

Mistley Kids Club – annual report 2020/21

Well, what a difficult year - the worst we've had in our 22 years of existence! Through it all we've kept the service going, for whoever has been able to come, under some ever-changing rules around bubbles. There were two exceptions; a small chunk of time when the Village Hall wasn't allowed to open, and another couple of weeks when our entire first aider team came down with Covid at the same time! We're very glad to say that everyone is back at work and feeling much better now.

With all the children back at school, the number of children we care for is creeping up - although of course many parents are still working from home or furloughed, so still not at pre-Covid levels. Currently we have 53 children on the books after school, of which about a quarter are from Mistley; that doubles in the holidays. We continue to have a great mix of mainstream and special needs kids, with a real family atmosphere.

We have been enormously grateful to Essex County Council and Action for Children, who have continued to meet our funding needs for our most vulnerable children. This has in turn allowed us to retain all our specialist staff on furlough, even though our fee income has been pretty much zero for large portions of the year, and we continued to pay our rent to the Village Hall throughout.

We are quite a large employer - there is a core staff of 18 people after school, and a looser group of around 30 or so who we bring in during the holidays; often people who work in school or care settings themselves. All our management team have qualifications in Childcare and specialist areas, and we encourage all staff to do continuing professional education.

We're beginning to plan for the summer holidays now and are hugely looking forward to a summer without bubbles, except for the soap kind!