

LET'S HEAR IT!

NEWSLETTER OF
DORSET DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY
AUTUMN 2025



PGL OSMINGTON BAY RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY WEEKEND

The PGL Osmington Bay Activity weekend has always been one of our most costly events, hence that is why it is usually biannual. It started out with the children and young people attending on their own without parents or siblings. It was a great disappointment that these weekends came to an end as we would need to be Ofsted registered to take the children away without parent/carers. We then asked PGL if we could have a family weekend where the parents are responsible for their children and PGL said yes.

This is our eighth visit to PGL Osmington and our fourth family weekend. We had the challenge again to get all the adults DBS checked before we went and once completed on Friday 9th May, fifty six members travelled to PGL for a fun packed weekend! Big shout out and thank you to Katie Bray our Safeguarding Officer for the work in getting this done!

We must give a massive thank you to the Fisher Charitable Trust for giving us a donation to cover the costs of the weekend. We could not be more grateful to Mark Fisher and his family for all the kindness and generosity they have shown us!



We were so lucky as the weather was glorious all weekend and the views from PGL are amazing especially with the blue sky. On the Friday the families travelled to the centre and most arrived in time to collect their keys and settle into their rooms then we all went in for the evening meal. This year we had two PGL 'Buddies', Jake and Sam, who would be with us for the whole weekend. After dinner we had PGL team games organised by Sam and Jake. This was a great ice breaker and loads of fun.

Saturday morning and everyone was up early ready for breakfast which set everyone up for the day's activities. Our group was split into five activity groups and over the weekend they took part in Climbing, Zip Wire, Giant Swing, Abseiling, Rifle Shooting, Tag Archery and Disc Golf. It was great to see everyone working together and some overcoming and conquering fears but most of all having fun! After the evening meal on Saturday, our evening entertainment was 'Passport to the World'. The children were put into teams by Jake and Sam and they had great fun running all over the site to answer questions; goodness knows where they got the energy from as it was very competitive and fast! Parents relaxed by the accommodation and some very brave ones joined in the game.

Waking up on Sunday morning, the sun was still shining and after a great breakfast it was time for the activities. The timetable over the two days allowed for every activity group to do all seven activities. At the end of the day it was time for a quick get together in the Beach House for everyone to say goodbye, have the evening meal and return some very tired children/young people (and parents) home!

This weekend again exceeded all expectations and more! To see all the children making friends, having so much fun, and the parents making friends really enjoying themselves as a family and getting the chance to bond with other families was brilliant. Some parents came on their own with their child and were anxious about how it would be, but were soon at ease and making friends, many overcoming fears and making special memories!

It was a very special weekend!

For more pictures please go to our website www.dorsetdcs.co.uk



Some comments from the families:

"It's been a lovely weekend at PGL we have absolutely enjoyed the different activities in a safe and friendly environment. The staff have been very helpful. It's been lots of fun and a great way to meet other families in similar situations. It's an amazing location with great facilities. Thank you Shirley for going above and beyond in organising it all."

"Brilliant weekend as always, thank you for all the hard work to make it happen. Selection of activities was the best I've experienced, particularly rifle shooting and tag archery"

"This has been an amazing weekend and we have loved every minute. Although exhausted now. All the staff have been so good with the children"

"Fantastic first experience. Our children were very shy, but it was amazing to see them blossom, make friends and join in on their own. Most PGL staff were amazing and encouraging."

"Thank you for everything, it was great! Thanks for all your hard work, we loved it. Our favourite activities were rifle shooting, giant swing, climbing."



Thank you to Pat Saunders and Judith Morris for all the time they have given to DDCS as trustees.

Judith has been a member since her daughter Megan was a baby. Her son Harry also has a hearing loss.

She joined the trustees in 2015.

Pat worked for the Hearing Support Service as a Teaching Assistant before retiring. She became a Trustee in 2018.

You would probably have seen them serving the refreshments at our events!



We wish you all the best and hope we will see you soon!



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 want to get lucky and also support Dorset DCS then please log on to:

www.bhcoastalottery.co.uk

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

Thank you!



Well done Scott!

Scott Gray (Alex's dad) ran the half marathon in the Bournemouth Run on Sunday 12th October to raise funds for DDCS.

What is amazing is he only started running last year.

He raised £885!

Thank you Scott!



Thank you to Andre Brito who Cycled from Bournemouth Pier to Paris and raised £472 for DDCS!



MAX CARDS

Max Card is a discount card enabling children with additional needs to benefit from reduced or free entry to attractions and day's out

To get a Max Card for your child you would need to apply through your local council. Just google Max Card for Dorset Council or Max Card for BCP Council.



Welcome to Leanne Witheford and Kyle Bailey who have joined the DDCS trustees and are now part of our team!

Also thank you to Anna Sewell and Katie Allan for their help as trustees.

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 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.

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

We would love to hear from you!

NDCS HELP LINE

Do you need help and advice about DLA claims or education for your child? If so please ring the NDCS help line number 0808 800 8880 or Email: helpline@ndcs.org.uk

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

E-mail – 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

THE JENNY BARRETT DEAF CHILD ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 2025

Every year, at our AGM, we present the Jenny Barrett Deaf Child Achievement Awards. The awards set out to reward achievements of children with a hearing loss and they are split into two categories, the junior category which is for eleven years and under and the senior category which is for twelve years to 17 years old. In 2025 there were a total of thirteen children nominated.

The winners were announced at our AGM held on Saturday 11th October 2025 at Bournemouth Deaf Club. The awards were presented by Robin Barrett and the two overall age group winners received shields, certificates and cheques for £100 each. The winner in the junior category was **ALFIE HIRIART** and the winner in the senior category was **ANYA BEAL**. All other nominees received £20 vouchers and certificates.



Alfie Hiriart
Junior Winner



Anya Beal
Senior Winner

JUNIOR NOMINEES

Please note that the nominations below are a short summary and only a part of the nomination as the nominations can include confidential and personal information.

Obi Brammer Thompson has been nominated by Melissa May, Advisory Teacher Hearing Support Service. He is being nominated for his exceptional progress in reading. When he began in Reception class he found phonics challenging even with visual cues. Despite the difficulty he showed consistent determination working hard every day with his Teaching Assistant. Melissa observed Obi reading, he confidently sounded out letters, blended sounds, recognised whole words and self-corrected when something didn't make sense. He applied every strategy he had learned, and it was truly inspiring to witness. He has since passed his Year 1 Phonics Screening Check, a fantastic achievement. His success is a testament to his resilience and hard work. He has shown with effort and determination, barriers can be overcome.

Matilda Bryant has been nominated by her mother, Holly Bryant. Matilda was implanted at three and half years old. She had no speech prior to being implanted and since then she has massively progressed. They are so proud of how much she has achieved in 18 months. The Elizabeth Foundation said that she is their most progressed child they have ever had. She has worked really hard to get to where she is and has now started school.

Caitlin DeGiorgio has been nominated by Sarah Joiner, Advisory Teacher Hearing Support Service for the wonderful year she has had in Year 6 which reflects her astounding focus and determination to do well in all that she applies herself to. She completed her Year 6 SATs and also successfully passed the test for a place at Parkstone Grammar School. She has grown into a mature young lady, who has been an amazing self-advocate for her hearing needs in school as well as being a positive deaf role model for younger pupils.

Harrison Greenham has been nominated by his grandfather Stephen Greenham for being an inspiration to his family and others. He is an incredible advocate teaching others what being deaf truly means as well as the access they deserve. He strives for better access within the deaf community especially when it comes to education, accessible days out and businesses being more inclusive for their deaf guests. He has recently started his new Deaf school, after struggling with needing deaf friends and role models. He has become extremely independent and grown significantly in confidence in the past year and is making a huge difference within the deaf community online and in person.

Alfie Hiriart has been nominated by his mother, Candy Hiriart. Alfie faces so many challenges and faces them all with a big smile to match his personality. He started Taekwondo on his own with no peers or school friends. He knew no one but just wanted to take part. This would be challenging for him, not only for his hearing loss but also his Noonan's syndrome, having low muscle tone. From the very first lesson he won over the instructors. He gave everything a go even though he struggles with fatigue after a full day at school and learning to listen to new adults and peers in a very difficult listening environment. He took part in his first grading in September having to remember his exercise to perform and recall Korean counting and the names of the moves in Korean. His master commented that he had the loudest voice. Candy is overwhelmingly proud of Alfie for using his voice, recalling information, listening to instructions and following them, often without visual cues of lip reading.

Myla Preston has been nominated by Dawn Wrench, Advisory Teacher Hearing Support Service for her superb transition move from a Gloucestershire primary school to a Christchurch school. Throughout the move she has shown maturity, receptivity and willingness to embrace all aspects of her new school with zeal and joy. She has made an excellent impression on her teachers and has developed and maintained new friendships. She has recently been selected to be a Year 5 Monitor and is a role model for her peers. She was articulate at an INSET to teachers about how her Cochlear Implant processors work and why her Roger Touchscreen is so imperative. She is an excellent deaf aware advocate and has embraced the opportunity to learn BSL.

SENIOR NOMINEES

Please note that the nominations below are a short summary and only a part of the nomination as the nominations can include confidential and personal information.

Anya Beal has been nominated by Teresa McCabe, Advisory Teacher Hearing Support Service. Anya has experienced over the last year many challenges and bullying relating to her deafness. She has worked on the audiology curriculum to help her become knowledgeable of her own deafness and how to manage and maintain her own equipment. Her confidence and self-esteem has been severely tested to combat and manage sustained verbal unkindness and managing her diagnosis of autism for her to cope. Despite her own challenges Anya has shown incredible determination, resilience and drive to overcome many obstacles. She initially made a great start to secondary school and became a Deaf Awareness Ambassador but as demands grew so did her anxiety and stress. This year she has come up against a lot of challenges about her deafness and her needs as a deaf learner, which led to frustrations and worry. This escalated when her teacher and teaching group changed. She then became a victim of sustained verbal bullying. She withdrew into herself and rebelled at wearing her glasses and hearing aids in an attempt to reduce the attention on her. She found the situation intolerable and her family removed her from school to consider home schooling her. Anya attended the HSS peer support day and was able to talk to other peers and decided to start wearing her hearing aids again. She has also been able to bravely return to a new school. Teresa is so proud of her incredible resilience and determination to try again. The situations she has found herself in have been incredibly tough however she is beginning to overcome them with determination and perseverance.

Bernardo De Brito has been nominated by Dawn Wrench, Advisory Teacher Hearing Support Service. Bernardo last year successfully transitioned to secondary school. He has made an excellent impression on school staff for his politeness, courtesy and helpfulness to teachers and peers. In particular he is kind to other peers helping to check his and others audiological equipment. He is adept at trouble shooting if his radio aid is not working. He is a kind thoughtful role model to his peers and polite and enthusiastic for his learning.

Liliana Kiss has been nominated by Dawn Wrench, Advisory Teacher Hearing Support Service. Liliana has successfully transitioned to secondary school; this was a great achievement for her. She has made a superb impression on school staff for her focus, organisation and conscientious approach to all aspects of her Year 7 studies and helpfulness to SEND staff. She has embraced learning BSL with gusto, and has shared and inspired peers and school staff to learn more about deaf culture and identity. She is an excellent role model and is polite, enthusiastic and hard working.

Harry Lake has been nominated by Sarah Joiner, Advisory Teacher Hearing Support Service. Harry has had a fantastic year at Bournemouth and Poole College, completing a Level 2 Media course which he was awarded a merit for in the summer term. He has transitioned so well into college life and has matured into an amazing young man, who always puts 110% into his course and has made new friends. He is also leaning to drive.

Cameron Miller has been nominated by his father Colin Miller. Over the past year he has been increasingly more confident and outgoing and is starting to develop some very good technical, leadership and coaching skills. Cameron sat his GCSE's this year. He decided to take the higher paper in French even though it could mean it would be ungraded if he did not obtain a high grade. This was a concern for his teacher but he spent many hours revising and practicing. Through his dedication he scored a Grade 7, with a distinction in his French speaking exam. He was predicted a very low score in English following an ungraded mark in his mock exam. He put so much effort with revision and practice and scored a Grade 6. The French and English grades he achieved are huge achievements for him. Away from school he attends Army Cadets achieving two promotions this year. He was promoted to Lance Corporal in June and in September and he was promoted to Corporal. In July he received the Top Marksman Trophy at Dorset's Cadet Summer Camp in Merseyside for achieving the highest overall score in A2 rifle shooting, a huge achievement as there were around 200 participants. He has made it to joint most senior cadet within the Bovington Detachment; a reflection of his dedication, ability and leadership.

Jennifer-Marie Roe has been nominated by her parents Sadie and Martin Roe for how far she has come in her life and in school. From when she was diagnosed with a hearing loss she has worn her hearing aids every day. She has overcome all her difficulties at school alongside having dyslexia. She has achieved passing her GCSE's and progressed to A levels where she studied EPQ and researched into sign language and how it is used in schools and shops. She did a presentation in front of many people. She attained an A in her A level that she needed for university. She has also learnt to drive and passed her driving test. Whilst completing her A levels she worked two jobs. She worked at McDonalds where she has been promoted to crew trainer. Two years ago she signed up for a volunteering opportunity in Borneo. For the trip she had to raise £5000 which she did by doing many different events. She then spent four weeks in Borneo. The determination that she has shown has been inspirational, she has gone above and beyond what anyone expected of her to achieve. We are very proud of her.

Milo Wong has been nominated by Dawn Wrench, Advisory Teacher Hearing Support Service for successfully transitioning to secondary school. He has made an excellent impression on secondary school staff for his enthusiasm, politeness, courtesy and willingness to partake in all aspects of the school curriculum and extra school activities. He has achieved extraordinary success in music. He is working towards taking his Grade 8 Drumming exam which is outstanding as he is only in Year 8. He has performed at Kings Park at a summer annual event with his DJ set. He is praised by teachers for his audiological support and encouragement to his peers and his ability to trouble shoot and assist school staff if his or others radio aids are not working. He is an engaging, supportive, kind, thoughtful role model to his peers.



All the
nominees have
done
exceptionally
well to be
nominated.

Congratulations
to all of them!

Cumulus Outdoors supporting DDCS at Swanage Carnival

This summer, Cumulus Outdoors was proud to support Dorset Deaf Children's Society at Swanage Carnival. Cumulus Managing Director Sam Thompson, dad to Obi and Iris, nominated DDCS to Swanage Carnival committee and DDCS was chosen as one of their charities this year. Sam wanted to give something back to the DDCS as it has supported his family and so many others across Dorset. Sam said, "I love supporting the charity wherever I can and this was a great opportunity to raise some funds. We enjoy all the DDCS events and have benefited so much by meeting other families and seeing our kids spend time with others."

In the weeks leading up to the carnival, the Cumulus team were busy planning, organising volunteers, preparing to run one of the bar nights and helping coordinate safety cover for big events such as the Biathlon and the Swanage Bay Swim. Alongside all this, Sam and his family were hard at work creating their wonderful "Deaf Giraffe" for the parade, with Obi and Iris proudly taking part in the procession (and a funny moment when Uncle Jack got "run over" by their car!).



Throughout carnival week, the Cumulus staff gave their time and energy to help wherever needed, from serving behind the bar, taking part in the procession, and ensuring the safety of participants at events. Their enthusiasm and community spirit shone through, making it a fantastic week for everyone involved.

Swanage Carnival held their Annual Presentation Evening on Friday 26th September at The Mowlem Theatre, Swanage. Shirley Sorbie went along with Sam and after a short speech on stage they were presented with a cheque for **£2000!!**



An enormous thank you to Sam and all the staff at Cumulus Outdoors and also to the Swanage Carnival committee and volunteers for this amazing donation!



Story Books with Deaf Characters

Little Signers Club
www.littlesignersclub.co.uk



The 'Rhyme and Sign' Collection



where sign language and stories meet



For families with younger children this book has a charming story. Freddie found a fairy, tangled in a tree..... Freddie is desperate for a pet, so when he rescues Bessie-Belle and she offers to grant his wishes he knows just what to ask for. The only problem is that Bessie-Belle can't hear very well, and Freddie tends to mumble. Whatever can they do? Luckily the Fairy Queen is on hand to explain..... A delightful tale full of Julia Donaldson's (author of The Gruffalo) trademark rhyme and wit, with a subtle message about hearing loss. You can find this book on Amazon for a very good price!



www.ndcs.org.uk/childrens-books