

Chair's Report for Oxfordshire Sands AGM
26.09.18 7.30pm at Kingsmere Community Centre, Bicester.

Support

- We have had fairly regular contact through our Facebook page and emails. Some contact has been made via the befriender phone.
- Our group support meetings are now at Kingsmere Community Centre- opposite St Edburg's School in Bicester- where the meetings used to be held. The new community centre has just opened and we felt it was a more suitable venue from September onwards.
- We held 10 meetings this year- due to requests from parents, we added a meeting in January. We don't have a meeting in April or August due to school holidays.
- We spoke with a multi-faith minister about Sands support, which aided the support she was able to give families in her care.
- We have been working hard with the JR Chaplains and Oxford Cemetery Services to improve the Headington Cemetery Sands Garden. This major project is now near completion.
- We have produced a poetry booklet to be given to parents.

'Support' - Aims for next year:

- *To be able to continue with 10 meetings a year, by developing a befriender rota of our current befrienders.*
- *For our new befrienders to undertake Part 2 training.*
- *Potentially we have a couple of new befrienders in the making!*
- *To produce a stories booklet? National Sands creating one?*
- *To continue with - and celebrate - the cemetery project, to make it a peaceful area for parents to visit.*
- *If the need arises, another Remembrance Book for the JR.*

Fundraising and Events

- Along with St Mary's Church in Banbury - we held a service for Baby Loss Awareness Week on 15th October, to coincide with the Wave of Light. This was the first time a service of this kind had been held in the area. It was well attended, including Victoria Prentis MP. The service gained good publicity and awareness.
- Banbury Town Council lit up the Banbury Cross pink and blue for Baby Loss Awareness Week.
- Our Annual Remembrance Service last year (leading up to Christmas) was a success, bringing many parents comfort. Plans are in place for this year's Service at the same venue.
- South Oxfordshire Crematorium presented us with a cheque for £5,000 in January under the metal recycling scheme- this was thanks to the positive feedback the crematorium staff had heard from of the multi-faith minister we had supported (as previously mentioned).
- We held our Awareness month event at Bloxham Steam Rally. We had a huge amount of bottles generously donated for our Bottle Tombola, which was incredibly successful and raised £500.
- The past few years, Edd Frost and Daughters family funeral directors, Banbury, have kindly dedicated their window display to Oxfordshire Sands during the month of June. The memorial section of the display has received a lot of positive feedback again - with this year having the highest number of names included.
- Individuals have continued to choose to support us through their fundraising, which is fantastic.

Aims for next year:

- *Baby Loss Awareness Service at St Mary's Church, Banbury*
- *Buildings lit up pink and blue for Baby Loss Awareness Week - in Banbury- and wider across the county hopefully*
- *Join in with National Sands campaigns throughout the year, including Random Acts of Kindness for Baby Loss Awareness Week.*
- *June event for Awareness Month*

Healthcare

- We donated £5,000 to Petals Counselling service, to fund 100 sessions for bereaved parents.
- We continue to work with the bereavement midwife and offer our support in terms of support packs, memory boxes, memory sticks, funding training- on both the wards and in SCBU at the John Radcliffe hospital in Oxford.
- We funded 16 midwives to attend photography training.
- We encourage midwives to attend the Bliss Conference, including the SCBU team.

Next year:

- *Continue to offer Sands training, including to funeral directors- potentially through South Oxfordshire Crematorium.*
- *As the booking system is different now - keep a track on the number of staff from the JR attending the Bliss Conference.*

Communication

- We are GDPR compliant !
- We take part in Network calls and attended the Network Day, to share good practice.
- We try to be active on our Oxfordshire Sands Facebook Page, which has a good reach.
- We continue to send out regular newsletters and email updates.
- We have had quite a lot of media coverage throughout the year, including from fundraisers.

Communication- Aims for next year:

- *Maintain established links with media in North Oxfordshire and aim to build new links across the whole of the county?*
- *Seek support of Funeral Directors in other towns, to make them aware of what we offer, and provide them with the booklets and information in order to support parents.*
- *Send out Spotlight on Sands to all Oxfordshire GPs along with the about Oxfordshire Sands leaflet and a newsletter. PLUS find out about Drs Networking - give literature about Sands at those events to be quickly and easily distributed.*

Amazing achievement !

In July 2018, we were wonderfully surprised, grateful and honoured to be nominated for the Angel Community Awards, in the category of 'Best UK Bereavement Support Organisation'. At the end of August- the finalists were announced and we are one of them ! To have reached this stage is unbelievable, as there were hundreds of nominations !