



# THE FATHERS' CLUB



(Support and guidance for fathers and grandfathers of children with autism)

## **ARE YOU A FATHER OR GRANDFATHER OF A CHILD WITH AUTISM OR WORKING WITH FAMILIES WHO PERHAPS HAVE A CHILD WITH AUTISM?**

Across the county of Kent, there are many excellent parent support groups that work with families who have a child or children with autism. These may be attached to a local school or have been formed by concerned parents in the area.

Very often the help and support they provide tends to be directed towards the mother for very understandable reasons. The down side of this is that fathers can develop feelings of being ignored and of being left out of decisions concerning the very crucial care and attention that is designed to support the family as a whole.

In 2002, this gap was recognised by professionals and to bring support and guidance to fathers and grandfathers, a specific fathers meeting group was formed. On 29 January 2003, the inaugural meeting of THE FATHERS' CLUB was held at The Parents Consortium (now called Beams) in Hextable. This was followed on 14 June, of the following year, with a group at Folkestone and on 23 February 2007, a third group was set up at Bower Grove School in Maidstone. The aims of the club were established by the following constitution.

### ***Constitution***

*The aim of the Club shall be to provide a regular forum in which fathers of children with an autistic spectrum disorder may seek ways and the knowledge to improve the quality of life and future prospects for their child. These objectives will be pursued through:*

*\*Meetings held in an informal way, \*Unstructured debate on matters of mutual interest, \*The sharing of problems, \*The benefit of learning from the successes of each other and \*Sharing their knowledge, information and experiences for the benefit of all. \*All meetings will be held in a highly confidential environment and with respect for all.*

Since its inception, the Club has assisted over 300 fathers, including a number of grandfathers and, indirectly, their immediate families. The club normally runs with an active membership listing of around 140.

There is no charge for membership and there is a library of relevant book titles held by Beams that members may turn to for advice and guidance. Members also have access to databases and information held by the club and other supporter friends that contain answers to a wide range of problems that such families may encounter.



One of the key benefits to new members is the ability to link in to and access the experiences and knowledge gained by those members with older children. For example, a new member, with say a four-year-old child, looking forward but having concerns about having a child with autism, could find himself talking with the father of an eight-year-old who has been there, seen it and done it and is only too willing to pass on his suggestions and knowledge.

The club gratefully acknowledges the unquestioned support given to it and its members by Beams, Hextable and The Kent Autistic Trust, Gillingham and for the very special knowledge they share with us.

Some of the past and present supporters of the club from within the community include, Pfizer Ltd, GlaxoSmithKline, Kent Police, KCC Local Boards Grants Scheme, Kent Community Foundation, The Co-op, Waitrose Ltd, The Lions, The Rotary Club and Singlewell Stationery and Print of Gravesend.

Details of our meeting venues follow and current dates and times may be obtained from either of the offices mentioned below. They will also be happy to put anyone in touch with The Fathers' Club Facilitator, Andy Young, for any further information. Alternatively, please contact Andy direct on the following email address: [fathersclubkent@outlook.com](mailto:fathersclubkent@outlook.com)

***North West Kent Group***

*Beams, Allsworth Court, 40 St. David's Road  
Hextable, Kent BR8 7RJ*

***Maidstone Mid-Kent Group and Folkestone South East Kent Group***

*These now operate as internet contact groups for those members in those areas.*

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Allsworth Court  
40 St. David's Road  
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