

# Style Acre

Supporting people with learning disabilities



Review 2017



Style Acre is a charity that enhances the lives of people with learning disabilities and autism throughout Oxfordshire. We provide support for over 240 people through supported living, day service hubs, our work programme and providing communication therapies.

**Mission:** Style Acre provides safe and nurturing environments for people with learning disabilities and autism to grow and develop in their own unique way and with the utmost dignity. We recognise and embrace individuality and deliver person-centred care of the highest standard.



Chris Ingram, Chief Executive

16/17 has been another challenging but successful year at Style Acre. You will see from the selection of great stories in this report that we continue to encourage people to be involved in their local community, to pursue work opportunities and ensure the people we support have a great quality of life. The pressure on funding has continued to bite and the challenges around recruitment have intensified but we have continued to thrive in spite of these and have some really exciting plans already for the

coming year. We are developing a number of new properties to ensure people have the right accommodation and have plans for a number of new social enterprises to improve employment opportunities for people.

I would like to thank all of our staff for their continued dedication and commitment over the last year. They do a fantastic job and none of the great successes would be possible without them. I would also like to thank our team of volunteers and those family and friends in the local community that contribute so much to the work we do and the fun we have.

Tony Vernon, Trustee

I have been involved as a Trustee and Chair of Style Acre for 12 years and have seen it grow from a small charity to a thriving and dynamic organisation which truly embraces a sense of community inclusion. Community is all about people, and it is heartening to observe how our proactive approach of enabling people we support to be part of the community has, in turn, drawn local people to support us by volunteering their time. Our volunteers enable us to run our shops and tearoom and share their skills and hobbies with individuals and small groups. Many corporate and youth volunteer teams have also helped us with garden work and events.

Funding cuts make these challenging times and I am more aware than ever of the vital contribution that our generous and committed volunteers make, working alongside our dedicated support teams, enhancing and enriching the lives of those with a learning disability or autism.



## Supported Living

Style Acre currently enables **95** people to live successfully in **25** homes with friends across Oxfordshire. The people we support range from those with complex learning, health and/or physical disabilities needing 24 hour care, to others who need only a few hours per week.



Supported living is designed **around the needs and wishes of the individual** and people are helped to plan their lives and make decisions with as much support as necessary. Our **Quality Manager** ensures that people are given every opportunity to understand, make choices and express their opinions about what happens in their lives. We encourage people to take part in a wide range of community activities and to develop new friendships whilst maintaining existing relationships.



Pete, 71, has been supported by Style Acre for over 30 years and lives in one of our supported living homes, with friends he has known for decades.

Sadly, Pete's mum died. But she made sure Pete would have the holiday of a lifetime. Ever since Pete was a little boy, he had always wanted to go the USA and especially the Grand Canyon.

After spending time planning his dream holiday, Pete and his support worker Katherine joined a small coach tour, and visited San Francisco, Yosemite National Park, Las Vegas, LA, San Diego and of course, the Grand Canyon.

"Everyone on the coach fell in love with Pete! We didn't stop laughing" says Katherine. In San Francisco, Pete took Katherine's arm and said 'You made my dreams come true'. Katherine says: "That's when you get real job satisfaction."

Pete attends one of our day hubs and enjoys gardening, flower arranging and the Men's Group, where outings are organised every week.



## Day Opportunities

Style Acre Day Opportunities support over **191** adults with a learning disability or autism at day hubs in **Wallingford, Didcot and Banbury** and at a market garden in **Wantage**, in collaboration with Sustainable Wantage and social services.

We offer a broad range of leisure and developmental **activities**, designed to encourage people to realise their potential and build their **social networks**. We also organise day trips and participate in **community activities**.

We teach a wide range of **skills** that will enable people to develop a level of **independence** that will enhance their lives. Our Work Programme enables people to gain **work experience** and we offer a wide range of ASDAN courses that support people to learn skills, grow in confidence and prepare for work.



TO ALL OF STYLE ACRE BANBURY  
I would like to write you this letter to express  
my thanks and consideration  
Before coming into style acre, my life did not consist of  
anything apart from getting up having my breakfast  
sleeping and having my dinner. BUT now I have this  
centre. It has given me a new lease of life.  
I want to Thank you ALL from the bottom of my heart  
  
All my love + best wishes may it long continue  
Ryan Gool.

## Work Programme

We employ a **Work Manager** and a **Job Coach** who help people access work placements and paid employment. Our 3 social enterprises – a charity shop, tearoom and bookshop – provide work opportunities where people are trained to develop work-based skills in a supportive environment at a level that suits them. We have excellent links with an ever-growing number of local companies who provide a variety of placements.

The Work Programme demonstrates many success stories. People who have never worked before go on to show significant increases in confidence, independence and communication as well more specific work skills, independent travel training and money handling. Over the year we have set up **59** work placements. We currently have **82** people in work placements, of which **17** are in paid employment.

## Style Acre Tea Room Success!



Since the tearoom opened in 2010, 36 people with learning disabilities benefited from work experience there. Some people have progressed to getting paid employment. During the year 8 people we support were paid employees, 2 were long-term volunteers and 6 people undertook work experience. In addition 17 people we support help bake delicious cakes.

"I like doing different things at the tearoom. I feel really pleased I got a certificate online for Food Safety. I can make some coffees on my own – I can do a latte with a little bit of help. I can chat to the customers."

Katy Anne has worked at the tea room since it opened in 2010.

## Education

As a registered ASDAN centre, we offer a wide range of modules that support people to learn skills, grow in confidence and help prepare for work. The courses complement the skills people develop through activities. Many courses are achievable without the need to read and write. Topics include *Using Computer Technology, Meal Preparation, Photography and Yoga*. Users are very proud of their achievements. During the year **12** learners completed **16** modules.

## Communication Support

Our part-time **speech and language therapists**, Michelle and June have this year supported **52** people with communication difficulties, delivering personalised communication support, using interventions and sensory programmes. They work with Keith, our IT Project Manager to provide technology to aid communication and sensory experiences.

The **EyeGaze** has been a fantastic piece of equipment for the people we support who have limited speech and difficulties with hand movements.

It is a piece of technology that enables you to use a computer mouse via eye movement so that you can access software. Looking around the screen will move the mouse. This gives people the opportunity to play computer games and access websites.

It has enabled one of the people we support (pictured) who has no speech and few hand movements to play computer games and produce a voice to communicate. Style Acre is supporting her to develop skills with this equipment and she is beginning to enjoy the experience of having a voice and choosing what she would like to say.



Style Acre is working with Dogs for Good and Kingwood to provide Animal Assisted Intervention for a small group of people we support. Working with a therapy dog can help with reducing anxiety in unfamiliar or busy places; increasing confidence and motivating people to try new activities, increase exercise and develop their road safety skills.

## Community

Throughout the year, community events are a great opportunity for people we support to volunteer, such as at the Thames Run, directing runners and handing out medals.

As well as being a key local employer in Oxfordshire, **41** people volunteered for us during the year at our services and social enterprises, as well as **6** corporate and **3** youth teams.



Channel 4 volunteers spent the day at our Didcot day hub



Our annual community event hosted by Cornerstone Arts, provided a day of arts events with a Style Acre showcase in the evening, which brought in a large audience from the Didcot community. Young local people volunteered and we worked collaboratively with a film cooperative and local artists.

## Style Acre Ambassador – Grace Kerrigan

Things I like about Style Acre. I get to live independently, I get to go on trips out, meet up with friends and do new things. I get to do things I wouldn't normally do. I love running and cycling. I fundraise for Style Acre and so far have run two half marathons. My favourite fundraiser was doing the Sky Dive. I work in an after school club and I am a very busy girl.



## Fundraising



We raise funds to provide additional services which enhance the lives of those we support. This year, income from Trusts enabled us to deliver our Work Programme, fund a Garden Coordinator, subsidise our day service in Banbury and fund IT and communication aids. Much of our community fundraising supplements our day services.

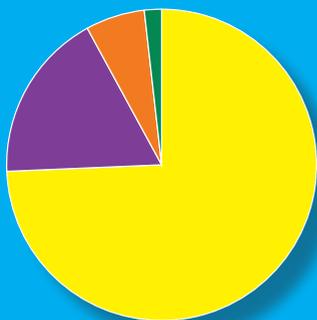
We received a legacy and with this, we hope to buy an accessible holiday home for people we support who aren't currently able to afford to go on holiday. Many in supported living need high levels of support and the costs required to stay away are beyond their personal budget.

Community fundraising events included an abseil, sponsored walks, marathons, a Madonna tribute night and a Christmas service & craft fair.

## Financial Performance

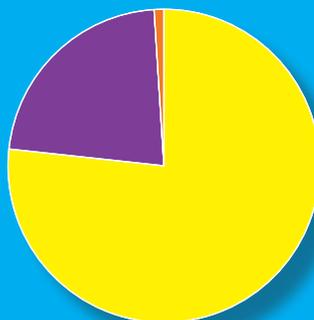
Government cuts have challenged us, but through careful use of money and creating opportunities for people to share support, we have remained stable. We hold a designated reserve of two months operating costs - **£1,155,251**.

Income - £6,480,962



Supported Living	£4,817,443
Day opportunities	£1,147,355
Donations	£400,043
Other Income	£116,121

Expenditure - £6,366,278



Supported Living	£4,889,321
Day opportunities	£1,412,909
Fundraising	£64,048

### Our Trustees

Tony Vernon (Chair)	Sarah Nye
Ian Boulton	Rob Thornton
Philippa Chalmers	<b>Our Patrons</b>
Alison Elliott	Sinead Cusack
Trish Millar	John Craven OBE

### Style Acre

Evenlode House	01491 838760
Howbery Park	Info@styleacre.org.uk
Benson Lane	
Wallingford	
OX10 8BA	www.styleacre.org.uk