

EAST GRINSTEAD MEMORIAL ESTATE – December 2023 Newsletter

Welcome to our December newsletter.

I thought this time you might find it interesting if I threw a little light on a less well-known aspect of our work which is that of awarding grants in support of local community causes.

During the pandemic period your board has taken a conscious decision to increase the total of our financial awards recognising the difficulties experienced by so many in and around our town. We have distributed nearly £100,000 over the last three years, and choosing what to support is heavily shaped by our founding aims and objects mentioned in the August newsletter.

Below I've attached a list of this year's grants (which we publish each year on our website) just so you can see the range of support we try to provide, but a list of names and sums can be a bit bland so I've chosen to highlight just one of our beneficiaries to give a little more background – that is Kangaroos Mid Sussex, which is not what it sounds like!

Kangaroos, a registered charity based in Mid Sussex since 1994, provides a range of fun, inclusive social and leisure activities in our local community for children and young adults with learning disabilities as well as additional physical, sensory, medical and behavioural difficulties. They run Saturday and Holiday Clubs, after school clubs and an evening programme for over 320 children and young adults. In addition, they offer a substantial Family Support programme which includes networking, 0-5 play and stay dates, family fun days and trip outs plus sibling only events.

As part of their Family Support programme they provide a Family Fun Day for families who have a son or daughter with a learning disability. This is a fully inclusive family day where children or young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs or Disabilities) can enjoy activities together with their siblings and parent carers alongside other families in similar circumstances.

The Children and young adults attending may have a learning disability with many having additional difficulties including hearing or sight impairments, challenging behaviour, physical or mobility difficulties, complex medical needs, epilepsy and autism with the majority taking part in family days. An additional benefit is that Kangaroos are able to offer these events to families who have a child who is currently too young to join a regular club and is part of their 0-5 group, or is waiting to join one of the regular clubs from age 6 onwards.

The event this year was held at the Jubilee Community Centre, East Grinstead where Kangaroos provided entertainment including, soft play, face painting, balloon making and animal encounters. They also offered lots of refreshments so that parents could unwind while their children were entertained. Staff members were on hand to support and play with the children.



EGMEL Grants 2023

Name of Organisation	Amount (£)
East Grinstead Swimming Club	2000
Super Siblings	1000
Family Support Work	3000
East Grinstead & District Mental Health Group	500
Everychild Trust	3000
William Robinson Gravetye Charity	1000
Chequer Mead Theatre	500
Meridian Radio	400
Age UK East Grinstead & District	1000
Estcots School Association	2000
East Grinstead Bonfire Society	300
Sussex Clubs for YP	1000
Halsford Park School (Friends of)	300
Kangaroos Mid Sussex	1000
Jigsaw SouthEast	500
East Grinstead Lions	3500
CAP	2000
JCC	300
East Grinstead Museum	750
Relate West Sussex	400
Being Neighbourly	1000
NTCTS Resolution	500
4th EG Scouts	500
6th EG Rainbows	887
St Mary's School	1000
EG Target Shooting Club	750
Turning Tides	500
Running total	29587

The eagle eyed amongst you will have spotted that we also made a donation to the East Grinstead Community Bonfire group which held a very successful event through the town and onto the playing fields below East Court on Saturday 21 October. That event was the result of a huge amount of work by the organisers, so our congratulations go to them all. By way of insight, EGCB worked closely with Mid Sussex District Council to ensure they caused the absolute minimum of damage. They had a team up all Saturday night / Sunday morning tending the bonfire. This included raking out, removing any ash and then using a sweeper magnet to remove the metal from the pallets & torches. At 8.00am on the Sunday morning they had a clean-up crew that litter picked the estate before moving into the town and sweeping the route.

Our thanks go to the volunteers who left the Estate in such good order and we understand a date has already been pencilled in for next year which is provisionally targeted as the 19 October.

In contrast to the work undertaken by many litter picking volunteers throughout the year, unfathomably, we have recently endured a rash of abandoned bicycles being deposited on the Estate – all known locations have been advised to MSDC who cleared the debris very quickly, so many thanks to them.



The Ashplats Conservation Group of volunteers have been busy in recent months concentrating their efforts around the Cranston pond area where they have coppiced hazel on the banks, some were felled across desire paths; pulled debris from the pond, mostly fallen branches, some litter and some bits of fence: removed some of the willow fallen across the water and reduced silt from key areas. In amongst the rubbish they have removed was a catering size nitrous oxide pressurised container - hopefully we will see less of these harmful items in the future given proposed changes to sales regulations.

We have recently been undertaking a refresh of our website to make it more appealing and informative, improving links with activities that use the Estate as well as flagging many of the other events that happen across East Grinstead. Please have a good look at it on www.egmel.co.uk and do let us know of any thoughts you might have for further enhancements we can include.

The annual Remembrance Day services took place on 11 and 12 November around the town with the customary, well attended parade through the town on Sunday 12 November preceded by a short service at the Memorial Gardens on the Estate. Wreaths were placed on our behalf at both the Memorial Gardens and at the War Memorial in the High Street.

Finally, we have a meeting lined up for early December with MSDC to review progress against plan and amongst other things, to agree details of an initiative to further improve pathways around the Estate. There has been a decision to change the contractors they use to maintain the site and we are eager to learn more to ensure continuity is effectively managed.

Thank you all for your support during 2023 and your Board join with me in wishing you all a wonderful festive period and a happy and prosperous 2024.

Lloyd Richards

Chair | East Grinstead Memorial Estate