

ANNUAL REVIEW

September 2016 – October 2017

Grove
Cottage

The home of Bishop's Stortford Mencap

LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN KEVIN DAVIS



On behalf of the Board of Trustees I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported Grove Cottage over the last year. Grove Cottage is now over 50 years old and has a tremendous amount of support in the local community which is particularly important as it is increasingly harder to get resources from both central and local government.

We are moving towards a time of reduced support from the public sector and now find ourselves in a position where only 8% of our annual income comes from statutory funding. Although we are affiliated with The Royal Mencap Society we receive no funding from the national body.

We therefore continue to rely on our community for a substantial amount of our income and are indebted to all those people who so generously donate to us. The work and impact of our many wonderful volunteers should also be mentioned, without whom we simply could not operate.

Despite our challenges however we are also moving towards a time of potential growth. Planning permission has been submitted with the intention to redevelop the existing site. This will increase the available space significantly allowing Grove Cottage to provide a better service to our existing members and their families. We wait anxiously for the outcome.

In early 2016 we were chosen by the Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF) to be given assistance to improve both our

effectiveness and efficiency. We have since then worked closely with Mosaic Consultants working on behalf of the Cranfield Trust who undertook a review and in September 2016 they presented a very positive report. We are currently working to implement their recommendations.



ABOUT LEARNING DISABILITY

A Learning Disability is a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills and to cope independently.

This difficulty in learning can be a result of brain damage suffered before, during or shortly after birth or it can be due to genetic conditions (for example Down's Syndrome).

Only 10% of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) attend mainstream schools and children with SEN are twice as likely as other children to be bullied regularly.



If brain damage is profound or associated with other physical difficulties, independence is often difficult. Some people with learning disabilities can learn to lead an independent life whilst others may be permanently reliant on carers.

Studies have shown that 50% of individuals with learning disability suffer chronic loneliness as opposed to 15-30% in the general population. Loneliness has been associated

with health risks such as depression, stress, heart disease and has even been linked to a higher mortality rate.

With the right support and care many people with Learning Disabilities can lead an independent and fulfilling life.



OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

PAST

- Grove Cottage began in Bishop's Stortford in 1966.
- The crèche was held in a church hall and quickly evolved to a nursery-playgroup. Many volunteers including teachers, nurses, speech therapists and physiotherapists came forward and gave their time for free.
- In 1968 a car service was introduced and a fortnightly youth club began. The catchment area increased to include Sawbridgeworth, Buntingford and surrounding villages.



- In late 1972 the local society purchased 151 London Road and called it Grove Cottage. This allowed more services and in 1975, aided by local secondary school children, school holiday sessions were introduced and later holidays and speech therapy.
- In 1994 the cottage next door was purchased allowing greater expansion of services.

PRESENT



- We currently have approximately 150 members and our youngest member has just turned 2 whilst our oldest will soon be turning 83.
- We have approximately 35 staff, nearly all of whom are part time.
- Around 100 volunteers are actively involved with Grove Cottage and help across all departments.

- Our premises are used six days per week in the daytime and during the evenings.





- We currently provide 10 different services:



Special Needs

Nursery (Ofsted Regulated)

Monday to Thursday 9.30am – 2.30pm

Performing Arts Club

Mondays 6.00pm – 7.15pm

Youth Club

Tuesdays 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Adult Social Club

Wednesdays & Thursdays 7.00pm – 9.00pm

Get Active Club

Thursdays 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Cottage Creates Club

Fridays 5.00pm – 7.00pm

Saturday Clubs

(Small Play, Big Play and Cottage Crew)

Big Play & Cottage Crew – 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month.

Small Play – 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month (varied times)

School Holiday Clubs

These run during school holidays

Grove Cottage at Thirst Café (South Street, Bishop's Stortford)

Wednesdays and Thursdays 10.00am – 2.00pm

Speech and Language Therapy Programme



To find out more please call the Operations Team on:

01279 656085 or e-mail info@mencapgrovecottage.org

FUTURE

We have exciting plans to redevelop the site at 151 London Road and are currently awaiting the approval of planning permission. This development will help Grove Cottage to expand our services and offer more of the great clubs that our members currently enjoy.

The future looks exciting and with your continued support we can help to make our dreams a reality, continuing to support local people with learning disabilities for many more years.

HOW OTHERS SEE US

A Parent's View

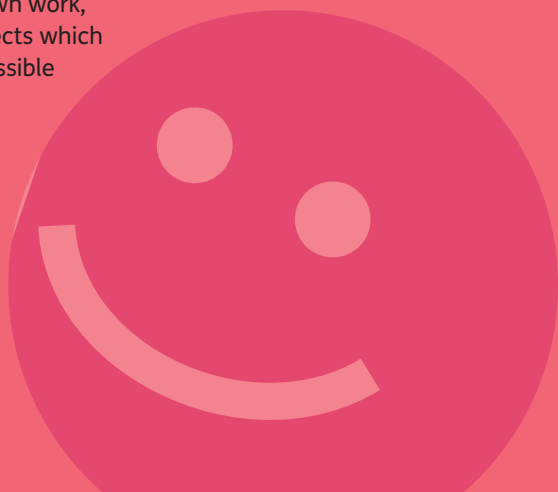


Sally-Anne How is mum to Ruben, aged two, who attends our Ofsted Regulated Special Needs Nursery four days a week.

Sally-Anne first took Ruben to the doctors in December 2016, but it wasn't until May 2017 that he was diagnosed with a complex condition which affects his development. Sally-Anne said: *"Receiving this news about Ruben was horrendous and completely debilitating. I knew I needed to get help."*

Fortunately, Sally-Anne was told about Grove Cottage by a friend who thought we might be able to help. Sally-Anne says: *"Ruben is stimulated and enjoys the social side of attending a nursery. He is always beaming from ear to ear when I pick him up and I see small differences in him every day. He enjoys swimming every week as well as organised trips, such as going to Cammas Hall Farm, meeting Father Christmas and day trips to the seaside."*

Grove Cottage has also given Sally-Anne a lifeline at a time when she needed it most. Whilst Ruben attends the Nursery she has been able to concentrate on her own work, studies and charity projects which would not have been possible otherwise.



A Member's View

Harry is 18 and has a genetic condition which causes developmental delays. He has been coming to Grove Cottage since he was a young child and now attends our Youth Club, Get Active Club and Café at Thirst. Harry's favourite thing to do at Grove Cottage however is volunteering as



a minibus chaperone! Harry's dad Graham drives the minibus for our Small Play Club and Harry enjoys helping him out and loves operating the tail lift! Harry's future dream for when he is older is to be a minibus driver for Grove Cottage.

Harry's favourite club at Grove Cottage is Youth Club because he gets to 'hang out' with his friends and he especially enjoys the occasional pamper night. He loves it when Youth Club go to the trampoline park but his favourite trip out is bowling and he always tries to get a strike.

For Harry, Grove Cottage is all about having fun and seeing his friends as without these weekly clubs there would be no opportunity to meet with them. When asked if he would recommend Grove Cottage he said he would because it's so much fun.

A Volunteer's View

After retiring from teaching Gill decided to start volunteering for Grove Cottage as she understood how her time could make a huge difference to the staff and Club Leaders, she also did not want to 'just stop' after retirement. She has now been volunteering for Grove Cottage for around 18 months and thoroughly enjoys her time here. Gill enjoys the knowledge that she is being useful and that she can come into the Nursery and help without the pressure and responsibility that she used to have at work prior to her retirement. She also enjoys the fact that she can fit in her volunteering with her family and lifestyle.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

VOLUNTEER

Grove Cottage could not run without volunteers and we need volunteers in a wide variety of roles including: Club support workers, Minibus drivers, Minibus chaperones, Administration roles, Fundraising event volunteers, Trustees and more.

If you have time and skills we will find the right volunteering role for you. For more information about volunteering please email:
volunteer@mencapgrovecottage.org

DONATE

All donations, large or small, make a massive difference to Grove

Cottage. To set up a regular standing order donation please contact Fundraising on the details below or to make a one-off donation please make cheques payable to *Bishop's Stortford Mencap* and send to **Fundraising Grove Cottage, 151 London Road, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 3JX.**

SCHOOL CHALLENGE

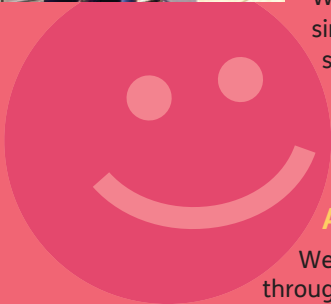
Can you grow a pound? We will give you a pound and your task is to make it grow. Awaken that entrepreneurial spirit in your pupils while teaching the value of charity work!

ORGANISE AN EVENT FOR GROVE COTTAGE

Whether you plan a golf day, organise a concert or simply hold a bake sale we will support you every step of the way with your community event. If you want to organise an event, but are in need of some ideas, then we can provide you with our A-Z of fundraising ideas for inspiration.

ATTEND A GROVE COTTAGE EVENT

We organise many different fundraising events throughout the year to cater to everyone. Annual events include our 'Wag 'n' Walk' sponsored dog walk, Golf Day, Black Tie Ball and our 'Festival of Flavour'. To keep up to date with our events visit our website, or follow us on social media.



TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

Grove Cottage wouldn't be where it is today without the generous support of charitable trusts and foundations. If you are connected with a grant-making organisation please contact our Grants Manager at natalie.p@mencapgrovecottage.org



TAKE ON A SPONSORED CHALLENGE

Whether you're an adrenaline junkie looking to do a skydive or a fitness fanatic wanting to cycle the length and breadth of Britain we can find the challenge for you! Taking on a sponsored challenge is a fantastic way to support a great local charity while ticking something off of your bucket list.

CORPORATE SUPPORT

If you are a local company looking to fulfil your Corporate Social Responsibility then there are loads of ways to get involved with Grove Cottage! You can choose us as your 'Charity of the Year' and embark on a year of fundraising, sponsor one of our local events, encourage staff to take on a sponsored challenge or you could become a 'Corporate Friend of Grove Cottage' and make a regular donation.



For more information about any of the above please contact the Fundraising Team by calling **01279 651908** or emailing fundraising@mencapgrovecottage.org

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Our total income for 2016/2017 was £372,293; a 10% rise on the previous year's income of £338,901.

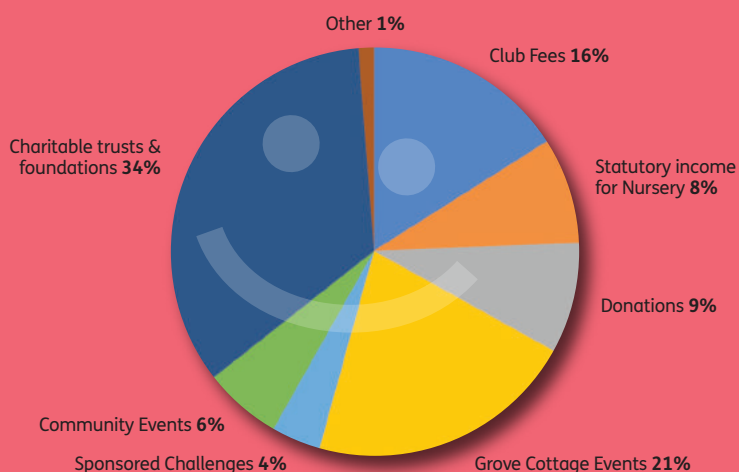
Our expenditure however also increased to £375,074, a staggering 27% rise on the previous year's expenditure of £294,751. Our rise in expenditure is largely due to increased staff levels and the first full year of 'Grove Cottage @ Thirst' project costs.



Whilst our finances show a deficit of £2,781, this includes the generous donation of a new minibus funded by the Department for Transport. This was treated as a donation to the sum of £67,121; however as this is an asset and not accessible funds we in reality finished the year with a much higher deficit.

Total income 2016/17

£372,293



Our reserves expanded

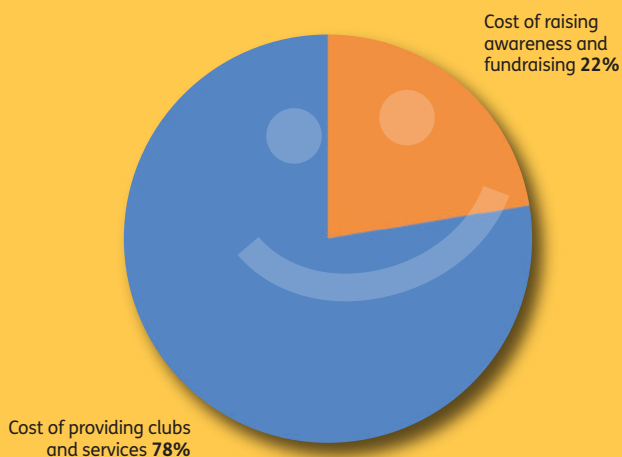
Restricted cash reserves	£13,329
Unrestricted cash reserves	£115,079
Designated funds for new build	£125,000
Fixed asset—property	£168,000
Fixed asset—minibus	£61,722
Total reserves	£483,130

Our current unrestricted cash reserves (excluding designated funds) equates to just over 3.5 months running costs.

This document is not the charitable company's statutory accounts. At the time of publishing this annual review the statutory accounts for the year ended 30 September 2017 have been filed with Companies House. The accounts were not audited.

Total expenditure 2016/17

£375,074



GETTING IN TOUCH



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Hertfordshire, CM23 3JX

Operations: 01279 656085

Fundraising: 01279 651908

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