**WELLSPRING WEST SUSSEX**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019**

This year (2018-19), Wellspring West Sussex has continued providing information to families with disabled and special needs children and young people through our newsletter, website and Facebook page. We have also delivered creative arts workshops to children and young people with special needs and their siblings.

We published two editions of the newsletter in 2018. Issue 1, Travel and Tourism included an advertorial page from Southern Mobility Vehicles (£50) and included articles from local and national groups looking at different aspects of mobility, outings and holidays. We featured a family who hire out their wheelchair accessible motor home and my article was about my holiday memories.

Issue 2 focused on Transition and featured Chailey Heritage Futures and the Lavinia Norfolk Centre. We shared information from West Sussex County Council about their Advocacy Service and Lifelong Services. There was an article from a mother with twins with Cerebral Palsy who have achieved beyond expectations and another article about a young man with autism who had received his Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. We also reported on the Wheely Wonders days that had run since the last newsletter.

Issue 1 was funded by the West Sussex Travel Society and the Rowan Bentall Charitable Trust. Issue 2 was funded by The Thornton Trust and the Friarsgate Trust. Christine Richards and Southern Mobility Vehicles advertising fees went towards both editions.

During 2018-19 our website and Facebook page were kept up to date with details of events happening across the county and relevant national information. On average the website receives 50-65 visits per month and our Facebook page now has 135 people who “Like” it and are regularly updated with events and news shared. Followers of the Facebook page can also Share details with us which can be a useful way for us to receive information for newsletters. We put each newsletter on the website when it is published and send an email to our online mailing list of 67 contacts.

Wellspring has continued to offer places for children with special needs and their siblings at my Craft Club with funding from the Thornton Trust. At the Animal themed club in April to May 2018, an 8 year old boy with developmental delays attended with his 7 year old sister. At Summer Craft Club 2018, an 8 year old boy with visual impairment attended the course. Some of the Christmas 2018 Craft Club sessions were attended by a 4 year old boy with severe anxiety and selective mutism. He came with one of his parents each time. He also came for two weeks of the Spring 2019 club; each time he came he built his confidence. A 10 year old girl with autism attended the first session of the Spring club and the 8 year old boy with visual impairment attended two weeks of the Spring club.

The children were extremely proud of their art and crafts and were proud to show their parents what they had made. I have had former members of the club coming as volunteer helpers this year and they have learned a lot from supporting the children with special needs. All the children have mixed very well and have wonderful conversations while they are making the crafts.

Our first “Wheely Wonders” family day of 2018 was in April and was attended by 6 children and one young person with special needs. This date was funded by the Thornton Trust. We ran one day in June, attended by 4 children and one young person. There were two July Wheely Wonders dates – the first was for 6 children with parents who were members of Super Scopers in Worthing. The June day and the first July date were funded by the Friarsgate Trust. In July we received a grant from the Shanly Foundation which enabled Wellspring to be able to offer Wheely Wonders days free of charge for the rest of the financial year. At the second July date there were 8 children. In October we ran two Halloween themed days, the first was attended by 7 children and at the second date there were 4 children and 2 young people. Chris North joined us for the afternoons in April, September and the second Halloween date. Some of the families came to several of the dates and new families were welcomed through the year. We were very sad to hear in September 2018 that Alexander, the founder member of the Wheely Wonders days, had passed away aged 6 and a half; we continue to remember him at each event. The families love meeting the animals, doing all the Forest School and Craft Club activities as well as the freedom that their children can have while being safe at the same time. We have received wonderful feedback which we have published in our reports in the newsletters. In total this year we welcomed 36 children and young people with their parents and grandparents.

In August 2018 we received funding of £9900 from the National Lottery Community Fund. We are very grateful to Fit, Well and Connected for helping us with the application for this. This funding will be used for music sessions with Adam Gellibrand and a poetry project to be delivered by Chris North. Some equipment for these workshops was also purchased: 3 x mini Macs with screens and keyboards (one old version and 2 new versions), a CD writer for mini Mac, an iPad, a Makey Makey music circuit and a Scoog music box for Adam’s workshops and a Makey Makey music circuit, a Scoog music box, a Data projector and an iPad for Chris’ sessions. A roll of plastic tracking was also purchased to be used on the grass at Wheely Wonders days.

In the next year we will be looking for new sources of funding for the newsletters and to enable us to continue running Creative Arts workshops and Wheely Wonders days. We will be asking more businesses if they wish to advertise in the newsletter and on our website. We will keep our mailing list updated to ensure it is complying with the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) laws.

Funding this financial year came from The National Lottery Community Fund, The Friarsgate Trust, The Shanly Foundation, The Thornton Trust, Easyfundraising.com where online shoppers can “earn” donations for Wellspring, we raised £50.03 - £34.05 was raised between April 2018 and April 2019, the rest was held over from the previous year. We also received £45 in donations. We are extremely grateful to everyone who has supported Wellspring West Sussex in the past year.

Lizzie Baily

Chair – Wellspring West Sussex

October 2019