

Family Fun Sessions

Thursday 8 August 2024

10-11.30 and 12.30-2

The King's Church

Budget: £700

Total Spent: £442.50

Broken down to:
£300 from Budding Foundation
£400 from BHTC

Spend Breakdown: £140 -Disco dome
£295 -Trainmaster
£7.50 -replacement banner sticker

There were no costs incurred for:

- Seed planting equipment, herb plants and paintable stones, which were gifted by The Budding Foundation
- Venue hire, volunteers and additional activities were provided free of charge by The Kings Church (TKC)

Aim: The Family Fun Sessions were open to families of children and young people with SEND, and were free to attend. The aim was to provide a safe and fun event for children and young people with SEND, whilst providing support and information to parents and carers, as well as offering activities to siblings.

Number of bookable tickets: 61 families via Ticketsource

Booking statistics:

The total number of bookings was 61 families across both sessions, with waiting lists in operation. This was made up of:

	10am	12.30pm	total
Number of families	30	31	61
People in total	94	101	195
Just Children	57	63	120

Via Ticketsource we collected information on where people lived, this was broken down to:

Per area	10am	12.30pm	total
Burgess Hill	21	18	39
Surrounding Village -Hurst/Hassocks etc	4	3	7
Haywards Heath	3	5	8
West Sussex	2	3	5
None of the above	0	1	1

Attendee statistics:

The total number of attendees on the day was 49 families across both sessions, this was made up of:

	10am	12.30pm	total
No of families	23	26	49
People in total	73	89	162
Just children	42	52	94

Per area	
Burgess Hill	31
Surrounding Village -Hurst/Hassocks etc	6
Haywards Heath	7
West Sussex	5
None of the above	0

There were 12 no shows/last minutes cancellations, 7 in the first session and 4 in the second.

Publicity:

The event was advertised in a multitude of ways, including:

- The King's Church shared the event with congregation, contacts and on their social media
- Poster in the Help Point Window
- Summer activity flyer
- Printed in RH Uncovered
- Press release in advance
- Shared with all local schools
- All noticeboards in the town
- A banner at the McDonalds roundabout
- Several posts on the Town Council Facebook and Twitter
- Sent to all supporting organisations and activity providers
- Sent, via email, to all the Young Carers database
- Shared with a support group I am part of personally
- Sent to those who attended the April sessions

Event breakdown:

Local organisations who support families were invited to attend and have an information table at the event. Six organisations attended offering support, these were:

- Reaching Families
- NHS dentistry team
- WSCC young carers
- WSCC Early Help Team
- West Sussex Library Service
- Kangaroos

The King's Church ran a number of activities with volunteers from the church, and the budget was used to provide other activities too. The activities were all free to do and on offer there was:

- Inflatable disco dome with music
- Giant train track
- Stone painting
- Bubble machine
- Sand art
- Lego table
- Seed planting
- Sensory herb table
- Colouring
- Butterfly craft

Author Julie Alison Macdonald provided a book reading of her story, alongside Jenny Fisher who did Makaton signs. Julie then offered a book signing to anyone who purchased a copy of one of her books. This was the only paid part of the event and books were reasonably priced at £7.99. Kindermusik also lead a music session.

Feedback:

We created a QR code which is available at the events to scan as well as in notice boards afterwards. The code is linked to a Google form which we can keep adding events to without changing the code itself. The form simply asks what event you have attended, *'what went well'*, *'it would be even better if...'* and *'If the event you attended required you to book in advance, how did you find the process?'*

Here are some of the responses received for this event;

What went well?

- Trainmaster track was awesome and friendly staff, loved the layout of the stalls in the middle, bouncy castle great as always, friendly council staff.
- It was brilliant. Lots of different activities available. There were the right amount of people attending so it didn't feel too busy. All the information stands were helpful with lots of friendly people offering help.
- Quiet session for my ASD children not too many there and wide range of activities.
- Good number of activities and helpful advice.
- Really good people manning the services and resources available to speak with for support.

It would be even better if...

- More sand art craft- perhaps limit to 1/2 per person and give as a pack?
- My daughter said she wished the circus skills person was there as she really enjoyed that at one of the sessions we previously attended.
- Nothing we really enjoyed it.

- Nothing.
- The enclosed dome bouncy castle isn't ideal, we have been every time and each time it seems hard to manage as you can't see inside! We have fed back that there needs to be an open bouncy castle, SEN children don't always like going into a dark enclosed space and there has been an accident with my child that I attended with twice.

There was a lady manning the knitting stand this time around and she was very impatient with the SEN child I was with who wanted to throw beads and go on the stage, she didn't seem to know how to speak to people and was quite rude to us when we tried to explain about the child we were with not being verbal and understanding her.

If the event you attended required you to book in advance, how did you find the process?

- It's never very easy to find out where to book tickets, perhaps a simple link straight to the booking page?
- Very easy
- Easy
- Email

There was also lots of verbal feedback received on the day, as well as feedback from Cllr Brenda Williams, as below:

"Please pass on my sincere thanks to all involved in the SEND event at Kings Church. To those responsible for the huge amount of planning and to all volunteers who helped to make the event such a success. Talking today as a grandparent (and not a Councillor) with two grandchildren with differing needs, I have seen for myself the great variety of activities which they could choose from. I also spoke with a couple of other parents who thought the same. Also, having the information tables in the middle-enabled parents/carers to talk while keeping an eye on the children. Thanks again to all involved in this event."

Evaluation:

There were 12 no shows/last minute cancelations. I have broken these down into area to assess whether distance was an issue;

Burgess Hill -9

West Sussex -0

Surrounding Village -Hurst/Hassocks ect -1

None of the above -1

Haywards Heath -1

This was clearly not the issue, as 75% of no shows were actually listed as being Burgess Hill residents, so I can only presume that there were other reasons for non-attendance.

Looking at the stats as a whole, our attendance was 80.32%, compared with April's turnout which was 63.33% and last August's attendance was 66.67%. Clearly the number of no shows has decreased overtime, which is great to see. Attendance can be tricky for this cohort so it's good to see people are recognising the event as a safe space.

These sessions are getting a mix of supporting services coming along and it was great to have Reaching Families attending, who normally work term-time only, and who will be also attending in October. The NHS dentistry team were also a good addition and seemed to generate good conversations around oral health, they were invited by the Early Help team, and I will explore further contacts with them. With many SEND children and young people now being homeschooled it would be interesting to see if there is anyone able to support with knowledge in homeschooling. I have also made a contact with the Disabled Facilities Fund team, who although can't attend in October, are looking to support in 2025.

We requested the ages of children/young people be supplied at the time of booking to ensure we have activities for all, these were broken down to:

under 5	5 to 7	8 to 11	12 plus	Total
21	35	44	20	120

Looking at the 12 plus age group there were 9 young people aged 12-13, 6 aged 14-15 and 5 17 plus. So clearly there is a need to cater to this older age range still. The mix aged group sessions do seem to be working well so we will continue to use a range of table heights and mix activities for both session times.

It is always difficult to know whether to change up the activities or to stick to what we have used previously. Minus one comment about the disco dome, everyone else seems to love it and the issue raised on the feedback form was not brought up during the session, but to mitigate any issue we are always looking at the size of children on it at any time, we limit the numbers and do allow parents to support children to use it, in terms of the train tracks I think this works best as not being used every session.

It was also great to have coverage in the Mid Sussex Times, both pre and post event. I have included copies of the articles below.

Overall, these sessions seem to be working well, they are booking up quickly and the attendance is increasing. The Budding Foundation verbally agreed at this event to extend support to 3 dates next year, this demonstrated the value of inviting funders to events. The King's Church is also happy to support them again in 2025, of which both are the key to the success of the sessions. I will continue to listen to feedback and adjust where needed, to ensure the sessions meet the needs of those attending, and continue to provide a safe, inviting space for children and parents alike.

Kayleigh Elliott-Davidson
Events, Communication and Administration Officer
30/9/2024

Photos of event



Pre event:

Post Event:

Family sessions return next week

The next Family Fun Sessions – for families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – will take place next Thursday (August 8).

Held at The King's Church, families can expect the ever-popular inflatable disco dome to return, Train Master with their never-ending train track and crafts.

Reaching Families, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Early Help, Kangaroos, WSCC Young Carers, Makaton Jenny, and West Sussex Libraries will all be available to offer information and support to families.

Julie Alison McDonald will also be returning with her newest book!

The sessions will run from 10am-11.30am and 12.30pm-2pm, and are free to attend but spaces must be booked in advance.

The sessions are aimed at ages three to 18, with pri-

ority given to those living in Burgess Hill and the surrounding villages.

To book visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/burgesshilltowncouncil or contact the Help Point on 01444 247726 or visit in person at 96 Church Walk. Please note under-16s must be accompanied by a parent or carer at all times.

Anyone over 16 who is able to attend the event space without the need of parent or carer support may do so, but a responsible adult must remain onsite for the duration of the event.

We are unfortunately unable to provide any individuals with independent support at the event.

For further information visit www.burgesshill.gov.uk/family-fun-sessions/

The Family Fun Session are co-organized by The King's Church and Burgess Hill Town Council, with funding from The Budding Foundation.



Collection of plants from the Budding Foundation

Fun sessions at King's Church

Steve Cridland
Report contributed
submit.nationalworld.com

Burgess Hill Town Council and The King's Church joined forces earlier this month to deliver two Family Fun Sessions for families of children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities).

There was a whole range of free activities on offer to families, as well as organisations providing support.

The King's Church organised a range of activities which were run by their volunteers, from wool butterflies to sand art!

There was also an inflatable disco dome with lights and music, providing great sensory experience, and Trainmaster Sussex set up their giant train tracks.

Author Julie Alison McDonald led a story time with assistance from Jenny Fisher who did Makaton signs alongside, and Kindermusik provided a music session.

The Budding Foundation sponsored the event and also donated items for a seed planting activity, as well as stones to paint – which proved popular.

Additionally, they donated herb plants for everyone to feel and smell.

A host of organisations at-

tended to provide support and information to the families, including Kangaroos, WSCC Early Help, West Sussex Young Carers, Reaching Families and West Sussex Libraries.

A great time was had by all, with amazing feedback from attendees!

If you would like to hear more about events organised by Burgess Hill Town Council then register to join the mailing list at www.burgesshill.gov.uk/town-community/town-events/events-mailing-list

■ Visit submit.nationalworld.com to send your story straight to our newsroom.