

A BETTER BUILDING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE



In line with the rapid expansion of Bishop's Stortford and the evolving needs of local people with learning disabilities and special additional needs, we need YOUR HELP!

Grove Cottage needs a new building that is safe, fully accessible and which will support our community's needs for years to come.

With your help, we can shape futures, change lives and enable those who attend Grove Cottage to reach their full potential.

This is your chance to make a huge difference to our community. The next few pages will show you how.



"I have seen first-hand how Grove Cottage provides much needed support for children and their parents in their social and educational struggle; and how their adult members enjoy a supportive environment, experiencing achievement in the company of others, scaffolded by compassionate staff.

Grove Cottage's lifelong support ethos is crucial, adapting to life's changing pressures. It's an invaluable resource for the local community, and I wholeheartedly endorse their ideas for expansion and improvement."

Dr Mike Blows
Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust



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Our Mission

To provide social and educational activities for people of all ages with learning disabilities and special additional needs; to help them develop their potential, avoid social isolation by supporting lifelong friendships, and to provide respite for their families.

Our Vision

A world in which every individual has the opportunity to learn, develop, integrate into society and exercise choices, and where families can enjoy a regular family life.

Grove Cottage is affiliated with Mencap but we are an independent, registered charity.

Charity number: 1122298

Welcome to Grove Cottage

Supporting people with learning disabilities and special additional needs in the local community for 60 years

Grove Cottage is more than a building on London Road; it is a place bursting with heart and soul, offering support, advice and friendship. We are a lifeline for our members and their families.

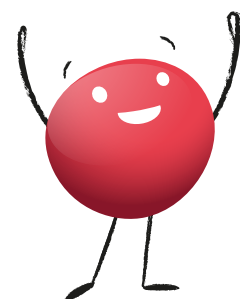
In 1966 we were born out of a need to bridge the gap in services for children with additional needs. Today, Grove Cottage continues to offer essential services for individuals of all ages with learning disabilities and special additional needs throughout their lives.

From a modest beginning with 11 members, we now welcome over 180 adults and children through our doors every year. From tender nursery age to adulthood, we stand by their side, nurturing their potential, opening doors to new experiences, and forging bonds of friendship that will last a lifetime.

We support their families, many of whom experience anxiety, financial strain, social isolation and a lack of facilities. Families and carers find much-needed respite here, free from judgement and welcomed with open arms.



Our goal is simple yet powerful: to ensure high-quality support for everyone with a learning disability or special additional need, including their families and carers, long into the future.



A Grove Cottage story

Ollie's story

“Grove Cottage has offered us so much as a family since Ollie was born.”



“Ollie started attending a play group at Grove Cottage when he was just one. This was the time that we were embarking on the new and scary life of special needs, full of doctors and diagnoses. This group enabled us to have ‘normal’ experiences with Ollie for his age, as well as providing much needed support. Here, we made lifelong friends who have been with us throughout our journey.

As Ollie got older, Grove Cottage provided respite for us as a family. His behaviour became harder to manage and there were very few places that would agree to look after him, let alone where we felt we could trust to keep him safe. At Grove Cottage, Ollie has never been made to feel ‘too much’ to manage, and it has enabled him to enjoy himself, as well as providing our family with vital respite, and quality time with our daughter.

Now Ollie is 24 years old, his needs have changed once more, but Grove Cottage is still here to support him and us as a family. Ollie attends Grove Cottage clubs for vital integration and socialisation with people his own age, and gains much from his relationships with the amazing staff and volunteers too.

Grove Cottage has been with us as a family for Ollie's entire life and it will be part of his life for long into the future. They have supported us every step of the way and we honestly don't know where we would be without it!”

Annie, Ollie's mother



We've outgrown our home

Our home is now woefully inadequate for the services we provide and will not meet future demand

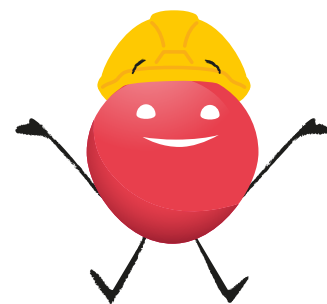
Our community have spoken

After analysing the needs of our local learning disability community and assessing our own requirements, it is essential that Grove Cottage builds a larger, modern, purpose-built facility to enable us to meet our members' needs throughout the course of their lives.

There is an acute shortage of facilities and services for complex learning and special educational needs. Growing local demand intensifies pressure on our building. A busy hub of activity for over 50 years, it can no longer adapt to accommodate the increasing members and services, rendering it unfit for purpose and inadequate for current and future needs.

Some of our challenges:

- Unsafe building structure
- Poor accessibility
- Outdated facilities
- Lack of appropriate toilet changing facilities
- Energy inefficient and costly to maintain
- Lack of space
- Inadequate local service provision across all age groups for those with a learning disability, but particularly day services for adults, and those transitioning from child to adult services
- Insufficient family support and respite care
- Rapidly increasing local population in Bishop's Stortford
- Upward trend in those living with learning disability in Hertfordshire



It is essential that Grove Cottage builds a larger, modern, purpose-built facility to enable us to meet our members' needs throughout the course of their lives.

Building a brighter future

You can be part of our journey... ...to rebuild Grove Cottage!

We have been granted planning permission to demolish and rebuild Grove Cottage, to make it fit for purpose.

Following a large gift from the Crabb family who we supported for many years, we have since received further donations from friends and grant-making organisations. It is now time to bring our community, individuals and organisations with us on our journey to help us raise the remaining funds.

With your help we can look forward to welcoming more people with a learning disability and their families to our new building and home, and to provide a safe environment with more space and the facilities our members deserve.



Our current Grove Cottage building



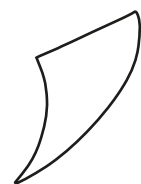
A new modern home will support our community for years to come!

Our new building

A new modern home will support local people with learning disabilities and special additional needs both now and in the future

Our aim is for our new purpose-built premises to be over twice the size of the current floor space with two storeys and an outdoor space. It will be fully accessible with a state-of-the-art specification and an adaptable interior, which will enable us to accommodate a variety of activities for separate groups on different days.

“Grove Cottage has a life-long impact on local people with a disability and those who care for them. And we will be able to do so much more in our new home.”



Our new building will enable us to:

- Meet health and safety requirements
- Provide a fully accessible space
- Accommodate current and future demand
- Offer comfort and dignity for our members with modern facilities
- Increase service provision for members, families and carers
- Operate in a sustainable, energy efficient and cost-effective manner
- Provide a welcoming ‘hub’ for the local community and to further develop our partnerships



A lifetime's support

Our increased timetable will help to fill identified gaps in local service provision, offering long-term support over a person's life.

Early Years



CURRENT PROVISION:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Ofsted-registered Early Years Nursery

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL PROVISION:

- Parent and toddler group
- Holiday club for nursery age children

School Age



CURRENT PROVISION:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Weekend club for primary aged children
- Weekend club for secondary aged children
- Holiday clubs for 5 to 25 year olds

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL PROVISION:

- Sibling club
- Music Man Project Hertfordshire Juniors

Young People



CURRENT PROVISION:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Monthly Saturday afternoon club
- Holiday clubs for 5 to 25 year olds
- The Music Man Project Hertfordshire 
- Grove Cottage @ Thirst Café
- Get Active sports club
- Performing Arts
- Gardening club

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL PROVISION:

- Sibling club
- Music Man Project Juniors
- Weekend club for 18 to 25 year olds
- Cooking for fun
- Cottage Creates art club
- Health and wellbeing sessions

Adults



CURRENT PROVISION:

- The Music Man Project Hertfordshire 
- Grove Cottage @ Thirst Café
- Get Active sports club
- Performing Arts
- Grove Cottage @ South Mill Arts
- Adult evening social clubs
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Gardening club

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL PROVISION:

- Cottage Creates art club
- Health and wellbeing sessions
- Adult drop-in session
- Occupational Therapy
- Specialist training for carers
- Support and advice service for parents, carers and families
- Life skills sessions
- Grove Matters – member and staff board

Help us create

A Better Building for a Brighter Future

This is your chance to make a huge difference to the lives of people with a learning disability and the wider community.

There are various ways you can support our project and we can work together to offer a range of recognition packages, suited to your requirements.

For example:

- A financial gift could fund a specific room or project element, or contribute towards the overall project costs
- You may be able to offer gifts-in-kind, such as materials, time or expertise
- You could connect us with people you know who could offer their support

With your help, we can shape futures, change lives and enable those who attend Grove Cottage to reach their full potential.

Thank you!



Contact our Head of Fundraising now on:
natalie.p@mencapgrovecottage.org
07523 945310



Thank you to the legacy of

Brian Crabb, founding member of Grove Cottage, and his family

In 1966 Stanley and Margery Crabb, with a group of other parents, purchased Grove Cottage to create a safe place in which their son, Brian, and other local people who had a learning disability could receive social and practical support.

The organisation grew and evolved, and Brian Crabb attended Grove Cottage's clubs and services for 53 years, leading a full life with his family and friends. Brian's parent's vision gave him and others a happy life and remains a lifeline to many families to this day.

After his sad passing in 2019, Brian's estate was generously left to our charity; words cannot express the magnitude of our surprise and immense gratitude.

The Crabb family's generosity will help us to rebuild Grove Cottage, so that we can meet our growing community's needs and continue to fulfil the wishes of Brian's family.

The Crabb family created Grove Cottage, and their presence in its history has given us a chance to help our community for many years to come.



We remember Brian for his dry sense of humour, kindness, courtesy and flawless manners. We are all truly honoured to have played such an important role in his life.

By joining us on our journey and supporting our new build project you can help change lives and create a brighter future for those with learning disabilities, just as Brian's parents did for him nearly 60 years ago.

Grove Cottage

A Better Building for a Brighter Future



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**Registered
Charity Number:**

1122298



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Find out more here:

www.mencapgrovecottage.org