

North London Deaf Children's Society AGM Committee Report for 2020

Presented to members on 8th February 2021

The NLDCS aims to offer support by providing accessible events and activities for deaf children and their families in an inclusive, safe environment where ideas and knowledge can be shared and friendships made. All events are heavily subsidised by the NLDCS and some are free of charge to members.

2020 started well but we were not to know how it would evolve into one of the toughest years for all of us with the outbreak of COVID-19. What with working from home, furlough, home schooling, social distancing and self-isolating, a whole range of new vocabulary and new ways of thinking hit us all. We are a charity used to being actively face-to-face with our members and this has not been the case since March but we have now embraced online activities.

Our year in numbers	2019	2020
Subsidised or free events for families	9	5
Email communications	36	27
Newsletters	2	2
Mailing list of members, schools, professionals	98	100
Families who attended our events this year	22	18
Age range of children	0 - 15	0-14

Events 2020

February: AGM & Party

Another of our combined AGM party events encouraged more people to take part in the AGM with the multisport party brilliantly run by Brian from Football Superstars.

The party was a great success with 63 adults and children attending – making up 19 families as well as the very welcome three Barnet Teachers of the Deaf.

After the ball games and races, we all shared a wonderful buffet tea with food provided by all.

The AGM included the formal voting for committee officers – Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and the other members of the committee. There were two changes to the committee. Esther Conway stepped down as Chair after 11 years in the role, to be replaced by Sharon Webb as interim Chair. Andrea Dean retired from the committee after being both secretary and newsletter editor over the years. More Committee news continues below.

March: London Transport Museum

We booked ahead and as a special group we were welcomed as soon as the doors opened at 10am with no need to join the long queue to get in. This meant that we could enjoy a quieter space

together to explore the museum with chances to clamber up and down double decker buses and pretend to drive taxis and trains without long waits in queues and the potentially overwhelming noise of hundreds of excited children! The museum has a wonderful collection of old buses and model trains, and children loved dressing up as drivers and cleaners, pressing all the buttons in the Thames clipper climb aboard boat and practising waiting for the green man and looking both ways before crossing the road at the working pedestrian crossing.

June- July: Online Art Competition – Being Me

Our first ever art competition was a great success with 12 submissions across a wide age group. The brilliant competition publicity video was made by youth member Aiden O’Gorman who also produced a stunning piece of art to show as an example. There were three winners (one from each age group) who received £10 gift vouchers and everyone who took part received an NLDCS certificate. The event was judged by Ruaridh Lever Hogg a young professional artist with hearing loss.

November: Online Baking event

On a rainy Saturday afternoon in lockdown we ran our first live online event via Zoom. We were lucky enough to have a professional baker Daisy to lead the baking and with the timing of late November, what better to bake that spooky finger biscuits for Halloween.

Eleven children took part and all were given the recipe in advance and knew what implements they would need so there was no last-minute rushing around. BSL communication was included by Ben Jefferson to make this a fully accessible event and all agreed it was a great successful.

December: Online Arts & Crafts

Our last event of the year was Arts and Crafts on Zoom. With a seasonal theme, the children were all told to save paper tubes (kitchen roll tubes) and gather together all their making bits and pieces. The eleven children who took had the option to make snowmen, elves, Santas or reindeers with ideas shared for creating the snow, the antlers and other things necessary accoutrements. Thank you Naomi Thomas who stepped in as a volunteer to provide BSL interpretation for this event.

Committee Activities

The committee elected at the AGM in February 2020 was Sharon Webb (interim chair), Donna Apparicio (treasurer), Kam Makram (secretary), Esther Conway, Linda Sells, Denis Coelho, Lauren Rapacioli, Suki Gill, Barbara Kasperska, Zibiah Loakthar, Rayan Basma. We were also delighted to welcome Marvi Rauf, Jess Robson and Pari Kotecha to the NLDCS as trustees and committee members.

Despite COVID-19, from March the committee continued to meet monthly via Zoom to keep update to date and share resources. Committee members also took part in online Children’s Hearing Services Working Group CHSWG meetings with local authority and NHS staff in attendance to establish contacts, represent other families and find out news and information.

In July Kam Makram took over the role of Chair and in November, after first becoming our contact for members with young children, Zibiah Loakthar agreed to become our secretary.

We updated the NLDCS website to include a resources and information page including COVID-19 links and deaf specific learning resources as well as other useful online links. Our newsletter included

information about NLDCS events and topics such as government policies, NDCS online events and information about local services for deaf families. We also share information about other events and news that might interest our members.

We have a private **Facebook Group** for members and hope to grow this as a way to share ideas, stories and news and we now have an Instagram account for sharing information at NLDCS_org.

All committee members are up-to-date on safeguarding issues and hold DBS certification.

Finally, we say a huge thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time and expertise for the NLDCS this year. We can't do it without you.

Plans for 2021

We already have a draft schedule of online events for the start of 2021 with a range of fun, stimulating and educational activities planned, Watch out for more news via email, our website and Facebook. If any member has ideas for online activities that would work via Zoom, please do get in touch.

CAN YOU HELP? We always need new committee members. We are always looking for new committee members who have a few hours a month spare to join the team. We are especially looking for those with good organisational skills and experience in Mailchimp and WordPress to help with our communication.