



Contacts & Aims

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Kindred Spirits is a registered charity, based at First Base Agency, 6 Buccleuch Street, Dumfries DG1 2AH. Our aim is to help and support local kinship carers and their dependant children. We aim to empower grandparents and to encourage them and others to feel more positive about their situation.

If you have an article or a letter that you feel would be interesting to our readers, please email it to marion@kindredspirits-online.org.uk

Kindred Spirits Online

We now have our own website at <http://kindredspirits-online.org.uk>
It was designed by

James Middleton of <http://www.turningturnip.co.uk>
James is a profes-

sional web designer and has given his time and effort as a donation to Kindred Spirits.



Update

December 2009

Welcome to the first edition of our quarterly newsletter

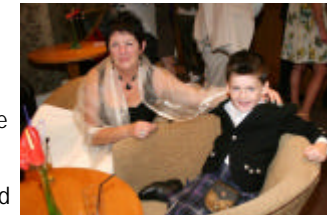
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Kindred Spirits—the beginning

Four years ago my grandson came to live with me on a permanent basis. I felt very isolated and didn't know where to turn to for support and advice. I identified a need for a service for Kinship carers and after discussions with Carol Green and Mark Frankland from The First Base Agency I set about setting up Kindred Spirits. I started by writing a letter to the local papers telling my story and asking if there were any others in my situation. I had many phone

nate in that Carol and Mark offered me the use of their premises and meetings were soon set up with kinship carers and politicians. The next step was to secure funding so I set about writing to various trusts; money came in small amounts until in 2007 I received £5000 from the Scottish Community Foundation. This has kept us afloat for 2 years now, however, funds are getting low again.



Another role central to Kindred Spirits is to raise

Christmas Party

The children's Christmas party will be held in Cresswell Community Centre, Cresswell Hill, Dumfries on Saturday 19 December from 2 pm—4.30 pm. Please contact Tulip or one of the committee so that we know the numbers of those attending

calls in response to the letters. I took details of all the callers. I then did a lot of soul searching for a name and came up with Kindred Spirits, next on the list was a leaflet. After a weeks of pattering about on the computer a leaflet and posters were ready to distribute.

The next year was spent working hard to get charitable status, getting a committee and a constitution. I was fortunate

awareness of the difficulties that face kinship carers and to campaign for a realistic, consistent weekly financial allowance. There are around 250,000 children who are being raised by grandparents and other relatives and friends as an alternative to being in care and we are saving the government billions of pounds. We must keep up our fight and remember that people together are strong.

Tulip

Outings



At Belfast Zoo

Throughout the year the children have had several outings. At Easter, We took them to Dalscone Farm. During the summer there was a trip to Belfast Zoo. For many it was the first time on board a ferry. Later on there was an outing to Mabie Farm Park.



A swinging time at Mabie

Blackpool Holiday

Kindred Spirits received £12,000 from Children in Need for a residential holiday.

At a meeting of Kindred Spirits in August it was decided that we would look at the possibility of taking the children to Blackpool and staying in a hotel instead of caravans as we had the previous year in Scarborough. Tulip set about the mammoth task with the help of



Margaret Martin of organizing the holiday.

A group of around 40 went on holiday to Blackpool on 12 October. We stayed at

the Norbreck Castle Hotel.

Everyone was given a travel pass for the trams and buses, tickets were also given for those who wanted to visit the Sandcastle Water Park, Sea World, the Pleasure Beach and the Tower.

A big thank you to Tulip and Margaret for organizing the holiday.

Member's Meeting

There will be a Kindred Spirits member's meeting on 12 January at 1 pm in the First Base Office, Buccleuch Street, Dumfries. Please come along if you are able.

If you have any items for the agenda please let us know before the 5th January.

Email: marion@kindredspirits-online.org.uk

UPDATE

Kinship Care Allowance

Kindred Spirits Committee members and other group members attended the Corporate Planning Meeting of Dumfries & Galloway Council on Tuesday 3 November. The council had to vote on whether or not they

should raise the amount of Kinship Care Allowance to £75 from £45. After much debate the outcome was 13 to 5 councillors voted against the proposal.

It is still very unclear regarding who is entitled to

claim this allowance and it is advisable that everyone wishing to claim it should seek advice from Citizens Advice Bureau. Tel: 01387 252456



National Conference in London

Tulip attended the first national conference for leaders of support groups for family and friends carers in London on 19 November. Here is what she says about it.

The conference was very useful in that I made some good contacts with people from the Family Rights Group. Here is some feedback::

I met other kinship care support groups all of them met on a regular basis for coffee, chat and general support. I am wondering if this is something we would like to start doing so feedback from everyone would be useful.

An important piece of news I took away with me below: We need to start lobbying

our MP's to support this bill. The Child Poverty Bill is part of the government's strategy for ending child poverty by the year 2020. You can find out what the government are saying about it in the Every Child Matters section of the DCSF website here: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/parents/childpoverty/>

Office bearers duties

At a meeting of Kindred Spirits on 11 August 2009 a new committee was nominated and elected by the members of the group who attended. Their names can be found on page four of this newsletter. We feel that it is right that we should outline their duties here. They are as follows:

Chairman—responsible for chairing meetings, dealing with complaints and writing

certain letters.
Treasurer—dealing with finance, keeping a record of all transactions and preparing accounts for audit.
Secretary—taking the minutes of meetings, writing letters which have either been dictated by the committee or sanctioned by them, preparing a quarterly newsletter and dealing with the website.



Wanted

Clothes to fit a girl 2-3 years old.

If you have any good quality clean clothing that you think might be of use please contact

Tulip.

UPDATE



Congratulations

To Tulip on the birth of her granddaughter

Connie