

As with many things that should've taken place during 2020, our annual AGM has also had to be postponed, however we still feel it's important to take a look back at all we've achieved over the last 12 months between July 2019 and July 2020. Whilst a lot of things that we've planned have been cancelled since the beginning of this year, it's important to remember that a lot of planning and work goes into these things long before they actually happen, so it's good to recognise the efforts of our amazing team of volunteers.

Providing support to bereaved parents has always been our main focus and being able to provide a supportive environment and a listening ear has been a lifeline to many over the years. We simply couldn't do this without our amazing Befrienders who continue to provide such vital support to those who need it. We thank each and every one of you for your time, care and compassion you give to our parents.

It was a difficult decision to withdraw our Ante-Natal support from the Pregnant Again Support meetings earlier this year, however this hasn't stopped us from providing the required support for those going through a pregnancy after loss. It goes without saying that the amazing support our two midwives have given over the years have been invaluable to those worried parents. Our grateful thanks to Fiona Perkins and to Rachel Cox for their support over the years and particularly to Rachel, who was the driving force behind setting up these meetings initially. The legacy of your efforts have been the hundreds of parents you've helped over the years and the hundreds yet to come who will benefit from these meetings you created.

During these unprecedented times, we've been able to maintain our support meetings online via the zoom application. This has taken a great deal of organisation and adapting to fit in around personal circumstances and we thank all our Befrienders who have been able to keep this support going during lockdown and beyond.

Our mobile phone is probably one of the few aspect of our work that's has remained unchanged during these times. Our thanks to Sharon for providing this vital contact for yet another year, whether it's a quick enquiry or someone in need of a conversation, Sharon has continued to be there for whoever needs to speak to us directly.

We've continued supplying our hospitals with support packs, which have been altered slightly in the last 12 months to include a compact booklet, replacing previous leaflets, and all placed in a new card wallet, greatly reducing the amount of plastic we use to make packs a little more environmentally friendly. Big thank you to Danielle who has again coordinated ordering and delivering of stock to our hospitals.

We've again continued to support both our local hospitals and have been working with them to help maintain a good level of bereavement care for parents in the local area. Our thanks to Anna who has recently taken on hospital liaison roles at both hospitals and has been establishing a great relationship with the contacts there.

We've also managed our various social media channels including two Facebook pages, Twitter and Instagram accounts, using them to advertise events, information regarding support meetings and sharing fundraising news. We've had our new website in place for just over a year now and it's been great to have the benefits of a fully functioning website after so long with one. A big thank you to Pete for looking after all of these for us.

Our Newsletter has continued to be a great way to keep you all up to date with the all things Bristol Sands throughout the year and we've continued to deliver two outstanding copies each year. Our thanks to Reg for compiling the contents and to Sharon for her professional design skills.

Our thanks must also go to Kaeti and Hilary who ensure that much of Bristol Sands continues to function, with their work as Secretary and Treasurer. An awful lot of things wouldn't happen if it wasn't for all your hard work, thank you both for all that you do. Much of your work happens behind the scenes, but that shouldn't mean that your amazing contributions should go unnoticed, thank you for helping to keep everything on track.

We've once again been able to participate in training for healthcare professionals by sharing our stories and talking about the work that Bristol Sands does. Two of our team were able to attend a training session in September 2019 and our thanks go to Natalie and Peter for taking part.

Our annual events have probably been the most prominent victim of the lockdown, as many of these have had to be re-thought. I carefully chose not to say cancelled, as our brilliant team have ensured that both our Spring Service and our Flower drop have been able to take place, albeit on a virtual basis. On 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020 we shared some readings, reflective music and a roll call of babies names, all recorded by our committee in place of our usual Spring gathering. On 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020, we were able to drop some beautiful flowers, kindly donated by Natalie's Mum, from Clevedon Pier itself, as it was able to reopen just in time for our scheduled service. Thank you to Natalie for coordinating this service. Our Christmas service on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2019 feels a bit like a distant memory of how things used to be, but it did, thankfully, take place at St Mary Redcliffe and was once again very well attended. We were supported once more by the wonderful voices of the The Bromley Heath WI and Part Song choirs, we thank you both for your support over the years, you are such an important part of our services. Thanks also to Vron Lee who travelled up from Devon to lead our service for us, always comforting to see her. Thank you to Roxie for coordinating this event, for Sharons amazing artwork with the invites and order of service, and to all of those who have contributed by reading poems, reading the roll call, baking cakes and serving teas, everyone's contributions really do help to make our events such an important way for parents to take some time out to remember their babies.

Our ceramics event took place again on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and was once again so popular that we had to expand it into two sessions. We had 18 families join us for some therapeutic time painting various pottery pieces, and of course there was tea and cake too. Thanks to Abbie for organising this annual event once more.

Work on our projects have continued throughout the last 12 months, although the Lavender Suite Project has been slower than we had hoped and has still not reached completion. A lot of the furniture was already in place but we still needed to install a large sideboard/dresser to store all the items we are placing in the suite. Unfortunately a lengthy delay with the arrival of the furniture and it subsequently arriving damaged and needing to be replaced, meant that it wasn't in ready until the beginning of this year. Once it had arrived, we were about to start ordering the memorial items to be placed in it, just as Lockdown hit and we have been further delayed in getting these bits to the hospital.

On a more positive note, the St Michaels Consultation Room Project based within the Early Pregnancy Unit, was completed at the beginning of 2020. The 10k team of 2019 fundraised well in excess of the £5,500 target need to do the renovations. Just as the room was completed, we arranged to view it and officially declare it open just as, you've guessed it, lockdown hit. We will

arrange to visit the room and take some photos as soon as it is safe and sensible for us to access the hospital.

We once again took part in Baby Loss Awareness Week in October 2019 and took up the challenge of turning Bristol's iconic venues and landmarks pink and blue. We were lucky to be able to get a few more buildings on board for this awareness event and our thanks to Arnos Vale Cemetery, Ashton Gate Stadium, the SS Great Britain, Bristol Hippodrome, Bristol Magistrates Court, Luxe fitness and the churches of St Peter's, St James' and St Mary's, who took part and lit up in wonderful pink and blue light.

In May 2020 we should have been getting together for our flagship fundraising event at the Bristol 10k. It was looking like our most successful event to date, with an absolutely phenomenal 85 runners expressing an interest in running. We had 5 runners who had won their running place for free, a very challenging fundraising target of £10,000 to fund our running costs for the next 12 months. Along with our usual marquee in runners village, we had a new addition for 2020 of two massage students from Bristol College of Massage and Bodywork on hand to help soothe our runners tired and aching muscles. We know we would've been joined on the day by lots of amazing supporters and it would've truly been a day to remember. Despite our obvious disappointment with the event being cancelled, we were truly humbled to hear how many of our fantastic runners still completed their 10k races virtually and still managed to raise an amazing £4,596. A massive thank you to all our runners and potential runners - we'd really like to see you in 2021 if you are able to join us – it wouldn't be an event without you and all your supporters. Our thanks also to Bristol College of Massage and Bodywork for your support too.

We took part in Treefest at St Mary Redcliffe Church once more in December 2019, a great opportunity to raise awareness of our charity and baby loss, as the event draws visitors in their thousands. This year we displayed our tree containing 105 hand crocheted butterflies, representing the 105 babies who would on average be lost during the week the tree was on show. A huge thank you to Denise and Linda Byrom who crocheted each beautiful butterfly.

Bristol Sands once again were able to join the Sands Annual Conference and AGM that was held in London in November 2019. We were able to have 5 members attend this year and our thanks to Anna, John, Roxie, Hilary and Peter for giving up their weekend to attend. Always a worthwhile event to take part in, the team were able to participate in a number of workshops as well as listen to keynote speakers and hear from the Sands leadership team about forthcoming plans. It was also an opportunity to recognise the contributions that our volunteers make to the organisation, and our congratulations to Peter who picked up this year's Volunteer Award.

Our Sands United football team has continued to grow over the last 12 months and what started out with a handful of Dads we knew through support meetings has now grown and we have around 43 bereaved Dads, Uncles and Brothers in the team. During that time they have taken part in a number of training sessions and tournament matches, including their launch game on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2019 against Sands United Wales. Our thanks go to Peter, John and Adam for all the hard work involved in this and to all the team members for making this such a success.

Absolutely none of what we've been able to achieve in the 12 months since July 2019 would've been possible without the tremendous support of our phenomenal fundraisers and it's right that a huge thank you must go to you. Bristol Sands wouldn't be here at all without the vital funds that are

raised. It would be absolutely impossible for me to mention you all by name, but you know who you are. Please accept our sincerest thanks and gratitude from us all for your time, effort and generosity, we truly do appreciate all that you've done for us, thank you.

This year has been difficult for us all in so many ways, for some it will be the hardest of all as they face the new loss of their baby, something we can all relate to but perhaps can't quite imagine in these unprecedented times. The fact that Bristol Sands is still here and able to support parents is probably our greatest achievement this year and something that we should all feel very proud of. No matter how much we've been able to contribute, each member of the team has been a vital help in a number of ways, to bring comfort and support to a grieving parent. This is what we do. And this is what we will continue to do, and nothing will stop us from being there when you need us.

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