

Buddy Bear Trust
(Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee)

DIRECTORS' REPORT for the year ended 31 August 2023

The Directors, who are the trustees for the purpose of charity law, have pleasure in presenting their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charitable company for the year ended 31 August 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Reference and Administration Details

The reference and administration details of the charitable company are as shown on page 2.

Objectives and Activities

The principal activity of the charitable company is to relieve sickness of children suffering from cerebral palsy, spina bifida and other motor neurone disorders.

The main strategic objectives of the Trust are:

- To provide conductive education for children who suffer from cerebral palsy and other motor disorders.
- To become a "mainstream" part of education and therapy for children suffering from cerebral palsy in Northern Ireland and to see greater integration of the existing services of health and education for such children.

The key aims of Buddy Bear Trust are to allow young people to benefit from this life changing therapy and develop their own optimum level of independence.

Public Benefit Statement

The Directors of Buddy Bear Trust confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 4(6) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to have regard to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the charitable company in the year ended 31 August 2022.

Achievements and Performance

Children with Cerebral Palsy at the Buddy Bear Trust Conductive Education School ("Buddy Bear School") benefited from a team lead by the principal and three other Peto trained Conductors, all of whom are registered with the General Teaching Council of Northern Ireland as well as two experienced Classroom Assistants and a part-time Secretary. The Buddy Bear School was able to offer places to 26 children in one of four main groups being:

- Parent and Child Group (Pre-Nursery);
- Nursery Group;
- School Group 1; and
- School Group 2.

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DIRECTORS' REPORT for the year ended 31 August 2023 (Continued)

Children at the Buddy Bear School made great progress under the guidance of the Conductors/Teachers. Each child made visible progress throughout the year which pleased and motivated their parents to request more conductive education within the school.

Children new to the school began the first stages of walking, while others used the mounted wall bars in classrooms to pull themselves into a standing position and show new levels of mobility, all of which brought positive feedback from parents. One parent shared a quote with us "We are so grateful that our child attends Buddy Bear. Even with the pandemic the care, teaching sessions, progress and support he has received from the Buddy Bear team has been incredible. It has been amazing to see progress so much in such a short space of time and has filled us all with such hope and joy for the future."

Several children at the School were also able to make the transition to mainstream education at local primary schools during the year on a full time or part-time basis.

Achievements and Performance in year

The Buddy Bear Trust continues to actively promote its five year 'Lifetime of Difference' project. The project is being funded for the next three years from the National Lottery Community Fund and the McClay Foundation. These vital funds serves as a platform but still leaves a shortfall for the optimum running costs of the school which we need to supplement with government funding and ongoing fund raising.

The Buddy Bear Trust continues to rely heavily on volunteers to assist in the day to day operational running of the charity. Such volunteers are invaluable, and the charity continues to be grateful for their continued input. The volunteers do not receive any remuneration; however, the charity will cover any costs of travel and expenses in order to ensure no volunteers are out of pocket for the costs they incur. Good volunteers are the backbone of any charity and we appreciate their time and effort.

DIRECTORS' REPORT for the year ended 31 August 2023 (Continued)

Independent School Inspection

The school last had an inspection by the Education Training Inspectorate in December 2020 with the focus on:

- The learners' achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy;
- Whether the accommodation is suitable and meets health and safety standards;
- The implementation of procedures for safeguarding and pastoral care;
- The quality of leadership and management

The full inspection was carried out with findings and conclusions documented within an official report of inspection; DE Ref No. IS59 to which key findings have been noted below.

Outcomes for Learners

The pupils all have complex physical difficulties arising from medical conditions, despite these, they make steady progress in their physical, educational, communication and play skills targets.

A small number of parents and family members shared with the inspectors their highly positive experiences of the school. They reported that their children are safe and very happy and appreciate the ongoing support they receive from staff to increase their skills in helping their children.

It was also reported that the pupils are very well settled and enjoy their routines and activities in school and interact well with staff and visitors.

Quality of Provision

It was stated, the learning environment is highly inclusive and nurturing with child-centred, well-maintained, and very purposeful learning resources, including a well-equipped sensory room and outdoor play space.

The conductors/teachers' plan learning for each individual pupil. It is thorough, comprehensive, and purposeful, and is monitored, reviewed and evaluated regularly through corroborative staff meetings.

Furthermore, the resources used are well-planned, imaginative and linked closely to themes and to the pupil's individual interests.

The school is reported as inclusive and has a highly positive ethos, addressing the educational, physical and health and well-being needs of the pupils.

The learning environment is highly inclusive and nurturing with child-centred, well-maintained, and very purposeful learning resources, including a well-equipped Sensory Room and safe poured rubber outdoor play space.

Leadership and management

The teaching Principal and staff are highly skilled and apply consistent high standards of provision appropriate for the complex and wide range of learning and physical needs of the pupils.

They continually self-evaluate and assess the progress made by the pupils as well as identifying and sustaining areas of improvement across the school.

It was also reported that the board of trustees are highly committed to and support all aspects of the school. They meet regularly and are very well informed about safeguarding and the overall life and work of the school.

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DIRECTORS' REPORT for the year ended 31 August 2023 (Continued)

Independent School Inspection (Continued)

Safeguarding

It was reported at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding learners, take account of and reflect, the guidance from the Department of Education.

It was concluded in the inspection from the ETI that Buddy Bear Trust Conductive Independent School provides efficient and suitable instruction for the learners and that the school is to continue to be registered by the Department of Education to provide education.

High Profile Visits to the School

The Directors encouraged the Political Leaders and Senior EA officials to visit the independent special school to understand why early intervention is important in the life of a child with cerebral palsy and the impact it can have on the parents and extended family.

The Hungarian Ambassador was among the politicians to visit the school in the year.

We valued the visits as the Politicians could speak with authority about the benefits of the school.

The visits also reinforced the parents and let them know that their child was valuable.

Joint Letter of support from the main Political Parties

The Buddy Bear Trust continued to receive letters of support from political parties and a Joint Letter signed by the Political leaders of the 5 main parties, showing their continued support to Buddy Bear Trust.

Along with previous letters received from all political party leaders, including Michelle O'Neill (Vice President of Sinn Féin) and Robin Swann MLA (Health Minister for Northern Ireland), it is clear to see the continued support for the work and care carried out by Buddy Bear Trust.

We are actively trying to secure a meeting with the Secretary of State, the Minister of Education and the Permanent Secretary of Northern Ireland to meet with the Trustees to discuss funding arrangements and how the parents of children attending the school should be assisted.

General Maintenance

- Converted a Classroom (upstairs) to a toilet and changing bench and area
- Converted other half of Classroom into a storage area

Aims for Next Year

- Address Councils about benefits of Buddy Bear Trust
- Provide lift to access first floor
- Employ two more Conductors as to meet needs of school and children
- Add additional rubber flooring outside

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DIRECTORS' REPORT for the year ended 31 August 2023 (Continued)

Financial Review

Financial Performance

The charity earned net incoming resources of £124,934 (2022 – incoming resources of £80,552) in the year to 31 August 2023 and at the year end the total funds of the charity amounted to £380,693 (2022 - £255,759) comprising unrestricted funds of £168,868 (2022 - £149,859), restricted funds of £11,825 (2022 - £5,900) and a designated reserve fund of £200,000 (2022 - £100,000).

Principal sources of funding and how this has supported the key objectives of the charitable company are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

Reserves Policy

The Buddy Bear Trust have a formal reserves policy and the trustees believe there are sufficient funds to meet the needs of the charity for the medium term. As the charity is heavily reliant on donations and funding from public bodies, the board believe it is imperative to hold a significant level of reserves so that the charity can continue to operate should there be any unexpected fall in incoming resources.

Structure, Governance and Management

Organisational Structure

The charitable company is a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital.

The charitable company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

In accordance with the Articles of Association, the members to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last election, and the relevant motion will be put at the Annual General Meeting. A retiring member shall be eligible for re-election.

Directors

The Directors during the year are the same as the Directors as listed on page 2.

Taxation Status

The charitable company is recognised as a charity by HM Revenue & Customs. Accordingly, the charitable company has availed of the exemptions contained in Chapter 3 Part 11 Corporation Taxes Act 2010 and Section 256 Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992.

Directors' Responsibilities

The Directors are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year. In preparing these financial statements the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

CavanaghKelly, Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors

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DIRECTORS' REPORT for the year ended 31 August 2023 (Continued)

The Directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

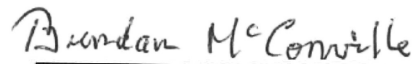
Small Companies Exemption

The above report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the Board of Directors on 29 July 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Registered office:

Peto Centre
Killyman Road
Dungannon
Co. Tyrone
BT71 6DE


Mr Brendan McConville
DIRECTOR

Company Registration Number: NI022996
Charity Registration Number: 104137


Mrs Phyllis Agnew
DIRECTOR