



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service



East Sussex Foster Care Association

2020-2021





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for Voluntary Service



**East Sussex Foster Care Association**

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# WELCOME TO THE ESFCA

In March 1993 a small group of foster carers in the Uckfield area started to meet regularly in a back room of a retirement home in Hailsham. It was created in response to the needs of the children and young people in the care of East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and the demands this placed on foster families.

East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) aim has always been to “build brighter futures” for children in care and to support foster families in their role, including recognising the contribution our own children make. This continues to be done through fundraising so that we can deliver a large range of activities and services.

Over the last 27 years ESFCA has grown from the Uckfield support group to the association we are today, covering the whole of East Sussex and over 240 foster families.

ESFCA has always remained proudly independent of the ESCC, but we are also very proud of the very special relationship it has created with the fostering service and social workers.

The association arranges surgeries monthly for foster carers to attend and is often asked to provide feedback on policies and practices. Social workers take part and join the children on PGL residential trips and volunteer to help on some of the activities the association run throughout the year.

The association feels strongly about training and education for the members and regularly provides training seminars and conferences for the carers, social workers, and the various child services across East Sussex.

ESFCA has a goal that grabs the imagination of all foster carers and volunteers, and that is to allow the children to create their own happy memories by having fun and taking on activities by bringing them out of their comfort zone.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019 ESFCA was awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service.

This award recognises the exceptional work achieved by ESFCA in their community which incorporates the whole of East Sussex. This is a prestigious award, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK and equivalent to an MBE.



**“Facilitating life changing experiences for fostered children to enable brighter futures for the whole fostering family”**

# AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The objectives of East Sussex Foster Care Association as set out in the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association are, to promote all or any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community mainly but not exclusively within the County of East Sussex and in particular the advancement of the education of the public in matters relating to substitute care. The education, training and support of foster carers and their families, the relief of Looked After Children, their Carers, and their Carers' families by providing facilities and services in the interests of social welfare with a view to improving their conditions of life.

The Associations aim is to support East Sussex Foster Carers and their families in their efforts to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children in their care by working in partnership with all appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies. It undertakes this task by offering a range of events, advocacy, training, and support for the both the families and the children they care for. Its membership comprises of East Sussex Local Authority registered Foster Carers. The management group is formed from elected Trustees/Directors', largely from within that membership but not exclusively as the board benefits from the ongoing support of others with backgrounds in children's services.



# TRUSTEES

## **Chairperson- Susanne Beesley**

My family and I have been fostering 30 years, our second son was only a few months old when we began, and our third son was born some years into our fostering journey.

Our family grew through the adoption of our 2 daughters and long-term fostering. Our goal has always been to provide longer term stability to the children we have fostered, and we are always delighted to be able to keep in touch with these young people and see them as extended members of our family today.



## **Vice Chairman- Mark Thornborough**

Mark and his wife Andrea have been fostering for many years, Mark is very active in ESFCA as he runs the very successful PGL trips with Tina and the team of dedicated volunteers. Mark also takes an active part in the administration of ESFCA and manages the staff and office to ensure things run smoothly.



## **Treasurer- Lysette Grosvenor**

Myself and my husband Gary have been Foster Carers since 2015. We have looked after over 30 children. We do this full time together. We have done short term care, respite cover, emergency placements and more recently long-term fostering.

Every child is different, and it is so rewarding when they learn and develop new skills and accomplishments like reading, swimming, and riding a bike. I also enjoy helping them become independent with skills like shopping, saving money and cooking.



## **Founder Trustee- Tina Henderson**

Hi, my name is Tina Henderson and my family, and I have been fostering for 30 years. We are also adoptive parents to our wonderful son.

My start in life was not the best and I use this experience to try and help other children. We can offer long- and short-term home for children and enjoy doing assessment placements and respite.



## **Founder Trustee- Ann Holder MBE**

My family and I have been fostering since 1975 (with a short break when my daughter was born) and we also became adoptive parents. We mainly care for babies which I really enjoy.

I also actively get involved with pre-adoptive work and working with families. I received the MBE for services to fostering in 2007



# TRUSTEES



## Trustee- Ru Petraitis-Williams

Ok, my name is Ru, my husband Kevin and our daughter Blue have been fostering for almost 14 years. Our life has become so very fulfilled and it's a fantastic journey in so many levels.

We have the privilege to have children coming into our home and share the challenges we face and achievements we conquer. The children who come into care are so resilient teaching us so much in how we can appreciate life in general. We foster children between the ages of 5 to 15 years old and being foster carers is the most rewarding thing we do.

## Trustee- Anja Leeves

Anja & Nick (Anja's husband) have been offering foster families respite for over 7 years and Anja has also been an active participant in ESFCA. The Baby & toddler meet ups are arranged between Anja & Ann and Anja also leads the way in foster carer wellbeing by running the Relax, Recharge and Reflect.



## Trustee- Sandra Maylam

Sandra has been instrumental in offering all-round support and is an asset our team. Sandra takes an active role on the Inspire Project and when she isn't with us, she is enjoying a well-deserved break living the dream along the canals in her narrowboat.

## Anne Buchan

I was a long serving Social Worker in the fostering service and I was always an avid supporter of the ESFCA. My passion has always been to recognise the important part foster families own children play in the fostering role.



## Christine Phillips

During my career as a SEN personal advisor, I became acutely aware of the difficulties faced by looked after children. I was in awe of the foster families love and commitment to these children, many of whom could present significant challenges.

## Ruma Smith

My parents have been fostering for 9 years. I love having a busy house and have been involved in supporting the children they have looked after. It has been amazing to see lots of children reach milestones they may not have reached otherwise.



# PATRONS

## Jayne Torvill OBE

Once again, we would like to thank Jayne Torvill OBE for her continued support and Patronage. Jayne has been a Patron for ESFCA since 2012 and has taken part in many events and fundraising activities. Jayne is a strong advocate of ESFCA and feels passionate about making a difference in young people's lives.

*"I feel passionate about making a positive difference to the lives of children. The opportunity to work with a local charity that offers opportunities to move children forward in their lives is incredibly important. I am looking forward to contributing to their experiences and helping to create special memories".*

*Jayne Torvill*

## Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE, FRSL

We also thank Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE, FRSL (Fellowship of the Royal Society of Literature) for her continued support. Jacqueline became a patron in 2018 after meeting the trustees at our annual Bluebell Walk event and has continued to support the association at many events including our Christmas message sent to the foster families on **Dec 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020** and launching our book club in January 2021.

*"I've been involved with foster care associations ever since I wrote my book *The Story of Tracy Beaker* and I'm always impressed by the care and dedication of foster carers, but I think everyone at ESFCA are the absolute best. I love the sound of the residential breaks, the thoughtful provision of new luggage, the arts project, the library and the day trips."*

*"All power to ESFCA"*

*Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE, FRSL*



# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Dear all,

March 2020 to April 2021 can probably be described as a year like no other and yet despite the upheaval and restrictions of the pandemic, ESFCA has stayed true to its mission.

I pay tribute as always to the people who make this possible, all can take pride in what we have achieved this year, despite and even possibly because of Covid. This includes today's dedicated committee as well as previous trustees.

At the time of writing, we learned of the sad passing of our first Chair, Jona Eichner who was an inspirational foster carer with great insight into the many issues facing foster families. At our launch in 1993, Jona brought foster carers together to acknowledge some of the many difficulties we were facing, in the quest to be recognised and the cornerstone in the Looked After Child's life. Her wish was for carers to be respected as part of the skilled and proficient team around the child. She created an atmosphere to find solutions in a positive way and always led by example to bring all parties to the table to negotiate a brighter future for us all. She was larger than life and had a charismatic, friendly smile that drew everyone in.

We were also deeply sorry to hear about the passing of Fred Livings in December 20. Fred was the chair of ESFCA from 2010 to 2015. Fred stepped in at a time when nobody else was brave enough to take the lead and steer ESFCA forward. He brought many skills from the world of business and helped create a more professional appearance in our standing as a charity. We will always be grateful to Fred for his time and commitment to the role. ESFCA is indebted to both inspirational foster carers

During the pandemic, the number of children nationally needing foster care rose by 44%, while the number of people looking to become foster parents plummeted by nearly half compared to previous years. Collectively, alongside our dedicated trustees and supporters, we were still able to make a difference. As always, we are grateful to our local authority whom we regard as one of our greatest supporters, alongside so many other individuals and organisations all named individually later in this annual report.

During this year not only did East Sussex families continue to show commitment to the children in their care but in many cases, families took on new placements despite the obvious increased risk of covid-19 infection. Yet again the resilience of our dedicated fostering families and has been truly remarkable. During this time Government guidance deemed it necessary for social workers and other professionals involved in children's lives to take a step back and maintain their link with an online presence. While feeling the increased pressure of being forced into quarantine with children and young people suffering from little outlet for their emotions, families took on many new roles and responsibilities. Foster parents not only had to manage their usual roles but also became home educators, counsellors, mediators, receptionists to online meetings, contact supervisors' full-time cooks, medics performing frequent lateral flow tests and all this whilst learning the balance of safe care for all, in the covid crisis. All of this was achieved in many cases while working from home and trying to maintain and adapt new rituals and routines to achieve some level of normalcy in uncertain times. Anxiety levels rose and most families experienced a level of uncertainty for the future and limited contact with elderly relatives, extended family members, and friends. Importantly, it must be acknowledged that most of our families rode this storm without the face-to-face support of social workers, support services and other professionals usually involved.

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

As a charity we are so grateful to our community partners who found new and ingenious ways to provide funding, demonstrate kindness, congratulate achievement and lending practical help to support our mission.

Thanks to the hard work of the trustees and Lysettes prudent financial management in previous years, we entered the lockdown and the unprecedented crisis, with a healthy level of reserves. This allowed our pandemic response to move swiftly from being reactive to being proactive, focusing on the needs of the children and families. Therefore, we continued to provide an adapted but extensive list of support, advice, advocacy, activities, and training services, as well as carry out research for our fellow carers, families, and the children in foster care throughout East Sussex.

In difficult times reaching out to others has the power to unite and inspire us all and there is no doubt that new initiatives evolving from the frustrations and challenges faced by Covid restrictions, helped us to meet these unwelcome trials. It became impossible to roll out our beloved PGL (Children's residential Activity Camp) However, not wanting the children to miss out, a new exciting new relationship with Jamie's Farm Lewes was developed, who revised the way they usually work in line with the necessary restrictions and offered the most amazing therapeutic opportunities for young people to experience farm life, including hands-on activities with the animals.

We are so grateful to our dear friends the Lady Soroptimists who came to us knowing there would be new challenges and asked a specific question about how they could help. Thereafter, in partnership with Focus Games, a generous donation of therapeutic games was provided to enable a fun but powerful connection between carers and children.

In this report, you will read about the many initiatives this financial year brought with it, but another example of our capacity to adapt to circumstances ensure our children and families didn't miss out was the covid friendly 'Meet Santa' event. The event was pulled together at short notice and at low cost to us, thanks to the generosity of our community partners after the cancellation of our Christmas party.

I wish to thank both our patrons Jayne Torvill and Jacqueline Wilson for their ongoing commitment to ESFCA. One individual who really deserves to be recognised for his outstanding efforts is Nigel Berry, ESFCA's member of staff. Since he joined us in 2018 Nigel has shown immense professionalism and total dedication to his role, nothing is ever too much for him. During the lockdown, Nigel continued in his role unphased, and has been instrumental in supporting the trustees to embrace digital technology, facilitating online meetings, and enabling us all to continue to meet, even if it wasn't quite as we would have liked. It is precisely because of the trustee's dedication and passion alongside Nigel's actions and tireless dedication to ensuring every project is a great success, that that we can feel proud of all that has been achieved and all that is to come, under the banner of East Sussex Foster Care Association.

With Kind Regards,



Susanne Beesley  
Chair ESFCA

If you would like to contact Susanne  
Beesley regarding ESFCA please email;

[Susanne.beesley@esfca.co.uk](mailto:Susanne.beesley@esfca.co.uk)

# LOBBYING

ESFCA continues to lobby on behalf of foster families to ensure their needs are heard and met. We have regular contact with the County Councillors, and we report to ‘the Corporate Parenting Committee’ for ESCC

The meeting was particularly focussed on the East Sussex area, with the three representatives of ESFCA providing insights gleaned from their decades of fostering experience.

# ADVOCACY

ESFCA receives funds from East Sussex County Council as an annual grant which is held in a restricted fund (Advocacy Fund). This fund is used to provide independent support as required to assist any of our member foster carers who may be subject to an allegation or concerns around standards of care. These investigations can be complex and lengthy and can feel very isolating to a foster family as they are unable to discuss many of the issues with others due to confidentiality.

ESFCA are aware that if a serious allegation is made against a foster family member, then Supervising Social Workers are unable to support them whilst an investigation is ongoing. ESFCA has worked jointly with the fostering services to provide an extensive Allegation support pack and all foster carers in East Sussex are automatically signed up to Foster Talk who provides **free independent legal advice**.

# SURGERIES

ESFCA holds monthly surgeries on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month whereby foster carers can bring to the table often complex and difficult issues that needs a fast-track resolution from senior managers in Children’s and Fostering Services. A trustee will attend the meeting to offer support to the foster carer in presenting their problem. This can really help all parties to find a way forward or air complaints in a face to face and professional manner.

Foster carers are encouraged to come and talk through any difficulties in the hope of finding a way of resolving the difficulties quickly and efficiently. If the issue is around Adoption or Education, then ESFCA would seek to bring the relevant manager to the same meeting. For further information please contact.

[advice@esfca.co.uk](mailto:advice@esfca.co.uk)

# COVID LOCKDOWN SURVEY

The outbreak of Covid-19 brought challenges to everyone as well as everyday life. These challenges were magnified for foster families as raising a looked after child brings its own unique set of tests.

Social distancing meant a rise in the use of technology, home schooling and working from home which created a need for a new set of skills. ESFCA worked with the fostering service to create, distribute, and report on key areas of concern during the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown.

ESFCA sent every member a questionnaire to gather information on their experience during the initial 2020 Covid lockdown. The survey referenced three key areas.

- Continuance of contact and placement support for looked after children and foster families.
- The support and continuance of education (home schooling) from the Local Authority and Virtual school.
- The financial, welfare & wellbeing support during lockdown (and beyond) from the Local Authority for foster families and looked after children.

This information was collated, and a report was given to the Fostering and Children's services operations managers.

# ALLEGATION SUPPORT

With the cancellation of so many activities, ESFCA trustees looked to the concerns regarding the pressures surrounding our foster families and the increased risk of allegations due to the stressful home environment and the added pressure of home schooling.

ESFCA and ESCC Fostering Services put together a joint working party to review, assess and improve the allegation support package available to the foster families. This process took over two months and resulted a definitive allegation document pack given to every foster family to ensure they have appropriate knowledge, information, guidance, support and legal advice.

The allegation packs include:

- Introduction letter from ESFCA Chairperson Susanne Beesley
- Fostering Network guidebook to allegations and Legal Support
- Contact sheet including a dedicated email address to ESFCA support, 24/7 contact phone number and the contact number to free Legal support
- Booklet 1- Containing an easy-to-use guide to the allegation process
- Booklet 2- Containing a more in-depth guide to the allegation process
- Wallet Card with the contact phone numbers and email address
- Fridge magnet with the contact email address.

These packs were sent to every foster family under ESCC Fostering Service and automatically sent out to every newly approved foster family.

# YOUNG PEOPLE WHO FOSTER



This is a group that represents the birth, adopted and special guardianship children of foster families, these children share their parents and their childhood with the children who are fostered within their families. These incredible children help

LAC coming into their home adjust to their new environment. The YPWF allow these children to have a voice and a place to share their experiences, they also organise events (Halloween discos) and day trips out and regular meetups. ESFCA are again able to help finance some of these projects and help when asked.

Prior to the Covid lockdown ESFCA had sponsored a YPWF trip to Chessington Zoo (now on hold).

# CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL



The Children in Care Council (CiCC) is a group of looked after children which represents LAC across East Sussex and allows them to have a voice across the county. They represent LAC at events such as the Children and Young People's Trust conference. The CYPT conference

is where they meet other organisations that help and support young people in East Sussex.

CiCC also looks for ways to help in the future, prior to 2020 they have attended first aid and food hygiene courses which will help the children when they are looking for their first job (part/ full time).

These amazing children also provide backpacks which are gender and age appropriate, each backpack contains a toothbrush, socks, soft toy, hairbrush, pen, notepad and a newsletter explaining who they are.

ESFCA is extremely proud of these children and supports them by providing the financial support to run some of the projects above.

# THROUGH CARE TEAM

The through care team support young people and adults who are leaving the care system and support them to adjust and learn to be independent. Young adults aged 16-25 with varying different needs are supported by key workers to adjust to the big changes' adulthood brings and ESFCA is there to help on projects so they can continue to develop self-esteem and create positive memories.

ESFCA had sponsored a camping trip for a group of young adults (this has now been put on hold until 2022 due to Covid restrictions).

# SUITCASE INITIATIVE



Dignity and self-worth are key in the way a looked after child views and values themselves. This can be torn away from a child when they must leave their home with nothing but a rubbish/bin bag carrying the few possessions and clothes they have.

No child (especially foster children) should have to face the distressing sight of having their belongings packed into black plastic bags, when being moved either from birth family or to new foster placements. Black plastic bags are designed for rubbish and not for children's personal belongings.

ESFCA are proud to run an initiative that can help restore pride to the children entering the care system and have stock of luggage available to social workers and assessment teams and have already distributed over 200 suitcases to children that have had to be moved as an emergency or travelling to respite.

This initiative has also involved supporting the looked after children leaving the care system (16-25). The "Through Care Team", distribute luggage bags, hold-all's, and sports bags to help the leavers enter the community with dignity. Over 50 bags this year have been distributed to care leavers and in turn allowed them to maintain their dignity when moving to assisted lodgings or their own home.

This has been made possible by the amazing generosity from **Tripp Luggage** who has continued to support ESFCA over the last 7 years.

# SUPPORT

The association is only as strong as the support it receives, and we are privileged and humbled by the generosity of time and help it receives from its members, friends of ESFCA and community partners.

The activities and events can only take place thanks to members of the community stepping forward and volunteering. However, we are always looking for more help. If you would like to volunteer at one or more of our events then please contact the team at the office, where they can add you to our mailing list.

[Nigel.berry@esfca.co.uk](mailto:Nigel.berry@esfca.co.uk)

## Support East Sussex Foster Care Association

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Amazon Donates

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[smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk)



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Facebook



@ESFCAUK

# MAKE IT REEL PROJECT



Most families have Grandparents who spoil and make the children feel special by providing the little extras however looked after children often miss out on this influence. ESFCA recognise this and with a very generous donation from the **Reel Poster Company** (becoming the

fairy godparent) has stepped in to fill this role. ESFCA recognises that the East Sussex County Council has the responsibility to provide the needs of its LAC (looked after children) and the “Make it Reel Project” can only be accessed via a foster child’s social worker.

ESFCA would like to thank the Reel Poster Company for their support and below are some examples of how a small amount of money can make a real difference.

- Purchasing Weighted Blankets to aid with anxiety
- Spending money for a 14-year-old teenager who lives in a residential home, who went on her very first holiday with an old foster family she had remained in contact with.
- Football Coaching.
- A necklace for a 16-year-old who was attending her Prom.
- Attendance at a Science club for 10 weeks.
- Providing a birthday present for a teenager who had just been received into care and she had been abandoned by her birth family.

## CHILD OF SUSSEX

During 2019 ESFCA partnered with More Radio at their Child of Sussex awards and sponsored their “Make a Difference Awards”. These awards celebrate exceptional children have shown to be great achievers, shown great courage and resilience.

ESFCA was proud to partner with More Radio again in 2020 and celebrate the amazing resilience the children of Sussex have shown despite the restrictions (social distancing, home schooling, not being able to see their friends).

At the time of writing this the awards have been postponed due to Covid restrictions, please keep an eye on our website [www.esfca.co.uk](http://www.esfca.co.uk) or follow us on Facebook (Meta) for news on when the awards are back on.



# JAMIE'S FARM- LEWES



During 2020 ESFCA had to cancel or postpone nearly all our key events (due to Covid restrictions and lockdown) and unfortunately this meant cancelling our annual residential trips to PGL. However, this did not stop the trustees looking for alternatives and this led us to find Jamie's Farm.





Jamie's Farm is a residential experience with the aim of acting as a catalyst of change. Disadvantaged & vulnerable young people have the chance to combine therapy and farm life over a five-day period.

ESFCA sent 9 children and 8 adults on 5 consecutive days, camping on the penultimate night in the grounds of the farmhouse. Each child experienced working on the farm including feeding and cleaning the animals, tending the crops, walking the farm boundaries, and chopping wood. These tasks along with the fun and games allowed the highly qualified staff to engage with the children and help create a profile that could be given to the carer/ social worker to add on their development.



Each child received a video of their week along with a postcard and inspirational comment as a keep's sake.



# EMOTIONAL FOCUS



When our friends at the Lewes and Eastbourne Soroptimists contacted us with an offer to help, the trustees were overjoyed and jumped at the chance to help our members.

Over the last 7 years these amazing ladies have volunteered at our Christmas parties and have donated and helped the children wrap presents for their foster carers.

*The Lewes and Eastbourne Soroptimist's clubs are part of an international organisation that aims to help women and girls at a local and international level in many ways. It has been running for nearly 100 years and, as well as helping like-minded people meet, they raise funds locally and support causes as well as giving women more of a voice through the four seats at the UN allocated to the Soroptimist's International Organisation.*

The Soroptimists were incredibly generous and donated over 80 "Emotional focus" games designed to help children cope with their anxieties and fear. The games allow children to express their feelings and help build a dialogue between themselves and their care giver.



# HORSE RIDING



We were once again humbled by the generosity of our community partners when our friends at Horam Manor stables reached out to offer our members a chance to go horse riding.

We took the opportunity offered by Horam stables to blow of the cobwebs and take our looked after children horse riding (young people who foster were offered spaces towards the end of October.)

Over five weekends in October we took 36 children who enjoyed one to one session with the horses and trainers, learning about equine welfare as well as enjoying the experience of riding through the woods surrounding the stables.

The sessions were completed in a Covid safe environment and unfortunately had to be put on hold with the November lockdown.

East Sussex Foster Care Association in partnership with Horam Manor Stables

Can now offer

### Horse Riding for Foster Families

We are really pleased to be able to offer horse riding sessions in partnership with our very good friends at Horam Manor Stables.

There are limited spaces and restrictions due to Covid-19, but it is also a chance to blow the cobwebs out. There are sessions available over the month of October on every Saturday at 3:30 pm. The session will last for 1/2 hour and at this stage can only be offered to looked after children. There may be spaces available at a later date for young people who foster. Children taking part must wear boots (wellies), long trousers and long sleeved tops. Safety equipment will be supplied. The cost for each child will be £5.00, the remainder will be subsidised by ESFCA.

The dates available are:

	Saturday 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2020 @ 15:30pm	
	Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2020 @ 15:30pm	
	Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2020 @ 15:30pm	
	Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2020 @ 15:30pm	
	Saturday 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2020 @ 15:30pm	

If you are interested please use the link below and complete the on-line booking form, completion of the form is no guarantee of a place and because of the limited spaces.  
<https://forms.gle/3QmK0ryuqCHx3Pqv7>



# CARE PACKAGES

Everybody faced their own personal struggles through 2020 learning to live the 'New Normal' and the association became increasingly aware of the issues and concerns foster families faced on a day-to-day basis.

Trustees identified families that were facing unprecedented challenges and continued to remain in contact to offer support and to boost morale. They also arranged care packages for the families that were going above and beyond, these care packages took the form of flowers being delivered, sweet hampers and Just Eat vouchers (take-away food delivery.)

The Association also managed to arrange a couple of visits from Father Christmas to families that missed the meet Santa event due to Covid Isolation conditions.



# Beachy Head 10K



After so many cancellations and postponements during 2020 it was marvellous to find out that Eastbourne Borough Council were going to go ahead with the Beachy Marathon and 10k.

The Beachy Head 10k is a popular fixture on ESFCA's calendar, and we were overjoyed to be asked back for a third year to marshal the course and support the events team and runners.

The Beachy Head 10K has grown from its introduction in 2013 and is popular for its scenic course through the South Downs National Park countryside, covering a circular route starting from the same point as the Marathon. Heading along the South Downs to Belle Tout lighthouse before circling back along the stunning coastal route and ending at the start/finish line.

This year (2020) the weather was very wet and windy, however this did not dampen the spirits of our volunteers who continued to keep the runners safe and clapped and cheered as they made their way around the course.



# INTUITIVE HORSE



ESFCA fund sessions with Intuitive Horse for traumatised children offering a one-to-one session with specially trained horses that bond with the child and develop trust and emotional connections.

Intuitive Horse is Equine Assisted Personal Development through experiential learning which means working with horses to help gain insight into areas of life that we feel challenged in.

Q. What feelings have you experienced when you have been working with the horses? (put a circle around the ones you have felt) is there one feeling you have felt more of?

HAPPY SAD ANGRY FRUSTRATED WORRIED CALM

CONFIDENT GUILT JOY SHAME TRUST RELAXED EXCITED

CONFUSED LOVE EMPATHY ANXIOUS

Q. How confident are you around horse  
0.....8

How confident were you around horses  
0.....5

Q. Would you recommend this experie  
Yes

Q. In one word how would you describe



## STABLE CONNECTIONS THROUGH INTUITIVE HORSE

### Feedback from the young person

Questions to be asked at the end of all the sessions for the young person to reflect on their experiences at Intuitive Horse.

Q What have you learnt from your sessions with the horses (horse skills and personal skills)?

I have learnt how to give space and use body language

# THROUGH CARE TEAM CHRISTMAS

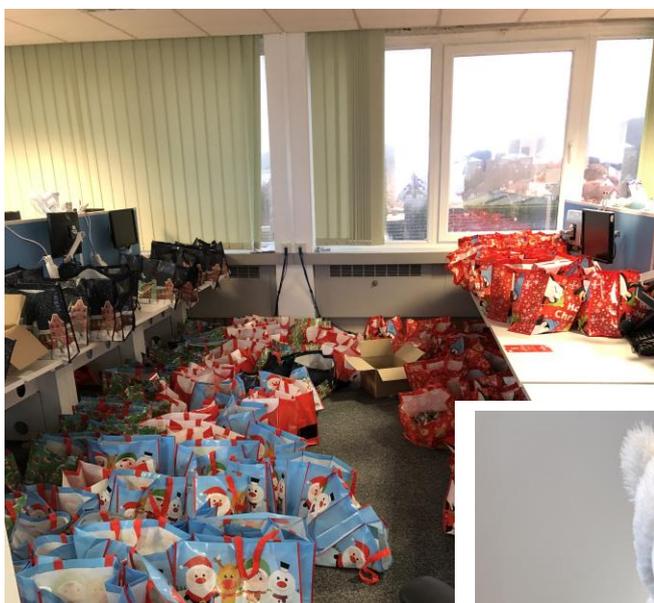


The Through Care Team (TCT) support young adults leaving the care system aged 16-25. These young adults need support adjusting to life on their own and very rarely have family to help them adjust.

This year the TCT Christmas party was cancelled due to the Covid lockdown, however ESFCA supported the TCT by supplying gifts, gift bags, wrapping paper and cards.

Our friends at “Much Ado Books” also stepped up and supplied over 200 cookery books to add to the gift/care packages to help encourage healthy eating and cooking.

Over 150 young people received gifts bags and in addition 17 baby and toddlers of these young



# BACKPACK PROJECT



Since 2019 our friends at the Department of Works & Pensions (DWP) have created a Christmas event where they donate backpacks full of gifts for children coming into the care system.

The bags are donated not only from the staff of the DWP, but from their families and friends across the country. Bags have been donated from as far as Scotland down to South Wales

each containing toiletries, stationery, books, clothes, toys, and a soft cuddly toy.

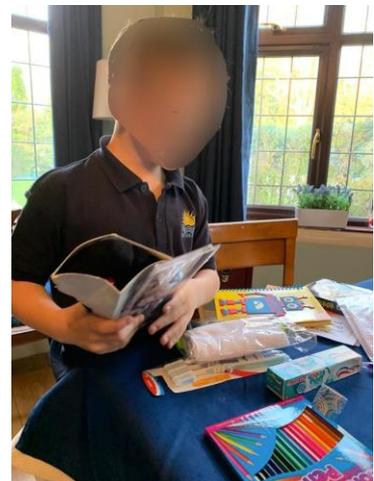
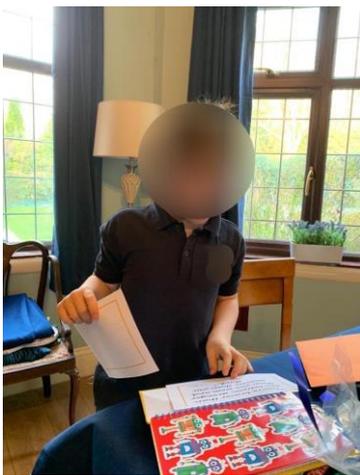
We distribute the backpacks throughout the county ensuring they are available to all the family support teams have crates containing backpacks suitable for all age ranges and genders. ESFCA trustees across the county also hold small collections of backpacks to support emergency placements. The remaining backpacks are held at the office where they are distributed to social workers directly upon request.

The Backpacks offer a fantastic opportunity for the children and carers to start their journey together on neutral ground. Exploring the bags together creates a useful diversion for a short time and the shared experience helps build their relationship. They also show the LAC that there are other adults thinking about them and sending a positive message so that they have some possessions of their own at this difficult time.



Picture taken in 2019





A special mention and thank you goes to Jo and her family who managed the event throughout the Covid lockdowns and social distancing rules.

They arranged for every donation to be delivered to their house whether directly from a donor or via the Amazon wish list set up for the activity. They then sorted the donations into suitable age and gender, packed the bags and boxed them ready for distribution.

Over 280 bags were donated along with a lot of time and humbling generosity.



# EASTBOURNE MOTORCYCLE RIDE OUT



For the third year running EBMR- a group of motorcycle enthusiasts from across the country, have partnered up with The Widows and Son Masonic Bikers Association to support local children across the county.

The group rode their motorcycles from Eastbourne seafront to Eastbourne District Hospital and then onto Hastings

Conquest Hospital (some dressed as Santa Claus and Elves) distributing toys for the children in hospital over the Christmas period.

Trustees and staff attended the ride out and received a generous donation from EBMR members and another donation from The Widows and Son Masonic Bikers Association,



# SAINSBURY'S

On Christmas Eve our friends at Sainsbury's (Eastbourne Beacon) kindly donated £100 (gift card) to the association to use for future projects.

This gesture was particularly special for the association as we were fully aware of the challenges the Sainsbury's team had faced, ensuring they stayed open during lockdown and facing the same fears and concerns as everyone whilst dealing with panic buying and social distancing. We were particularly touched that they thought of our foster families and made such a generous donation.



# MEET SANTA



After a year of cancelled events, and activities for looked after children across the county East Sussex Foster Care association were devastated to have to cancel the annual party for the foster families.

This is always one of the highlights for children of all ages as it closes with a very special visit from Father Christmas bringing a little present and a lot of Christmas spirit to the children and carers.

However local businesses Orbit Innovations, the Berwick Inn and More radio had other ideas. They could not offer a party, but Orbit Innovations who design and build outside pods for the hospitality trade and domestic use contacted the Berwick Inn (who currently have one of their pods) and between them offered a Covid safe environment for Santa to join the children and families in a social distanced meet.

More Radio stepped up and helped Santa by providing lots of toys and Sainsbury's (located in the beacon) provided plenty of mince pies so everybody could enjoy a touch of Christmas Spirit and a quick chat with Santa (who promised he would still be out on Christmas Eve working hard with his Elves and Reindeer for everyone).

ESFCA would like to extend its thanks and the thanks of all the foster families who attended the event to all the owners, staff and volunteers of the businesses that worked so hard and generously gave their time, resources that made this happen.





We would particularly like to thank the staff at the Berwick Inn for joining in with the fun.

They dressed up as Santa's helpers along with ESFCA chair meeting and greeting the families and ensuring they kept the Christmas spirit going.

They even filmed their own special birthday message for our Patron Jacqueline Wilson, singing happy birthday and wishing her special day.



# BOOK CLUB



On 24<sup>th</sup> December we posted a video onto our social media sites and sent a link to all our members. The video was of our patron Jacqueline sitting next to Sant Claus reading from “Hettie Feathers Christmas”.

At the end of the Christmas message, Jacqueline launched our book club and spoke about how we would meet virtually (via Zoom)

to read and talk about books together. The book club started at the end of January 2021 with another video from our patron launching the club and introducing the first book “**I Dare You- Tracy Beaker**”. Jacqueline then spoke about the character “Tracy Beaker” and the storyline we would all be following.

We decided to open the book club membership to all children, this would allow our looked after children and young people who foster to invite their friends (who are not in the care system or a carer) and enjoy the club together.

Once again, our friends at “Much Ado Books” stepped forward and donated a copy of the book to every member free of charge through their Prospero’s Project and once again we extend a massive thank you from the association and on behalf of the children from the club.

The book club currently takes place every two weeks on a Friday and every month we send out small gifts to the book club members (bags of popcorn, notebooks & pens).



# FINANCIAL REPORT

We continue to receive an annual grant of £20,000 from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) which enables us to employ staff to support the 11 Trustees in running the charity. We have also received an additional £6,000 to employ an apprentice to train in Business Administration which we are very much looking forward to helping a young person achieve in 21/22.

Furthermore, we continue to receive an annual top up of restricted funds from ESCC for the allegation fund held by ESFCA to support any foster carer facing an allegation. This fund provides independent support, at a most upsetting and worrying time, for all members of the family for as long as needed, which can in some cases involve a lengthy and complex investigation.

In this financial year our membership was 242 households residing in the county of East Sussex.

Our reserves remain constant and at the same level as last year at £40,000. These reserves are held to provide a safety net for the provision of regular annual events such as holidays, PGL weekends, the Christmas party and Pantomime, should we be unsuccessful in receiving donations or grants for these cherished activities to proceed. Should the Local Authority withdraw its annual grant, we hold reserves to meet our obligations such as paying staff and associated costs such as pension, NI and Tax, plus any outstanding creditors. In tandem, if the charity was wound up or placed into dormancy, we hold reserves to pay redundancy, accounting, audit and HMRC costs. The association can access our reserve fund immediately should the need arise.

Where donations are received and the donor has asked for the money to be utilised on a specific project request or a certain group of young people, we will honour that request and mark these funds restricted so they are only used for that purpose.

We continue to hold stock of new suitcases donated from Tripp luggage and other providers. These are available to specialist teams of Social Workers needing to move children in an emergency thus ensuring that their personal belongings are carefully packed and transported with the young person.

The ongoing Corona Virus pandemic continued to affect all aspects of our work, cancelling, and postponing many events including fundraising activities. There was a brief spell during the spring where we began to hold events but unfortunately a further lockdown brought challenges and the Trustees had to think hard as to how we could operate with Government restrictions in place.

One important aspect of our advocacy support is to provide a detailed written pack containing valuable information regarding all the processes and procedures in place for foster carers to understand how the departments work together in an ongoing investigation.

One of our founding members, the chair and our admin officer worked in conjunction with fostering services to update, overhaul and improve the documentation and

procedural information so that we jointly can give foster families the best possible support if they need to use this resource.

We received the first year's payment of a very welcome three-year grant from BBC Children in Need towards our yearly PGL events. Although they could not go ahead due to covid 19 restrictions, our lead trustee Tina managed to get permissions to adapt residential to wonderful activity days instead enabling many more children to experience the event.

Another residential, Jamie's Farm did go ahead but was amended to 5 day's attendance with one day camping overnight. This experience was amazing for carers and children alike to switch off from the pressures of everyday life and interact with nature at the farm.

Our Trustees tried to find ways to work around Covid and this included fundraising and events squeezed in before the second lockdown; a band night held by R & K, Beachy head marshalling for ESCC, More radio child of Sussex awards, Intuitive Horse sessions for traumatised children, Father Christmas in his Pod with the naughty elf helper, The Widows Sons SE and Eastbourne motorcycle Rideout to Conquest hospital and horse riding lessons at Horam Manor although this was cut short due to Government restrictions being reintroduced.

For our older care leavers some bookings were moved over to 21/22 and one even to 22/23. The pantomime reservation for 200 tickets was also moved to 21/22.

A difficult year for all involved in fostering and our charity but we did manage to have a successful year and financially we are in a very strong position. Our team of 11 Trustees supported by our Admin Officer have adapted as best we could, and we head into 21/22 looking forward to restrictions lifting as and when the Government sees fit.

Lysette Grosvenor

Trustee and Treasurer

If you would like to contact  
Lysette Grosvenor regarding  
ESFCA please email.

[Lysette.grosvenor@esfca.co.uk](mailto:Lysette.grosvenor@esfca.co.uk)

Or visit

[www.esfca.co.uk](http://www.esfca.co.uk)



**East Sussex Foster Care Association**

**Statement of financial activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account)**

**For the year ended 31 March 2021**

Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 Total £	2020 Total £
<b>Incoming Resources</b>				
Donations	2,912		2,912	9,743
Core funding	20,000		20,000	20,000
Advocacy support		2,920	2,920	2,989
Apprentice scheme grant		6,000	6,000	
Fundraising - inc Bluebell walk				5,679
Christmas party				150
Keep it reel				2,000
PGL		9,770	9,770	14,050
Pantomime				1,530
Interest	18		18	74
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>22,930</b>	<b>18,690</b>	<b>41,620</b>	<b>56,214</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>				
Insurance				526
General running expenses	771		771	2,343
Inspire				1,143
Queens award				2,323
Pantomime				3441
PGL				13,131
Through care team	109		109	4,090
Events/Projects	6,992		6,992	2,409
Keep it reel				128
Supporting CICC				790
Fundraising				654
Intuitive Horse	1,440		1,440	640
Advocacy support		3,395	3,395	2,920
Salaries & pensions	13,298		13,298	14,741
Christmas party				1,089
Computer costs				
Training				
Accountant's fees	1,640		1,640	1,272
<b>Total outgoing resources</b>	<b>24,250</b>	<b>3,395</b>	<b>27,645</b>	<b>51,638</b>
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/ Net income/(expenditure) for the year</b>	<b>(1,320)</b>	<b>15,294</b>	<b>13,975</b>	<b>4,576</b>
Transfers				
Total funds brought forward	81,814	9,453	91,266	86,690
<b>Total resources</b>	<b>80,494</b>	<b>24,747</b>	<b>105,242</b>	<b>91,266</b>

The notes on pages 8 to 10 form an integral part of these financial statements.

# THANK YOU



**MEMBERS  
& VOLUNTEERS**



**Sainsbury's**



**LEWES**

**EASTBOURNE**

**More  
RADIO  
Mid Sussex**



**TRIPP**

# THANK YOU



**EBMR**

**BEACHY HEAD  
10K**

**OUR AMAZING  
FRIENDS AT**

**OUR AMAZING  
FRIENDS AT**

**OUR AMAZING  
FRIENDS AT**

**ASHDOWN  
HOUSE**

**THE  
BERWICK  
INN**



**MUCH ADO BOOKS**

The trustees and members would also like to thank everyone who has volunteered and supported the association over the year.

Your generosity goes a long way in supporting ESFCA and without people like yourselves stepping forward and aiding the association our events, activities and critical projects would not be able to continue.



*“We cannot always  
build the future for  
our youth, but we  
can build our  
youth for the  
future”*

Franklin D. Roosevelt