

HOME-START BANBURY & CHIPPING NORTON

Annual Report 2004/05



supporting families

- support • friendship • practical help •

**COMMUNITY
FUND**
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local network fund
for children and young people



SureStart

Making life better for children and families in our county

Cherwell Vale
Primary Care Trust



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HOME-START BANBURY & CHIPPING NORTON is a voluntary organisation which is committed to promoting the welfare of families with at least one child under five years of age. Volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to families under stress in their own homes helping to prevent family crisis and breakdown.

HOME-START BANBURY & CHIPPING NORTON aims to continue to provide a quality service to families.

HOME-START BANBURY & CHIPPING NORTON will endeavour to expand and develop its resources by continuing to recruit volunteers and raise the profile of the organisation throughout the local community.

For more information contact:

**The Organisers
Britannia Road Family Centre
Grove Street
Banbury
Oxon OX16 5DN
Tel/Fax 01295 266358
e-mail: info@home-startbanbury.co.uk
www.home-startbanbury.co.uk**

Patron: HRH Princess Alexandra, the Hon Lady Ogilvy, GCVO

Registered Charity No 296837

Management Trustees

Chair: Jeff Chard – Rector of Ironstone & Chaplain of Katharine House Hospice.

Vice-Chair: Deborah Hayter – Independent Member

Treasurer: Jocelyn Taylor – Independent Member

Lesley Bourne – Deputy Directory Ace Centre, Chipping Norton

Vivienne Bennett – Volunteer Representative

Sharon Doar – Health Visitor, Chipping Norton

Liz Gatliff – Independent Member

Kathy Goodey – Project Leader – CHUFF (Centre for Hardwick U5s & Families)

Jo Graves – Local Councillor, Chipping Norton

Maurice Humphris – JP, Retired Funeral Director

Hilary Patterson – Volunteer Representative

Peggie Sinclair – Independent Member

Christine Whitaker – Volunteer Representative (retired Jan 04)

Trish Willoughby – Health Visitor, Banbury

Volunteers

Deborah, Pam, Alison, Romey, Diana, Ann (M), Jenny (M), Pat, Hilary, Ann (S), Jo, Jane, Chris, Jenny (B), Karen, Viv, Polly, Helen, Geraldine, Judith (H), Carla, Carol, Anna, Kay, Caroline, Frances, Judith (W), Polly, Emma, Kerry, Rachel, Jayne, Abigail, Agnes.

Retired during the year

Dawn, Margaret, Dominique, Alicia, Emma (S), Kelly, Sharon, Angela, Andrea, Kirsty, Moe.

Staff

Senior Organiser – Christine Yarborough

Organisers – Liz Witka, Fiona Hill (until Aug '04) & Clare Campling (from Dec '04)

Administrator – Vee Sampson

Play Leader – Emily Lambert (from Jan '04)

Chairman's Report

It is once again my great pleasure to commend to you Home-Start's Annual report. It sets out the achievements made during the past year, and those achievements are very considerable. Home-Start staff are working under increasing pressure. Funding organisations and Home-Start nationally are asking for more and more evidence of the results of our work. The future direction of 'child-centred' work is still being discussed and outcomes are not yet clear. Continued funding seems to be as precarious as ever. These are just some of the pressures we work under.

Indeed this must continue to be the primary task of the Management Committee – to ensure sufficient money so that the essential and important work of Home-Start can continue. The Management Committee are pledged to do this, and I thank them all for their sustained support of the project over the past year.

But at the heart of our venture are the volunteers. One of the privileges that the Chairperson enjoys is the chance to meet new volunteers at the end of the Preparation Courses. They are invariably devoted to their task, and prepared so well by our staff, that it is little wonder that they do so well in the central work of Home-Start.

But inevitably at the heart of such an enterprise as ours are the staff that run the project. Last summer we lost Fiona to the work of Home-Start nationally; but Clare Campling has settled in so well, and we welcome her as she works primarily in the Banbury part of the project. Liz Witka, whose primary task is looking after the Chipping Norton families, and who in the months after Fiona left found her work load so increased, continues to be such an important member of the team. Vee continues to operate at the heart of our administration systems, overseeing such delicate tasks of allowing computers 'to talk to each other' and otherwise ensuring that everything flows smoothly. Christine, who has been with Home-Start in Banbury since the beginning, is still at the hub of everything we do. Her job has expanded and increased as both the amount of work we do has increased – but also as the variety and range of the Team Leader has got so much more complex. I cannot really imagine Home-Start here without her. I thank the staff of Home-Start, both on behalf of the Management Committee, and also on behalf of the wider community whom they support so well.

Finally, on a personal note, having served my three years I must stand down as Chair of the project. If that sounds a little like having served a prison sentence, nothing could be further from the truth. I have had nothing but total support from the Management Committee and staff here, and also from Heather Alexandra and the staff of Home-Start regionally; and I have thoroughly enjoyed, (though sometimes as a lone male), the chance to meet with the officers and staff of other Home-Start schemes.

Jeffrey Chard

Chairperson

Senior Organiser's Report

There's been plenty to keep us on our toes this year! Upgraded technology in the office for example set us new challenges, as much when it was working as when it wasn't! There have been occasions when it was 'bring back the quill', frustration levels being tested as they were. However, there is confidence that a battle is being won on that front as (wo)man conquers machine.

Summer 2004 witnessed our battling with the elements when torrential rain flooded through the office and left chaos behind it administratively, to say nothing of the fragrant smell of damp that lingered for weeks.

It was shortly before the rainstorm, that Organiser Fiona Hill left us to become a Regional Consultant for Home-Start UK. She had made valuable contributions to the scheme during her time with us and we were extremely sad to say goodbye to her. It was not until the end of November that we welcomed Clare Campling to the team so it was all hands on deck to survive the staff shortage during those 3 months.

It's not all bad news though! It's been great to have Clare on board. Liz Witka completed her Organiser Induction with the scheme in July after successfully launching Home-Start in Chipping Norton. Our first Preparation Course in the town began with 8 volunteers and set the trend for further successful recruitment.

The volunteer social in May was enjoyed by staff and volunteers alike. Hilary Hammond from Hilary's Hat Hire gave us an illuminating talk on the history of hats and brought with her some stunning samples of hats that we could try on – much laughter ensued! The 'faith supper' meant we all ate well too. Huge thanks to Hilary for entertaining us and giving up her time.

At the end of July we welcomed a number of members from Cherwell Vale PCT to the office. We invited them to come and meet management committee, volunteers and staff of the scheme to increase their awareness of the work of Home-Start and to illustrate how we are helping to raise public health.

Towards the end of the year we were able to re-establish Tiggerz, our group for parents of children with specific needs. The group had stumbled slightly after Fiona's departure but with the appointment of Emily, our wonderful play leader, we began sessions again in earnest and are monitoring progress. Funds to run the group were given by the Oxfordshire Community Foundation and we will report back at the end of the first year.

In the autumn I attended the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council conference 'Breaking Down Barriers'. Focussing as it did on isolation and social exclusion in rural Oxfordshire, we can't forget that barriers to inclusion exist just as much in the urban areas of the county. It left me feeling even more convinced of the importance of what we are achieving in Home-Start. All of us at times, whatever lifestyle we have, can encounter a 'trip wire' that renders us excluded emotionally or practically. When that happens, it is easy to become marginalised and to lose confidence. Young families can be especially vulnerable with health at risk and social interaction denied.

There is no doubt that Home-Start volunteers do much to alleviate isolation by enabling families to move outward into society again, to restore confidence and to provide the helping hand required.

Enormous changes loom ahead in Oxfordshire for Children's Services. The Best Value Review conducted across the county and the requirements of the Children Act 2004 will transform the way we work. Home-Start plays a vital and unique role in the provision of family support and it is exciting to be part of a new era of services designed to challenge barriers and give parents and children the help they need WHEN they need it.

It is our privilege as staff in Home-Start to work with so many dedicated and committed volunteers. It is also our privilege to meet so many loving and caring parents and their children. Together they make things happen and head towards a universal aim " to give children the best possible start in life".

Thank you to Liz, Clare and Vee for being a great office team, to the management committee for their responsible and reassuring approach and to ALL our deserving and valuable volunteers.

Christine Yarborough

Senior Organiser

Organiser's Report

Chipping Norton

Its been a busy year one way or another and until Fiona left I hadn't quite realised how busy my role was to be. There is never one day the same, from family work, running preparation courses or arranging our family outing there is always plenty of variety! I have really enjoyed working with the families and am still in awe of the hard work our volunteers undertake.

I have attended various training courses and had training for Power Point. Christine and I headed off to Eastbourne in October for Home-Starts Study days. Although rather blustery, it was nice to meet other Organisers and put faces to names.

I was lucky enough to go to Home-Start National Convention in April. This was a wonderful experience although a little overwhelming. It was quite surreal to be sitting in a convention centre with 500 people all reading from the same hymn sheet! There were various speakers including the first Children's Commissioner Professor Al Aynsley-Green who was both interesting and humorous.

We have supported 16 families in Chipping Norton since taking referrals last May. We have completed 3 preparation courses and have a lovely group of 14 volunteers. Referrals seem to have slowed down somewhat, so I have spent a few days at the ACE centre armed with balloons, pens and display boards in the hope of raising our profile and hope to visit local pre-schools and the maternity unit in the near future.

Liz Witka – Organiser

Tiggerz

Following a successful application for funding from the Oxfordshire Community Foundation we appointed Emily Lambert as Play Leader for Tiggerz and the group, which had been on hold since Fiona left in August, was re-launched in January 2005. The grant has enabled us to rent premises and to purchase equipment.

The purpose of the group is for parents of pre-school aged children who have specific needs to meet together, give each other support and share information, and for the children to play in a safe and stimulating environment. The aim is to enable parents to gain confidence in using a group and from this to move into mainstream groups and activities.

Getting to the targeted family groups has not been easy and we have been working closely with the Pre-School Teacher Counsellors to promote the group. Four families have been attending since January and they seem to have all enjoyed themselves. The children have gained confidence in using the space and the equipment, and the parents enjoy not having to tidy up the mess created!

It is a lot of fun and we hope that more families can be encouraged to join us. The group meets every Thursday at the Britannia Road Family Centre.

Clare Campling – Organiser

Events and Other Things

Volunteers have fun too!

- Mid-December we held our usual Christmas Party for Volunteers and Management Committee to get us all in the festive mood. As always we had delicious food, lots of chat and a little wine! Our regular 'bring a present and get one back' once again proved popular and it never ceases to amaze what you can get for £3!
- Hilary, from Hilary's Hat Hire, came along one evening in May bringing with her lots of hats for us all to try on. We had a really good laugh and afterwards shared a 'faith supper' and some spring punch.
- Of course in addition to social events volunteers have a chance to get together at our regular monthly support group meetings. This year we have had a session on the importance of play, several family support sessions and said farewell to Fiona at the meeting in August.
- Several volunteers attended the Birth-3 Conference held in Wheatley in October and they all commented on how good this was.

Family Summer Outing

- Coombe Abbey - The family summer outing was a really hot day spent at Coombe Abbey, near Coventry. Liz & Fiona co-ordinated proceedings from the front of a large coach full of children and parents intent on having a good time. Coombe Abbey offered lots of open space for a great family day out, marred only by the wasps intent on joining in the picnic! Happily no-one got stung and all returned without mishap. Thanks go to volunteers for helping out on the day, and to Annette MacLaren for raising the funds at a coffee morning, enabling us to offer the trip free of charge.

Christmas Party

- The Christmas party saw the return of Jenny Mead singing songs, encouraging the children to join in the fun playing musical instruments, singing and dancing. Face Painter, Kirsty, was also on hand painting willing faces. This picture shows a finished work of art on a satisfied customer. Father Christmas found time in his busy schedule to visit us with a present for each child in his bulging sack. He was accompanied by Rudolph (alias volunteer Jenny Martin) who assisted in the singing and handing out presents. As usual, volunteers provided an excellent lunch and left overs' were taken home in 'doggie' bags for enjoyment later. Thanks to everyone who helped on the day and made it such a success.



Feedback

Volunteer - I am a wife, mother, daughter, sister, niece, aunt and friend, with my own life experiences and, since last October, proudly a Home-Start volunteer. The preparation course equips each volunteer with the practical and emotional elements of becoming a volunteer; how to offer friendship, practical help and support to enable a family experiencing difficulties to gain increased confidence in their parenting skills.

Being a parent is one of the most difficult jobs any of us will ever have to do. We have all experienced times when we feel out of control or unable to see a positive outcome to a situation, especially as many of us do not have extended families to help us. Problems can seem much worse if a parent is ill, isolated or faced with stressful situations.

I have just come to the end of being a volunteer to my “first” family. The initial meeting with the family was very nerve racking, but probably more so for the family, who could be worried that they were being judged or patronised. After that first difficult meeting we developed a special relationship that has grown over the months and the knowledge that Home Start has made a difference to someone’s life is very special. Although some of the activities have been repetitive, the satisfaction of knowing that a child has been able to experience a group activity on a regular basis, thus allowing mum to have a rest and spend some time with a new baby, has been very rewarding.

I shall be sad to leave my “first” family, because we have become friends. But, also so pleased and proud with how far the family has come, and how hard they have worked to make such good progress.

Judith

‘Dear Home-Start

This is just a quick note to say thank you for the help and support I received from Home-Start. Our volunteer, Ann, was terrific and we miss her a lot! Home-Start is a great organisation - thank you again.’



Spike and Isobel

Families – ‘With having two children 15 months apart, I found it very hard to cope and lost some of my confidence. Even though I have family and friends all around, I felt a bit lonely.

When my volunteer started coming round she either watched after the children while I did some housework or we did something with the children, either in the house or we went out somewhere. She helped build my confidence and it was nice to have someone to talk to who would listen and give their undivided attention. Also, because she had two children of her own, I could ask for advice on how she handled different situations.

I listen to the children more, feel more confident have also learnt to relax and just take things slowly.

I am very grateful to Home-Start, they have helped me out a great deal’.

Referrer – I am a local Health Visitor and also a member of the Management Committee of Home-Start. Having worked for a number of years with a voluntary carers scheme before returning to my roots, I know what hard work and dedication a scheme like Home-Start involves.

I would like to say how much we Health Visitors value the scheme we have here in Banbury and Chipping Norton. Referrals are dealt with quickly and professionally, and the ladies visiting the families are superb, seem to be amazingly well matched and mums’ find their volunteers so supportive and down to earth.

We will keep singing your praises and you carry on your excellent work.

Thanking everyone so much on behalf of all the local health visitors.

Trish Willoughby – Health Visitor

Treasurer's Report

The scheme has had another successful year. Income was in line with expectations but by keeping a tight control over expenditure we have managed to realise an overall surplus of £14571.

Unrestricted Incoming Resources

Core funding for the year from Oxfordshire County Council amounted to £29408. This is made up of £24400 under our service agreement and £5408 for our Quality Protects Grant. In addition to this, we have received £18000 from the Cherwell Vale Primary Care Trust. We have received £4798 from fund-raising, donations and bank interest. In particular, we have received a very generous donation from Middleton Cheney Parish Church of £727 and once again we are very grateful to our volunteers who have increased our coffers by donating unclaimed expenses to the value of £2600.

Restricted Incoming Resources

The income on our restricted resources for the year amounts to £41844. We have to thank the Community Fund for £37211 which we have received under our agreement with them to finance our expansion into Chipping Norton. We are also grateful for the grants which we have received from the Cherwell District Council of £1033 as a contribution towards the cost of running preparation courses and the £3600 which we have received from the Oxfordshire Community Foundation Local Network Fund towards the running of our special needs group, Tiggerz.

Reserves Policy

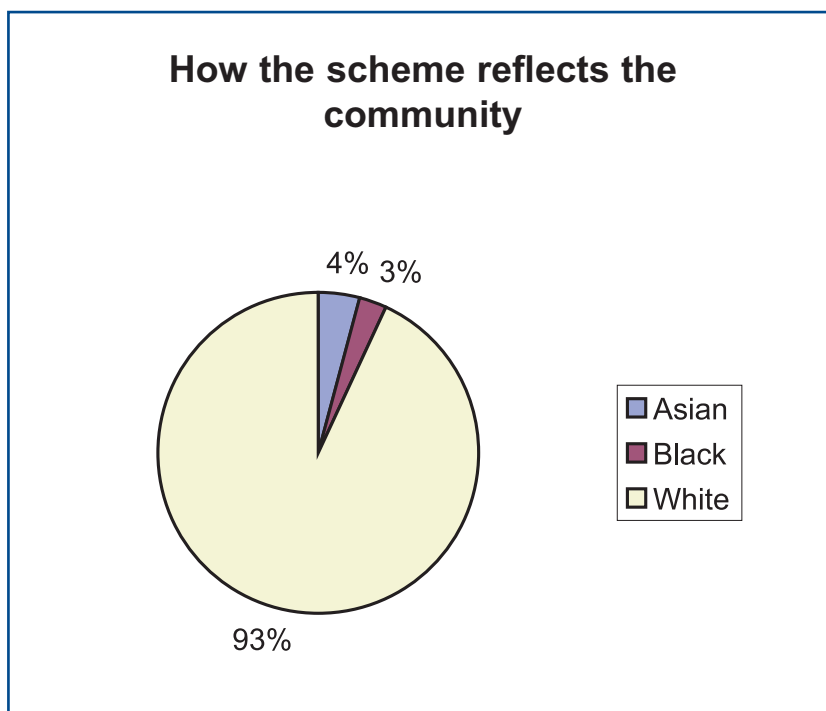
With an increasingly uncertain funding environment, the Charity Commission advises all charities to have a reserve policy. The reserves policy allows the trustees of a charity to create a 'pot of money' that is available for contingency liabilities i.e. gaps in funding, cash flow problems, redundancy payments to staff and payments to outstanding creditors. Our reserves currently stand at £61940. In reality, this only represents 9 months of our current running costs for the entire scheme. With continued uncertainty over the future of our funding from the Cherwell Vale Primary Care Trust and with only 18 months left in our agreement with the Community Fund for Chipping Norton, these reserves will be consumed in a very short space of time.

Again all credit must go to the Management Committee, staff and volunteers whose continuous efforts during the year have made all of this possible.

J.S. Taylor – Treasurer 5th July 2005.

Facts & Figures

Total number of families supported this year	79
Number of children supported	179
<i>of which:</i>	
Number of children under 5	134
Number of children over 5	45
<i>Referred by:</i>	
Health Visitors	54
Other Health referrals	1
Social Workers	3
Other Social Services	2
Self	10
Other	9



Thank You

We would like to thank all our Volunteers who willingly contribute their time, skills and expertise to Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton

Our grateful thanks also to our many supporters and friends who take on a range of tasks from putting up the occasional poster to raising funds.

Special thanks go to:

Annette MacLaren, Friend of Home-Start

Rector, Churchwardens & Congregation of St Martin's Parish Church, Sandford St . Martin

Rector, Churchwardens & Congregation of All Saints Parish Church, Middleton Cheney

Ron Carr, our loyal Father Christmas of many years

Mark Jenkins – Buzzinet

Grants were received from:

Cherwell DC

Cherwell Vale Primary Care Trust

The Big Lottery

Oxfordshire County Council

(including funding from Government's Quality Protects)

Oxfordshire Community Foundation

