

**MAIDSTONE MENCAP  
CHARITABLE TRUST LTD**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2025**

Cobtree Hall, Willington Street  
Maidstone ME15 8EB

**Registered Charity No 1009677 – Registered Company No 2672192**

## **MAIDSTONE MENCAP CHARITABLE TRUST LIMITED**

**Registered Charity No 1009677 - Registered Company No 2672192**

PRESIDENT: Mrs Helen Grant MP

VICE PRESIDENTS: Vacant

DIRECTORS: Mrs Susan Roughley Chairman

Mr Mark Smith

Mrs Mary Rimmer

Mr Guy Roughley

Mrs Amanda Masters

Other Committee Members

Mrs Lynn Snedden Secretary

Mr James Burrows Treasurer

Mrs Liane Morris Playschool & Clubs Manager

Mrs Kornelia Couchouron Office & facility Coordinator

Mr Angus Roughley Community and Marketing Officer

Mrs Rebecca Fox Social Coordinator

# MAIDSTONE MENCAP CHARITABLE TRUST LTD

## ANNUAL REPORT 2024

### CHAIR'S REPORT:

Chair Person report

2025 saw the charity directly support 116 children and young adults as well as giving the indirect support to their families and carers. We were in a position to do this from the money received from KCC funding, the National lottery, grants, donations and fundraising events.

Unsurprisingly given the current climate and competitiveness for funds, the money received from grants and donations was down but due to the tight control of unrestricted funds our year-end figures were within budget. Although the charity's financial position is stable, there is absolutely no guarantee of further national lottery funding, so the emphasis for 2026 will be sourcing new grants and fundraising opportunities as well as hopefully forging some corporate funding relationships and collaborations in the community.

The building continues to prove expensive in terms of upkeep but 2025 saw many smaller much needed repairs carried out. Additionally, the completion of the garden project took place resulting in a much safer, upgraded and usable outside area. This has been further enhanced by volunteers from voluntary work days for which we are always grateful.

Finally, this brings me to the core support work the charity provides through Playschool, Junior, Youth and Holiday club. All are running at full capacity with waiting lists in place. All face increased challenges due to the SEND system pressures and funding uncertainty. We struggle to recruit staff and volunteers, and this issue is to be a priority area of action in 2026. Our exceptional employees and volunteers continue to give strong support to all the children and young people attending our services.

Our focus for 2026 will have to be diversification of income and long-term sustainability, especially with increasing demand for our service provision and funding competition. I am sure there will be further challenges but I feel positive about the charity's future. I take this opportunity to thank all the trustees, management, employees and volunteers, families and carers for their continued support.

### FINANCIAL REPORT:

#### FINANCIAL REVIEW 2025

Opening balance, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025: £161,203.38  
Closing balance, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025: £146,844.53  
Balance decreased by: £14,358.85

This was a combination of:  
income overspend + expenditure underspend: +£13,620.81  
and a decrease in the ring-fenced funds: -£27,979.66

The charity finished 2025 with an income of £210,081.56 against a budget of £223,161.05, a shortfall of £13,079.49. This variance was due to lower Restricted Grant income than anticipated. Excluding restricted funds, unrestricted income was in line with budget, with higher-than-expected club income offsetting lower fundraising income.

Total expenditure for the year was £211,327.85, which was £1,246.29 above budget. This overspend related entirely to restricted fund activity. Unrestricted expenditure remained well controlled and finished £13,815.53 below budget, with savings in staffing and other running costs offsetting smaller overspends in finance and facilities.

Overall, the charity recorded a deficit of £14.3k for 2025, with restricted funds included. This reflects the planned use of funds brought forward from previous years rather than an underlying deterioration in day-to-day operations.

#### Restricted Funds

Restricted fund income during the year totalled £114,776.28, while expenditure totalled £142,755.94. The higher level of expenditure reflects the planned use of funds carried forward from previous years, including completion of the garden project and works funded from the Heritage Fund, which is not strictly restricted and may be used to support larger projects or exceptional costs if required. Restricted funds held at the year end totalled £56,414.05.

## **Reserves**

The combined Lloyds and Scottish Widows accounts closing bank balance at 31 December 2025 was £146,844.53. After allowing for restricted funds, the charity's operational balance was £40,430.48, with a reserve level of £50,000 (six months' running costs). While the overall cash position remains stable, unrestricted reserves are slightly below the preferred level and will need to be monitored carefully.

## **National Lottery Funding**

2025 was the final year of the charity's five-year National Lottery grant, which has made a significant contribution to the charity's financial stability by supporting staffing and payroll costs. A further application has been submitted for new Lottery funding, but no award has been confirmed.

In preparing the 2026 budget, the trustees have assumed that no further Lottery funding will be received. On that basis, the current forecast indicates a potential income deficit of approximately £43,000 for 2026. The board is aware of this position and will need to consider additional fundraising, grant income or cost savings during the year to ensure that reserves remain at an appropriate level.

## **Outlook**

The charity remains financially stable overall, with adequate cash reserves and no immediate risk to ongoing operations. However, the loss of Lottery funding means that the financial position will be more challenging going forward, and maintaining sufficient unrestricted reserves will be a key priority for the trustees during 2026.

# **FUND-RAISING REPORT:**

## **Fundraising Report**

Over the past year, our fundraising has played a vital role in enabling us to support approximately 116 children and young people. There is a continual growth in demand for the services Maidstone Mencap offers and thanks to the dedication of our supporters, we have been able to respond to that need.

This year, we generated income through a mix of grants, community fundraising, individual donations, and local partnerships. Trusts and foundations remain a key source of funding, with the National Lottery, Kent County Council and SENIF supporting the delivery of our core services. April 2026 sees the completion of our five-year grant funded by the National Lottery.

Community fundraising and events have helped raise both vital income and awareness of our work. In March we hosted an Easter Family Day, which included a jumble and cake sale. Maidstone Mencap became a partner of the Kent Charity Trek in May which saw six brave individuals walking huge distances across Kent to raise money for both our charity and the Kent Search and Rescue team, culminating in £1,836.10. We also collaborated with Funding For All and took on a stall selling craft items at Rochester Cathedral raising £1,000. This was a very successful event for us and a positive collaboration with another key county-wide charity. Our annual quiz evening was equally successful, and the year finished with an excellent community centred Christmas fair.

We are very touched that we are supported and championed by other Kent organisations and societies and have received generous donations from Kent wide rotary clubs, Scottish dancers and by those who enter our membership lottery.

We've seen continued engagement from our local community, including schools, volunteers, and corporate supporters who have given their time and resources. These contributions are not only financial but help to strengthen the inclusive community we are working to build.

Looking ahead, we are focused on building sustainability. Our priorities include increasing our total hours of support beyond current levels, expanding our playschool provision, and developing new income streams to ensure we can continue meeting demand. Like so many charities across the UK, we face ongoing challenges,

including increased competition for funding and rising costs. However, we remain committed to strengthening our fundraising approach, diversifying our strategies, and building long-term partnerships that will secure the future of our services.

Finally, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to all our funders, donors, volunteers, and supporters. Your generosity and commitment make everything we do possible.

### **Overall Figures**

Donations - £30,068.95

Events - £1,229.70

Hall Hire - £3,000

Memberships - £403.90

£25 Draw - £483

Restricted Grants - £114,776.28

**Angus Roughley**

**Community and Marketing Officer**

## **GROUPS REPORT:**

### **Cobtree Playschool for Special Children Annual report from January - December 2025**

Cobtree Playschool continued to support many families, and their children entrusted into our care. With register planning children joined us throughout the year, our sessions continued to be full, throughout the school year, with families being supported from with Maidstone and surrounding communities including Swale and Medway.

With ever evolving concerns for all parents with children having a SEND, awaiting the Government "white paper" and how the impact of this on special educational needs local authority budgets /funding and provision in schools and specialist places, it has been a challenging time as we work together to support applications for educational health and care plans and the revised criteria for KCC assessment, we supported families through appeals and tribunal processes and supported children deferring their school year until sept 2025/2026 whilst waiting outcomes- this has continued into the new school year giving the time and appropriate evidence and narrative reports needed.

We are continually aware of the need for the sustainability of our provision for those within the community, especially with knowledge of the impending changes of the SEND offer of support, not just from our local authority but nationwide. Although it is good to see recommendations increasing from the children's therapy support network and word of mouth, we need to continue to be proactive in maintaining the funding for the sustainability of our service and all the valuable support and care we are able to give to the children.

We had changes to our playschool team welcoming Farren into a role as a key person from Jan 2025, with support from Olivia from the September and also welcomed Greta into the team, having recently volunteered with us as a student. Cath continues to be supportive in the deputy manager role, with Sheryl Sue and Jaime continuing to provide the much-valued roles in supporting their key groups

I would like to give a huge thank you to the whole team, staff and volunteers, who all support each other and work so hard in ensuring that all the children are so well cared for, giving the much-needed time, dedication and planning to ensure we can meet their individual needs, developing trusting relationships with our parents and families.

We continue to face difficulties in recruitment for the much-valued roles of volunteers to be able to increase numbers whilst still being able to offer our continuing standards of care and early education. We, our children and families recognise and truly appreciate the help we have from our small team of very committed volunteers, those that have supported us for well over 10 years to those that support for a few months; their loyalty and continuing support makes a true difference to our provision and care and recognised best practices.

It continues to be a privilege to work alongside them, recognising their kindness care and support to the children and their families, which continues to embed the ethos of the Playschool., As each year, a thank you never seems to be a big enough word for all that they do.

We managed to say goodbye to those leaving for school and to celebrate the end of another school year, with a picnic for everyone in the garden. It is lovely to celebrate with the parents the children's achievements, to look through their unique photographed progress journey to show how well they have done and the steps they have made towards the early learning goals.

We invited parents into to share a session alongside their child in December, to share progress being made in their first term and to have opportunities to speak and spend time with the key person and team in their individual key groups, before sending off for the Christmas break.

We would like to acknowledge our Yoga ladies who use the hall on a Monday evening – donating regularly to Playschool, alongside donations we have received in memory of past volunteers – thank you

## Juniors

With a continuing thankyou to the KCC disabled commissioning service and the grant award from their short break Local Offer we are able to run our club provision for the t two years (April 2024 to March 2026) with applications submitted November 2025 to request continuing support for the next two years – fingers crossed outcome will be known early February 2026

Due to the continuing demand of places, we have kept to running our junior club, with three age groups, running alternate Saturdays to be able to support as many families as is possible although we have an evolving waiting list, we aim to be able to offer up to 36 children, sessions with us.

We have children joining our Saturdays from their experiences at Playschool or Summer club, a testament to the care, commitment, hard work, enthusiasm from our staffing support, that families have developed their trust in the caring relationships that have been formed, and the consistency of support we can continue to provide for them.

We have an evolving turn round from lovely groups of young helpers, coming from local schools in their sixth form of studies or completing Duke of Edinburgh awards for example. They are providing the one-to-one social interactions with the children. The children in our care are excited to come each session knowing or requesting their helpers by name “wanting to be with their friend” which embed the ethos of the offer of our Junior clubs. A huge thank you to the dedication and commitment to all of those in our Junior Club team. It is lovely to see the potential future of Maidstone Mencap in the commitment they all bring.

We are continuing to seek additional senior supporting staff to build on our management team, to enhance and bring in their knowledge and care to support those attending

## Youth Club

With thankyou to the KCC disabled commissioning service and the grant award from their short break Local Offer we are able to run our club provision for the next two year (April 2024 – March 2026)

The team have all worked with such tireless enthusiasm throughout this year to ensure that Youth club continues to offer a provision to those on our registers.

With the sessions being hall based, they included music, singing, dancing, craft activities and games - the young adults have had such fun. We prepare a supper together, encouraging the young people to make a pizza, a toasted sandwich, make choices of what they would like on their jacket potato for example. We encourage their independent skills to help with clearing away washing up They have especially loved the dancing and singing at the end of each session, you can see the confidence and friendships formed with their peers and with our staff, making the sessions a joyfully energetic social experience for all.

Again, a huge thank you must go to everyone at Youth, for the time and commitment that goes to organising and planning these events. The young adults in their care are being given some wonderful experiences and opportunities building on the trusting caring and fun relationships that they have developed with our team. They are building on their confidence to try new things, to interact with their peers engaging and understanding that during their time with us their individual needs are being met. This all supports the foundations needed for them to make a positive contribution in the decision making, and positive behaviours needed in the rules of being together in our community.

## Holiday Club

With thankyou to the KCC disabled commissioning service and the grant award from their short break Local Offer we are able to run our club provision summer 2024 and summer 2025

During the Summer, we again ran our holiday club for 4 weeks over August., providing respite for the families of almost 90 children and young adults between the ages of 5-18.

Activities are hall based, we are able to utilise both floors of the hall, the sensory room and garden, with each day divided to have a planned activity in the afternoon We themed each week including very messy fun, and visits from tessellation dance proving to be a very memorable day for everyone.

We have a fantastic team, with many familiar from previous years supporting the staffing needed again, in 1;1 care and more senior roles, these included the day-to-day management from our Junior club (Sarah) alongside a new management team, experienced from working in senior roles at specialist settings, or youth support roles, which provided the consistently knowledge and understanding for those entrusted to our care. They all worked so well together reflecting each day to ensure that the children's days were full of fun, activities, and social interactions,

A huge thank you must go out to all, for their commitment, time and the hard work given to make our holiday club so successful. Sharing their knowledge of the children, the techniques and strategies needed to help keep them entertained happy and motivated, made the children feel safe and confident to explore all the opportunities and experiences we could provide for them.

Photographs taken throughout the summer show the huge smiles, reinforcing the fun they had, and the relationships formed.

This Ethos continues to be embedded in our Junior and Youth clubs throughout the year, for which Maidstone Mencap continues to be immensely proud.

We are able to run our club provisions from the major financial support from the short break grants applied for from KCC Disabled Commissioning Service, local offer for short breaks, which support us to be able to offer much reduced fees for the 1;1 care and support provided, for this we say another thank you, as it goes a long way in sustaining the variety and quality of experiences we provided.

Another thank you must go Peggy Heron and the William Brake foundation for their huge donation again this year, which contributes significantly to the activities and resources we are able to provide for our Clubs.

## **BUILDING REPORT:**

### **Maidstone Mencap AGM Building Report for works January 2025 – December 2025**

#### **Works Completed This Year**

##### **1. Garden Renovation**

Our largest project this year was the full renovation of the garden. Unfortunately, the work had to be delayed until September, but it has now been completed and looks fantastic. The space is ready for the children to fully enjoy.

We were able to make some savings through VAT exemption.

##### **Costs (including payable VAT):**

- Timotay: £20,676.13
- Hoist & Co. (Fencing): £2,012.30
- Fencecraft: £1,119.28

The old playhouse was removed and a new shed was added.

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##### **2. Classic Lift**

Planned maintenance work was carried out on the lift to ensure its continued safe use. Unfortunately, shortly after the work was completed, the lift stopped working and required a call-out and emergency repair. Although the issue was resolved, communication and explanations from Classic Lift were poor.

Following this, James asked me to source an alternative provider. However, I later realised that the contract is on a rolling agreement requiring three months' notice. As this was not given in time, we remain contracted with Classic Lift until January 2027.

##### **Additional Costs:**

- Planned repair: £831.60
- Call-out: £187.12
- Emergency repair: £432.00

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##### **3. Volunteer Support**

A volunteer group attended the site and carried out significant clearing work around the building, including weeding and general garden tidying. This made a noticeable improvement to the outdoor areas.

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##### **4. Cleaning Company**

Following several complaints from staff regarding cleaning standards, I raised concerns with Blue Mountain. Unfortunately, this resulted in a further decline in service.

From September, we appointed a new cleaning company, Better Clean. Overall, we are very satisfied with their service. There have been a small number of occasions when cleaning did not take place for various reasons, but aside from this, the improvement has been significant.

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### 5. Main Hall Sliding Door

Several panels in the main hall sliding door system were broken. It proved difficult to find a contractor to repair them, as the original installation company no longer exists.

Fortunately, a recommended company with relevant experience was able to carry out the repair. They also advised that annual servicing is recommended, as replacement of the entire system would be very costly if it became irreparable.

**Cost:**

- Easylide: £1,170

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### 6. Gutter Cleaning and Gutter Guards

Peeling paint in the main hall indicated possible moisture issues. Alongside our annual gutter cleaning, we arranged for gutter guards to be fitted as a preventative measure. No other leaks or external water issues were identified.

**Cost:**

- Martin Holland (cleaning, supply and fitting of guards): £585

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### 7. Main Hall Wall Repairs

The peeling paint in the main hall was treated as an urgent health and safety issue, as flaking paint could pose a risk to children. The affected area covered approximately 8–10m<sup>2</sup>.

The wall was scraped back, treated with a high-quality sealer/primer, and finished with a white topcoat. We will continue to monitor the area for any further signs of damp.

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### 8. Handyman

We appointed a new handyman for one full day to complete minor maintenance tasks, including:

- Repairing sliding storage doors
- Fixing door handles
- Repairing a stuck sink plug
- Installing sensory boards in the garden

At £30 per hour (including VAT), his quote was the most reasonable received. However, we are not yet fully convinced he is the right long-term option.

**Total paid so far: £205**

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### 9. Minor In-House Repairs

We have continued to complete small jobs internally where possible (e.g. fitting new locks, , general screw and fixture maintenance) in order to reduce costs.

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### 10. Cess pit emptied

Cess pit emptied in February 2026

**Cost:**

- Scott Stevens: £260

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### Planned Work for Next Year

- Fire Risk Assessment (due this year)
- Continued redecoration and general refreshment work throughout the building

**MONTHLY DRAW:**

2025	January	63	Kathleen Avison
2025	February	18	Mrs A Weaver
2025	March	54	Mrs M Ive (Hogan)
2025	April	53	Mr Bill Simons
2025	May	6	Louise Brass
2025	June	71	Mrs Ann West
2025	July	77	Lee Taggart
2025	August	62	Sharon White
2025	September	13	Carolyn Cox
2025	October	35	Mrs A Weaver
2025	November	53	Bill Simons
2025	December	6	Louise Brass