

## Wakefield and District Down's Syndrome Support Group

AGM 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010  
(held 24<sup>th</sup> September 2010)

### Chair's Report

As you will have heard from Andrea and Ruth's reports, this has been another successful and significant year for the Group.

We have continued to provide our usual trips and events (Flamingoland, Xmas party etc) drawing significant numbers of people to every event we arrange. It's these levels of support that enable the group to continue.

The Saturday Club is thriving and provides a wonderful environment for both kids and parents. As I have said before the Saturday Club is the lifeblood of the group and is at the core of all our activities.

The creation this year of our Facebook group will, I believe, prove to be as important as the Saturday Club in providing a meeting place for the community that the group has created.

The fact that we have provided a means for our members to communicate and support each other on a daily basis is something of which we should be extremely proud. A massive thanks should go to Andrea who had the original idea and developed it forward.

As Ruth explained despite being very active this year we managed to not only balance income and expenditure but to actually increase the group's funds, although this was due in large part to Lee and Hayley Smith's brilliant fund raising which we can't expect every year.

I think it's important to clarify that it is not the Committee's intention to always maintain these levels of savings, after all when the money is sat in the Bank it is of no benefit to people with Down's Syndrome in our area.

One of the difficulties we have had for some time, as a voluntary group, is finding the time to organise activities that we have sufficient funding to pay for. This is an ongoing challenge for the Group and one that we will continue to address.

The Group has been represented on a number of committees across the District – I am currently chairing the Wakefield Parent Partnership Forum, which Emma Jukes and Amanda Courtman have attended on a regular basis this year.

Ann Aylward and Amanda have been involved in the Parents Reference Group, which amongst other things, inputs into the spending of Aiming Higher money,

which, in turn, is producing some fantastic schemes and initiatives for our kids across the area.

Also during this year Wakefield Family Services asked if the Group could provide a member to sit on an interview panel for a short term Manager for the Service that ultimately became the WeSail project run by the Kids charity. They were looking for us to provide a parent/voluntary sector perspective. It was short notice so I did it despite the fact that I hate interviewing. I will be looking for volunteers next time they ask!

Although outside this reporting period it would be remiss of me to not mention the fantastic day we had in June when we launched our new web site and celebrated our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

When we came up with the idea of the combined launch and celebration our plan was sing the praises of our web site, to create a bit of publicity for the Group, to reinforce some connections with professionals from the Local Authority and most importantly to feed everyone and have a bit of a party. I'm sure everyone who attended agrees that we succeeded in our aims.

Looking forward I think we can be confident that the Group is established with some solid foundations and will continue to provide regular activities and events as well as providing a network of support for people with Down's Syndrome and their parents and carers.

I'm sure we are all aware of the current economic situation and the possible impact over the next few years of cuts in services accessed by people with DS.

It is possible that the Voluntary Sector will need /be expected to cover some of the affected areas, be it on an entirely voluntary basis, semi funded or wholly and formally funded.

We are a group which has many talented and capable members and I believe has the basis and the potential to develop in this area if the group as a whole wishes to do so.

Finally, I have the pleasure of thanking those people who have attended Committee meetings and been involved in organising this year's activities. This year I am, without fear or favour, simply going to list names :-

Andrea Arnold, Ruth Noble, Alicia Tulley, Amanda Courtman, Sue Hodgson, Alison Brown, Ann Aylward, Wendy Brooks, Richard Hodgson, Jon Arnold and last....my mate Neil Courtman

THANK YOU ALL

Geoff Tulley Chair (April 2009-March 2010)