



2025-26 Annual Review



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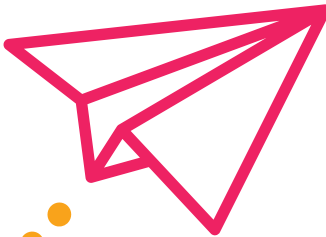
**HOME
START**
Clackmannanshire

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Chair’s Update

By Patrick Leavey



In the last year we’ve supported more families than we ever have before.

This review will tell you how we managed to do that, and about the impact our charity had on the lives of those families. It covers the last financial year: the period of time from April 2025 to March 2026. It always seems a bit strange publishing our annual review in September, a full six months afterwards. But it takes a bit of time to process our accounts and to organise our annual general meeting (AGM).

I am the Chair of our group of trustees, who hold ultimate responsibility for Home-Start Clackmannanshire. My family and I live near Forestmill, and I work in the public sector.

The charity was founded in 1988, so we’re 38 years old now. I’ve been involved in Home-Start for about 12 of those years, and I’ve seen the organisation change considerably over that time. In order to provide support to more families with a variety of needs, we have needed more staff, more volunteers and so, more funding. Being a larger organisation means that sometimes our systems and processes have needed to change and adapt. This last year has also solidified a new way of working with Clackmannanshire Council (and wider partners) and a new approach to the planning, commissioning, delivering and

evaluation of local children and family services through The Clackmannanshire Children and Family Services Collaborative.

Our charity trustees make decisions, like approving the annual budget; ensuring that the money from our funders is spent carefully and sensibly; and set the long-term direction of the charity. We meet every 6 weeks or so to discuss risks and how to avoid them, to plan, and to keep an eye on the people, systems and processes which make Home-Start Clackmannanshire so effective.

Since our last annual review, Jill Baty has stepped down as a Trustee in order to focus on a career change. Jill helped us to produce Home Start Clackmannanshire’s first Communications Strategy and Communications Plan. This was something we’d talked about doing for many years, but Jill made it happen. Thank you for all that work and for your good counsel over the years, Jill.

Many other people are due thanks for their time, their hard work and their compassion and kindness. Thank you, in particular, to all our volunteers and the staff team who helped so many Clackmannanshire families over the course of those last 12 months. And thank you to all our donors and funders who continue to fund us in what is a challenging financial environment.

Treasurer's Update 2025/2026

By Colin Carmichael BA, FCIBS

My second report as Treasurer, and once again our CEO Louise deserves thanks for keeping everything ticking over including the organisation's finances.



It has been recognised for some time that Louise has been spread very thin between her day-to-day responsibilities as CEO while being expected to manage the financial operations of the charity. Against this background, it is pleasing that we have recently recruited an experienced Finance Officer (a very warm welcome is extended to Iryna) on a part-time basis to take over control of financial administration and ensure that accurate financial records are maintained and reported regularly to the Trustee Board. In short course, we expect this to release Louise to give more focus to her duties as CEO.

The past financial year has seen our income maintained at around the same level as 2025. This is no mean feat in a financially constrained climate but does mean that we have not kept pace with inflation. However, the charity's overheads have continued to rise, up by over £65k (15.5%) year-on-year, with the main contributory factor to this being payroll costs up by £61k (22.5%) excluding shop payroll, which is an issue of which the Board are aware and continue to monitor. Other overheads are being held well in check overall. The overall position as a result of the

foregoing is a deficit of £42k. This is reflected in a like reduction in the charity's funds. With restricted funds being held for specific projects and used purely to cover associated costs, this means that there is a broadly break-even position in respect of these. However, grants towards our unrestricted funds are more elusive and this is where the deficit primarily originates.

At the start of the 2026/27 financial year, there was a very healthy pipeline of grants at the application / approval stage and as part of the budgeting process these applications have been individually assessed as to likelihood of success. This, together with further grant application opportunities which we know will come forward during the year gives us confidence in the financial sustainability of the charity. Our aim on an annual basis is to break even or achieve a reasonable surplus, but in reality, this does mean that from time-to-time a deficit will be seen. However, the charity maintains a strong balance sheet with adequate reserves to cover deficit years, and every effort is being made to return to a surplus in the current financial year.

"I am very grateful to you for the great help you have given me, for your attention and support, for your good feedback about me. Thank you for your trust, it was a great pleasure for me to be part of your team".

Volunteer quote

Strategic Plan Update

By Patrick Leavey

Our Strategic Plan sets out the wider context in which Home-Start Clackmannanshire operates, our vision and mission, the services we deliver, the resources we have at our disposal, and the risks that we face and how we plan to mitigate them. Each strategic plan covers a 3-year period.

This annual review marks the end of the 2023 to 2026 Strategic Plan, and the start of the next one, which covers the financial years 2026/27 to 2028/29.

In our 2023 to 2026 plan, we set out four priorities, and I'm pleased to report that we achieved all of them. Here's a quick summary:

- Increase awareness of the charity. We now have a communications strategy and a plan to deliver it. We know that more and more people now see and interact with our online content. Our shop in the centre of Alloa also raises our profile.
- Develop the support we provide to families. We are working with an organisation called Statisticians 4 Society which provides statistical support to charities. We hope this will enable us to use the data we already capture to improve the services we provide. We have launched a new Perinatal Infant Mental Health group.
- School-age children. We have increased our capacity to work directly with children by funding and recruiting a third Family Support Worker. 20% of our referrals come from education partners, and a common theme is children having difficulty engaging with school.
- Grow unrestricted funds. We have grown the revenue from our shop and introduced a Gift Aid scheme.

In order to develop the plan which covers 2026 to 2029 we gathered staff and trustees together for a strategic planning workshop: a day of discussion, celebration and reflection. Supported by an external facilitator, we considered our progress over the last strategic plan period, the changing profile and needs of the families that we are supporting, and our aspirations for the future. We then had subsequent discussions within the Board of Trustees, with volunteers, with families and with our partners. The new plan is available on our website.

The objectives for the next 3 years are:

Objective 1

Develop our volunteer programme in order that our services are more inclusive, accessible and reflective of need.

Objective 2

Provide additional staff/volunteer training, support or signposting to improve the physical, mental and financial wellbeing of families.

Objective 3

Improve our systems and processes

Objective 4

Improve the physical locations we operate out of.

We will keep you updated on how we get on!



Key messages and measuring our impact

220 families supported over 25/26, made up of 680 individuals: 275 adults and 405 children. Of these children, 238 were aged 0-5, 117 were aged 6-12, and 50 were aged 13 – 18.

Over 25/26, we received 109 new referrals (a further 11 families were also re-referred) *. 39% came from health colleagues (e.g. midwives, health visitors, perinatal mental health team, family nurse partnership etc.); 26% came through education colleagues; 21% from social work; 10% self-referral; and 4% from fellow third sector partners.
*Not including our partnership project Play Roots, where referrals are logged separately.

Launched a new Open Access Stay and Play group for families with children aged 0-3, which 31 families benefitted from.

We fulfilled 34 Bairn Bank Referrals through our Charity Shop, at an estimated value of £1,091.75 (based on our shop pricing).

We have continued our environmental impact commitment. In 25/26, we received 35802.90 KG of items, and diverted 94% from landfill through onward sale, our Bairn Bank, or onward donation to Nathans Wastesavers.

Over 98% of respondents to our end of year family survey felt listened to and supported through their journey with us.

86% of respondents to our end of year family survey felt more confident since receiving support.

80% of respondents to our end of year family survey felt less isolated/that their network has improved since receiving support

78% of respondents to our end of year family survey felt more able to deal with challenging situations and make positive changes in their lives

65% of respondents to our end of year family survey felt better able to manage their mental wellbeing

73% of respondents to our end of year family survey felt their children had improved social skills

82% of respondents to our end of year family survey felt their children were more interested/ excited to learn and try new activities

73% of respondents to our end of year family survey felt their children's confidence increased

100% of volunteers who responded to our end of year survey expressed being either very satisfied or satisfied with their overall volunteering experience with us

100% of volunteers who responded to our end of year survey rated our training opportunities as very good or good

100% of our volunteers who responded to our end of year survey felt they are having an impact for local families and/or our organisation

100% of respondents to our end of year referrer/ partner survey reported that they trust in our teams commitment and capability to meet local families' needs

100% of respondents to our end of year referrer/ partner survey would recommend our services to friends/family/colleagues

100% of respondents to our end of year referrer/ partner survey would recommend us as a partner to collaborate with

Through our end of year shop customer satisfaction survey, 100% of respondents said they were extremely satisfied/very satisfied with our shop and the service they received

100% of respondents to our end of year shop customer satisfaction survey said they would shop with us again

Top reasons customers reported for shopping with us through our end of year survey were:

- Friendly team (87%)
- Value for money (70%)
- Wish to support a local charity (68%)
- To be more environmentally friendly (38%)

CEO's Update

By Louise Orr

As I sit down to write this update, I feel disbelief and thankful in equal measure...



Disbelief that it has already been a year since our last review, since we last reflected upon the year gone by, and how much of an increase we have again seen in the need for our support locally.

Thankful that I continue to have an incredible, dedicated and talented team of staff and volunteers' side by side with me to allow us to continue to learn, grow, and meet the ever-changing needs of our local families. Thankful to have a diverse, strong, capable board providing the oversight and direction needed to ensure we remain sustainable, and present, to provide the best possible support we can for a long time to come. Thankful that despite a challenging funding landscape, trusts, foundations, our local authority, community members and more have continued to invest in us, trusting our ability to deliver high quality, impactful services for our local families. I was very proud to see from our recent end-of-year survey that over 20 different partners, spanning different sectors, 100% reported that they trust in our teams commitment and capability to meet local family's needs.

We have continued to develop our collaboration and partnership in this past year. This includes developing a new project, "Providing a Place2Be for Home-Start families", funded through National Lottery Community, Strengthening Communities. This is allowing us 18 months to work with Home-Start Stirling and Place2Be, to bring a tried and tested schools-based model called PIPT (Personalised Individual Parenting Training) into our community settings by embedding a Family

Practitioner within each Home-Start team one day a week. The focus is on earlier intervention (from age 3) with parents/ carers to allow them to better understand and support their children's wellbeing, cascading impact across the whole family.

Wellbeing, and supporting positive wellbeing continues to be a huge focus for us, and so we were thrilled, with the support of Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Funding to be able to launch our third parent/carer wellbeing group. We now have groups in Alloa, Menstrie and Tillicoultry, focused on peer connections, discovering passions, combating isolation, and providing the time and space to explore next steps, whatever they may be.

Growing our services sustainably has been another key focus for us in the past year. We were thrilled to be the only Scottish Home-Start to secure Pears Compassionate Communities funding (through Home-Start UK), to test and learn practices to support us transform not only our volunteering programme but also feed into wider learning and practice development to benefit the whole Home-Start UK network.

I have been privileged to work alongside the other 11 Home-Starts across the UK on this journey, adopting Design thinking and mindsets along the way. This funding also allowed us to invest in a dedicated Volunteer and Community Engagement Worker for the very first time!

Family Quotes

“I have been supported to help with my daughters behaviour and emotions, this has given me more confidence to take my daughter out alone and deal with her challenges without help.”

“The lovely M visits us we have known her for quite a while, which I feel like really helps as when you are a family with additional needs you often meet a lot of people whom you need to tell your story to so it’s nice to have a trusted person who understands you and your story. She is also highly knowledgeable and experienced which makes her a good person to turn to for advice and to have conversations with. She helps keep me company when my mental health is low and my physical health is deteriorating and I have been isolating myself and sometimes that is all I need and I appreciate that she does not try to force me to do more than that. She has also attended TAC meetings with me as support and to help speak things through after. She has also met with my son on a few occasions to spend time with him and speak about emotions We also attended a play in the park event which was really exciting for us we had had quite a rough summer weather wise and life wise and hadn’t done as much as we wanted to so it was really nice to get out and be with other families. My child also receives Christmas presents and he has an understanding that they are from people that help him and he donated a present back and when we have a clear out he donates to the charity shop so this has given him a sense of community because we do not have a big family.”

“Home-Start support is like a personal safety net”

“I started living alone and didn’t leave the house home-start supported me to find confidence to leave the house myself with my son as I never used to do anything if I didn’t have someone with me.”

“I have been supported through the most challenging time in my life and couldn’t have done it without Home-Start help and support”

“I feel happier in myself and less likely to over-think and worry. F is very sociable and happy. I have a volunteer who comes out to my house once a week, we try to get out for a walk with F and my dog. I have been feeling very guilty about not being able to take my dog out for walks as much as what he needs so this has been a fantastic help and I am starting to feel more confident about doing it myself. If I didn’t have the help from Home-Start I would continue to feel very isolated and lonely. It has been a true lifeline!”

“Home-Start has made such a huge difference to me and my children. When I was struggling and feeling overwhelmed, they were there without judgement. They listened to me, supported me, and reminded me that I wasn’t alone. The support they’ve given has helped me feel more confident as a parent. Having someone to talk to who genuinely cares has improved my mental wellbeing and helped me cope better on difficult days. My children have also benefited so much — they’ve had positive attention, encouragement and stability, which has made a real difference to our home life. Home-Start didn’t just offer practical help, they offered emotional support, reassurance and kindness at a time when I really needed it. I honestly don’t know how I would have managed without them, and I will always be grateful for the support they gave my family”

“I have been working with my support worker on my mental health health and my anxiety. Also on leaving the house. I have now started not stressing nearly as much and going into panic mode at everything in my life no matter how big or small. I might have a small moment now and again where I panic but then look at the bigger picture and fix and try to resolve if I am able to and not run away anymore and hide from this like I used to. I know my support worker is there when needed... I have started leaving the house to do shopping which I never used to do... My moods are not as low. I am having more good days than bad now and my daughter has also had emotional support through her hard times. My support worker was there to support me through supporting my daughter after losing her friend which if I did not have support I don’t think I would have coped watching my daughter grieve, but with help, I was able to support my daughter through this really hard time in her life”

In Home Supports

Family Support Coordinators

As always, we would like to begin by expressing our heartfelt thanks to our incredible volunteers. Without their dedication and compassion, we would be unable to provide such an effective and valuable support service to families across Clackmannanshire.

Over the past year, our team has continued to evolve, including the introduction of a new Parent Wellbeing Group led by Bernie.

This year has brought a further increase in demand for our services. To help meet this growing need, we have worked alongside our new Volunteer and Community Engagement Worker Laura, to develop our volunteer programme. We delivered two volunteer preparation courses and welcomed seven new volunteers. These volunteers have been incorporated into both home-visiting and group support.

Our Preparation Course, traditionally delivered face-to-face over eight weeks, has been adapted into a hybrid format. Volunteers now have the flexibility to complete online modules at their own pace, complemented by support from Coordinators and in-person catch-up sessions as needed. This new approach has allowed us to be more inclusive and responsive to volunteers’ needs.

The course continues to cover essential topics, including Safeguarding, Domestic Abuse, and Mental Health — both in parents/carers and children. We also focus on the vital importance of listening skills and confidentiality, ensuring our volunteers are well-equipped to provide compassionate, informed support in all aspects of their role.

We remain committed to providing ongoing learning and development opportunities for our volunteers. This includes access to online courses, which

volunteers can complete at their own pace. Over the past year, we have continued to align our work with The Promise, reinforcing our dedication to ensuring that all care-experienced children in Scotland are supported to reach their full potential and feel loved, respected, and nurtured.



Once a volunteer is matched with a family, they receive ongoing monthly support from their named Coordinator. In addition, our staff are always available for a chat and ready to provide support whenever any issues or concerns arise. This open-door approach helps us ensure our volunteers feel confident, valued, and well-supported in their roles.

This year, we also had the privilege of welcoming two students to our team who completed their placements with us, supporting Play Roots and wider family support group work. Each brought valuable knowledge, as well as practical and emotional support, which greatly benefited the families attending the groups.

To ensure we are meeting the needs identified during initial assessments, our Coordinators continue to carry out 12-weekly review visits with families. These regular check-ins are vital for monitoring progress and adapting support as required. In addition, staff

In Home Supports

continue to support families in crisis during some of their most difficult and challenging times.

This year has been particularly challenging for many of the families we support, with significant increases in poor mental health, financial hardship, and experiences of domestic abuse. In response, our team has strengthened collaboration with a range of external agencies and partners, including Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Clackmannanshire Council's Energy Efficiency Team, The Gate Charity Food Bank, SGN's Warm Home Scheme, making use of our internal Bairn Bank, and many more. Through these partnerships, we have been able to signpost and support families to access the wider services they need.

In many cases, our team also provides direct assistance by accompanying families to important appointments, including mental health services,

hospital visits, and dental check-ups, addressing issues of missed or avoided appointments that have affected outcomes in the past.

Additionally, we have supported families with benefit checks and applications, working alongside Social Security Scotland and CAB to assist with Adult and Child Disability Payments, ensuring families receive the financial support they are entitled to.

As we look ahead to 2026–2027, we are excited to continue developing and strengthening our support services for families across Clackmannanshire. We remain committed to creating meaningful opportunities for our volunteers and ensuring that every family we work with feels heard, supported, and empowered.

**With warm regards,
Paula, Maureen, Leyanne, and Bernie**



Family Support Workers

And just like that, here we are at the end of another busy year!

Freya has loved her first year with the team and continues to build confidence within her role. Megan and Susan have had another successful year supporting families in a variety of circumstances.

As Home-Start Family Support Workers, we aim to offer practical and emotional health to families experiencing difficulties, whether in the short or long term. We support the whole family in a non-judgmental way, and build a plan together with the family, entirely tailored towards their needs and wants. This can sometimes involve working directly (1:1) with a child/ren in the home. Our support can be a short, intensive, targeted piece of work lasting as little as 6 weeks, or it can last for a year or more. Our aim is to empower our families to address challenges and reduce risks and problems in their lives, and to make positive decisions moving forward. Our role ends when mutually agreed with the family that they have met the goals identified in our co-produced plan. Depending on their needs at that point, support may be ended entirely, they may move to a group only support, or, they may progress to having one of our wonderful volunteers matched with them.

When we meet a new family, our first step is often to offer help around practical issues; regularly these are financial. We can make referrals for food parcels and fuel vouchers and provide/signpost to budgeting advice. We support families to access information and support from wider agencies where appropriate - from Citizens' Advice, Social Security Scotland, Clackmannanshire Family Wellbeing Partnership (been incredible support for families to access enhanced childcare provisions and support). We also make referrals to our 'Bairn Bank' (our own charity shop) for toys, books and clothes, baby equipment, and safety equipment such as stairgates. We were delighted to receive funding from SGN and M&G in the Community this year

which allowed us to ensure that families had warm clothing, basic energy advice tips, and access to wider Winter Warmer items to make winter just that little bit easier.

Poor mental health continues to be a UK-wide problem for both adults and children, and in Clackmannanshire it is an important area where support is required. This can take the form of emotional support (often simply listening) or more practical efforts such as helping transport to/from and sitting in on mental health and CAMHS appointments. Post-natal depression and other mental health problems can often lead to feelings of isolation, so we support families to attend both wider offerings we have, such as parent/carer wellbeing groups and our perinatal infant mental health (PIMHs) group "Bumps to Babies" or Play Roots; a group-based project run as a partnership between us, Action for Children, Education and Health. We also highlight to families' wider offerings available locally and suggest they engage with local Family Wellbeing Hubs to find out more and connect with their communities.

We see often that overwhelm, poor mental health, and daily struggles can lead to chaotic living conditions. We support by working alongside families to clear, clean, and make plans to maintain living environments; it is vital for us that we work with families, and not do to or for them, so that they have ownership of the changes and decisions that are being made and are able to sustain them far beyond our involvement with them.

A significant part of the family support worker role involves working with families on making sense of challenging behaviours and additional support needs, setting boundaries, improving communication, and establishing routines within the home, all aimed at improving parent/carer-child relationships. We have supported families through bereavements and been someone to lean on in times of need.

In Home Supports

Where school attendance and/or punctuality are an issue, we work through this with families, offering strategies and practical support to bring about change. We support parents and carers to attend Team Around the Child and Staged Intervention meetings at school and nursery, as this is something our families often find daunting. We help with pediatric appointments, eye tests, dental appointments, in short anything that is likely to affect a child's early development. We also support parents to access groups within Clackmannanshire like THRIVE and the Cygnet Programme which focuses on additional support needs. Our work involves liaising with and working alongside other agencies such as Citizens' Advice, schools and nurseries, Health Visiting and Social Work teams. We have found there are many benefits to be gained from this collaborative approach. We attend core-group meetings for children who are on the Child Protection register, as well as supporting adults and children who have been affected by domestic abuse. We communicate with Safe guardians and have an input into Children's Hearings. We work with parents, carers and children where there is a kinship care arrangement, and support families where a parent is in prison.

Family support workers have provided direct support to 53 families over the year. We are always looking to build on and update our existing skills and knowledge so that we can provide the best support possible to our families. Recently we have undertaken training in Domestic Abuse, Drugs and Alcohol awareness, Trauma Informed Practice, Harmful Sexualised Behaviour and Makaton training. Freya has recently completed Safe and Together training which discusses keeping children safe & together with the non-abusive parent/carer in a domestic abuse situation. Susan has begun using her LIAM training (Lets Introduce Anxiety Management) and looks forward to fully developing her skills with this tool in the coming year.

The family support worker role is nothing if not



varied, and no two days are ever the same. Events such as our Christmas party in the Town Hall are always a highlight. Our summer trip to the Safari Park brings joy to children and parents alike, and other seasonal events like our Autumn nature festival and Easter fun day are well attended and great fun. The team often attend bingo teas to support local charities, including Love in a Box which ensures children in Clackmannanshire experience the magic of Christmas. As always, it has been a privilege to be part of the amazing Home-Start team this year and to work alongside our fantastic families, colleagues and volunteers. We are excited to see what 2026/27 will bring.

Megan, Susan and Freya

Group Support Services

Family Support Groups

0-3 Stay and Play

Our group at Hawkhill has evolved from being a smaller, supported family group, to an open access session, welcoming any family in Clackmannanshire with a wee one 0-3. This change came as part of our efforts to remain responsive to changing local needs, and recognising that the "closed" nature of our wider groups may be a barrier for some families in engaging with support, as they would need to be referred, or contact us about support. This group is an open door for all; allowing us to reach a wider demographic and removing barriers to engagement.

Since starting the group part-way through this year, we have delivered 37 sessions, and had 31 families attend our sessions. Group has been warmly received and enjoyed and brings in a lovely mix of drop in families and some "regulars".

Each week, we have a variety of activities, usually centred on a theme. We have enjoyed new 'story boards', messy play, water play, outdoor exploration and wider activities to enhance fine and gross motor skills. We have also had visits from



ChildSmile, The Health Visiting Support Team, Play Talk Read and the Smart Play Network. Each group is free for families to attend and always provides a snack and a cuppa for parents/carers.

Play Roots – 0-5 groups

Play Roots has continued to grow over the last year, with each of our four group locations seeing significant growth in attendance. We have continued to work in partnership with Action for Children, Educational Psychology (Clackmannanshire Council), and Speech and Language Therapy (NHS) to ensure families receive the support they need.

Over the past year, we have enjoyed a range of outings and experiences together. One of the highlights was our Santa Cruise, kindly facilitated by the Seagull Trust. Families had a wonderful time meeting Santa onboard the boat and enjoyed a relaxing trip along the Falkirk Canal, spotting a variety of wildlife along the way.

We ended the summer term with a visit to Briarlands



Farm, where families enjoyed spending time together, meeting the animals, and making the most of the play park. It was a fantastic day that was enjoyed by everyone who attended.

Group Support Services

0-3 Ben Cleuch Group

We continue to offer a smaller, supported families only group each week at The Ben Cleuch Centre. We have delivered 35 sessions over the year, with 4-8 families attending at any one time.

We have been making the use of the fantastic outdoor space at the centre, getting out wherever possible. We have also enjoyed messy and sensory play, and supported our parents/carers to be more comfortable and confident with messy play.



All the children have loved getting involved in exploring different textures through this too.

Group has also been a wonderfully supportive place to have conversations about weaning, routines, self-care as a parent/carer, and healthy boundaries within friendships. As with all our groups and activities, snack and refreshments are provided, and we are able to provide transport thanks to Robertson Trust funding.



Holiday programmes/events

Easter Event

We held our Easter Event at the Bowmar Centre, welcoming 91 attendees (32 families) for a fun session including crafts with CLD, creating Easter baskets, planting of sunflowers, colouring, and of course an easter egg hunt!

“Management team are kind, responsive, supportive and always ready to listen.”

Volunteer quote



Summer Play in the Park

Our Summer Programme was fabulous as always. We went to five different parks around Clackmannanshire and had lots of fun activities for the whole family. Once again, we had some of our wonderful partners join us to provide activities: Reachout with Arts in Mind come along and do a clay and bead activity and canvas painting; The Japanese Gardens at Cowden attended to lead cherry blossom crafts and

origami; Under the Trees attended to support with den building and loose parts play; and our local CLD (Community Learning and Development) team came along to run a mini Highland Games with families.

Across our 5 sessions, we had 395 attendees: 148 adults and 247 children.



“I think we all know when we’ve made a difference. The personal connections we are privileged to have made with the families already provide direct feedback. The small things count most - more smiles, more engagement, more confidence, better emotional regulation, clearer communication and just generally seeing families having more fun together - these things tell us we are making a difference”.

Volunteer quote

Group Support Services

Safari Park

We were very lucky again this year to receive funding to allow us to host a summer day trip for our families. Due to the success, enjoyment and positive feedback from last year, we again embarked upon a trip to Blair Drummond Safari Park.

We had some excitement with monkeys hitching a lift on our coaches, and a truly “roarsome” day out. We had 4 coaches full of families, plus some cars, totalling 208 attendees (58 families): 101 adults and 107 children.



October Nature Festival

This October event has fast become a favourite with the team and families’ alike, and so we went ahead again at The Cochrane Hall in Alva to get in touch with nature – exploring the fantastic outdoor space this venue is situated amongst. We had a variety of activities leaning into our nature theme, from the Japanese Garden supporting people to create leaf crowns and various origami creations, to Reachout with Arts in Mind leading sessions creating leaf filled

pumpkins, and Autumnal cards. We also had tuff tray bug hunts (with toys), outdoor bug hunts, and den building. 98 attendees enjoyed the event this year.



Christmas Party

We once again held our annual Christmas Party at Alloa Town Hall, welcoming 167 people (51 families). We had our usual games, magic show, dancing, party food, crafts, tree decoration making, reindeer dust station and of course, Santa visiting to provide each child in attendance with a gift (selection box and book).

We were very fortunate to have The Wee Bookshop in Dollar support us through a giving tree, where customers purchased and donated books to support this. We also had a wonderful donation of selection boxes from a private donor, and support to wrap everything up from team members at Robertson Construction.



“The ongoing support for volunteers and learning opportunities are great”.

Volunteer quote

Group Support Services



Parent/carers groups

Our parent/carers wellbeing groups have continued to go from strength to strength. We often see parents/carers lose their sense of identity beyond their parent/carers role, and so these groups offer a safe, confidential space where parents and carers can speak openly, try new activities, and connect with others who may be experiencing similar challenges.

At the beginning of the year, we had two groups running on a weekly (term-time) basis, with Maureen supporting a group in Community House, Alloa, and Paula operating a group from the Dumyat Centre in Menstrie. As the year progressed, and need for this method of support was consistently increasing, we managed to secure funding from our Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund to support us to start a third group. Bernie, another of our Coordinators

started this group toward the end of the financial year (February), based from The Ben Cleuch in Tillicoultry.

All three groups are well attended and have naturally formed bonds and support networks between themselves. We have also found that once parents/carers are ready to move on from support, they are keen to give back, and we have been fortunate to have three of our former attendees join us as peer support volunteers within groups to support their running.

Moving forward, we hope to continue bringing all three groups together for training and activities identified by parents and carers. These opportunities will help support confidence, reduce isolation, promote health and wellbeing, and encourage participants to develop new skills.



“I think the way homestart recognises and supports volunteers is amazing”.

Volunteer quote

PIMHs – Perinatal Infant Mental Health

Our dedicated PIMHs support group has now been available to local families for 18 months. We have seen a significant increase in referrals for this service which allows us to support families at the earliest opportunity. As a result, our team members involved in delivering the support has grown to include Leyanne (Family Support Coordinator), Carole and Carlyne (Group Support Workers). In the last year, we have supported 25 expectant/new Mums, with 29 babies/infants. We have also signposted/referred expectant/new Mums to wider local supports dependent upon their needs/locality, such as Aberlour perinatal services, Community House, Bumps and All etc.

We have onboarded and trained dedicated PIMHs volunteers to support both in homes and through our Bumps to Babies group. Over the last year, we have provided term time weekly group sessions. Each session is split between structured wellbeing work, facilitated by Leyanne, and a more relaxed, developmental play session, lead by Carole and Carlyne, with volunteer support throughout. Our structured work covers topics of mental health and wellbeing such as understanding mental health, self-care, healthy support networks, understanding negative thoughts and communicating needs. Our relaxed play allows deeper connections to be made between our Mums and their bumps/babies and creates an environment where Carole and Carlyne can focus on modelling the play needed for connection and development. We incorporate songs, rhyme, and bookbugs into these sessions too.

We have also collaborated with services from the wider community based on the needs identified by our families. This has included visits from Child Smile, CAB,



the Community Nursing Team, The Child Wellbeing Partnership and Clacks Works to name a few.

At times, expectant/new Mums are perhaps not ready or able to engage in a group setting, and so Leyanne will carry out home-based support with them. We have also developed our volunteer onboarding, with Home-Start UK providing a dedicated PIMHs module as part of our course of preparation for volunteers. As such, we have been able to also match 5 volunteers as home visitors for PIMHs families. These volunteers provide emotional and practical support to families. Where more intensive support is required, our Family Support Workers and Coordinators also all have training in PIMHs and are able to provide home-based support where necessary. For example, they have carried out specific pieces of work to help promote development and attachment along with more practical tasks around managing day-to-day life.

To provide an additional offer to families with children under 6 (and sometimes older where there are additional support requirements), we also invested, with the support of the Child Wellbeing Partnership, in two team members becoming qualified to deliver Baby Massage. We have successfully ran three blocks thus far, and intend to build into our offering to run at least quarterly.



Partner and Referrer Feedback

“Homestart is a valued service that we could not do without. The level of support they proved our wider community is invaluable”.

“Locally Home-Start are very well known and attend many partnership meetings to promote their services including the CLD Partnership and Planet Youth Coalition. Keep doing what you do.”

“HS Clacks are a trusted and excellent service- Louise is a passionate and committed CEO who is a delight to work with- I am keen to continue working together in the future”.

“I honestly think since starting in my new post... I have been welcomed into home start like one of the team. Your communication is fabulous and I appreciate all the support I have been given from your staff”.

“We have mostly made referrals to the Bairn Bank, this service has been invaluable to not only the families in receipt of goods but also to us being able to access items so easily through Homestart shop.”

“In general, I feel that Homestart is a great model for family support across Clackmannanshire from family support to volunteering. It’s great that families can go on a journey of support with you including upskilling and giving back potentially as volunteers.”

“Continue as you are, well respected and impressive team of staff and volunteer’s. Everyone involved should be proud of what they do.”

“You obviously work really hard at what you do and seem to really support each other - families are lucky to have you!”

“I just wanted to add how positive my experience has been working in partnership with Home-Start. Through my role... the team have been incredibly welcoming, supportive and open from the very beginning. Communication has always been clear and consistent, and nothing ever feels like too much trouble. I have felt genuinely accepted and valued... The organisation, professionalism and warmth of the staff really stand out. It truly feels like a partnership, and I’m very grateful for how approachable, helpful and encouraging everyone has been.”

“Home-Start Clackmannanshire is a fantastic local charity that puts the needs of the families they work with at the heart of everything they do. They keep it local/ grassroots which is very important.”

Home-Start Charity Shop Update



Another busy and rewarding year has flown by in our shop, filled with growth, teamwork and continued support from our wonderful community.

We have had another fantastic year of support from our amazing shop volunteers. Their development has been wonderful to see, with many growing in confidence, skills and independence throughout the year. Several have even moved on to secure employment, which has been fantastic to celebrate with them. We currently have 22 volunteers, which is an incredible achievement and a real strength for the shop. We have also expanded the volunteer roles we have introducing more remote roles, such as our puzzle checkers, of which we have 7!

We have also continued working alongside local high schools to provide placements for pupils, which has been a great success. It has been lovely to see the students/volunteers develop their confidence and practical skills during their time with us, and their experience forming part of their qualifications (e.g. unit in enterprise) and gaining their Saltire Awards. Once again, we would like to thank all our volunteers for their dedication, commitment and support. We also held two celebration events to show our appreciation for everything they do. Our volunteers truly are the backbone of our shop.

This year, we have supported 34 families through our Bairn Bank, with items supplied coming in at an estimated value of £1,091.75 (based on our shop pricing). Our Bairn Bank provides essential items for families where cost would otherwise be a barrier. Referrals can be made by anyone, including families themselves, and where we have the items needed, we provide them free of charge. We have also joined the Baby Bank Alliance, helping us to strengthen our Bairn Bank, connect with fellow baby banks across the UK and secure funding to build our Bank.



We have continued our efforts to make donating to us as accessible as possible, using our van for collections and increasing the number of donation pods located across the county. We are very grateful to our wonderful partners who host pods for us: Ceteris, with one in the e-centre and one in the Alloa Business Centre; Menstrie Community Action Group at the Dumyat Centre; Alva Health Centre; Tullibody Health Centre; and Ugym Tillicoultry, who kindly host two pods. We are keen to continue expanding our pod locations, so if you would like to accommodate one on your premises, please get in touch.

We also remain committed to environmental sustainability and strive to ensure that as many donations as possible are diverted from landfill. Over 2025/26, we received 35802.90 KG of items, of which we successfully diverted 94% from landfill through onward sale, Bairn Bank, or donation to Nathans Wastesavers.

We have had an exciting year in the shop, trying new ideas and expanding our enterprise activity. We hosted a late-night Christmas shopping event, opening our back stock room to the public with tables of new toys and gift sets available to purchase, along with mulled wine and nibbles for customers to enjoy while they browsed. The event was a great success, and we look forward to advertising this year’s shopping evening soon. Building on the Christmas excitement, our festive window



display was loved by customers and recognised by the judges of the Alloa First window decoration competition. We were delighted to win first prize, with staff and volunteers collecting the award on stage at the Christmas light switch-on. We have also started selling products on eBay and Vinted, which has been a great way to reach more customers and raise additional funds, with further development planned for the coming year.

Our new till system and Gift Aid process continue to be a great success, with volunteers now feeling confident using both systems. We are delighted to now have an amazing 364 donors signed up for Gift Aid, which is fantastic and allows us to claim additional funds back for our charity.

Of course, the year has not been without its challenges, including periods of staff absence. However, the team has continued to pull together, showing dedication and commitment to providing the best possible experience for our customers. Laura, our Volunteer Engagement Officer, has been an amazing support to the shop, helping to keep us organised and providing valuable support to our wonderful volunteer team. Our customers continue to show how much they value the shop, which was reflected in our end-of-year customer survey: 100% of customers reported that they were extremely or very satisfied with our goods and services, and 100% said they would shop with us again. This is something we are very proud of.

As we look ahead, we have exciting plans to continue developing and growing our shop over the coming year. None of these ambitions would be possible

without the dedication of our volunteers, the ongoing support of the wider Home-Start staff team, the partnership of our landlord, and the incredible generosity of our donors and customers. We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to our success and look forward to building on these achievements together in the year ahead.

Sarah and Doune
Sarah & Heather



**Thanks to
our amazing
Charity Shop
Volunteers**

Volunteer and Community Engagement

Although the Volunteer and Community Engagement Worker role was only fully established in August 2025, it has already made strong progress.

Key achievements include delivering two volunteer preparation courses and working with local secondary schools to encourage pupils to get involved in volunteering. None of this would have been possible without the commitment of our wonderful volunteers and staff team. Volunteers are central to everything we do, and their support across the organisation enables us to help more families, run our charity shop, and operate the bairn bank.

Between August 2025 and April 2026, the Volunteer and Community Engagement role truly lived up to its sense of adventure. It began with weekly flyer drops to homes across the wee county, Clackmannanshire. Over seven weeks, with support from current volunteers and staff, we reached 1,642 houses in seven towns and collectively walked an impressive 174,000 steps, or around 87 miles. This campaign helped recruit five new volunteers and led to a volunteer preparation course starting in early November. The volunteers graduated in December, just in time for a festive party and a well-earned break.

Alongside volunteer recruitment, training, and retention, the Volunteer and Community Engagement role has helped us connect more widely with the local community, raise awareness of our charity, and support fundraising where possible. We were pleased to attend several community events, including the Dollar Winter Festival, Neil's Hugs community event in Sauchie, and Alva Development Trust's tabletop sale. These events provided valuable opportunities to build local connections, promote our charity, and share our volunteering opportunities.

We also built links with local secondary schools by promoting youth volunteering, explaining the



importance of not-for-profit organisations, and supporting young people who chose our charity for the Youth Philanthropy Initiative. I spoke with pupils from the Enterprise in the Community classes at Alloa Academy about the role charities like ours play in supporting local communities. As part of the course, pupils worked in groups to choose ways to support the charity, including running a guess-the-sweetie-jar activity and holding a coffee morning. It was fantastic to meet both classes, hear their ideas, and answer some excellent questions about the charity and the support we provide to local families.

Four groups also represented our charity in their schools' Youth Philanthropy Initiative challenges. This programme gives S2 pupils across secondary schools the opportunity to choose a charity, research its work, and compete for the chance to win £3,000 on its behalf. As part of the challenge, each group must meet with the charity either in person or virtually to better understand how the funding would be used. One group even chose to visit our Stay and Play group to see our work in action, and

Volunteer and Community Engagement



they thoroughly enjoyed joining in with the messy play activity.

In addition to our annual Christmas and Volunteer Week celebrations, we trialled Cuppa and Chat mornings as an alternative to volunteer forums. Two sessions took place, one in January 2026 and another in March 2026, each with its own theme. January's session celebrated Burns Night, with a quiz about Robert Burns and his life, along with

Scottish treats and time for volunteers and staff to chat and share ideas. The quiz was quickly declared "too difficult" by those attending, so I was promptly banned from running future quizzes. March's spring-themed session gave everyone the chance to get creative by making paper-plate wreaths and embracing their inner toddlers. Feedback on both sessions was positive, and we hope to continue them next year.



Fundraising and Awareness Raising

With an ever more challenging fundraising landscape, generating our own income through fundraising efforts remains a key focus for us. As a charity, we will always need the support of trusts, foundations, and wider funders (full overview can be found on page 31). However, the more funds we can raise ourselves, the more sustainable our services are.

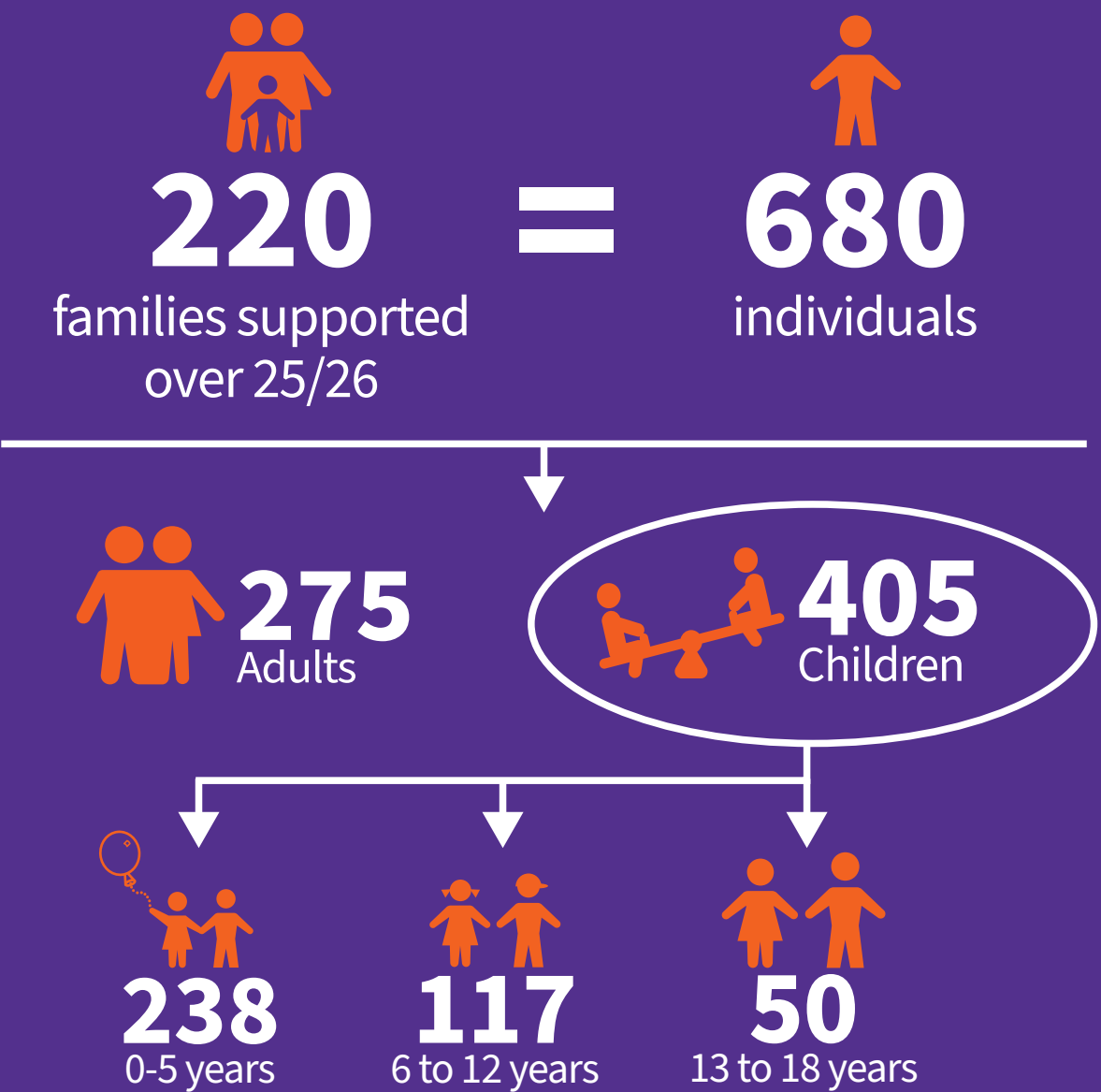
Our charity shop remains our leading source of income we generate ourselves. We also continue to build on our fundraising activities, for example through our Christmas Appeal. Thanks to generous donations from individuals and local businesses, we were again able to provide over £3500 in supermarket vouchers, gifts, and winter warmers such as boots and jackets to ensure that all our families not only had the essentials over the cold winter months but also were able to celebrate and enjoy the magic of Christmas (a full list of our supporters and donors can be found on page 30).

Over the course of the year, we also worked hard to raise our profile further locally. This is important not only to ensure that partners, referrers and families are aware of the supports we offer, but also to attract new volunteers to join our team. We have attended a variety of community events: Alva Primary fun day, Dollar Winter Festival, the Forth Valley Regional GIRFEC event, Alloa Rotary's Santa's Grotto, Wimpy Park Fun Day and many more. These events are also a lovely way to network, raise funds (who doesn't love a lucky dip or tombola!) and get some of our event and youth volunteers involved in our work.



The year in numbers:

April 2025 - March 2026



Over 9000 hours dedicated by our incredible team of volunteers across our groups, home-visiting, and shop!



964 home visits carried out by staff (Family Support Coordinators and Family Support Workers) alone!

415

visits/support meetings

A further 415 visits/support meetings were carried out by staff for reasons such as accompanying families to: TAC meetings; medical appointments; engage another service etc.

Child Protection:



10 families (31 children) on the Child Protection Register, or under Compulsory Supervision Orders.



6 families (9 children) with care experience

Reason for Referral:



Geographical areas where families reside:

Alloa **38%**
Alva **7%**
Cambus **1%**
Clackmannan **9%**
Coalsnaughton **1%**
Dollar **2%**
Fishcross **2%**
Menstrie **3%**
Sauchie **13%**
Tillicoultry **13%**
Tullibody **11%**

Referral Sources:

Health **39%**
Education **26%**
Social Work **21%**
Self-referral **10%**
Third Sector **4%**

Please note, this does not reflect Play Roots referrals, which are recorded separately.

Circumstances at referral:

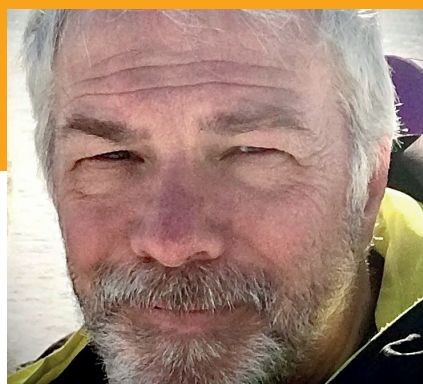
Family member in prison **6%**
Unsuitable housing **25%**
Member of family in the armed forces **2%**
Refugee/Asylum seeker **1%**
One or more adults in the household employed **47%**
Debt/financial struggles **22%**
Speech and language issues **16%**
Lone parent **61%**
Substance misuse **8%**
Domestic abuse **30%**
Disability **39%**
Teenage pregnancy **6%**
Poor Mental Health/Diagnosed **83%**

*NOT including dedicated Play Roots referrals

Trustees



Patrick Leavey (Chairperson)



Colin Carmichael (Treasurer)



Joan Gibson (Volunteer Rep)



Melissa Albentosa (Family Rep)



Sarah Shimmen



Elaine Wilson



Steven Day



Jim Nicol



Tony Duncan



Gemma Vear



Anne-Marie Aitken

Staff



Louise Orr



Jacqueline Kidd



Linda Kerr



Carole Evans



Maureen Holden



Leyanne McLean



Paula Paton



Bernadette Syme



Freya Kirkwood



Carolyn Nicol



Holly Daobry



Susan Bannatyne



Hayley Bunyan



Doune Weaver



Sarah Gray



Geoff Reid



Iryna Savenchuk



Amy Young

Supporters / Donors 2025-26

Alloa Academy
Alloa Baptist Church
Alloa Rotary Club
Alva Development Trust
Alva Health Centre
Andy Gray
Arnold Clark
Asda Alloa
B & M Alloa
Ceteris
Clackmannan Development Trust
Coalsnaughton Village Hall
Community House, Alloa
CTSI
Dollar Community Development Trust
Flying Start Nursery
Hawkhill Community Centre
Hillfoots Harmony
Individuals who donated to our
Christmas Appeal
Japanese Gardens, Cowden
Lithium Systems
Maintel Ltd
Menstrie Community Action Group

Morrisons, Alloa
Pure Gym, Alloa
Reachout with Arts in Mind
Royal Oak, Alloa
Robertson Construction
RSVP Knitting Group
Sarah Kerr Choreography
Sauchie and Coalsnaughton Parish Church
St Mungos RC Prayer Group
Tesco, Alloa
The Cats Whiskers
Tillicoultry, Coalsnaughton & Devonside
Community Development Trust
Tullibody Community Development Trust
Tullibody Health Centre
U Gym, Tillicoultry
Valley Church
Wimpy Park



Thanks to our funders



Awards for All

May Mackintosh
Foundation



**Heinz, Anna and
Carol Kroch
Foundation**



Child Wellbeing
Partnership



The
Henry Smith
Charity

Community
Mental Health and
Wellbeing Fund

THE
BIGGIVE



Fairer Futures
Partnership





Clackmannanshire

**Chief Executive Officer:**

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Assistant Manager:

Jacqueline (Jax) Kidd

Office Manager:

Linda Kerr

Finance Officer:

Iryna Savenchuk

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Amy Young

Family Support Coordinators:

Maureen Holden

Paula Paton

Leyanne Mclean

Bernadette (Bernie) Syme

Family Practitioner – Place2Be Partnership:

Phillipa Donnelly

Family Support Workers:

Susan Bannatyne

Freya Kirkwood

Hayley Bunyan

Play Roots Coordinator:

Geoff Reid

Play Roots Group Support Worker:

Holly Daobry

Group Support Workers:

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Carolynne Nicol

Charity Shop Enterprise and Development Manager:

Sarah Gray

Charity Shop Retail Supervisor:

Doune Weaver

Consultant Support Provided by:

Shelley Bowman

Sofie Meier

Our wonderful team of trustees, family support, group, and shop volunteers.

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