

Trustees

Annual Report 2024



HARTLEPOOL SPECIAL NEEDS
support group

supporting local families since 1989

Trustees Report 2024

From 1st January to 31st December 2024

Structure Of The Organisation

Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group is a Voluntary Organisation and consists of:-

Trustees

Jayne Shepherd	-	Chair	Re-Elected February	2021-2027
Karen Taylor	-	Treasurer	Elected February	2024-2027
Marlene Barnard	-		Elected February	2024-2027
Ami Carroll	-	Secretary	Elected February	2024-2027
Jamie Allison	-		Co-opted November	2024-2027
Shaun McCabe	-		Elected February	2024-2027

Recruitment of Trustees

Members can nominate trustees or themselves for positions, also trustees can appoint co-opted trustees.

Met a total of 9 times

The Trustees meet monthly to monitor, set targets and discuss a range of issues relating to the efficient running of the group, including operational and financial reports from the Manager to whom the Trustees have delegated the day to day running of the Group. Additional or informal meetings are also held as required. Full members meeting are held at least three times a year.

Staff and Volunteers

Pat Allison	-	Manager
Julie Carter	-	Assistant Manager
Michelle Hall	-	Administration
Bank of Staff 22	-	Support & Care
Volunteers 15	-	Various Roles

Beneficiaries

- 98 Children and Young Adults who have a disability plus their Parent's, carers and siblings.
- 10 Affiliated Families

Address

Resource Centre
109 Park Road
Hartlepool
TS26 9HR

Chartered Accountants

Waltons Business Advisers Ltd
Maritime House
Harbour Walk,
The Marina
Hartlepool, TS24 0UX

Bankers

Virgin Money
118 York Road
Hartlepool
TS26 9BT

Barclays Bank
148 Park Road
Hartlepool
TS26 9BT

Chairs Report 2024

In 2024, Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group continued to provide a wide range of opportunities for all members.

We are now running a wider range of activities than ever before. This includes a monthly Meet and Mingle session for two different age groups and the introduction of a new club held Friday nights three times a month.

Pat has worked closely with Julie over the last year, sharing all of her managerial knowledge and insights, in readiness for her retirement at the end of the year. On behalf of everyone involved in Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group I would like to thank Pat for all of her hard work and dedication in making the group what it is today, an essential part of the Special Needs community.

The commitment and enthusiasm of all staff and volunteers has been invaluable, as usual, and is very much appreciated.

We had a busy year with lots of renovations and the resource centres makeover is now complete and has already started to have a positive impact on all of the group sessions. Everyone agrees it's looking great.

I, for one, can't wait to see all the exciting opportunities and possibilities 2025 has to offer our members!

Jayne Shepherd—Chair of Trustees

This Annual Report is circulated to all supporters, further copies are available from the Resource Centre.

HSNSG

History

Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group was established in 1989, a voluntary organisation formed under a constitution adopted July 1990 and amended November 1993, November 1999, June 2003, January 2005 and May 2023 **Registered Charity No. 1031151**

We have been providing this service for thirty four years and have a proven track record of managing large sums of money effectively. In 1999, we started operating from our own premises.

Over the years, we have become recognised as a specialist provider of services in our field. It is very apparent that our young people have an enhanced quality of life, are growing in confidence and are gaining the firm foundations and experiences upon which they can build in order to enjoy future opportunities.

Aims and Objectives

The Charity shall serve families, children and young people in the Borough of Hartlepool and those attending schools in this Borough (herein called “the Area”). From birth onwards, (herein referred to as young people). Such young people who enrol as children may remain as members after the age of 18, if deemed mutually appropriate by all parties.

To relieve the needs and advance the education of children and young people with various profound physical or learning disabilities with varying complex needs, including life limiting conditions, and to support their families and carers. An essential part of our service is to raise public awareness and change preconceptions about disability by encouraging inclusive activities through taking part in activities set in the public domain.

The Manager and her team work hard to achieve the Group’s objectives by carrying out the following:

- Develop the group, encourage participation, recruit, train and support Volunteers and staff.
- Design appropriate programmes of activities both at centre and outreach and look for new opportunities
- Support the children and young adults under their care
- Provide support and information to parents
- Develop links with other agencies
- Maintain links with existing funding sources and research potential funders
- Ensure the smooth running of the resource centre

Contingency Policy

The Trustees agreed to continue this policy of keeping a contingency fund equal to six months running costs of the Charity. This policy is reviewed and monitored regularly.

Risk Management

The trustees have put systems in place to mitigate any major risks which affect the Charity.

Public Benefit

The Charity Trustees consider they have complied with their duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Commission.

Resource Centre and out in the wider community:-

Throughout 2024 services has seen an increase of attendees.

- Children’s Fun Club
- Babies/Toddlers/Parent & Carer Group
- Friends Fun Club
- Get-Together Club
- Youth Club
- Drama Club “Constellation”
- Friday Night Club
- Meet & Mingle Sessions
- Multi-sensory Sessions
- Parent/Carers Social Events
- Film Nights
- Themed Social Sessions
- Use of centre for private use
- Training and awareness sessions
- Fundraising events (*see Donations—fundraising*)

Our Resource Centre



Children's Fun Club

The club is held every Monday evening during term-time. The children are a very lively group and love to move from one activity to another, enjoying multisensory sessions, energetic and table top games. The children always enjoy participating in the extra fun session with lunch and treats held throughout the year during school/college holidays. All were excited for the Christmas party with a visit from Santa and a gift.



Baby/Toddler/Parent Club

Held on Tuesday mornings 10 am to 12 pm with regular attendance babies and toddlers enjoy accessing the multi-sensory room, play area with a range of toys to keep them busy and continue to have a great rapport with our work placement who supports the sessions. This gives parents, grandparents and carers an opportunity to meet in a relaxed environment with time for refreshments.

Multi-Sensory Room

The multi-sensory room continues to be well used, with bookings from members, non-members and Individuals, all enjoying the relaxing environment.



Get-Together Club

This club is held every Wednesday during term time for over 18's, who enjoy completing various tasks including delivering messages, general office duties and preparing gifts for other regular clubs, also enjoying the sensory room for chill-out time. The members help to organise and deliver various fundraising events including fayres, raffles etc and look forward to our parent/carer events welcoming them to the centre.



Youth Club

The club is held every Wednesday evening during term-time. The club is aimed for ages 12years+, or when agreed it is appropriate for the young persons particular needs. They are always excited to catch up with their friends and enjoy an exciting, busy programme of activities including bingo, cold cookery and crafts etc with treats and prizes and a visit to Tuck shop. Finishing of the year with a party and visit from Santa.



Friends Fun Club

Friends Fun Club meet on Tuesdays 5.30 pm—7.30 pm for children aged 3—13 years. The Children are a lively group who enjoy singing on the microphone, dancing and performing with time for some fun and games. The Stars are always enthusiastic in rehearsals and thrive when showcasing their performances in front of their family and friends. The year ended with a festive performance for their families, a Christmas party and a visit from Santa with personalised gifts.



Constellation

Constellation sessions are held on Thursdays 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm for a group of young people aged 13+ who enjoy performing. Stars work hard during the sessions to practice their individual and group parts in preparation for their annual show in a live theatre. Visits to theatre performances by other local groups were made to help collate ideas for future shows. The Group put on a very successful show along with Friends Fun Club and showcased their talents with “We are all Stars” to a full audience. The year was finished with family entertainment evening followed by a Party with treats and a visit from Santa.



Friday Night Club

The club is held Friday nights 5.30 pm to 7.30 pm. The new group was introduced to move on members from Children’s Fun Club when necessary. They engage in similar activities as previous and have all settled in well.



Meet and Mingle

The sessions are held on 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month for up to 15 years and 16 years +. These sessions are enjoyed by the children/young people and their parent/carers and offers all a chance to socialise in a safe environment.

Parent/Carer Sessions

The regular coffee-mornings held at the base give parent/carers the opportunity to meet up with a coffee and chat with friends, sharing any relevant information. Easter and mince-pie afternoons with treats served were well attended, with time to relax all thoroughly enjoyed.

Summer Scheme 2024

Following last years success it was decided to hold the scheme at Stranton Primary School once again. Delivering another fun-filled, action packed three weeks enabling all children and young adults to participate and enjoy the varied programme of activities on offer, including in-house and external entertainers, i.e. Bubbleman, Circurama, Hartlepotz, Animals About Town, Pets4People, Sparkling Treasures & Steve's Animal Ark. The on-site soft play area and bouncy castle was enjoyed by many. The specialized bikes hired were well used and popular, as was the visit from the ice-cream van. All sessions to the off-site hydro-therapy pool were enjoyed by all who attended. It was lovely to see so many members who have attended previous summer schemes and a delight to welcome a number of new families to our services.

Quotes from parents/carers:

This is the first year **Seb** has attended the scheme and it has been an amazing experience for him. He enjoyed all the activities he took part in. Every pick up time he came out so happy and full of smiles, the staff were helpful and informed us of his day. He will definitely be attending next year and will continue Children's Fun Club.

The scheme allowed **Halen** to have some independence from his parents in a safe environment to explore his own feelings and boundaries.

Ryan was so excited each morning and had lots of fun, he enjoyed every activity and come home with lots of different things he had made. The staff were all lovely and very approachable, they do an amazing job!

We feel very confident leaving the boys in your care, they had so much joy and pleasure from attending the summer scheme. Staff were brilliant and they loved all the activities on offer. Thank you all for the help you have given the **Bentham** boys.

The scheme is much needed as there is nothing else for our children and young adults in the community. They have so many opportunities they otherwise would not have.

Children and young adults:

Using our widget symbol individuals completed forms. All identified "happy faces" and the variety of activities on offer were thoroughly enjoyed including sand play, sensory sessions, pottery, silent disco and Bingo.

Quotes from Staff and Volunteers:

The programme of activities were fun and engaging. It was clear all the children and young adults enjoyed themselves.

This has been my third year, and have enjoyed each year. The children and young adults always have so much fun and make lovely memories, it is so rewarding to be part of this team.

The scheme is planned really well with all staff working really hard.



The Groups programme of activities out in the community.

The following activities were enjoyed during the year by all who attended:-



	No. of Visits	Attendees
◆ Annual Social Event—Volunteers	1	13
◆ Jump 360—Trampoline Park	3	98
◆ Larry’s Lanes, Seaton Carew	4	139
◆ Cinema Visit and Pizza Hut	2	63
◆ Social Afternoons	6	142
◆ Humpty Dumpty, Billingham Forum	1	42
◆ Aladdin, Hartlepool Town Hall	1	51
◆ Christmas Party, Catholic Club	1	88
◆ Sleeping Beauty Panto, Darlington Hippodrome	1	56

Hydro-Therapy Sessions

Various sessions for different age ranges continue to be extremely popular and with good attendance. This is a fun and relaxing activity, with parents enjoying the water as much as the children.

Adapted Caravan Short Break

A number of our families were given the opportunity to enjoy a short break in Reighton Sands staying in an adapted caravan, the site had a programme of activities on offer to book and enjoy. All attended reported the full family had benefitted from the break away and had a lovely time exploring the site, the adapted caravan was easily accessible, comfortable, attractive and met individuals needs.

Information Sharing

We continue to work closely with the voluntary and statutory sector within our base and visiting events out in the community.

Work Placements

A number of young adults continue to attend carrying out various tasks including general office duties, checking and purchase of supplies, Preparing and setting-up other clubs, contributing to the running of the Charity whilst enabling them to build on their own skills and confidence.

Training

Course

Basic First Aid

Attendees

1 Tutor, Manager and Assistant Manager
13 Support staff and volunteers

Emergency First Aid @ work/
Appointed person

1 Tutor, Manager and Assistant Manager
12 Support staff and volunteers

In-House Training

Positive Behaviour &
Disability Awareness

1 Tutor and Manager
12 Support staff and Volunteers

Summer Scheme Introduction

Manager & Assistant Manager
29 Support Staff and Volunteers

HSNSG

Volunteers

We started 2024 rewarding our committed team of volunteers with a social evening, it was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

We rely heavily on our dedicated team of volunteers to assist with the provision of our services, supporting children and young adults members enabling them to participate and enjoy regular activities held at the resource centre or out in the community.

Also providing help numerous ways behind the scenes contributing to the success of the Group. The Summer Scheme attracted some new students to the team offering their time during their Summer Break and continue to be involved.

We are very proud of them all, we much appreciate the time and effort they give to the Group, well done.



Thank You

Grants, Trusts and Businesses

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following for financial assistance:

Hartlepool Families First—Extended Activities and Play Schemes

Happy Days

Venator Materials

Quorum Development Ltd

Members Personal Donations and Fundraising Events

Donations

Pauline Hunter—Christmas cakes made & decorated

Isaac Boubda & Ethan Turnbull Families

Adapted Caravan Short Breaks via The Teesside Charity

Use of Centre and Equipment

Hunter, Ellis and Phillips Families.

Sensory Room Bookings

Events

Café & Tuck Shop

Raffles

Easter Treats and Mince Pie afternoon

Production and sale of Constellation and Friends DVD

Through the efforts from members, friends, families and supporters who have donated or participated in fundraising events we raised a grand total of **£12,169.**

Many hours of voluntary work were contributed by our Members and Supporters, it is impossible to place a value on the time given, but without it, much of the work undertaken could not be achieved. We very much appreciate all the donations and assistance from our Members, Friends & Supporters, not forgetting all the prizes.

Core Fundraising Group:

This is a small group of volunteers with their key aims to organise events and come up with ideas to increase funds and also general awareness of Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group.

Events held in 2024 were:

- ◆ Band Night
- ◆ Great North Run
- ◆ Christmas Jumper Day

We continue to receive great support from the local community and raised an amazing **£4,244** in the year.



A huge “Thank you” to all involved with the events.

FINANCIAL REVIEW - Accounts for the year end 31 December 2024

Full Accounts 2024 are available at the Resource Centre

INCOME	£159,096
EXPENDITURE	£147,490
BALANCE	£175,242

A message from Julie—Assistant Manager:- I was pleased to start my new position in May 2023. I have enjoyed working in the office alongside Pat, Michelle and Abbie, learning my new role. It has been lovely being involved and getting to know the children, young adults and their families, as well as other staff members and volunteers. I am look forward to what 2025 brings.

FINALLY - A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MANAGER, PAT ALLISON:-

I am delighted to report 2024 has been an extremely busy year lots of exciting activities and events within the resource centre and out in the wider community. It has been lovely to welcome new families and to see the number of members accessing our regular clubs and social opportunities increase. All our clubs provide a wide-range of activities all catered for the specific age-range and needs. I would like to take this opportunity to say I am super proud of our dedicated teams of support staff and volunteers who due to their commitment have allowed the Group to continue delivering services successfully throughout the year.

I would like to say a big thank you to Michelle for her continued support and efficiency in keeping the office and our systems running smoothly. Her relationships with the families has grown and developed getting to know them personally. Julie continues to expand on her knowledge of running the Groups services for the many families we support and has development good relations with members, families and staff. Also thank you to Abbie-Leigh and Andrew for continuing their work placement with lots of enthusiasm. My appreciation must go to our wonderful team of staff, trustees and volunteers who have continued to show they commitment and dedication to the group. Throughout the year they help steer and ensure the smooth running of the group contributing to its success.

As always I am overwhelmed with the support and generous donations from families, these are always appreciated and helps the group raise much needed funds. I would also like to thank all our children and young adults, parents and carers for their support.

A big achievement during 2024 has been the modernising of the centre with renovations making it not only welcoming and attractive, easier to access and maintain.

The retirement event arranged for myself was bitter–sweet, it was lovey to see so many past and present families attending. It has been an honour and a pleasure to be have been on this journey, with support from my family, a great team of staff, volunteers and trustees who have enabled all members to experience and participate in many varied social opportunities. Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group will always be a part of who I am and close to my heart.

Pat Allison



Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group

109 Park Road
Hartlepool TS26 9HR

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Panto—Darlington Hippodrome

supporting local families since 1989