



Support, Share, Experience: The Chairs Report

Intro

This year sees us turn 14. We have truly hit our teenage years. When we talk about teenagers we instantly think of spots, mood swings and wafts of terrible body spray or the famous comedy teens Kevin and Perry.

They say bigger kids and bigger problems. We have had some bumps in the road over the last few years. As we watch our original Hiccups Members turn 18+ this year it really is a time to reflect how far we have come. In 2014 we had 35 completed registration forms as of AGM 2022 we have 491 online registrations..... 2009 figures are pre archived events. Lindsay was just happy people turned up. We started at a cabin in Headingley to now having twice weekly bookings in the awesome space at Mencap Vinery Building.

Purpose

We continue to commit ourselves to the core values of; support, share and experience. We have found new ways of doing this via our parent /carer groups, physio assessments and equipment hire products are increasing. We have increased our services in ways we never imagined. We are building a stronger reputation for our work and partnership working especially with West Yorkshire CANN. The tougher financial times are not going unnoticed as we carefully had to increase our costs to members. Which was not an easy committee decision.

We continue to recover financially from COVID-19 and the drop in income. We are looking at reestablishing more fundraising challenges in the future. As we strive to secure a steady income stream again.

Achievements of 2022/23

All our services are back up and running bigger and better than ever. With tickets selling out faster than ever and waiting lists getting bigger. Hearing families building



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their own strategies to ensure they get tickets on release days really makes me proud. It's like the hype of registering for a Glastonbury Ticket.

As a committee we are still sailing high on the receipt of our Queens award for Voluntary Services, with four of us being honored to attend a Royal Garden Party around the Coronation Celebrations. All our branding now has the Queens Award Logo.

We have developed digitally setting up E-Commerce and having means for contact-less payments at events.

We continue to strive to be a sustainable and environmentally aware. Reducing our plastic use at events, going paper light and reducing packaging this year at the Christmas Party. We welcome further ideas on how we can achieve this.

We are developing a role as activists which really excites me as we expand our work with West Yorkshire CANN. Going back to our roots of #nolimits. We are also expanding our access to parent/carer education sessions.

Stay and Play is now twice weekly due to growing demand.

We continue to strive to meet the diverse needs of everyone who attends a Hiccups event. In the last year we have purchased ear defenders and a safe space tent for individuals to use at events if they are struggling to engage. We have a changing bench and attempt to have a changing space or alternative provision at all our events. We do consider physical accessibility and environmental considerations at all our venues. Our emailed information has become more comprehensive to help members plan their attendance and support routine planning. We also acknowledge we don't always get it right.

We started a trial of part funded physio assessments which is continuing. But this is another reminder of how the charity sector is supporting cut backs in the public sector.



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This biggest buzz to end 2023 is that the Hiccups Ball returns. We hope to bring you all the memorable night you have all grown to love. I am super excited to get back into our posh togs and dancing shoes. I really hope the Iveridge Dance and Grow Zone Dance squads will join us.

In addition to this we ran a full calendar of events since our last AGM;

2022

July- Space themed birthday party

August - Super Hero day

September - Lazer zone

October - Yorkshire Wildlife Park , Parent group cocktail making class

November - Cinema Trip

Dec: Sundown Adventure land day trip, Grow Zone Christmas Party and Hiccups Christmas Party

2023

January - Lush Sensory Party

Feb Eureka

April Stockheld Park at Easter Break

April Pottery (Parent/Carer)

May : Canal Boats Trip

June 17 Hollingworth Lake Watersports Day

July Bugs birthday party

Volunteers



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We really have expanded and give thanks to our new volunteers; Carla, Laura, Hannah and Shamila who join B and Lindsay to make a stealth group of volunteers. Each bringing a unique skill set to help us to continue being amazing.

2023/24: Objectives, Goals and beyond

- I have addressed in our achievements some of our work in the last year in meeting the diverse needs of our group members and how we make sessions more accessible and inclusive. A further objective of the future is to look at how we address the cultural needs of our members and meet the needs of all our families given we are based in a hugely diverse city. We have addressed this point and are seeking further outside support to achieve an inclusive service. In previous years we have had Sikh Santa. One small step this year was the highly successful Eid party. We continue to want to develop and be a charity that is inclusive to all.
- Continue to raise our profile and reach more families; through social media and other support networks.
- To continue what we do and do it well. Identifying that we can't do it all.

As always from me the big goal rolls forward that we want to continue to strive towards the dream of owning our own building base. This would be a hub of activity and support for children and families.

Conclusion

The world has grown and developed since 2009 as have we. In 2009 we saw the swine flu pandemic come and go, the collapse of the Icelandic Banks and Barack Obama was inaugurated as the 44th President of the USA and the first black president. The world went blue with the release of Avator, the tweens where obsessed with Hannah Montana. Facebook grew from 150 million users to 300 in a year. We were still expected to wait a week to watch the latest release of a new tv show. We might be in the flourishing teenage years but like all teens we are adapting, changing and growing and anxious about what our future holds.



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Sarah Stewart

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July 2023



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