

FUN AT OUR FIRST SUFFOLK SHOW



We were delighted to unveil our new name and logo at the Suffolk Show this year. The opening day of the show fell on the 31st May, the date of us becoming an independent charity, so the timing was perfect for us. We held a very popular colouring competition of our new logo, and our stand had a sandpit, Duplo bricks and a bubble machine - it was a great opportunity for little legs (either 2 legs or 4!) to sit and have a rest, and for us to talk to their parents and carers about the services we have to offer. The weather was fairly kind to us and a good time was had by all.



One of many four legged friends that enjoyed the bubbles!



Vickie, our Lead SEND Family Support Coordinator and Hannah, Family Support Coordinator, ready for action!



For the last 40 years, Home-Start Mid & West Suffolk were affiliated with the national charity Home-Start UK, but after a great deal of discussion between the Trustees and the Management Team we decided to become an independent charity. A resolution was passed at a Board of Trustees meeting, and as of the 31st May 2022 we are now known as **Families Together Suffolk**.

This name better reflects the type of work we do, and the areas we cover in the county.

Our team of trustees, together with the support of staff and volunteers, are committed to our ongoing work to support parents and their children. We will continue to diversify to meet the needs of children and families in Suffolk now and in the future, whilst still providing the invaluable, reliable support that we are known for.

If you have any questions, please contact us on **01379 678552** or info@famiestogethersuffolk.org.uk

Training for our Volunteers

A group of our volunteers enjoyed a day of First Aid training with Adam of AB Training during May. Attendees included volunteers from our charity shop and those that support our groups and home visiting services. We like to hold a variety of optional training for our volunteers, which will support them in their roles and enhance their skills.

A BIG "THANKYOU"

.....To Jane at Waitrose in Bury St Edmunds, who arranged a donation of £833 for us to use over the Summer school holidays to enable children to access clubs or activities that they may not otherwise be able to.



Families Together Suffolk
Eye Charity Shop Bargains
eBay Hub



VOLUNTEERING NEWS

VOLUNTEER GET-TOGETHER



For the first time since December 2019, we were finally able to meet up with some of our lovely volunteers, old and new, to share a cuppa, cake and a long overdue face-to-face chat. We met at The Bank Arts Centre in Eye, which was a lovely spacious venue. We will be holding events in other areas of the county to give other volunteers the chance to meet up and will continue to do this regularly. Our next one is due to be held at Nowton Park in Bury St Edmunds in August, for those of our volunteers and staff based in the West of the county.

DO YOU LIVE IN OR NEAR:

Aldeburgh, Gipping, Hadleigh, Ipswich, Leiston, Stowmarket, Woolpit?

We are actively seeking to recruit more **home-visiting volunteers** to provide support to families with children under the age of 11. SEND experience always welcome, but not necessary.

Our next induction course starts on Tuesday 13th September, and will be held in Bramford, just outside Ipswich with great access from A12 and A14.

Bildeston, Haverhill, Honington, Stowmarket, Sudbury, Wattisham?

We are actively seeking to recruit more **group volunteers** to assist our coordinators deliver exciting educational activities for parents/carers and their children under 5 in our family, perinatal and SEND groups.

Please call 01379 678552 or email info@famielstogethersuffolk.org.uk for more details and how to apply.

By volunteering in either of these roles, you can make a real difference to families with young children needing support at this time in their lives.



Jo Pearson, our Senior Trainer and Monitoring Coordinator, with one of our new trustees, Helen Jackson, a Perinatal Clinical Nurse Specialist with the Suffolk Perinatal Service

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT BEING A TRUSTEE?

Trustees are responsible for governing a charity and directing how it is managed and run. It's a great opportunity to contribute to your community by sharing your skills and knowledge.

It's a common misconception that trustees have to be retired people, but that isn't the case. Whilst retirees have a great wealth of experience and talents to offer, people of all ages may have the relevant skills to share, for example: management/financial skills, income generation, strategic planning or communication/media skills, the list is endless!

Please call Amanda Jacques on 07540 282074 or Angela Dennis 07936 913928 if you would like to find out more.



New trustee, Colin Lay, who is Assistant Manager and Trustee at Red Gables in Stowmarket. He also volunteers at our Saturday Dad's Club

www.famielstogethersuffolk.org.uk



OUR SERVICES

**Our name may have recently changed, but the range of services that we provide to families hasn't!
Here is a reminder of what we do and where we do it:**

Home Visiting: Families can find it hard to cope for all sorts of reasons, maybe because of the illness or disability of a child or because of post-natal illness, bereavement, money worries or loneliness. Our coordinators and trained volunteers can visit to support any parent with young children who asks for our help, and the families we support come from all walks of life. This service was previously delivered in Mid & West Suffolk, but is now moving countywide.

Family Groups: Parents/carers and their pre-school children discover imaginative ways to play using everyday toys and items. Activities are designed so they can also be done at home to encourage children's development and help them achieve their full potential. The groups enable both children and parent/carers to socialise and receive support. Our groups run in Bildeston, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Honington, Stowmarket, Wattisham and Woodbridge.

SEND Groups (Special Educational Needs): Welcoming and supportive groups for parents/carers with a child of diagnosed/undiagnosed special educational needs or/and disabilities. We provide a safe, relaxed and supportive environment for parents to attend, meet other parents facing similar challenges and receive vital information from our SEND coordinators specific to the family's needs. The groups are a great place to break the isolation that many SEND parents/carers feel. Children are welcome to come along to these sessions. Groups take place in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Stowmarket and various locations in blocks of 6 weeks for Forest Schools.

Growing Minds: Growing Minds has been initiated by Suffolk Community Foundation and partners. Designed to support families with little ones to access early learning opportunities, the activities help to promote early years development from pregnancy through to school readiness. We help deliver Growing Minds through groups, workshops and home-visiting support. All activities are free for families from the Howard, Marham Park, Westley, Priors and Mildenhall Estates in Bury St. Edmunds.

Perinatal Mental Health Support Groups: Working in partnership with the Perinatal Mental Health team in Suffolk, we provide support groups for mums and mums-to-be who are experiencing any mental health difficulties or a diagnosed mental health illness/condition within the perinatal period – from pregnancy until baby is one year. The groups offer support through professional and peer support, helping to build their confidence, reduce feelings of isolation, and encourage bonding with baby. Groups also offer access to programmes such as treasure basket play, baby story sacks, art and craft activities all in a friendly, relaxed and safe environment to help improve mental wellbeing, and in turn help to improve outcomes for baby's development and learning. Groups take place in Bury St Edmunds, Eye, Hadleigh, Red Lodge, Stowmarket and Sudbury.

We also have a **charity shop** in Eye, and an **eBay selling hub** in Stowmarket, which both raise vital finds to help keep these services running.

If you would like to know more about any of these services, either for yourself or someone you know, or you would be interested in volunteering with us, please contact us on 01379 678552 or email info@famielstogethersuffolk.org.uk

Suffolk Coalition of Disabled People run a scheme called "Keep in Touch"

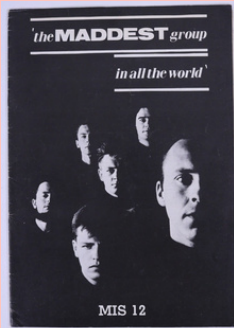
Would you like a regular friendly chat, or do you know someone who would? Alternatively, would you like to have an online chat? KIT (Keep in Touch) is a service that offers exactly that. We understand that, even as society opens again, not everyone is comfortable with meeting other people as we did before the pandemic. So, if you feel our service is for you: **Phone: 07708 473197 For online chat: kit@scodp.org.uk**



RETAIL NEWS

EBAY SELLING HUB

Our selling hub manager Rebecca and her team of volunteers recently celebrated their 1 year anniversary of being in their new location in Station Rd West, Stowmarket. They continue to list and sell items that have either been identified by our retail staff and volunteers at our Eye shop, or that have been donated direct, in order to achieve the best price possible for our collectible, unusual or named items, and good quality clothing. Recent notable sales have included a taxidermy owl and a vintage magazine featuring the pop group Madness, which sold for £50.



We would also like to welcome our new volunteer Poppy, who has just left school and wanted to volunteer with us to gain some work experience while she is waiting to start college in September.

You can find our selling hub by visiting ebay.co.uk and searching for **familiestogethersuffolk** - please add us to your "Saved Sellers". Or just scan the QR code above on your mobile phone for easy access to the page. If you live locally, you can arrange to "Click and Collect" to save on postage costs.

If you enjoy online selling and would like to be part of the team that prepares, lists and dispatches items for sale, please call 01379 678552 or email info@familiestogethersuffolk.org.uk for more details and how to apply.

CHARITY SHOP

We are delighted to be taking part in the Piggy Tail Trail in Eye this Summer by sponsoring "Piggles". You can check Piggles out in our shop window at 1 Broad Street. Why not come in and pick up a map (for a suggested £1 donation) showing the location of all the various piggies around the town, whilst having a browse at our wide range of quality stock. See more details on our Events Page about the trail.



We have also now reinstated our changing room, so please feel free to try on anything you are thinking of purchasing. Also, if you keep your receipt, you have up to 14 days to exchange or return your item.

Donations can only be accepted each morning up until 12.30pm, and we have to limit it to 2 bin bags/boxes or equivalent per donation, due to lack of sorting/storage space.

We can also take slightly larger or unusual items, such as cots, suitcases, small furniture etc. Please call the shop on 01379 870186 if you would like to drop off outside of those times, or to check if we can accept your items.

If you are interested in being part of our team of retail volunteers, please call 01379 678552 or message info@familiestogethersuffolk.org.uk for more details.



EVENTS PAGE

PICNIC IN THE PARK - BURY ST. EDMUNDS

On Saturday 16th July we provided an information and play stall at the Abbey Gardens in Bury St Edmunds, at their Picnic in the Park event. The event was to celebrate the 1000th anniversary of the Abbey, and families were invited to join in with the celebrations with a picnic. It featured local performers, charities, community groups, activities, tours of the Abbey, food and drink stalls, live music, storytelling & trail, funfair rides, combat archery and a climbing wall! The event was visited by 100's of families who enjoyed exploring all the Abbey had to offer.

Our stall had lots of information about the services we provide here at Families Together Suffolk, along with some inviting water play, colouring, books, toys and rice play. Many families stopped for a play and had a chat to our coordinators. The event was a great family day out, and enjoyed by so many.



Our Group Coordinators Helen and Hannah spreading the word about our services in Bury St. Edmunds.

STOWMARKET FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL - STOWMARKET

Our group leader Charlotte attended the Stowmarket Food and Drink Festival a few weeks ago, along with our group volunteer Ann Morrell. Between them, they kept many children and their parents/carers happy while they were waiting in the long queue for face painting! Their sensory play table was a massive hit, and they were lucky to get a nice shady spot in the Red Gables gardens. We'd like to say a big "THANK YOU" to Ann for helping.



SCULPTURE TRAIL - EYE

We are delighted to be taking part in the pig-themed Sculpture Trail in Eye this Summer by sponsoring our very own "Piggles", expertly painted by Shelagh Seales from the Blossom Charity, who have organised the trail. You can see him for yourself in our charity shop window at 1 Broad Street, where you can pick up a map (suggested donation £1) showing the location of all the various piggies, providing great family fun and taking you to hidden places in the town that you may not know about!

The Blossom Charity has helped over 1,000 people since it was launched in 2013, by supporting people going through personal difficulties and challenges, or those facing hardship for many reasons. They run a variety of programmes to help people live their best lives. They achieve this by focusing on improving confidence and problem solving, developing communication skills as well as stress and body management, and helping people to get a sense of purpose while learning new skills. You can find out more about at: www.theblossomcharity.co.uk.

