

KENT KINDNESS ANNUAL REVIEW, SEPTEMBER 2020

The past year has certainly been one of two halves, pre and post Covid-19. For the latter part of 2019 the Kent Kindness lessons at the Ashford Reception Centre continued to be very well received both by the Beginners and the Intermediates. And the volunteers coped admirably with the sudden increase in class size in the summer of 2019 which resulted from the increase in UASC arriving in Kent. We tried to put a limit of 20 boys in any one class but both the volunteers and the Care Workers found it very difficult to send the “extra” boys away. And then in March the Covid-19 lock-down occurred and lessons had to stop. But as soon as the restrictions were reduced sufficiently and KCC judged it was safe to run classes again many of the Kent Kindness volunteers went straight back to teaching.

Kent Kindness Committee

There have been some changes to the roles within the Kent Kindness committee, mainly Margaret stepping down as our Chairperson. She has held this post for 4 years and has moved us on to being a much stronger and forward looking team. It is impossible to thank Margaret enough for all she has done for Kent Kindness. Luckily Margaret has stayed on as the rota supremo; possibly this is the biggest role for anyone in the committee and the whole team is extremely grateful. Overall the committee has remained strong and stable.

Support during lock-down

From late March until early August, when no lessons could be run at the Reception Centre, Kent Kindness continued to support the boys, albeit from a distance. One volunteer batch cooked the most delicious cakes and delivered them to the car park at the Centre on several occasions. The boys were always so very grateful, as were the staff team. We ran an online crowd-funding fund raiser and were able to purchase sport and art equipment for delivery to the Centre. Things like footballs, table tennis bats and balls, a table football table, a basketball hoop and balls, and even tennis rackets. The boys were again delighted and drew the most wonderful thank you cards and pictures and had their Care Workers post them to the Committee.

We also provided laminated copies of some of our worksheets in the hope that some teaching could be provided by the skeleton staff who remained at the Centre during lockdown. More were sent in e-format when requested.

More Reception Centres

During lock-down and on into the summer of 2020 the number of UASC arriving greatly increased and we found out that there were, by July, three Reception Centres in Kent; the one in Ashford plus one near Cranbrook and one in Maidstone. For a while the Maidstone Centre was used as the quarantine centre but when the government’s restrictions on travel were reduced it became just another Reception Centre. This great increase in numbers resulted in the government requesting other Counties to take some of the boys into their communities but still all three Centres were running at capacity.

The wonderful Kent Kindness volunteers rose to the challenge and by the second week in September we were running 2 classes a day on 3 days of the week both in the Ashford and the Cranbrook Centres. Currently it is not possible to offer lessons in the Maidstone Centre though this is being discussed. More worksheets and resources have been sent to the

Operations Manager who has forwarded them to the team leader at Maidstone so some lessons can be run there by the Care Workers.

Fund raising

The increase in the number of boys we are teaching has led to our expenditure exceeding our income. Plus the opportunities to fund raise have been reduced due to lock-down, social distancing and the like. A new initiative has been to invite our volunteers and supporters to set up small but regular donations to Kent Kindness. It is hoped this, with KCC's agreement to provide more of the basic stationery used in our classes, will enable us to carry on providing not just our lessons but the greatly appreciated gift bags provided to the boys as they leave the Reception Centres and move on into the community. We also plan to write to many local schools inviting them to nominate Kent Kindness as a charity to be supported during their next academic year.

Extra activities

The main extra activity over the past year was the Christmas party. As there were by then 60 boys at the Ashford Centre we feared we could not run a party. How could we entertain so many? Of course, as usual, Kent Kindness rose to the challenge. One of the Committee suggested we got in a magician, and he just happened to know the right person and was even able to negotiate a discounted price. The boys loved this and the party was a huge success!

Other initiatives

The link with West Kent College continues with one of the volunteers regularly supporting the refugee students there. This is extremely well received and the College are needless to say very grateful.

Unexpected gifts

Throughout and since lock-down Kent Kindness has received some unexpected gifts for the boys. The Goudhurst and Kilndown Primary School very kindly donated many boxes of Maths text books and these were gratefully received by the staff at the Centres. The same school also donated many used but very useable hockey sticks and footballs. These were taken to the Cranbrook Centre as they have the outside space to use such equipment. A member of the public saw our website and contacted us to offer 3 bicycles. These could not be accepted by the Reception Centres, for Safeguarding reasons, but the company Bikeability, who have provided biking lessons for the boys in the past, were very grateful to receive these bikes.

The local sports shop in Cranbrook gave us such a good price for some tennis rackets and footballs for the Centre in Cranbrook that they were almost a gift. And the same shop now has a basket available for shoppers to donate unwanted but slightly used trainers for the boys.

New volunteers

Since lock-down Kent Kindness has received applications from many new would-be volunteers. Sadly some have been under 25 so we have suggested other ways they may be able to support the refugees in Kent, such as the Red Cross or KRAN. This is because KCC

insist all our volunteers must be at least 25 years of age. Others are joining the team and enabling us to offer more frequent classes at the Centres in Cranbrook and Ashford, and we are even looking to possibly start some classes in the Maidstone Centre. Some are former volunteers returning to the team but most are totally new. They all start by observing and then assisting with the classes, but some are quite quickly starting to lead with the teaching. Some of these new volunteers are found by word of mouth and others by our very good website.

Newsletters

During lock-down we were worried that some of our supporters might almost forget about Kent Kindness's work, so one of our volunteers has been writing a very informative monthly newsletter. This has been shared with all our volunteers and supporters and has been very well received.

Summary

Despite the challenges of many more UASC arriving in Kent and lock-down occurring Kent Kindness has continued to support the boys living at the Reception Centres in Kent in an ever expanding way. As each challenge arises Kent Kindness volunteers find ways to overcome the problem and forge forwards. Our rota supremo works absolute wonders with the rotas, already managing two of the Reception Centres. Our volunteers provide wonderful, inspiring and very well received lessons. And the reception we all receive from both the boys and the staff at the Centres it is obvious Kent Kindness is a very positive part of the lives of the UASC in Kent.



Registered Charity No. 1167921
 Receipts and Payments
 Annual Accounts
 07.04.19 – 06.04.20

Total Receipts	Total Payments	Balance in bank	Cash funds	Total capital
Unrestricted donations : £4087	1. UASC travel £513	£6157	n/a	£6157
	2. UASC entertainment £611			
	3. Sport + activities £650			
Restricted donations: £700	4. Gifts (leaving and Christmas) £1546			
	5. Educational I (stationery) £1245			
	6. Educational II (books) £2318			
Total donations: £4787	7. Insurance + web maintenance <u>£302</u> <u>£7185</u>			