

# News update

## July 2015



### From the outgoing chair

This is my final Chairman's Report as I stood down from the role (after 8 years) at our recent AGM and have handed over to Marion Simon. See more from her on page 2.



Firstly, **thank you** to everyone who attended the AGM and for all the people who have offered their help to take on new roles or to help others carry out some of many jobs. DSO is in a very fortunate position in that we have **some committed people and a healthy bank balance**, so hopefully some of the ideas that came out of the meeting will be carried out.

I would like to **highlight some of the things we have achieved over the past few years**. There are too many people to mention personally, but when we reviewed our ideas from last year's AGM it was fantastic to say that we have achieved, or made a start, on many of them. In particular:

- Training for **midwives**. We organised a course run by the DSA for about 25 midwives in April.
- More training for **parents and professionals**, aimed at children of all ages, covering a range of subjects.
- Visits by professionals to Wednesday morning **stay and play** sessions at Abingdon.
- **New baby leaflet**.
- **All-age events** (disco, visit to Thomley Hall).
- **Primary Development Groups** - along the lines of EDGs but for children of school age.

Finally, a thank you to **Sarah Hazell** who has stepped down from the role of Treasurer, and to Marion who has stepped down as Secretary to take on the Chairman role. **Welcome to Sue Buckett (Treasurer) and Emma Smith (Secretary)!**

I am remaining a Trustee of DSO, and have plans to still be involved. In the meantime, hope to see you at the summer party on 11th July.

**Katharine Horrocks**

### Thank you Katharine!

Everyone at DSO would like to thank **Katharine Horrocks for the fantastic job she has done as Chairperson over the last 8 years and the huge contribution she has made to the charity, through her hard work, commitment and excellent leadership**. The changes she has instigated over her years have improved DSO's structure, financial situation and presence in the wider community. The improved finances have allowed the charity to set up a comprehensive programme of events such as social clubs for all ages, training courses for parents and professionals, Primary and Early Development Groups, and groupwide annual social events.

**Katharine has always been positive, cheerful, and ready to throw herself 100% into everything she does for the charity**, including singing at the DSO concert and giving speeches and interviews to the press and wider community. Being into amateur dramatics always comes in handy when we need a public speaker!

**She has always had a very professional and pragmatic approach to supporting DSO, and has remained passionate and committed to the work she does for the charity**. The impact that Katharine has had on the charity through her fantastic leadership skills, and her ability to listen, solve problems, and make decisions, is huge.

Thank you, Katharine, from everyone at DSO for being such an exceptional Chairperson.

*Appreciation written by Lucy Sanderson*



## From the new chair

Hi, I'm Marion. My partner Ian and I have three children: Finn (7), and twins Amber and Olivia (5). Amber has Down's Syndrome. We live in Charlbury, in west Oxfordshire.



I was mainly introduced to Down's Syndrome Oxford through the Early Development Groups, which we loved coming to, especially when DSO started running them on a weekly basis in Abingdon. **I really liked the support I got from other mums and from the groups, which Amber also really enjoyed.**

I started going to committee meetings and eventually became **DSO Secretary** when Amber was three. I also took on the distribution of fundraising materials.

This school year I also organised the pilot of the **Primary Development Groups**, which were popular and will be held again next year.

**During my time as secretary I've learnt a lot about DSO.** I'm excited about taking on the role of chair and am very pleased that Sue Beckett and Emma Smith have taken on the roles of treasurer and secretary, respectively.

Their children are younger than Amber and that means that, with all the other committee members who have children who are older, **we now have a really solid base for serving children with Down's Syndrome of all ages and their parents and carers throughout Oxfordshire.**

**Down's Syndrome Oxford, in my view, really is a charity for parents and by parents.** The committee meetings, which are held every other month, are open to everyone, so please do come along. If it is difficult for you to come to meetings but you are interested in helping out and have ideas for things that you would like DSO to do or organise, **please let me or Emma know.** We'd love to hear from you.

Finally, I would like to thank Katharine for all her hard work for DSO over the years. You'll be a tough act to follow!

**Marion Simon**



A NEW LINE UP From left to right: Emily Robinson (assistant treasurer), Sue Beckett (treasurer), Marion Simon (chair), Emma Smith (secretary).

### Key email addresses:

Marion Simon 01608 811781  
Emma Smith 07920 808247  
Sue Beckett 07976 598816

chair@dsoxford.org.uk  
secretary@dsoxford.org.uk  
treasurer@dsoxford.org.uk

## Champion dancer!

**In the last newsletter I mentioned that Chloe Sanderson, aged 9, was due to compete in the Oxfordshire Schools Strictly Dance competition on 21 March.** Chloe is a member of her school dance team, and along with her dance partner Daniel and 14 other team mates, competed against 8 other teams in the county competition.



**The team had to perform two dances - the tango and the jive - in front of an audience of 150 people.** The team were fantastic and didn't put a foot wrong, each and every one of them performed superbly, remembering their steps and staying in time with one another, including Chloe.

**She loved every minute of it and was beaming with pride** when they took their bow in front of the judges. She's a massive fan of Strictly Come Dancing and I know she felt like she was a star of the real thing!

The top three teams were called to the stage and it was a nervous wait before her school was called out as the winner. **Chloe and all her team mates were ecstatic as they collected the glitter ball trophy.** The top three schools will now go on represent Oxfordshire in the National Schools Strictly Dance competition later this month. A big thank you to her very patient and lovely dance partner Daniel, and to her fantastic dance teacher, Andrea, who has been truly inclusive.

*Lucy Sanderson*



## Primary Club

In May the Primary Club had a trip to Bicester Bowl with a meal afterwards. Everyone enjoyed themselves even if the children did beat most of the adults. *Below is a photo of Joseph in action!*

Future events coming up include a Zumba session and a trip to see Father Christmas. Details will be advertised nearer the time.



## Stay and Play

DSO have recently donated £500 towards revamping the sensory room at South Abingdon Children's Centre, which hosts our weekly Stay and Play.

The children can now enjoy a selection of sensory toys with lights and textures. We also purchased a light cube which along with a bubble machine has been a big hit with the children. *Here's James enjoying some of the sensory toys.*



## Pre-School Club outing: Camp Mohawk, Sat 22 August

### Camp Mohawk is a day centre for children with special needs set in 5 acres of woodland.

They have a wide range of activities for us to explore including woodland, an adventure playground, soft play areas, sensory and art rooms. There is also a heated outdoor swimming pool and we have 2 x 45 minute sessions set aside for our exclusive use. Camp Mohawk has basic changing facilities and cubby holes to keep your gear, but no lockers.

**Please bring a picnic for yourselves and your family on the day.** If the sun is shining there are plenty of picnic tables and areas for us to eat. If not, there is an indoor dining area we can use. **DSO will be funding the cost of entry to Camp Mohawk.**

Camp Mohawk is open from 10am (so please try to arrive then) until 4pm and you can find out more about it here: <http://campaohawk.org.uk/index.html>

**Please email me as soon as possible, letting me know if you are able to attend, including:**

- names of those attending
- a contact telephone number for you
- whether you would like to swim on the 11.15 or 13.30 session and how many of your party will be swimming

#### A note on directions:

Mohawk is situated in 5 acres of ancient woodland near Wargrave, Berkshire. It is relatively secluded however it is well sign posted from Wargrave centre, which is situated on the A321 between Twyford and Henley. A word of warning - 'Sat Navs', both old and new, have often been known to lead people to the wrong location so please double check the location before heading off. If you are lost then please do not hesitate to call the centre on 0118 940 4045 and someone will be able to direct you.

Many thanks  
Emma Smith

Contact Emma on [preschool@dsoxford.org.uk](mailto:preschool@dsoxford.org.uk)

**Website:** <http://www.dsoxford.org.uk>

**Enquiries email address:** [info@dsoxford.org.uk](mailto:info@dsoxford.org.uk)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/dsoxford>

**Twitter:** [@DownsOxford](http://twitter.com/DownsOxford)

Registered charity number: 1103850

With thanks again to First Move direct marketing in High Wycombe who very generously prints and mails our newsletter free-of-charge.

## Latest DSO Lottery Winners

### March

1st Kelly Stacey (£42)  
2nd Ryan Wells (£25.20)  
3rd Ruth & Nick Smith (£16.80)

### April

1st Nigel Orman (£42)

2nd Matt & Emily Robinson (£25.20)

3rd Sue Crisp (£16.82)

### May

1st Ella Segaran (£42)

2nd C & J Dilnot (£25.20)

3rd Mary Robinson (£16.80)

### June

1st Andrew Partner (£39)

2nd Sally Dubock (£23.40)

3rd Ruth & Nick Smith (£15.60)

**To join:** set up a monthly payment to DSO Lottery (account 2978 6768; sort code 30 80 45). £5 for one ticket or £10 for two and send an email to [lottery@dsoxford.org.uk](mailto:lottery@dsoxford.org.uk)  
We will then allocate your numbers.

### Are you receiving the right information from DSO?

- Do you receive emails relating to age appropriate events for your child?
- Are you receiving emails that you would rather not?
- Have you moved house recently or are you about to move?

If your child is about to start school, you could switch over to receiving information about our Primary Club. Has your child reached 10 but you are still receiving information about Primary Club activities? Are you now 18+?

**If so please take a couple of minutes to update your details on our database.** It is really important to use that we only send out information that is relevant to you.

We don't want people to miss out on events because they are not receiving the right emails.

Also, we do not want to waste paper copies of the newsletter sending them to people who have moved or who would rather not receive them.

Updating your details and preferences is really easy:

**Log on: [www.dsoxford.org.uk](http://www.dsoxford.org.uk)  
Go to the 'About You' menu option along the top and select 'Login' and enter your username and password.**

If you have forgotten either of these, please email [website@dsoxford.org.uk](mailto:website@dsoxford.org.uk) and we can remind you.