

The background of the page is white with abstract green geometric shapes on the left and right sides. These shapes are composed of various shades of green, from light to dark, and are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement. The shapes are primarily vertical and diagonal, with some overlapping. The text is centered in the white space.

Access Bedford Annual Report 2020/2021

Access Bedford the Charity

We will empower, support and involve the D/deaf community to improve services locally.

The organisation started in April 2014 as a constituted group, moving to registered charity status in July 2015 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

In 2020/21 Access Bedford had 3 trustees, who operated as voting members of the CIO. Chair Catherine Wright Treasurer Helene Bolton Secretary Ally Tree

Within the CIO constitution for Access Bedford, the three trustees can serve until the AGM in 2023. They meet as a committee every 4 – 6 weeks and make decisions on the work of the charity to help meet the charity objects. Currently there are no paid staff employed by Access Bedford. However, with the support of Action Deafness this year they will be looking to employ an Admin assistant and Social media Coordinator this year.

During 2020/21, there have been three non-voting members who have supported the charity and their work by attending meetings and supporting events. They are Lisa Charlish, Marie Biswell and Ciaran McCarthy. Non-voting members will be elected at each AGM.

Trustees and non-voting members are supported through induction and training. Meetings are in BSL with a voice over where needed.

Chairs Report



I have been a Trustee and the Chair of Access Bedford for a few years now and its lovely to see how we continue to support the deaf community in Bedford. I would like to start by saying thank you to our Trustees Helene and Ally and our volunteer committee members Lisa, Ciaran, and Marie for working so hard throughout the last year and keeping things going through Lockdown!

It has been fantastic to see how we have carried on supporting our deaf community through the pandemic and how we quickly moved to a virtual world setting up Zoom for social chats, bingo, quiz nights, BSL cafe, BSL taster sessions, family signing group and our committee meetings. We also managed to keep our vital Deaf space service going and kept in touch with our Young at heart group.

I would also like to thank one of our regular interpreters Sarah who has continued to work with us at Deaf Space, it has not been easy providing this support online, along with Marie, she also supported us to provide BSL video content so that our community could receive important local Covid news.

As the restrictions lift it has been great to see how Access Bedford has grown bigger and formed strong relationships with service providers and other local community groups. We have recently set up our new Active Access Bedford with the aim of reducing social isolation and improving healthy lifestyles. One of our most recent activities is weekly badminton sessions, which have proved to be successful. We hope to bring new activities and events for our community to take part in very soon; keep an eye on our social media for more information.

Lockdown has given us many extra challenges and as volunteers this extra workload always impacts on our own time, the COVID period has meant that we have had to work extremely hard to keep the charity going and our community informed and supported. Helene has played a big part in the day to day running of the charity providing extra admin support, coordinating activities, posting on our social media channels, and organising the committee. She has made the decision to take a step back from this and with the support of Action Deafness we are looking to recruit an Admin Assistant and Media Coordinator to the team.

We are very much looking forward to meeting up with you all after the summer holidays, please do check on our social media for more events and activities, and remember we are here to help too.

Thank you for your ongoing support and stay safe and well,
Catherine.

Our Year - Ally Tree Trustee

Last year we were looking forward to lock down easing, we didn't realise that it would happen again and again!

Access Bedford as a charity itself has grown and developed so much this year. This is thanks to the hard work of Helene, organising, doing admin, reminding us to do things! Without her, I would not have all these brilliant things to tell you about.

One of the big things which has happened in the background this year is the introduction of our funding streams where we have been looking at 5 key areas: deaf space, NHS translation services, general translation and interpreting, outreach, and education. My passion has always been education and so my involvement this year has been focussed on this. Let me tell you all the exciting things we have done to promote learning this year.

BSL café: This has been going on for many years now as a safe place for BSL learners of all levels to come and practice signing. I'm pleased to say that we have continued to provide this service for free throughout this year.

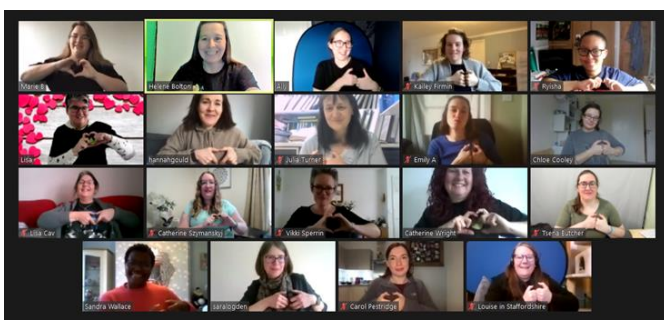
Due to lockdown rules and risk assessments, we have continued online through Zoom. Lots of people have missed the face-to-face interaction but there have been many positives to the experience too.

1. People from all over the country have been able to join us to practice. The furthest virtual distance travelled has been Scotland. One month we had 27 people turn up!
2. It has been much easier to support people learning at their level. Every month we have had a range of people from complete beginners to trainee interpreters joining in. The benefit of zoom is that it's possible to create 'breakout rooms' which means that you can make smaller groups, and swap groups, then bring everyone back together at the end.

We have also been really lucky to have some great topics to work on at different levels. From Christmas to International Women's Day, each level worked on a challenge for the topic and fed back to the whole group at the end.

For example, for the Valentines themed session in February, beginners and level 1 learned specific vocab about valentines and love. Level 2s practised conversation skills around the topics of best/worst valentine and how they met their partners. Level 3 and above went on a different tack, learning about the anatomy of a heart and what signs you might need for medical situations.

The highlight for BSL café has to be January when guest teacher John Smith delivered an amazing workshop on facial expression. It was fantastic... oh no wait that sign was not allowed!



Education Projects: There are three projects linked with education which Access Bedford has set up this year and there have been two BSL taster streams.

1. Free BSL taster session: 1.5 to 2 hours where people have learned basic signs such as the alphabet, numbers, questions and greetings, as well as a little bit about deaf awareness and how to break down communication barriers.

The charity has organised seven taster events over the last twelve months which is amazing, so many people in our local area now have that bit of understanding and can support deaf people in our community. Two taster sessions stand out as great examples of what we can do.

- i. We were approached by the Bedfordshire and Luton Recovery college, an organisation which supports people with mental health issues and diagnoses. It wasn't an easy session because normally on zoom each person is at home with their own camera and you can see them clearly and what they are signing. This session was different though, we were on a big TV and they were all on one screen, so small and so far away!
- ii. A special taster session provided to Sharman's Law in Bedford. Earlier in the year, Helen from Sharman's Law offered to speak to our deaf community about will writing. To say thank you for Helen's time and expertise, we invited Helen and the team to find out a bit more about BSL and deaf awareness. They were such a friendly group, my favourite thing was when we mentioned interpreter fees and they thought that sounded quite cheap! Well that's lawyers for you I suppose!

2. 5 Week BSL taster course: 5 weekly sessions for a small contribution. This year we have run three taster courses to teach people basic BSL conversation skills. Dominic Caswell, a local, qualified BSL tutor who is deaf himself, planned and delivered the courses. Topics included the alphabet, numbers, colours, directions, weather, transport. Dom also very kindly set up an online course for our delegates on his website bslonline.co.uk so they could continue practising between sessions.

3. Family Signing: Our project to help families of deaf children learn BSL. Quite a few families of deaf children in Bedfordshire have been asking about how to support their families in learning BSL and this has been a fascinating project to delve into.

When we researched and investigated, the options out there are BSL level 1 or baby signing groups. This is problematic. Level 1 isn't always what you want when trying to communicate with young children, and baby signing is aimed at hearing babies. Baby signing groups are fantastic for early communication, but they are usually run by a hearing person who may not have deaf awareness. They may not know about regional variations or may not even be using BSL signs!

We had a fantastic meeting with NDCS to talk about their family signing programme which is led by a deaf tutor and aimed specifically at families of deaf babies. This course wasn't quite right for the families in Bedford but it was a great help, so we know what we needed to look for.

We met with local deaf BSL tutor Emma McAllister who planned three fantastic zoom sessions for our families to get involved together learning BSL. Topics covered included family signs, feelings, food, and ideas of how to use BSL in conversation with your children. The parents who joined us for these sessions all had varying levels of BSL from beginner to level 2 and Emma supported each family brilliantly. The children were invited to join in as well, this was tricky on zoom but hopefully soon we can meet up with everyone in person to find out how to support them more going forward.

So that's what I've been involved in this year, no wonder I'm feeling exhausted!

Ally Tree - Trustee

The Money

Access Bedford does not have any debts, guarantees or liabilities. An asset log detailing equipment is maintained by the trustees. Charity trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the commission in exercising their powers or duties.

Access Bedford does not have a reserves policy in place at present. The annual income does not meet the threshold for external auditing.

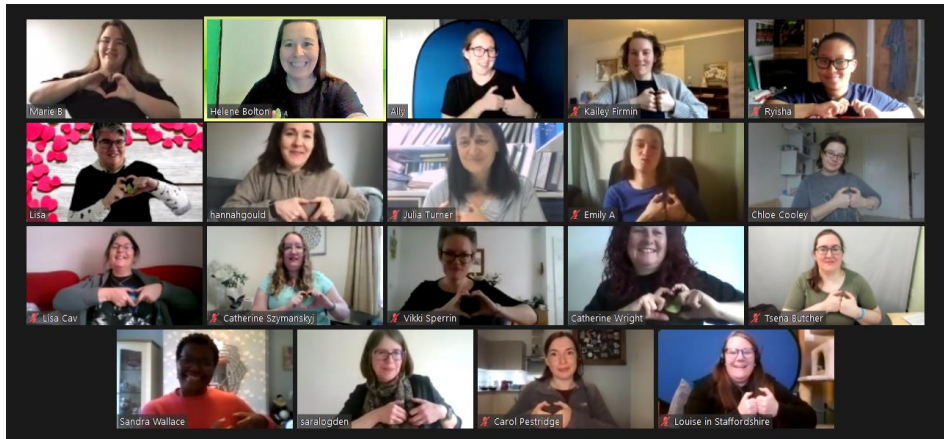
Detailed accounts can be shared on request or can be viewed at our website <https://accessbedford.org.uk>

Access Bedford Account

Starting balance 01.04.19 £10,036.69

Closing balance 31.03.19 £13,987.99

Our Virtual Year





To Our Funders

- National Lottery - Awards for All
- Harpur Trust
- Bedfordshire Response fund
- Adept
- Community Donations - Just Giving
- Co-op Community Fund

1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Receipts [In]

	This Year	Last Year
Ad hoc donations	£4,415.59	£181.00
Young at Heart	£0.00	£10.00
Coronavirus	£4,395.00	£0.00
Bedford Half Marathon	£0.00	£40.00
Just Giving	£2,495.60	£2,013.03
Yumma	£0.00	£600.00
BSL Café	£130.00	£0.00
Eventbrite	£109.20	£207.50
Quiz	£0.00	£180.00
Lottery	£0.00	£6,895.00
Adept Education	£1,000.00	£0.00
NHS Beds. CCG	£1,125.00	£0.00
BSL Taster	£630.00	£0.00
Totals	£14,300.39	£10,126.53

Payments [Out]

AGM	£110.00	£572.56
General Running Costs / Promo	£1,432.66	£49.66
Young at Heart	£47.61	£41.50
Hustings	£0.00	£231.58
Coronavirus	£4,458.10	£0.00
BSL Café	£50.00	£419.50
Deaf Space	£2,588.20	£3,046.93
Newsletter	£0.00	£169.70
Ad Hoc	£147.00	£144.40
Yumma	£0.00	£258.07
Bedford Half Marathon	£0.00	£712.01
Quiz	£0.00	£212.14
Hidden Disabilities	£110.52	£0.00
Workshops	£0.00	£670.83
Community Interpreting	£1,155.00	£0.00
BSL Taster	£250.00	£0.00
Totals	£10,349.09	£6,528.88

Surplus or (deficit) for the year £3,951.30 £3,597.65

Balances brought forward	Bank -1	£9,992.20	£6,601.64
	Bank -2	£44.49	£44.49
	Cash	£0.00	£0.00
		£10,036.69	£6,646.13

Balances in hand at year end	Bank -1	£13,943.50	£9,992.20
	Bank -2	£44.49	£44.49
	Cash	£0.00	£0.00
		£13,987.99	£10,036.69

Assets and Liabilities: In addition to the above cash balances Access Bedford have assets and liabilities to the value of £0.00 there are no other assets or liabilities.

Prepared by:

C UPTON

Signature & Date:

[Signature] 21.4.21

Reviewers Certificate: The above statements agree with the records and receipts of Access Bedford for the financial year ended 31 March 2021.

Reviewed by:

H. BOSTON

Signature & Date:

[Signature] 20/4/21

Notes: