioritise our services this year:

1. Speech and language therapy for under 25s and adults
2. WorkFit
3. New parent support
4. Keeping active including Football, Tennis, Padel Tennis and
5. Dance
6. Youth Club
7. Primary support
8. School Resource Packs
9. Support for schools
10. Family events and trips
11. Christmas parties

Our priority for this year is simple. We want you to be more involved. We want to hear your thoughts, we want you to be a part of what we do and help us shape the future of the Group. If you'd like to find out more drop us an email to [info@swindondownsgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@swindondownsgroup.org.uk)

The Swindon Down's Syndrome Group is a parent-led charity supporting people with Down's syndrome and their families in Swindon and the surrounding area.

We are here to help people with Down's syndrome to have the same opportunities as everyone else and raise awareness of Down's syndrome in the local community.

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#### REGISTERED CHARITY

Swindon Down's Syndrome Group is a UK registered charity. Registered Office 34 Periwinkle Close Swindon SN2 2QH.

**Charity number:** 1158449

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[www.swindondownsgroup.org.uk](http://www.swindondownsgroup.org.uk)



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**







**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Charity Name  
Swindon Down's Syndrome Group

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31 December 2022

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1158449

**Set out on pages**

3 to 4

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2022.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

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").

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.

**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 which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

18 April 2023

**Name:**

James Gare

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):**

FCA

**Address:**

Monahans, Hermes House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon SN2 2GA



**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Charity Name  
Swindon Down's Syndrome Group

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31 December 2022

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1158449

**Set out on pages**

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18 April 2023

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(if any):**

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**Address:**

Monahans, Hermes House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon SN2 2GA