

Darjeeling Children's Trust

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



A brighter future for children and young people in Darjeeling



Registered charity in England and Wales
Charity number 1143109

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees present their annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Brief history

Darjeeling Children's Trust (DCT) is a UK charity governed by UK law. It was originally constituted by Trust Deed in early 2008. This document was amended in June 2011 to comply with a suggested amendment from the Charity Commission to allow full registration to proceed. The current Trust Deed is dated 15 July 2011 and registration by the Charity Commission was confirmed on 27 July 2011.

Registered charity

The registered number is 1143109.

Registered address

151 Abbey Road, Westbury-On-Trym, Bristol BS9 3QH

Charitable Objectives and Activities

The objectives of the charity are to advance the education and preserve and protect the good health of the children and young people of Darjeeling through the provision and improvement of education facilities, through improvements to their living conditions and through sponsorship.

Having commissioned a Community Needs Assessment in 2021, Trustees agreed the launch of new projects during 2022 in support of its findings, notably the commencement of funding for career counselling provision and some extra-curriculum education and young people.

How the Trust works

The Trust has built close relationships with partners in Darjeeling over the years of its operation. Trustees based in the UK, Switzerland and India meet quarterly to take decisions about the operation of the Trust and its projects. In 2022 these meetings took place remotely by video conference, except for the meeting in June, which most Trustees attended in person in Basel, Switzerland.

Having taken on our first employee in India (Aashwin Pradhan) in late 2021, 2022 was the first year in which we could fully benefit from this critical new resource. A sub-group of the Board met regularly with Aashwin throughout 2022 as a project group to monitor and manage the delivery of projects in India. In September 2022 we also took on our first employee in the UK, Kirstie Davidson. Her arrival allowed development of the Trust's IT systems, more effective use of social media and communications, and for digital record-keeping to be placed on a more secure footing.

The Trust maintains effective relationships with a number of educational and welfare organisations in Darjeeling, including in particular the head-teachers of the schools attended by sponsored children, the Food and Craft Institute, the Head Monk at the Kripasaran Buddhist Mission Children's Home, and the building and design team responsible for delivery of the Children's Home project.

Funds are transferred to Darjeeling through use of the Trinity Foundation, an organisation based in Siliguri, India which is able to receive funds from the UK through an FCRA account; and by direct transfers to the FCRA account held by the Kripasaran Buddhist Mission, where funds are to be spent on that project. In 2022 we consolidated the arrangement with Trinity Foundation by sending payments in fewer, larger sums; we will continue to take this approach, which relies on accurate forward planning of expenditure, going forward.

Europe-based Trustees were able to travel to India in 2022 for the first time since the covid pandemic. Tshering Huber visited Darjeeling in March and May, and Marilyn Adams visited in October/November.

Trustees

The following were trustees throughout 2022:

- Katherine Carr (Chairperson), Monica Sood (Treasurer), Marilyn Adams, Clare Blakeway-Phillips, Hugh Heron, Sharan Patel, Lisa Glydon, all of whom are resident in the UK.
- Tshering Huber, who is resident in Switzerland.
- Pasang Wangdi, who is resident in India.

In 2023 Monica Sood and Lisa Glydon stood down as Trustees and three new Trustees were appointed.

- Matthew Houghton (Treasurer) appointed 23 April 2023, who is resident in the UK.
- Matthew Morpurgo and Jennifer Owen, appointed 2 July 2023, both of whom are resident in the UK.

The minimum number of trustees is three. Trustees are appointed for three years by a resolution of trustees passed at a Special Meeting. New trustees are invited to join the Trust when either a vacancy arises due to the resignation of a current trustee or when a gap is identified in the skills available to trustees and which needs to be filled.

The procedure followed is in accordance with advice published by the Charity Commission. Prospective Trustees usually join initially as Associate Trustees for six months before agreeing by mutual agreement to become full Trustees.

Achievements and Performance in 2022

2022 marked the return to a full programme of activity in India, following a significant pause necessitated by the coronavirus pandemic. Activity in India was placed on a more programmatic footing, with work undertaken as part of six distinct projects: Re-construction of the Kripasaran Children's Home; Ongoing support for the Children's Home; Health and Welfare; Child Sponsorship; Vocational Training; and Life Skills. Trustees intend to further embed this programmatic approach next year, and reflect these defined projects in future budgets.

a) Re-construction of the Kripasaran Buddhist Mission (KBM) Children's Home

Construction work restarted at the site of the KBM Home at the end of 2021, and continued through the first part of 2022. In February the new Prayer Hall began to be used, and work started on demolition of the old kitchen. In April geysers were fitted into the bathrooms to provide hot water. A significant milestone was installation of a 30,000 litre water harvesting tank in the Summer, to provide a reliable supply of clean water for personal hygiene and laundry through the dry winter months and negate the need to purchase water supplies.

Unfortunately, issues with making financial transfers to the KBM Home in the middle of the year meant that work had to pause for a number of months. This was finally resolved in November. This allowed sufficient funds to be transferred before the end of the year to support the organisation of materials and the workforce so that construction could be restarted in February 2023.

b) Ongoing support for the Kripasaran Children's Home

Many KBM residents had returned to their families during covid, but they returned in 2022 and the Home was close to its 100-child capacity by the end of the year. We funded a number of initiatives to keep the children healthy and entertained, as follows:

- A table tennis table was provided in May;
- Umbrellas were provided for the children in May;
- A white board was installed in August, and was put to use immediately to support maths and science tuition for 21 students from classes 8,9 and 10 who – having missed a lot of classes during covid – benefited from this additional support delivered in daily sessions in the lead up to their exams;
- Fire safety and evacuation training was provided in August, and the very old fire extinguishers were replaced by new models;
- Knitting and sewing classes continued throughout the year for the girls.

During the year we secured agreement from the Management Board of the KBM Home to fund the salary of a female assistant to help with management of the Home. This post would provide additional capacity and continuity of care, especially for the girls, when the Head Monk needed to travel away from Darjeeling. An advert was launched in November and interviews conducted in Darjeeling in December, resulting in the successful appointment of a new supervisor, Jigten Bhutia, at the end of the year.

c) Health and Welfare

At the beginning of 2022, DCT hired Dr Shreya Chettri, a Resident Medical Officer at the Planters Hospital in Darjeeling, to oversee the well-being of the children at the Children's Home, and also of our sponsored children who live with their parents/guardians. She will be supported by two nurses. Dr Chettri established well-maintained health records about all the children, and developed a programme of health interventions for the children through which we were able to deliver some significant improvements:

- Weekly yoga classes for all the children began in April, to support their physical health and also assist with mental wellbeing and relaxation after the difficult time the children had during covid;
- Menstruation education sessions were delivered in April by the Rotary Club of Darjeeling, and a local NGO called Darjeeling Prerna;
- Provision of age-appropriate books on teenage health and development;
- Continued provision of basic health supplies, including toothpaste, soap and sanitary items.

Two significant interventions also followed later in the year. In August, a team of dental surgeons travelled from West Sikkim to conduct a dental camp; this was held at the KBM Home but was also open to all sponsored children, a total of 98 children. They conducted basic dental screenings, and where necessary extractions, and tooth restoration. Around 20 younger students had teeth extracted, and a number were referred for x-rays and follow-up care at local clinics. The team also held an information session on dental hygiene for all the students. This was conducted for DCT on a voluntary basis and we are hugely grateful to the team for their support and commitment to repeat the camp next year.

In November, a local ophthalmologist volunteered to conduct an eye camp, supported by Dr Chettri and the two DCT-funded nurses. 130 children were seen, along with staff from KBM. DCT funded the cost of glasses where these were required, and any follow-up care for the children who were referred for follow-up checks.

Both of these camps were a great success and are an efficient way to take care of the basic health and welfare of the children at KBM; we will aim to hold them again next year.

d) Child Sponsorship

Schools re-opened fully after the pandemic at the start of the new school year in February. A total of 70 children were being sponsored through the Trust at the end of the year. This included 10 new children who were accepted into the scheme at the end of the year.

DCT introduced a new partnership agreement during 2022 with the families of sponsored children, so that rights and responsibilities are clear on all sides. We also moved to a new model of sponsorship, so that new sponsors now contribute to the scheme as a whole rather than being 'matched' to individual children.

After such a long pause in schooling during the pandemic, we were pleased to provide one-to-one tuition for all Class 12 students taking their final school exams at the start of the year, and to reinstate winter tuition in late 2022 for those children – both in our sponsorship scheme and at the KBM Children's Home – who needed extra learning support.

As usual we provided the children with wet-weather accessories – coats, wellington boots and umbrellas – in advance of the start of the monsoon in June.

e) Vocational Training

Funding young people to attend course at the Darjeeling Food Craft Institute (FCI) is a well-established and trusted method by which we can provide them with a skilled trade and access to reliable and well-paid employment. We took on 10 new FCI students this year, and funded some additional English classes for these students to ensure their language skills were sufficient after the break in schooling necessitated by covid. We were pleased to hear that all the students supported to undertake this course last year passed their classroom assessments and were therefore able to take up their industry placements.

In October we also paid for two young men to complete the Hotel Management Programme at the Don Bosco Technical School in Kalimpong, after which they were both able to secure employment in Bangalore, leaving behind the manual jobs with which they were trying to support themselves previously.

Four young people were supported to undertake General Nursing and Midwifery training in Darjeeling and Siliguri. We also provided funds for six young women to undertake training as beauticians, which they completed in September; this has always been a successful option for those students who do not wish to pursue a more academic path, and leads to excellent opportunities for employment, either locally or further afield.

One of the advantages of our operating model is that we can be responsive to individual requests for help, and we were pleased to agree to a request for funding from one young woman to undertake a year-long IT course which will be of great use to her in her future career.

Although we have funded vocational training for many years, the Strategic Needs Assessment we commissioned in 2021 identified career counselling as a gap in provision for young people in Darjeeling. We therefore launched a pilot in November for small cohort of young people to receive career coaching from a local counsellor. We aim to expand this provision next year, and offer it to children early enough in their schooling that it can inform the study choices they make.

f) Life Skills

The Strategic Needs Assessment also identified a gap in provision of extra-curricular skills and education in Darjeeling of the kind not routinely covered in the school curriculum. To meet this need, we launched a number of pilots during 2022, some funded by us and others facilitated through our links with other NGOs operating locally in Darjeeling.

In June, 38 of our older sponsored children and vocational training students joined a series of online self-development classes run by the Otermans Institute. These sessions covered subjects the children would not routinely learn at school, such as how to set SMART goals.

Child trafficking is a particular issue in Darjeeling, so we were very pleased to facilitate a visit to the KBM Home in October by a local NGO called MARG, who provided awareness training for the older KBM and sponsored children on human trafficking, the safe use of social media, underage marriage and child sexual abuse.

In December, DCT provided funds for five young people to attend an adventure course at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute. We also funded some warm weather gear. They successfully climbed to the summit of Sandakphu, the highest point in West Bengal, as well as experiencing a range of outdoor activities. This challenging course boosted their confidence and provided them with valuable self-development and new experiences. We intend to give another cohort of children access to this experience next year.

Fundraising

Our child sponsorship scheme continued to be self-funding, with a number of very generous sponsors providing the school fees and equipment costs for our sponsored children.

The annual Darjeeling Golf Cup resumed in Yorkshire in June, and raised over £2,800. Following a springboard event at the Brigadier's Club in London in April, the most significant fundraising event of the year was the Green Shoots and Strong Roots Ball, held at the May Fair Hotel in London on 19th November. This was a fantastic opportunity to re-engage with our supporters in-person, celebrate the achievements of the past 15 years and look ahead to new projects in the future. Through ticket sales and auctions, we were delighted to raise over £45,000 from the event.

We received a number of very generous individual donations in 2022, the most significant of which was a legacy donation of £37,822 from the estate of Tejinder Kaur. We are hugely grateful to all those who contributed to us. We were pleased to receive a grant of £3,477 from the Hope Organisation, for the purpose of installing a new water tank at the Kripasaran Children's Home. Gift Aid of £4,716 was claimed for the 2020/21 tax year and received in 2022.

Our fundraising activity this year means that in late 2022 we reached the significant milestone of having raised over £1 million since the Trust was established in 2008. As ever we are hugely grateful for the generosity of our supporters, which has allowed us to change so many lives.

Now that we have employees in India and the UK, Trustees will focus in 2023 on ensuring we have sustainable funding streams to be able meet these financial commitments and on stabilising budgets after the disruption of the pandemic, to ensure the safe functioning of the Trust in the long term.

Financial Review

Total receipts in the year were £184,346 with payments of £148,860. The UK-held balance at the end of the year was £154,551, reflecting some residual funds still held which had been received from supporters and not spent during the covid pandemic. Most of this balance will be spent in 2023 to complete the construction work and renovations of the Children's Home. Trustees expect outgoings and income to stabilise further next year as 'normal' activity resumes.

Statements of the Receipts and Payments, and Assets and Liabilities, come with this Report and are part of the formal statement for 2022.

Policy on reserves

The Trust's policy on reserves is to maintain a minimum balance of £7,500 for general activities. Reserves were well above this level throughout 2022. This figure will be periodically reviewed. None of the funds held by the Trust are in deficit.

The Trust does not act as the Custodian Trustee for any assets.

The report was approved by trustees as a fair and true account of the Trust's activities at their meeting on 1 October 2023.

Signed

Name

Position

Date

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Darjeeling Children's Trust

1143109

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/01/2022

To

31/12/2022

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Regular donations	19,860	1,608	-	21,468	13,893
Legacy donation	37,822	-	-	37,822	-
Ad hoc donations	18,010	15,847	-	33,857	38,952
Fund raising events	63,872	865	-	64,737	12,630
Child sponsorship	17,355	600	-	17,955	22,732
Gift aid	5,030	-	-	5,030	1,147
Grants	-	3,477	-	3,477	3,077
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	161,949	22,397	-	184,346	92,431
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	161,949	22,397	-	184,346	92,431
A3 Payments					
School improvements	-	370	-	370	4,623
Child sponsorship	28,373	-	-	28,373	14,188
Kripasaran Children's Home	13,382	52,784	-	66,166	10,147
Vocational training	20,031	842	-	20,873	6,004
Commissions, fees and bank charges	4,514	-	-	4,514	2,093
Trust running costs	8,765	-	-	8,765	7,834
Costs of major fundraising	15,632	-	-	15,632	510
Strategy consultancy report	4,167	-	-	4,167	-
Sub total	94,864	53,996	-	148,860	45,399
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	94,864	53,996	-	148,860	45,399
Net of receipts/(payments)	67,085	(31,599)	-	35,486	47,032
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	77,057	42,158	-	119,215	-
Cash funds this year end	144,142	10,559	-	154,701	47,032

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at Co-operative bank	144,142	10,409	-
	Cash in Darjeeling	-	150	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	143,100	10,559	-
(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))		OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		Matthew Houghton (Treasurer)	01 / 10 / 2023	

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Basis of preparation

The accounting year covers the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.

The Charities Act 2011 allows charities that are not companies to use the receipts and payments format provided they have not recorded more than £250,000 in the year.

The trust has two restricted funds:

- (a) for the redevelopment of the Kripasaran Children's Home - this is a project that has been part-funded by the trust since 2013;
- (b) some vocational courses at accredited institutes

Gift Aid

The HMRC gift aid claim for the tax year 2020/21 was settled during the year.

Staff costs

The Trust took on two part-time employees, one in the UK and one in India.

In 2022 the cost of these roles was £6,359.

Trustees and other related party transactions

No Trustees received any remuneration in respect of their responsibilities as Trustees.

Fees for examination of the accounts

These financial statements include fees for independent examination of £1,320 (2021: £1,236).

Commitments and Guarantees

The Trust did not have any material commitments, nor has it provided any guarantees to third parties at 31 December 2022.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF DARJEELING CHILDREN'S TRUST

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Andrew Jordan FCA ICAEW
Haines Watts Partnership (Bristol) Limited
Chartered Accountants Bath House
6-8 Bath Street
Bristol
BS1 6HL

Date: 16 October 2023