

# Ovingdean Hall News

Summer 2025



## Support for Early Years

We are supporting two projects to help deaf babies and young children and their families.

**AUDITORY VERBAL UK**  
Creating a sound future for deaf children

We have provided **Auditory Verbal UK** with training bursaries to increase the skills of professionals working with deaf children in Wales. Auditory Verbal Therapy (AVT) is a play-based approach to developing deaf children's listening and communication.



Communicating through play with Auditory Verbal Therapy

OHF's grant will enable professionals already working with deaf children (Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People, speech and language therapists or audiologists) to train in AVT and enhance their skills in the development of listening and spoken language in babies and very young deaf children.

In 2015, we became the first foundation to support bursaries for professionals to train in AVT. *'This new grant will draw on our experience of success and build on it to enable more families of deaf children to access AVT in Wales,'* said Sarah Henry, AVUK's Senior Development Manager.

We have also continued our support of Let's Listen and Talk (LL&T), **The Elizabeth Foundation's** free online communication programme for deaf babies and young children across the country.



LL&T now has 1,500 registered users, a combination of families and deaf education and healthcare professionals. It has also been launched as an app for phones, offering a quick and convenient platform that can be accessed on the go. This new app enables both families and professionals to help babies and young children of all levels of deafness to learn to listen and communicate.

*'The sheer reach and scope of the resource has been astonishing to us,'* said Julie Hughes, Chief Executive Officer of The Elizabeth Foundation. *'We continue to work to improve the LL&T programme, making it a diverse tool that will meet the variety of needs for deaf children, their families and the professionals who support them.'*

# Parent Power

Over the last few years, we have been supporting a growing number of parent-led youth clubs.



Children take part in activities at Deaf Kids Connect



**Sign School** is a community British Sign Language (BSL) school in Cardiff. Founded by Siobhan Darien, the mother of a deaf child, this popular club delivers BSL lessons to children and their families, alongside arts, play and sports activities.

Siobhan said: *'We aim to raise expectations about what Deaf children can do. Children have really thrived at Sign School. They are going home so happy, telling their parents what a great time they have had, and asking when our next session is taking place.'*

They have now received some support from local government, and Siobhan credits OHF with helping them to secure this funding: *'Thanks to your grant, we have been able to show evidence that there is a need for what we are providing.'*



**Saturday Kids' Zone (SKZ)** supports deaf children and young people and their families in the Portsmouth area.

SKZ was founded by Lindsey Piasco, who wanted her own children and other deaf children to benefit from the type of clubs she had attended when young.

After a successful launch in 2017, SKZ was forced to close during the pandemic. OHF helped the club to re-open in 2024, with 34 families joining in the first year. The venue provides a place for children and their families to take part in activities and socialise together. The club offers arts and crafts, an area for toddlers, and a games room for teenagers.

In early 2025, a legacy given to us by a very kind supporter from Hampshire was directed to SKZ. *'Thank you so much for thinking of us when receiving this incredibly generous legacy,'* said Lindsey. *'Our club is going from strength to strength, with new families joining every month!'*



This May, we agreed a grant to Deaf Kids Connect, a new group for deaf children and their families in Worthing and surrounding Sussex. *'Thank you,'* said founder Charlotte Short, whose son is deaf. *'With this funding, we aim to expand a vibrant community where deaf children can thrive and build connections, along with providing support to their families.'*

**A HUGE thank you to all of our friends for funding these important projects for deaf children and young people. If you would like to help our work, please can you donate online at [www.ovingdeanhall.org.uk/support-us](http://www.ovingdeanhall.org.uk/support-us) or please send your cheque or CAF voucher (payable to Ovingdean Hall Foundation) to the address below.**

**Thank you very much!**

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