

ANNUAL REVIEW

September 2017 – September 2018

Grove
Cottage

The home of Bishop's Stortford Mencap

A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



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 has been an integral part of the community since 1966 and we are looking to expand our services with the aim of supporting our community for the next 50 years.

Grove Cottage is more than just a building, at its heart are our members and their families and carers and the community who provide endless support, for which we are so grateful. We are in a time where the future is uncertain and there is reduced local and central government support, therefore most of our

annual £400,000 running costs are raised within the local community and through charitable trusts and foundations. Although we are affiliated with The Royal Mencap Society we receive no funding from the national body.

The work and impact of our many wonderful volunteers should also be mentioned, without whom we simply could not operate.

We now proudly run seven services on site and three off-site, including Grove Cottage @ Thirst Youth Café. We hope that in the near future we will be able to expand our services and are exploring different potential ways in which we could do this.

The future for Grove Cottage is exciting but we can only do it with your continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Kevin Davis'.

Kevin Davis



ABOUT LEARNING DISABILITY



There are 1.4 million people with a learning disability in the UK.

What is a learning disability?

Mencap's definition:

A learning disability is a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities

– for example

household tasks,

socialising or managing

money – which affects

someone for their whole life.

Learning disabilities can be caused by brain damage suffered before, during or shortly after birth or can be due to genetic conditions such as Down Syndrome.

Learning disabilities can affect people in different ways, including finding it hard to learn new things or communicate with others. Some may also have physical disabilities.

People with learning disabilities need different kinds of support. Someone with a mild disability might need support with day-to-day things like cooking and shopping or might need support to socialise with others. However, someone with a severe learning disability may need full time care.

By encouraging their strengths and getting the right support to overcome the things they find difficult, most people with a learning disability in the UK can lead independent and fulfilling lives.



OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



PAST

Grove Cottage was founded in 1966 by a group of parents and friends who set up a committee to unite in their efforts to help the people they knew with learning disabilities. They began by providing a crèche in a church hall, which quickly evolved into a nursery-playgroup, where teachers, nurses, speech therapists and physiotherapists gave their time for free.

In 1972, with the help of the local community, the committee purchased 151 London Road – “Grove Cottage” – which enabled more services to be offered, including school holiday sessions, holidays and speech therapy.

In 1994 the cottage next door was purchased, allowing further expansion of services for all ages.



PRESENT

We employ approximately 35 staff, most of whom are part time. Around 100 volunteers, including our Trustee board, are actively involved with Grove Cottage across all departments.

We are currently helping around 170 adults and children from all over Bishop's Stortford and the surrounding areas. Our range of services help people of all ages; our youngest member is 2 and our oldest is in his mid-80's.

Our Grove Cottage 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** For alternating age groups,
every Saturday.
- **School Holiday Clubs** Run during school holidays
- **Grove Cottage at Thirst Youth Café**
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 continue to explore the opportunity of sourcing suitable premises that will enable us to expand our services and better meet the needs of our members.

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



INSPIRING STORIES



A Member's View – Susan Parker

I joined Grove Cottage's Gateway Club thirty-something years ago (so many that I cannot remember) and have been coming to the clubs ever since. The Gateway Club is now called Adult Social Club and I attend this club on Wednesdays and Thursdays. I also attend Grove Cottage's Performing Arts Club on a Monday.

My favourite club is Thursday Club as I get to help Kat, who is the club leader, to take the money and write down the names of everyone who comes. I also enjoy baking and arts

and crafts sessions. At Performing Arts Club we sometimes get to perform at events which I like very much, being on stage makes me feel important and I am proud to sing the songs that I have learnt.

My favourite memory of Grove Cottage is when I got to perform at The Royal Festival Hall, in London, as part of The Gateway Festival in 1989. Grove Cottage helps me to see my friends which I think is important and I have fun; if Grove Cottage clubs were to close I would miss them very much.

A Volunteer's View – John Maley

I started volunteering for Grove Cottage because my Grandson Jake attended Grove on Saturday mornings for some years and I saw first-hand how much he benefitted from it and what a special place it was.

When I took early retirement, it was inevitable I would become involved with Grove Cottage in some way.

For the last three years I have been driving the Nursery children to swimming and I love it!

The very devoted Grove Cottage staff deserve tremendous praise for their dedication; however, it is not just the Nursery, the whole ethos of Grove Cottage is amazing – it is a place of hope, love and achievement.





A Parent's View – Mec Lewis

Since attending Grove Cottage's Special Needs Nursery my son, Jace, has come on leaps and bounds. Jace has autism and a sensory disorder meaning that everyday life is overwhelming for him. He is pre-verbal so cannot communicate and express his feelings which leads to great frustration.

Jace attended a mainstream nursery for two years before coming to Grove Cottage and unfortunately the staff were not trained to deal with the challenging behaviour and Jace did not get the support he needed.

Jace has greatly improved since attending Grove Cottage and has been able to join in playing with the other children, he has learnt to share and interact with the others and is now much less frustrated and is much happier.

The staff have been a wonderful support to my family and it has really benefitted me meeting other parents in a similar situation. I was at breaking point before Jace came to Grove Cottage and I did not know where to turn. When Jace is at the nursery I know that he is happy and safe and that I do not have to worry about him which is a massive pressure taken off.

A Staff Member's View – Freya Boittier

I became aware of Grove Cottage initially because my brother, Zac, who has autism attends their clubs. I started within the Saturday Clubs and I am now manager of Grove Cottage @ Thirst Youth Café, Club Leader for our Get Active Club and Cottage Creates Club, Holiday Club Coordinator and I help within our Nursery.

I have now worked at Grove Cottage for over three years and feel I have the best job in the world. The variety that the job brings is so rewarding, I have the pleasure of watching the children grow into teenagers, and the teenagers grow into adults. It is an honour to help such incredible people, and their wonderful families, face the challenges and joys that life brings. Grove Cottage has been the best decision I've made in my life so far and I hope to stay here for many more years to come.



GET INVOLVED



VOLUNTEER

Grove Cottage could not run without the volunteers who give their time in a wide variety of roles including: club support workers; minibus drivers; minibus chaperones; administration roles; fundraising event volunteers; and trustees.

If you have time to give, we will find the right volunteering role for you and will help you along your volunteering journey. For more information about volunteering please email: volunteer@mencapgrovecottage.org



DONATE

All personal donations make a huge difference to Grove Cottage, however large or small.



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

Fundraising for Grove Cottage as a school can involve as little or as much as you would like and can include just one class or year group or the entire school. You could take on our entrepreneurial 'Grow a £' challenge, hold a non-uniform day or do a collection at a school concert; the possibilities are endless.

ORGANISE AN EVENT TO RAISE MONEY FOR GROVE COTTAGE

You could plan a golf day, organise a concert or simply hold a bake sale and we will support you every step of the way. If you want to organise an event but are in need of some ideas, 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, including 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 please 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 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', 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



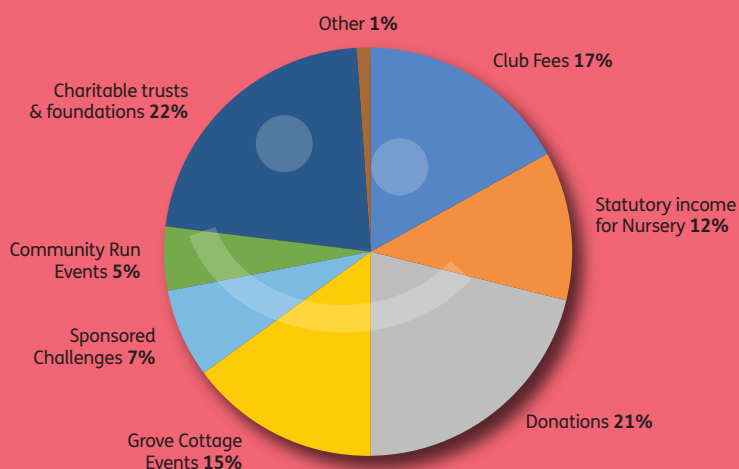
Our figures for 17/18 reflect an eleven-month year as we made the decision to move our financial year from October to September to fall in line with the academic year. It cost £369,017 (the twelve-month equivalent being £402, 564) to run Grove Cottage during the year, money which the team work hard to

raise. There was a shortfall in income of £25,256 which the trustees have met from reserves. The financial results reflect the ongoing changes in Grove Cottage as we seek to continue to grow services for members whilst being mindful of the need to balance our books.

We continue to rely on the community in which we operate for a substantial amount of our income and are indebted to all those people who so generously gave their time either organising or attending our many fundraising events throughout the year, as well as those who approached us with generous donations. We have also taken action to expand our work with charitable trusts and foundations and subsequently income from this source has grown.

Total income 2017/18

£343,761



Our reserves expanded

Restricted cash reserves	£8,802
Unrestricted cash reserves	£100,637
Designated funds for new build	£125,000
Fixed asset—property (unrestricted)	£168,000
Fixed asset—minibus (restricted)	£55,435
Total reserves	£457,874

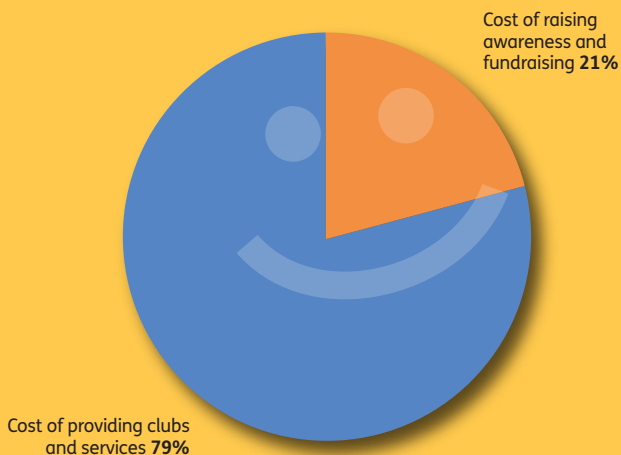
Our year end unrestricted cash reserves (excluding designated funds) equates to just under 3 months running costs.

Our year end unrestricted cash reserves (including designated funds) equates to just over 6.5 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 August 2018 have been filed with Companies House. The accounts were not audited.

Total expenditure 2017/18

£369,017



GETTING IN TOUCH



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Operations: 01279 656085

Fundraising: 01279 651908

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 [GroveCottageBishopsStortfordMencap](https://www.facebook.com/GroveCottageBishopsStortfordMencap)

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