



## **ANNUAL REVIEW AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2021-2022**

Our charity was established in August 2020 following an amicable split from the Sands charity after seven years, with an updated remit to support bereaved families by maintaining the Ashford Baby Memorial Garden, arranging support events, creating other baby memorial areas, and raising awareness of baby loss.

The basis of our work was widened from stillbirth and neonatal deaths to include all babies who die, whether through miscarriage, stillbirth, perinatal death or as infants. We are there for all families, no matter how or when was their loss. This new independence allows us to have total control over what we do and how we spend our money, so important for a small community charity. We continue to work alongside other organisations such as Sands and the Miscarriage Association, signposting people to their services and support where appropriate.

Our first year of operation was from August 2020 to March 2021 and as that was during the Covid pandemic, opportunities for community activities were few and far between. But that partial void gave us space to establish the charity and website and leaflets etc., ready for the return to normal activities. Our second year, 2021-22, included a gradual return to normality but with a reduced number of community events we were able to attend, impacting on our fundraising and awareness ambitions.

### **Volunteers**

Our charity is run, and all our activities are delivered, by a small team of volunteers, nearly all bereaved parents themselves, who between them gave an enormous amount of time and energy. A big thank you to them and to everyone who has supported us during the year, in any way. Some support has been financial, others have given time and energy while for some that support has been rather more subtle. But to everyone, a big 'Thank You'.

### **Ashford Baby Memorial Garden**

During 2021/22 we have continued to run our unique, fully accessible, town centre Ashford Baby Memorial Garden, adding a large wooden planter, and installing a further **41 baby name tiles**, remembering babies from 1958 through to 2021. We held our annual **Teddy Bear's Picnic** at the Garden and our regular **Wave of Light** during Baby Loss Awareness Week, the latter not going as well as we had planned due to issues with the venue, compounded by a relatively low turnout on the day by families.

### **Other Baby Memorial Areas.**

We have worked with the **West Faversham Community Centre** to create a new baby memorial area within its sensory garden, supplying a bench and a nameboard to allow local families to have their baby's name recorded closer to their homes. This will be opening in June 2022. We have supported volunteers at the old **Folkestone Cemetery** where a stillbirth area was discovered and which local volunteers are making nicer. We put pressure on the NHS Trust to make improvements to the **Baby Cemetery at Canterbury Hospital** where around 100 babies are buried. This area had been long forgotten and neglected, but now has new fencing, and a new path together with an engraved bench donated by us. We continue to work with **Dover Rotary** which is hoping to create a baby memorial area on the seafront, but which appears to be facing some reluctance from the Council. We continue to look for opportunities for other baby areas across East Kent and would welcome any suggestions for suitable locations.

### **Fundraising Events and Activities**

We undertake a considerable number of events and activities, many with the dual aim of raising funds for the charity, but also helping raise awareness of baby loss and the support available to families. The year covered by this Review was still affected by the pandemic although restrictions gradually eased over time, allowing us to undertake a reasonable number of events and activities, including some newer ones. During the year we:

- Attended fourteen full day events, and another eight shorter events, raising money and raising awareness in Ashford, Dover Folkestone, Sittingbourne and Whitstable.

- Attended twelve other networking events across East Kent with other organisations, raising awareness of baby loss and our charity. Conversations at many of these led to follow-up work or activities.
- Spoke to 500 students at Ashford College as part of its Fresher's Fair, recognising the College as our close neighbours and the students many of whom will almost certainly face the loss of a baby.
- Sold 16,000 Smiley Face Tombola tickets, giving away 2,300 prizes and raising almost £4,000.
- Raised awareness of baby loss among several thousand people.
- Created a four-page handout about baby loss for Kent Scout volunteers, and are looking at offering something similar to other youth organisations.
- Took part in Baby Loss Awareness Week, including having a stand in Ashford County Square.
- Had a full-page article in Ashford Council's magazine, delivered to 55,000 houses!
- Talked to Kent Police, Swale Council and others about their support to staff and the wider community, and developed plans to talk to National Citizens Service students in 2022.

### Finances

We started the year with £3,219 in our current account and ended the year with £4,015 with the most significant areas of **expenditure** relating to the Ashford Baby Memorial Garden (£2,100, partly offset by £1,440 from the sale of nametiles), baby areas elsewhere (including £1,400 for benches at Faversham and at Canterbury), and events and activities. Storage costs for two garages rented from Ashford Council were £1,400, a really frustrating call on our funds and representing the equivalent of five full days fundraising.

Our **income** included almost £5,000 raised through fundraising events (mainly our Smiley Face Tombolas) and £2,000 in donations from various sources, mainly from family and friends of the charity, and local fundraising by our supporters. We also received grants including £2,000 from Kent Community Foundation towards our core costs, £339 from Ashford Council for the purchase of a projector, £1,000 from the Arnold Clark Foundation, £500 from 'Magic Little Grants, £220 from the Tolmoor Shoot and £250 from the Tory Family Foundation. We are grateful to everyone who helped us in any way.

Our **reserves** were set at £7,500 at the outset and we have managed to maintain that amount throughout the year. That £7,500 represents the basic running costs of the charity for twelve months and is at a reasonable level. There are four important factors taken into account in setting reserves at that level. Firstly, the Ashford Baby Memorial Garden area is licenced to us for five years (to October 2025) after which the Council (at least in theory) can give us just three months' notice to quit. While we cannot see that ever happening, it is a risk we have to bear in mind and we need to have some reserves to either fight any such request, or to find an alternative area. Secondly, we have core costs which would continue, come what may. This includes paying Aspire for the maintenance of the Ashford Baby Memorial Garden, the costs of storage, and backroom costs such as insurance. Thirdly, as a small charity with a relatively low financial turnover, we are particularly susceptible to unexpected bills – a good example is some vandalism to the Garden in April 2022 which cost us over £300 to rectify. We have to plan for such eventualities. And finally, as a small community charity with no staff, we are entirely dependent on a small number of volunteers who undertake most of the fundraising and other income generation. Despite succession planning, the current levels of fundraising activity cannot continue forever and we have to be realistic in not necessarily being able to rely on current activity levels in the future. Charity law requires us to plan reserves at a realistic level and taking account of all these factors, we are satisfied the £7,500 figure is the right one.

### The Future

2022-23 is looking to be as busy as the previous year with 22 tombolas and eleven awareness and networking events planned so far. We are looking forward to working with NCS students in the Summer and to giving presentations to various groups across the county, as Covid restrictions are eased. Demand for nametiles continues and is likely to increase as we become more and more well known. We will continue to work with local communities to look for opportunities to create or support additional baby memorial areas and will work tirelessly to raise awareness of baby loss and to support bereaved families.

**EAST KENT BABY MEMORIAL GARDENS GROUP**  
**Charity Number 1190080**

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**Opening current account balance at 1 April 2021** **£3,219**

**Income**

Name Tiles	£1,400
Fundraising	£4,290
Event Donations	£681
Other Donations	£2,055
Grants	£4,089
Other	£3
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£12,518</b>

**Expenditure**

Garden Maintenance	£2,127
Name Tiles	£421
Fundraising and Awareness	£2,654
Fundraising Prizes	£540
Other Gardens	£1,482
Events	£1,303
Storage	£1,419
Insurance	£96
Other Group Costs	£1,157
Printing etc	£501
Transfer to Reserves	£0
Other	£21
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£11,721</b>

**Closing current account balance at 31 March 2022** **£4,015.43**

**Closing balance in reserves account at 31 March 2022** **£7,507.90**

**Closing balance of £50.00 cash held (fundraising event float)**

**Chris Twydell**  
**Treasurer**  
**31 March 2022**