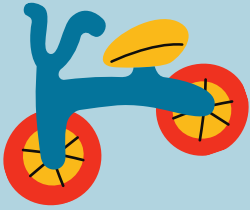


Botley Bridges Annual Report



2024-2025



Who We Are

Botley Bridges was founded in 2016 in response to the closure of Elms Road Children's Centre. The charity's mission is to support the care and upbringing of children to age 11 living in West Oxford, Botley, Cumnor, and the surrounding area by providing support services for families with children, and creating a space for the community to come together so that families can support each other. We believe that providing families with support at the earliest stage of their children's lives is essential to allow them to thrive.

What We Do

Since 2016, we have continued to carry out our mission by:

- Supporting learning for young children
- Helping families to access and enjoy outside spaces
- Preventing isolation of new parents and parents with young children
- Helping parents and children to maintain good mental health
- Creating a strong local community and reducing barriers to access
- Supporting families in acquiring skills which help to create strong families
- Providing information to parents about other organisations which support families



Chair of Trustees Introduction

This was the 8th year Botley Bridges has been operating, providing support for families with young children in the Botley area and surroundings.

This support has included:

- 50 Baby Play & Learn sessions
- 56 Stay & Play sessions for toddlers including summer holidays
- 32 Sing and Story sessions
- 4 Parenting and Paediatric First Aid courses for parents
- 6 Forest Stay and Play sessions

We were also able to organise the fifth successive year of Christmas Hampers, donating food & gift hampers to local families who benefit from them. In addition, at the direct request of local schools, we have financially supported local families.

Botley Bridges could not continue its work without the generous donations and grants received this year. Thank you to North Hinksey and Cumnor Parish Councils, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Pye Charitable Settlement and Doris Field Charitable Trust.

We are very grateful to the Lucy Group for its generous grant for the Hampers of £1000 and to volunteers from Knights Law Firm for packing hampers and helping with the refurbishment of the sandpit. Thank you as well for all the individual donations, made either in person at our sessions or online throughout the year. They make a huge difference.

We want to extend a special thank you to our Coordinator, Hayley Hayle, without whom our sessions could not happen. Thank you to all the trustees for contributing their spare time to maintain Botley Bridges' operations. Last but not least, a BIG thank you to all our volunteers who have helped run sessions, pack hampers, and have supported our work in any way possible.

Veronica Cucuiat
Chair of Trustees

Our Impact in Numbers

415

Families
Reached

Our services impact families from West Oxford and beyond:

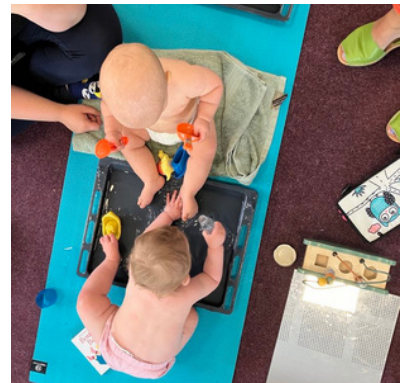
- 105 from North Hinksey
- 64 from Cumnor
- 54 from Frideswide
- 150 from elsewhere in Oxford & Oxfordshire
- 42 postcode data unknown

Supporting New Parents

Friday Baby Group

A weekly session held at Seacourt Hall for families with non-mobile babies under 1 year. This group is especially beneficial for first time mums/dads who haven't had previous experience of parenting. Peer support is very much encouraged and friendships are formed quickly and easily. Conversations have included loneliness, isolation and maternal mental health as well as sleep, feeding issues, teething, childcare and returning to work after maternity leave.

The session provides time for the mums/dads to talk to each other and we also have group singing with the families. Each week we have a topic relating to child development or age appropriate ideas for activities or days out. We occasionally have guest speakers coming to talk about Slings, Oral mouth care, sleep and baby massage. We often make keepsakes such as Mother's Day Cards, Christmas Cards etc. The Health Visitors run a monthly Well Baby Clinic too. We are able to signpost the families to other relevant support groups.



50

weekly sessions

12

average weekly attendance

100

families throughout the year

609

total attendances

“The Botley Baby group has been a phenomenal network of support. In the very early days, it was a motivation to get out of the house! Through it, I have made new friends who are in a similar life phase, and gotten new ideas on how to stimulate my baby's learning through different activities. This includes blowing bubbles, playing with sensory scarves, maracas (my baby's favourite toy) and learning new songs to sing her!”

“The baby group has been such a valuable support on my journey as a new mum. Coming from another country, it has helped me learn English rhymes to share with my baby and prepare her for nursery.”



6

weekly sessions

2

average weekly attendance

13

families throughout the year

Wednesday Buggy Walks

This was a group set up with Vale of White Horse District Council to encourage new parents to get out of the house into the fresh air. We would meet outside Botley Library and do an hour's circular walk with the babies.

This gave the families an opportunity to discover local walks as well as different local parks too. They were able to chat as they walked and they would often go off for a coffee on our return.

Unfortunately bad weather would discourage families from joining and gradually, our regular members returned to work from maternity leave so the group petered out and this session has been discontinued for the time being.

Supporting Early Learning

Monday Stay & Play

This is a popular Stay and Play session on a Monday morning in Botley School led by Hayley and two regular volunteers, Louise and Sue.

There is a mix of parents, grandparents, childminders and nannies who attend. Age appropriate activities are set out with plenty of opportunity for differentiation according to need and ability. All of our activities are designed to be low/no cost and can be easily replicated at home.

Our outdoor area has a large and small sandpit, climbing and balancing equipment, ride on toys and opportunity for water play and other forms of messy play. Each session is finished with a group singing session where the children and families have the opportunity to choose their favourite songs to sing.

We signpost families to various support services and advise on everyday issues such as sleep, toilet training, food, childcare and applying for school/nursery places.

We work in partnership with the Story Museum and Ashmolean Museum.



39 weekly sessions
16 average weekly attendance
130 families throughout the year
616 total attendances

“My little girl has gained in confidence since coming here. She is happy to join in with the singing and she sings some of the songs at home too.”

“We’re always made to feel welcome – the staff are so friendly”



12 monthly sessions
19 average weekly attendance
108 families throughout the year
222 total attendances

Saturday Stay & Play

These sessions are always held on the first Saturday of the month at Botley School and are open to the whole family. This is run alternately between Hayley and Sue assisted by one other paid member of staff.

The set-up is very similar to the Monday Stay and Play with regard to the equipment, activities and resources. The whole family are encouraged to come and we often see grandparents, aunts and uncles too. A snack is provided at this session for the children and it is a good opportunity for children who attend different schools to meet up with each other. This is usually a busy session with the widest reach of all our sessions - possibly due to the lack of affordable family activities available at weekends.

“My kids love your sessions. I love this group because my kids get along with other kids and it warms my heart.

Thank you Hayley and Sue.

“Lots of activities available for a range of ages and some good ideas to do at home that don’t cost much”

Supporting Early Learning continued...

Wednesday Stay and Sing

When listening to feedback from families, it appeared that an afternoon group would be welcome.

We set up a Stay and Sing Group at Dean Court Community Centre on Wednesday afternoons. The hour long session started with a story, we would sing a variety of nursery rhymes, counting songs, action songs, songs with scarves, bubbles and musical instruments and would then finish with a story.

Although the families that attended enjoyed the session, this would often clash with naptime/parents returning to work or other commitments so the numbers dwindled forcing the session to stop.

From Autumn 2025, we plan to replace this session with a new Stay and Play session on a Wednesday morning.



32 weekly sessions
3 average weekly attendance
43 families throughout the year



22 total families

Halloween Stay & Play

.This was the very last stay and play of Botley Bridges' year. It was a one off afternoon Themed Halloween Stay and Play which fell in October Half Term.

We had activities such as witches slime, pumpkin carving, potion making and more. Children were invited to attend in costume and there were lots of Halloween arts and crafts to make too.

The session ended with spooky stories and Halloween songs.

“Thank you for running another group this week when everything else has closed”

Supporting Outdoor Learning

Summer Stay & Play

The summer programme ran from the end of July until the beginning of September. Lots of other local groups close during this time so families were glad to have somewhere to go. Older siblings are welcome to join us during school holidays.

We ran 5 Stay and Play sessions on Monday mornings in Botley School, 4 Stay and Sing Sessions at Dean Court Community Centre, SS Peter & Paul Church Hall, West Oxford Community Centre and Seacourt Hall and also three themed Stay and Play Sessions in local parks. We ran a Dinosaur Session in Botley Park, a Teddy Bears' Picnic at Cumnor Park and a Pirate Session at Dean Court Park. Sue Wastie, a former Trustee of Botley Bridges ran themed family yoga sessions to tie in with the Park sessions too. We were also able to run two sessions at Oxford Story Museum which was very popular.

“Very enjoyable ‘edu-fun’ session. It’s important over the summer as the other children’s groups are closed. We want to close the gap in children’s development that covid caused. It’s great that it’s adapted for different aged kids too and importantly, it helps us to socialise.”



6 total sessions
26 average number of families per session
155 total attendances



14 summer sessions
20 average session attendance
108 families attended
280 total attendances



Forest Stay & Play

We successfully piloted these outdoor learning sessions in 2024 following feedback from families. This year we ran 5 sessions between April and October and then a special Santa session in December.

They are much liked and feedback is always positive. Each session has a camp fire with some food to cook and a variety of forest themed activities such as clay faces/mud pies/making kites/ bug hunts/making miniature gardens/stick people, leaf printing, clay modelling. The sessions are run by a trained forest school leader with support from 2 other staff.

“It was a very good session and we enjoyed it a lot. There were plenty of activities. It was a good way to spend our afternoon.”

“Relaxed session that was welcoming and well set up to support a mix of children..”

Forest Stay and Play and our outdoor summer sessions were funded with a grant from Pye Charitable Settlement.

Building Parents' Skills

Child & Baby First Aid Courses

We ran two sessions in Spring. We always run an afternoon session and an evening session. Basic first aid is taught focusing on common issues and complaints with babies/young children such as choking, cuts, bruises and breaks, childhood illnesses etc. Adult CPR is taught also.

“Very informative and hands-on”

“Really useful for anyone with small children”

2

total number of sessions

10

average session attendance

20

parents attended

8

total number of sessions

9

average session attendance

72

attendances

Family Nurturing Courses

Two courses were run this year. The course is the centre for Emotional Health Course and supports families in creating calm families with positive parenting strategies. In the first course there were 7 participants and in the second 10. There was over 80% attendance. 1 couple who attended were potential adopters and went on to adopt a young child.

“Every parent needs it to cope and understand parenting”

“I found the group to be really supportive, open and helpful”

Working With Our Community

Christmas Hampers

Over 150 hampers were made up this year at Christmas and collected or delivered to local households. 265 adults and 167 children were supported through the gifts.

Many requests came from households who use the City and Botley Larders and also from Field House retirement flats and Age Concern. Families and households could request a bag of food and small gifts. There were over 30 volunteers who gave their time to pack and deliver the bags, including volunteers from Knights Law Firm - who then went on to provide the hard labour for the sandpit refurbishment.



Accounts 1/11/24- 31/10/25

Income £30,811

Expenditure £23,342

Grants and larger donations £15,050
Income from sessions £7104
Donations from Individuals £1372
Legacy £5000
Donations for hampers £2285

Salaries & Staffing £12886
Premises costs £4384
Running costs £3935
Grants awarded £360
Hampers £1777

Closing balance on 31/10/25: £16,572



Trustees

Chair of Trustees - Veronica Cucuiat

Treasurer - Sue Dowe

Secretary - Sarah Cohen

Louise Kunzeman, Kim Randell, Amy Walters

www.botleybridges.org

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