



Newsletter

Teddy Bears' Picnic 2021

Following the success of last year's online Teddy Bears' Picnic, we hosted a bigger and bolder picnic over the bank holiday weekend of 1st & 2nd May.

Every individual with SMS on our mailing list in the UK was invited to join us for this special event having received an Easter card a few weeks before. The aim of this event was to bring our small community together in a time where we are all quite distant physically from each other.

This year we have been very fortunate that two Trusts – The **Pears Foundation** and **Foundation Scotland** gave us grant funding to fund the cost of wonderful picnic boxes full of goodies such as a teddy bear, an enamel picnic mug, some chocolates, an activity book, as well as awareness materials and support media for the activities. And without this valuable funding, the event certainly wouldn't have been what it was!



Amanda loves her teddy bear picnic box . Thankyou so much

But to allow us to put on this wonderful event, we also asked for your help. Throughout the months leading up to Easter, we asked you to send us your updated membership information, allowing us to reach over 300 individuals with SMS across the UK.

We also asked you for valuable feedback on the event to help us make improvements for future events. This feedback really did touch our hearts, here is what some of you had to say about the event:

“ *My child couldn't wait for the picnic box to be delivered. They were absolutely thrilled when it arrived!* ”

“ *Meeting others with SMS has really helped my child with SMS understand her syndrome and that everyone is different in their own way. Being with others with no judgement and with understanding brought them happiness.* ”

“ *This event allowed my child to realise that they are not alone, and I realised the same.* ”

We loved seeing the pictures of everyone across social media – from first opening the Easter card, to our community Zoom events on the weekend, your smiling faces were a joy to see!



You Said, We Will Do...

Thank you to everyone who gave us feedback after the Teddy Bears' Picnic. After collating all the information from the survey and your individual messages, we wanted to report back to you on how we are using your feedback as well as answering some of your queries.

"We loved the event. However, my child did not cope overly well with doing activities on Zoom..."

It has been unfortunate that this year we were unable to hold an in-person picnic event due to national restrictions at the time. However, over the coming year, we are hoping to run more in-person events for the whole community including those in your local areas held by our Regional Parent Supporters.

"The weekend was quite a long period of time to hold the event..."

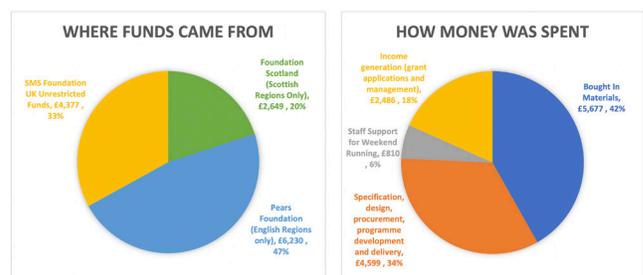
Next time we hold a similar event, we will try to focus it on 1 day. We recognise that for some people it was an incredibly long weekend, particularly with it being a bank holiday weekend, and so we will try to make sure we plan future events with this in mind.

"We would have like to have seen more age-appropriate activities during the event..."

We will certainly consider this for our future events and try to ensure that there is a greater variety of activities to involve individuals of all ages and abilities.

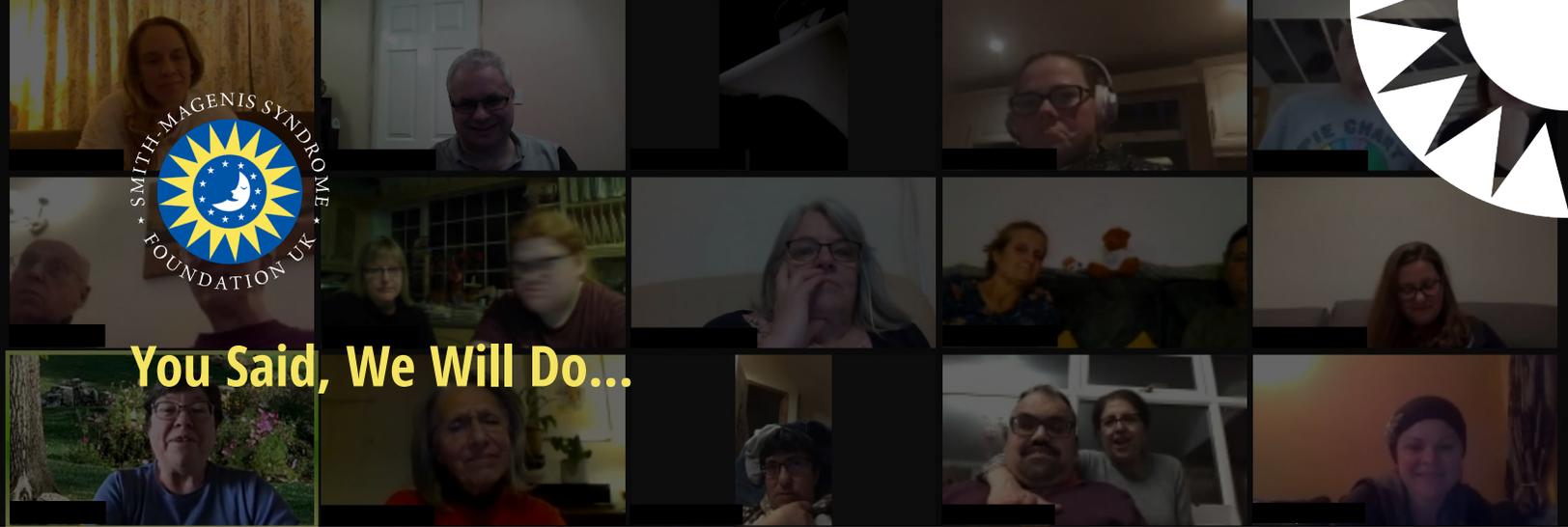
"This must have cost a huge amount of money – could it not have been used better by the foundation? It seemed like a waste of money."

We were incredibly fortunate to receive funding from the Pears Foundation and Foundation Scotland to host a community event for our members. Particularly with the recent cancellation of our conference, we thought it would be a key time for new families to join our SMS family. Unfortunately, due to national restrictions at the time, this could not be an in-person event, and so we planned to host an online Teddy Bears' Picnic. These wonderful grants did not however cover the entire cost of the activities, and only covered the costs for those in England and Scotland. This meant that to ensure every individual with SMS on our membership list received a box and could be involved, we had to cover the difference for Northern Ireland and Wales. The total cost for the event was £13,256 with a breakdown as seen below with the reserves used to cover the cost where the grant cover was not received.



"We weren't able to see all of the quiz throughout the day and we couldn't find the answers too."

Next time we will try to run it as a separate event like the scavenger hunt rather than on social media. Your feedback also told us that you really enjoyed the live events where we were interacting with each other such as the community sessions, the scavenger hunt, and the magic show. And so, we will aim to put on similar activities next time.



You Said, We Will Do...

“There was no cookie-cutter in the final box!

It had been our intention to include a cookie cutter in the box. We were unfortunately let down by the supplier at the last minute and could not source alternatives before the deadline for sending out the picnic boxes.

If you have any more feedback or ideas for future events, or any queries then please don't hesitate to contact us at info@smith-magenis.co.uk

We would like to thank you for getting involved in the 2021 SMS Teddy Bears' Picnic – we had so much fun, and we really hope you did too! With your feedback in mind, we are hoping to put on events like this in the future, however there is no guarantee we can receive this grant funding in the future.

Please donate today to our **Fulfilling Futures appeal** to enable us to be here tomorrow and beyond for families like you, who live with SMS. We need your help to be able to hold future events like this one. Thank you in advance for recognising how vital the SMS Foundation UK is to so many people.



Fulfilling Futures

justgiving.com/campaign/SMSFulfillingFutures