

# LET'S HEAR IT!

NEWSLETTER OF  
DORSET DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY  
SPRING 2025



## Biggest ever Christmas Party!



On Saturday 30th November 2024 we broke a record for DDCS! We had 205 members attend our annual Christmas Party at The Blandford School. We have previously had bookings for over 200 members but this is the first time actual attendance reached these numbers. Forty six families came along to enjoy the party and what a wonderful time we had!

To start the party we had music and games with Richard, craft tables, face painting and a photo booth which was popular with all the children and families having a great time dressing up in the props for their pictures! A finger buffet, teas, coffees and squash were available all afternoon for everyone.



All the children and their families had a chance to catch up with friends and make new friends. After the food it was time for Richard's Lovely Bubbly Show with some children finding themselves inside a giant bubble!

And before we realised it was then time for a visit from a very special visitor..... Father Christmas who brought presents for all the children.



## THANK YOU!

We would like to thank the Fisher Trust for their donation of £3000 to fund the party and thank you to The Blandford School for once again providing us with the venue.

Also a big thank you to the trustees and volunteers who helped before and on the day to make the party such a success!

## Welcome to Katie Allan HSS Specialist Teaching Assistant



The HSS team has welcomed a new Specialist Teaching Assistant, Katie Allan to their team!

Katie will be supporting children across Dorset and BCP alongside the Advisory Teachers. She is a sign language specialist, with a BSL Level 3 qualification, and will be working with young children and their families to support their language and communication development.

Katie has previously worked as a Newborn Hearing Screener and TA with deaf children in Surrey in a mainstream specialist unit, along with her experience of early years and SEN, she has brought with her many resources, knowledge & enthusiasm.

We are also very lucky to have her as a Trustee for Dorset DCS!

## A BIG THANK YOU FROM DDCS!

Dorset DCS wishes to thank all the individuals and organisations who have made donations, fundraised for us or provided something for us free of charge over the past year.

Without you we could not provide the support for the children and their families!

### THANK YOU TO:

Strategic Solutions Financial Services for posting all the newsletters free of charge and making regular donations.

Mauveworks for printing our newsletters free of charge.

### Richard George

Nicki Paul – London Landmarks Half Marathon

Thomas Ralling Lodge 2508

Activate Performing Arts

Mrs M.A. Thompson

Art Show/Sale in memory of Prudence Morgan

In memory of Margaret Sewell

Jamie Green & Mauveworks Tough Mudder Team

In memory of Tommy Earles

Fort Financial Planning

Fisher Charitable Trust – Donation for Christmas Party

Lloyd Whyte Draw winners

Magnaura Conclave Masonic Lodge

Stour Lace Makers

Livingston Academy

LFB Meats Shop - Collection Box

The Blandford School - Christmas Party Venue

Bournemouth Deaf Club – Venue for our AGM & Awards

Ideas for fund raising could be a sponsored event, car boot sale, cake sale, donations instead of gifts for a birthday or anniversary, a collection box in a work place, raffle or a school multi day.

Why not give it a go!



Support DDCS by buying a lottery ticket from BH Coastal Lottery. If you buy a £1 ticket, 50p goes directly to DDCS!

There is a one in fifty chance of winning each week (that's better odds than the National Lottery and People's Lottery) and the top prize is £25,000!

So if you think you can be lucky and also support Dorset DCS then please log on to: [www.bhcoastalottery.co.uk](http://www.bhcoastalottery.co.uk)

Select buy tickets and then select Dorset Deaf Children's Society.

Thank you!



## DDCS is now on Instagram!

Follow us @dorsetdcs to see event pictures & updates, testimonials & other useful information.

### DO YOU HAVE AN EXPERIENCE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH OTHER FAMILIES?

We are always looking for articles for our newsletters. It really helps to read what other families have experienced, or maybe you just have a story to share? Please contact Shirley on 01202 571089

## DDCS GRANTS

DDCS has funds available for grants and will consider contributing towards our member's costs or partial costs for deaf related equipment, activities or learning.

We regularly contribute towards signing classes and provide literature to support signing. We also provide specialist alarm clocks for children to become more independent at getting up in the morning!

We may also be able to offer grants in certain circumstances for financial support with a deaf related project.

Please contact us in writing or by emailing [info@dorsetdcs.co.uk](mailto:info@dorsetdcs.co.uk) with details of what you are asking for, how it will help your child and the costs. Please give as much information as possible.

Each case is considered on its individual merits.

## HELP AND CONTACTS

CHAIRMAN – Kevin Forbes, Hamilton Court House, 1-3 Alum Chine Road, Westbourne, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH4 8DT 01202 769890

VICE-CHAIRPERSON, TREASURER & MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY - Shirley Sorbie, Touchwood, 9 Oakland Walk, West Parley, Ferndown, Dorset, BH22 8PF 01202 571089

SECRETARY – Julie Hansford, 34 Fernside Avenue, Poole, Dorset, BH14 0PN 07973 737687

Website – [www.dorsetdcs.co.uk](http://www.dorsetdcs.co.uk)

E-mail – [info@dorsetdcs.co.uk](mailto:info@dorsetdcs.co.uk)

NDCS FREEPHONE HELPLINE 0808 800 8880 (voice & text)



For more information, news, pictures and future events please visit our website.

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



As some of you may know, Dorset Deaf Children's Society receives no centralised funding and therefore has always relied on the kindness of others to pay for all our events. So, when we received an email at the end of last summer from a charitable trust asking if they can have a chat to see if they can be of help, we were happy to jump on the call. That email was from Marc Bell on behalf of The Fisher Charitable Trust and after some more calls and conversations about what they can do for us, we were over the moon to have a massive donation of £3000 towards the Christmas Party from them – the most amazing timing as we had just found out that we would need to pay for caterers and were worried about the costs. Mark Fisher told us that what he preferred to support was local Dorset charities (because he now lives here), helping disadvantaged children and promoting community, also Mark has worn a BAHA hearing aid since his 20's, so has special empathy for our members.



**Mark Fisher**

Mark (known to his friends as Fish) started working at age 16 as a costume character at Alton Towers and (even after being told by his deputy head teacher he would amount to nothing) rose to become the Chief Development Officer of Merlin Magic Making – overseeing teams across the UK, USA and Asia in the design and development of rides and attractions. As a founder of Merlin Group, Mark's circle was complete when he and his firm bought Tussaud group in 2007 and he was the proud owner of Alton Towers! Apparently, his favourite ride of all of them is Nemesis, he even played the 'Spirit of Nemesis' – another costumed role at its launch

After more conversations, we were even more delighted when Mark and his trustees offered to fund spaces for the biggest (and most expensive) event on the DDCS calendar, our family residential activity weekend at PGL Osmington. This extra £6000 donation has enabled us to open up and fund more spaces than before, allowing more families to come along and join the fun.

**We could not be more grateful to Mark and his family for all the kindness and generosity they have shown us!**

## OUR FIRST VISIT TO THE TREEHOUSE

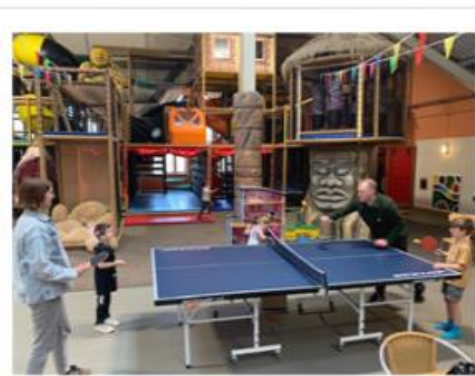


**Diverse Abilities**  
Dorset's Disability Charity

On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March we visited the Treehouse, run by Diverse Abilities, which is situated at the old Adventure Wonderland Site. There was so much for our families to do with something for all ages!

Inside there was soft play, role play corner, table tennis, pool table, toys, cinema room and a sensory room. Outside in the sunshine there was crazy golf, trampolines, playground, bikes, sensory garden and so much space for us all.

We booked exclusive use for just DDCS and eighty three members came along to enjoy the sunshine and as there was so much to do and so much space for the children to run around it was a very enjoyable day with loads of fun!



**Thank you for  
making us so welcome!**

# AMAZING DDCS FAMILY ACTIVITY WEEKEND!

By Natalie Pilgrim and Leanne Witheford

Hi, I'm Natalie Pilgrim, mum to Jack Pilgrim who is 10 years old and who is profoundly deaf in both ears, and has Cochlear Implants.

We attended our first activity weekend at PGL Osmington with DDCS two years ago, we were a little apprehensive about the whole experience at the build-up of the weekend, but there was really nothing to worry about, as we had a great time! Shirley and all the team were all very welcoming and there for reassurance for the whole weekend if needed. It was great seeing Jack really enjoying himself and giving all the activities a go, to see him making friends and joining in with all the things was fantastic, his confidence just grew. I really enjoyed myself as well, getting to know other parents and feeling confident to talk to others who are in the same situation as myself. I would recommend (however daunting it seems) on giving all the activities a go, I did (didn't think I would be able to) but I did it and came away feeling proud of myself. We are really looking forward to this year's weekend.

Myself and my family have been a member of the Dorset Deaf Children's Society for the best part of 8 years now and I can honestly say it's been amazing to have a group where you can meet up and all the children feel the same and just seeing them all together having fun and thriving is truly amazing. Shirley and the team are great, we will be forever grateful for DDCS.



My name is Leanne and I have a 13 year old son called Blake. We have been members of DDCS since Blake was 5 after having several surgeries between the age of 3 to 4 on his ears. After investigations and grommets he then developed a cholesteatoma which then needed removing. Blake was the first child at Poole Hospital to have this procedure. He had a right mastoidectomy removing his mastoid bone (5.5 hours in theatre) which has left him with a moderate hearing loss. This is when I saw the leaflet for DDCS when we were sat in the paediatric room at Audiology in Boscombe. I then phoned Shirley and as they say the rest is history.

We have attended several events over the years which has been lovely and meeting other families. Although at the events I always try to chat to someone as this is the whole point to share experience and for the children to make friends. But sometimes you might be at an event for 3 hours and have your whole family with you so it might just be a smile and a hello to other families. However, PGL was by far an amazing experience. What I loved was in the groups everyone become friends, we laughed, shared experiences, the children did activities they would never have done and got totally out of their comfort zones, adults joining in the fun (and some getting competitive), children becoming friends and looking out for them at other events now. One thing for sure it is definitely not a rest, it is full on but just so great to watch everyone have such good fun. Also, the evenings were a time for everyone to chill out - the kids could play in the hall or have a game of pool and the adults could sit and chat and get to know each other over a glass of fizz and reflect on the day.

The whole time was structured, organised, fun, energetic and just wholesome. Plenty of fresh air, the food was good and we loved it. Blake keeps asking when are we going again and as soon as the date was released we were definitely going again. So for anyone thinking about it and not sure like we were - once you go, you will have the best time and be itching for the next PGL.

## MAUVEWORX SUPPORTS DDCS



Mauveworx is a leading provider of digital and print marketing solutions, dedicated to helping brands and retailers execute impactful and efficient campaigns. Based in Wimborne, Dorset, Mauveworx specialises in creative design, technology-driven marketing management, large-format printing, and end-to-end storage and distribution services. With over 55 years of experience, the company delivers tailored solutions across industries such as fashion, food, beauty, and DIY.

By combining technology with award-winning creativity, Mauveworx enhances brand visibility, drives sales and streamlines marketing execution. Committed to innovation, sustainability and exceptional quality, the company continues to set the standard for modern marketing, consistently delivering outstanding results for leading brands and retailers.



As well as all of this they support local charities, including us, Dorset Deaf Children's Society! Since 2023 they have been printing our newsletters free of charge. This is a substantial saving for us on printing costs and we are very grateful for this support.

Their support did not stop there, Jamie Green, Fulfilment Manager and also a DDCS member and dad to Harley, organised a team from Mauveworx to take part in the Tough Mudder 2024 challenge and the team raised over £486 for us. They took on the challenge, braving muddy obstacles, freezing waters and electric shocks. Their dedication highlights Mauveworx's commitment to supporting the local community.

**Thank you so much!**