

Wave of Light ball

Around 130 people joined Hastings and East Sussex Sands at their Wave of Light Ball in October 2016, at a beautiful location on Hastings seafront, The Azur. Everyone was given a tea light candle on entry and these were placed on the window ledges all around the room, which looked beautiful.

The beautiful Maria Crowter sang and a local band, *Acoustica*, performed. The auction and raffle had some amazing prizes; thank you to everyone who donated.

The group were honoured to be accompanied by two of the local bereavement midwives, Jane and Kirsty, who gave emotional speeches on how they all met, about Sands and how we can make a difference.



The group's memory cloth was displayed with angels' names and dates of birth on, as well as the memory tree for anyone to leave a message for their little ones.

It was a very successful evening, raising £3,289.92, which will go towards refurbishing the bereavement suite at the Conquest Hospital.



Poppy's Santa run

Poppy's Santa run, on Sunday 11th December 2016, took place over a 5km running course or a 3km walking route. It was organised by Poppy's mum and dad, and over 40 people came along, many dressed for the festive season. The event raised a fantastic £1,466.75.



Praise for Powys

In 2016, for the second year running, Powys Sands were nominated for the Health and Wellbeing charity awards, which they won in 2015. This time, they were runners up, surprising themselves, although they won the overall and prestigious Calon award for the best group of volunteers.

The group also held their second darts tournament in memory of Carolyn's little boy Jamie, and a coffee morning, which raised £649.

From left to right: Michelle, Vita and Carolyn from Powys Sands.



Inspiring calendar

Blackpool and Preston Sands have designed their own calendar with the help of students from Blackpool Sixth Form College.

Each month has a beautiful photograph and quote and will raise funds for the group. The calendars are available directly from the group and cost £12.50+£1.50 postage.

5 for 5 challenge



2016 marks five years since Liz and Jerry's first child and only son, Petroc, was stillborn. Wishing to do something special to mark this milestone, the family decided to participate in the '5 for 5 Challenge'.

This fundraising initiative was started by bereaved parents Aoife and John in memory of their son, Seamus, who would also have been five this year. The similarities in their story were too strong to ignore and Liz and Jerry decided to get involved. The challenge was to do something

personal around the theme of five, while fundraising for Sands.

Liz, Jerry and their daughters challenged themselves to five 5km walks along five rivers in South East London. Over three weekends, they walked along the Beck, the Pool, the Ravensbourne, the Quaggy and the Thames, with their daughters, who are three years and six months old. Thanks to the generosity of supporters, Petroc's family raised over £1,200 to be shared between Sands and South East London Sands.

New training for health visitors



Sands Improving Bereavement Care Team are developing bereavement care training for health visitors. This training will be an evidence-based one-day course and will be piloted and launched in Scotland. The Scottish Network is going to cover costs for venues and subsidise registration fees (£10, instead of the usual £85).

The pilot courses will take place on 17th February at Apex Hotel, Edinburgh and on 3rd March at Doubletree by Hilton Glasgow City Central Hotel. The launch will take place on 20th March in Skeene House, Aberdeen. Places can be booked via Eventbrite; please circulate to all your health visitor contacts: www.uk-sands.org/professionals/training-for-professionals/sands-training-health-visitors

Crafty Christmas

Wolverhampton Sands held their Christmas Craft evening on Monday 5th December 2016. Bereaved parents joined befrienders to make robins and Christmas stockings in memory of their babies.

Laura Mongioli, Wolverhampton Sands Chair and befriender, said, "At Wolverhampton Sands we always try to do something that little bit extra at Christmas as we feel it's possibly one of the hardest times of the year. Christmas is about children and families coming together and is a celebration of love. When there is a baby missing from a family, Christmas can seem horrendously overwhelming and terribly sad."



"Giving bereaved parents the opportunity to take some time out to sit and make something for their much loved and missed babies for Christmas, can bring them a sense of comfort at this time of year."



Souter Lighthouse lit in remembrance

Members of Bradford Sands (pictured above), Newcastle Sands, Durham & Wearside Sands and Teesside Sands travelled up to Souter Lighthouse near Sunderland to participate in the Wave of Light, hosted by North East based charity 4Louis. Special permission from Trinity House allows the lighthouse to be lit in remembrance to mark the start of the Wave of Light. Pebbles were left at the beach, marked with the names of precious babies.

Derby Sands service

Derby Sands held their annual event *Remembering our Babies this Christmastime* on Sunday 11th December 2016 at Markeaton Crematorium in the Derby Sands Memorial Garden.

The event was open to anyone who has been affected by baby loss. People joined members of Derby Sands to have a hot drink and cake, light a candle and place a bauble on one of the Christmas trees. Derby Sands' befrienders were on hand to support anyone who needed it.

Hundreds of people visited the garden in memory of one or more special angel babies. Chair Kirsty said, "It was truly overwhelming to see so many families that the Group have supported over the years, and so many families who lost long ago, as far back as 1938."



Comments on Facebook included: "Fabulous," "Very moving," and "Thank you for all your hard work and time that you dedicate."

This wonderful event is a testament to the team at Derby Sands, including Kirsty, Lou, Betty, Lesley, Betty, Gabi and Kelly.



Shetland new groups training

Shetland Sands have now been established for over a year. In October 2016, Ann McMurray and Lorna Delayahu were very fortunate to be able to travel to Shetland to deliver the Part Two New Groups Training to the group. Although not all the committee could come along

on the day, those who attended were really enthusiastic.

We found out some of the challenges they face being island communities (and people knowing you and your family) and discussed ways to try and overcome them.

Forget-me-not suite

In October 2016, Swindon Sands proudly opened the new Forget-me-not suite at Great Western Hospital, which features a delivery room and a separate family lounge area. The delivery room, while featuring all the clinical equipment necessary to make it a safe working environment, is tastefully decorated and furnished to offer comfort and calm. It is in an area of the maternity department that is set apart and more private. The suite is the product of combined efforts by hospital staff and Swindon Sands, who have been fundraising for six years.

"You're exposed to an environment that should be a really joyous occasion – you come into hospital and find out that your baby has sadly passed away in the womb but you still have to deliver your baby and that is very challenging. Within this space they can create their lifetime of memories with their baby away from other parents."



Sandy Richards, clinical midwifery manager, said: "This room was very much more clinical looking before – we obtained the funding from government to do the building work and then Sands

have secured the money to do all the furnishing and decorating. Our whole ethos is to provide an environment that is a home from home and this is an extension of that – it makes a difference."