

Kent Kindness Annual Review

June 2021 to June 2022

General review

This has been a much more settled year for Kent Kindness. For most of the year both of the Reception Centres were open for lessons, though with everyone following the guidelines relating to Covid 19 such as having regular negative Lateral Flow Tests before going to teach. In September the Centre in the High Weald was changed to a quarantine centre so our lessons stopped there for a few weeks. This change was to enable the Home Office hotels to move the newly arrived UASC more quickly. In January the National Transfer Scheme was put in place and this has meant that since then most of the boys transfer to the community more quickly, though there is still a small number who seem to be resident for a few weeks.

Classes

Kent Kindness now runs three classes at the Ashford Centre, which we call Beginners, Beginners Plus and Intermediates. This was because the previous Beginners class had become too large and the wide disparity in the boys' level of English made teaching the classes very difficult for the volunteers. Plus too many of the boys were either bored or totally confused. Sadly we do not have enough volunteers to also offer this at the Centre in West Kent.

DBS checks

All Kent Kindness volunteers must have received their Enhanced DBS check before their first visit to either Centre. We used to have to ask volunteers to reapply for a new DBS Certificate after 3 years but now it is possible for volunteers to use the government's DBS Update Service which has streamlined our DBS checks. As this service is free for volunteers we find it works very well.

AGM

We held our first face-to-face AGM since 2019 in September. This was in a trustee's garden so social distancing was not a problem and the good attendance showed how people had missed traditional meetings over the previous two years.

Gifts and donations

Over the past year Kent Kindness has received many generous donations and gifts for the UASC. The sixth form students at the Wilmington Academy in Dartford collected gifts for the boys, things like soap and shower gel, socks and packs of cards. These they packaged into shoe boxes to be given to the UASC as Welcome Gifts. They were

very gratefully received by everyone, boys and staff, at both Centres, and sufficient boxes were donated for every boy in residence back in October to receive one.

Three local schools raised money for Kent Kindness by doing a sponsored walk, having a Christmas Fair and collecting donations after a Kent Kindness trustee gave a talk about our work. These were all very generous donations. Three local charities made substantial donations to Kent Kindness and one local charity is donating monthly for a year. These donations enable Kent Kindness to not only provide textbooks to the UASC to help their learning but we can also finance monthly outings for the boys. We received one very generous anonymous donation and we were asked to use some of this to support the newly arrived child refugees from Afghanistan and to support the UASC. Kent Kindness was able to purchase many pairs of trainers for both sets of refugees and these were very gratefully received.

In August Kent Kindness was approached by the Shepway Sport Trust. They were offering highly subsidised water sport activities. Thanks to the kind donations we were able to finance two days of watersport for the UASC which involved kayaking and paddle boarding. They enjoyed both though the boys said the paddle boarding was rather difficult.

Regular outings

Early in the year one of the Kent Kindness trustees told us of a model railway centre that was about to open in a local village. Since February a group of UASC has visited AIMREC, Ashford International Model Railway Education Centre, and they have loved it. They are allowed, or maybe encouraged, to take over the controls of the model trains and some, who have better English, have been seen to have in depth discussions with the AIMREC team on the physics of transforming the electricity supply from the mains to the model tracks. AIMREC is run by enthusiastic volunteers and Kent Kindness makes a monthly donation to show our thanks for helping, educating and entertaining the UASC.

In March the Kent Kindness negotiated reduced entry prices with the Hollywood Bowl and the Port Lympne Wild Animal Park and since then groups of 10 boys plus support workers from both Centres visit both of these venues. Our thanks go to our donors for making this possible and we also thank the senior staff at both venues for allowing us to book these outings at concessionary rates. The boys love both of these visits and photos showing their enthusiasm can be seen on display at both Centres. It is difficult for us to share these photos with our supporters as we must not use photos by which the UASC could be identified. With permission from the Managers at the Centres we have published a limited number of photos which do not show the faces of the UASC.

Regular gifts

Some of our supporters make monthly donations to Kent Kindness and thanks to these donations we are able to purchase a range of small gifts for the UASC at both Centres. We provide a Welcome Bag for every boy when he transfers into the community. This contains things such as a small blanket, a night light, soap and shower gel, a mug, a torch and a keyring. These items have been suggested to us by some of the Social Workers who support the UASC. We also give a small Easter Egg to every boy and a Christmas gift bag. We know most of the UASC are not Christian but we see this as part of our role in introducing them to English customs and all the gifts are always very gratefully received.

Training for the volunteers

Earlier in the year one of the Kent Kindness volunteers offered an online training session for the other volunteers. The training session was called "Empathy" and was based on the concept of "It's All Spanish to Me". It showed how impossibly hard it is to follow instructions in a foreign language if no visual clues are given. This fun presentation was very well received and sparked a very good discussion between the volunteers after the presentation.

After this another volunteer offered another online training session. This time it was called "Non-sense; why do we keep teaching when we think the boys are not understanding us?" and showed us how wonderful our brains are at picking out clues on what is being described to us. The volunteer presenter used examples of visual clues and we soon realised just how quick our brains are to make sense of what at first seems like nonsense. Again there was a very constructive question and answer session after the presentation which everyone found very helpful.

These two sessions showed how useful Zoom can be even when we are not in lockdown so Kent Kindness has signed up to a Zoom account. This has proved to be invaluable for allowing trustees to join our Committee Meetings even when they are not at home, and for our Treasurer who now lives in Wales.

A teaching resource for the UASC

In March a friend of a Kent Kindness volunteer offered access to a free online teaching resource for the UASC, ReallyEnglish. This wonderful resource can be used by individual boys on their Smartphone for a year so they can continue to use it after they transfer from their Reception Centre. Some boys have been signed up to ReallyEnglish by their Kent Kindness teachers and some by the support workers at the Centres.

Bike Maintenance

Also in March one of the volunteers spent three morning repairing the bikes that some of the boys use at the Centre in Ashford. Some just needed general maintenance such as puncture repair plus oil on the chains, but others needed their wheels realigning and more serious repairs. Luckily the volunteer is very resourceful and all but one of the bikes was made perfectly road safe. The one bike was used to provide some of the necessary parts for the other bikes so there was no waste. The boys were very grateful as it enables them to cycle to the park and the supermarket.

Walk with Amal

In the autumn one of the trustees told us about Walk with Amal. This three metre puppet, made by the team who made the puppets for War Horse, was “walking” from Turkey to Liverpool, a distance of 9,000km. The message of the walk was to raise awareness of UASC and the message was “Don’t forget about us”. Amal, which means hope in Arabic, represented a 10 year old Syrian girl. Our trustees arranged for a workshop to be held at one of the Reception Centres where the boys helped to make the lanterns which would be carried during Amal’s Event of Welcome in Dover. Some of the Kent Kindness trustees and supporters attended the event and walked with Amal from near the docks up to Dover Castle and we were told some of the UASC were there too, though the crowds were so large we did not see one another.

Eid Celebrations

At the end of Ramadan the boys from both Centres met up to celebrate Eid. Kent Kindness volunteers were invited to attend and a wonderful time was had by everyone, including a fantastic meal followed by games of football and other sports.

Change of site for donations

In September we received a notification from Virgin Money Giving, VMG, informing us they were to stop functioning as a site for donations. After research by some of the volunteers we decided to sign up to CafDonate. This has not caused any problems for our donors and like VMG it collects the Gift Aid for us on the donations where this is possible.

Trustee meetings and roles

The trustees meet regularly throughout the year. These meetings were held outside, usually in a trustee’s garden, while social distancing was essential. More recently we have felt confident to move indoors and from October the meeting will once again be held in a meeting room in a hotel in Cranbrook.

Finally

Thanks to our wonderful team of volunteers and our hard working trustees, Kent Kindness continues to provide a valuable level of support for the UASC at the Reception Centres, including teaching, gifts and outings. The messages of thanks and praise we receive from the Managers at the Centres show how much our efforts are appreciated and we hope to continue to offer this support in the future.



Registered Charity No. 1167921

Receipts and Payments

Annual Accounts

07.04.21 – 06.04.22

Total Receipts	Total Payments	Balance in bank	Cash funds	Total capital
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Unrestricted donations : £17,272		£17,869	n/a	£17,869
Restricted donations: £1000	1.Gifts (leaving, Christmas and Easter)	£3942		
	2.Stationery	£ 0		
	3.Books	£ 3313		
Total donations: £18,272	4.Other equipment for teaching	£ 340		
	5.Recreational equipment + outings	£4045		
	6.Insurance, web maintenance + IT	<u>£ 371</u>		
		<u>£11,989</u>		