

Report of the trustees for the year ending 31 August 2023

The trustees are pleased to present their annual committee report together with the financial statements of the playgroup for the year ending 31 August 2023..

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2008 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

Charity Number CCNI:0019015

Our purposes and activities

Little Acorns Community Play Group is established to enhance the development and education of children by promoting play based facilities and learning environments for all children under statutory school age in the Killyman and surrounding area.

The Play Group operates without distinction of religion, culture, race or means by associating the statutory authorities, community and voluntary organisations and the inhabitants in a common effort to achieve our charitable purposes. We provide a play based curriculum for pre-school children as set by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

We are open 5 days a week and we are an equal opportunity group where all parents and their children are welcome.

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a charity (PB2)'. The Playgroup relies on grant income to cover its operating costs.

The direct benefits which flow from this purpose include: provision of play group facilities that provide educational and recreational facilities for pre-school children in and round Killyman to meet the needs of, and to improve children's education, development, health and wellbeing.

The direct benefits which flow from purpose include advancement of education for children under statutory school age in receiving a balanced educational curriculum. These benefits are demonstrated through feedback from parents, annual inspections from health care professionals within the registered Health Care Trust and regular inspections from educational professionals.

These benefits are demonstrated through feedback from beneficiaries, parents and play group leaders, and attendees at our events and activities using: evaluation forms, surveys, verbal feedback.

In providing a play based educational environment there is no possibility of harm outweighing the benefit - there is no harm arising from any of the purposes.

The charity's beneficiaries are children under statutory school age in the play group that live in the Killyman area and its surrounding areas in County Tyrone.

Little Acorns Playgroup

There is no private benefit to any individual - the only private benefit flowing from this purpose that it is incidental and is necessary for staff to receive on-going training in childcare. These benefits are necessary to ensure the highest quality of service benefits the beneficiaries.

Aims

The aims of the Playgroup is to enhance the development and education of children under statutory school age by encouraging parents/guardians to understand and provide for the needs of their children by:-

- Offering appropriate play facilities, with the right of parents/carers to take responsibility for and to become involved in the activities of the Group, ensuring that the Group offers opportunities for all children regardless of religion, culture, race or means.
- Encouraging the study of the needs of such children and their families and promoting public interest in and recognition of such needs of such children and their families in the local area.
- Support the values and principles of Early Years

Financial review

Reserves policy and going concern

Reserves are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of income and to cover unplanned emergency repairs and other expenditure. The trustees consider that the ideal level of reserves as at 31 August 2023 would be £20,000.

Without the support of our funders and continued fundraising efforts by staff and volunteers, it is doubtful that the Playgroup could continue operating. The trustees are endeavouring to ensure the success with a combination of measures including fundraisers and applications to funding bodies in an effort to secure staff posts and long-term sustainability of the charity.

The trustees have reviewed the circumstances of the Playgroup and consider that adequate resources continue to be available to fund the activities of the Playgroup for the foreseeable future. The trustees are of the view that Playgroup is an ongoing concern.

A major financial concern for the Playgroup as with any charity will be ongoing financial sustainability from funding in the years to come. The trustees are aware of the need to maintain free reserves, especially in the current economic climate. Continual fundraising will provide a challenging environment in the years to come.

We would like to acknowledge the continued support of our funders as referred to in note 4 in the accounts.

Little Acorns Playgroup

Reference and administrative details

Operating address: Little Acorns Playgroup_5 Tamnamore Rd, Dungannon, Co Tyrone
BT71 6RJ

Our advisers

Accountant E A Grimley & Co, 30a Derrygally Rd, Moy, Dungannon, Co Tyrone, BT71 6LZ
Bankers; First Trust Bank, Scotch Street, Dungannon, Co Tyrone, BT70 1JJ

Key management personnel Little Acorns Playgroup

Trustees

The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Chair: Mr Stiofan Campbell

Mrs Kathy Devlin
Ms Tracey Owens
Ms Sarah Leathem

Key management personnel:

Playgroup Leader Patricia Shields

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Little Acorns Playgroup is a Trust governed by a Trust DEED.

Appointment of trustees

As set out in the Trust Deed, the maximum Board members shall be a minimum of 3.

When considering co-opting trustees, the Board has regard to the requirement for any specialist skills needed.

The Trustees shall be entitled to invite members of the public to attend as observers at any Annual General Meeting or any other meeting of the Trustees.

Trustee induction and training

New trustees undergo an orientation session to brief them on: their legal obligations under charity law, the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, and inform them of the content of the Trust Deed, the committee and decision-making processes, the business plan and recent financial performance of the charity.

Any person wishing to become a board member must apply in writing for approval by the Trustees. It is a requirement that the board members attend an induction process covering good governance. During the induction they meet key employees and other trustees. Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

Organisation

The board of trustees, which require a minimum of 3 Trustees, administers the charity. The charity is managed by the Trustee Board, which meets at least 6 times per year.

The Playgroup Leader liaises between meetings with the Chair and Treasurer to ensure the smooth running of the organisation.

Related parties and co-operation with other organisations

None of our trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity. Any connection between a trustee and senior manager of the charity with a funder must be disclosed to the full board of trustees in the same way as any other contractual relationship with a related party. In the current year no such related party transactions were reported.

Risk management

The trustees have a risk management strategy which comprises:

- an annual review of the principal risks and uncertainties that the charity
- the establishment of policies, systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified in the annual review; and
- the implementation of procedures designed to minimise or manage any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise.

This work has identified that financial sustainability is the major financial risk for the charity. A key element in the management of financial risk is a regular review of available liquid funds to settle debts as they fall due, regular liaison with the Playgroup Leader to ensure sufficient working capital by the Playgroup.

Attention has also been focussed on non-financial risks arising from fire, health and safety staff, volunteers and clients. These risks are managed by ensuring accreditation is up to date, having robust policies and procedures in place and regular awareness training for staff working in these operational areas.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

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

Company law requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of 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 period. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- 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 charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website.

Statement as to disclosure to our Independent Examiner

In so far as the trustees are aware at the time of approving our trustees' annual report:

- there is no relevant information of which the charitable company's accountant is unaware, and
- the trustees, having made enquiries of fellow committee member have each taken all steps that he/she is obliged to take as a member in order to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the independent is aware of that information.

This report was approved by the board of trustees and signed on its behalf by

Stiofan Campbell

Dated: 02/02/24