



## **South Oxford Adventure Playground**

**Annual Report 2023 (January – December 2023)**

**CIO Reg Number: 1157509**

**Address:** Whitehouse Road, Oxford, OX1 4QH

### **INTRODUCTION**

South Oxford Adventure Playground (SOAP) is a local charity run by volunteers that provides a well-loved adventure playground that is used by locals and those who live further afield. It is free for all children during the school holidays from Easter to the end of October and after school during this period. SOAP also now runs a popular weekly youth club for 11-15 year olds. Sessions are overseen by a team of trained play workers or youth workers, and are open access, meaning children & young people can come and go as they please.

**Trustees on date when the report was approved:** Naomi Waite, Megan Douthwaite, Phil Doubtfire

**Committee on date when report was approved:** Naomi Waite (Chair), John Appleby-Alis (Treasurer), Kai Tabacek, Sophie Howell, Tom Currie, Megan Douthwaite, Emily Sharp, Tamar Shirley, Cath Unia, Mark Essex

**Reserves policy:** £3,000 shall be kept in reserve, for emergency repairs/renovations and to cover 3 month's running costs for utilities and services.

**The charity's trustees have had due regard to the Commission's guidance on public benefit.**

**Purpose according to SOAP's constitution:** To provide or assist in the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation of children and young people in the St Ebbe's, Grandpont and New Hinksey area of the city of Oxford who have need of such facilities with the object of improving their conditions of life.

**Changes to the management committee & trustees in 2023:** Megan Douthwaite and Phil Doubtfire became Trustees replacing Bob Price and Pippa Sandford. Pat Smith and Pippa Sandford stood down from the committee.

### **USE OF SOAP IN 2023**

SOAP provided free, inclusive, supervised, adventurous outdoor play and activities for a total of 88 days in 2023. Through 2023 there were 4,326 child visits. Forty-two percent (N=1818) were by unaccompanied children aged 7+ years; a quarter were by 7+ year olds accompanied by a parent or carer; and a third were by children under 7 years accompanied by a parent/care. We registered approximately 525 children aged 7 and above through the year. The average age of children registered was 9 years.

Most sessions fell between April and October, but Youth club for Year 7s and upwards ran year round. In a change to previous years and because of funding and staffing challenges we ran two after school sessions per

week on a Thursday and Friday, and the summer playscheme on four days per week (Tuesday-Fridays) through the summer holidays. The Parasol Project used SOAP on a regular basis Monday through the summer holidays. The table below shows the number of days open and unaccompanied child visits by session type and sex.

Unaccompanied child visits (7+ year olds) by type of session and sex

<b>Unaccompanied child visits 2023</b>	<b>Days open</b>	<b>Total child visits</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>% girls</b>
Total	88	1818	897	921	49.3
Easter holidays	8	175	88	89	50.3
Summer half-term	4	95	43	50	45.3
Summer holidays	18	359	151	208	42.1
Autumn half-term	3	69	37	32	53.6
After school & youth club	55	1120	578	542	51.6

Accompanied child visits by sex and age through 2023

<b>Accompanied child visits</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>% girls</b>
Total	2508	1168	1272	46.6
7+ year olds	1062	530	506	49.9
Under 7s	1446	638	766	44.1

#### **Oxford City Schools & Community groups:**

In 2018, mindful of stretched school budgets and the importance of play and access to outdoors in children and young people's mental & physical health, SOAP decided to provide free access to the site to Oxford City Schools within the ring road. We continued this through 2023 and five city primary schools were able to take advantage of this, booking 14 visits in total. The schools were St Ebbes, New Hinksey, Mabel Pritchard, Marsh Baldon and Grandpont Nursery. Other organizations with regular or one off paid sessions at SOAP included the Guides, Home Education, West Oxford Elfins, Oxford Legal Walk, Parasol, Mabel Pritchard, Bloxham, and Free Learners. This presented a successful increase in paid day time hires, and expanded access to children and young people.

#### **Weekend and evening private hire:**

There were 103 weekend and after school private hires between March – October. This compares with 124 in 2022, 70 in 2021 and 105 in 2019. A slight reduction from the previous year as a result of reduced slot availability due to Creation Theatre. Cath Unia continued management of the party hires and a growing number of day time hires supported by some volunteer party checkers.

#### **Creation Theatre:**

Creation Theatre hosted their Summer Season at SOAP which brought in significant income and a wonderful production of Much Ado about Nothing to South Oxford. They worked around our core provision and allowed us to monetise the site during August which had been a key objective from the previous year. They were great partners with minimal issues although sadly there was a break in towards the end of the season which caused some damage to the hut. Repairs were covered by our

insurance and the publicity generated resulted in an increase in individual donations to the playground.

## **MANAGEMENT & SYSTEMS**

- An organization wide google calendar was introduced to manage a busier schedule of day time, evening and weekend hires.
- A more rigorous system for managing day time and community hires was introduced with terms and conditions now being signed by all groups who use the site.
- Our employment contracts and HR practices were improved to ensure we were following best practices.

## **FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT**

- Our annual ROSPA inspection didn't bring up any significant issues. Megan Douthwaite dealt with the necessary repairs throughout the year with support from local volunteers.
- We planted 200 saplings to form a mixed hedgerow for wildlife on the boundary of the wood, donated by the Woodland Trust

## **STAFFING**

- As planned we interviewed for a Manager at the beginning of the year to take on responsibility for recruitment of playworkers, management of the playschemes and management of the site, a much needed position. There were very few applicants for this seasonal post but were lucky to recruit Michelle Keeler, an existing Senior Playworker. Michelle was combining this position with a full time position as a teaching assistant at St Ebbes Primary so was not able to take on all elements of the position but led sessions well, took on the responsibility of onsite Designated Safeguarding Lead and managed staff rotas which had been an onerous volunteer responsibility.
- We took on some good new playworkers, many of whom were local residents. This included: Kamila Chamcham, Georgie Crowther, Ellie Gath, Ellis Gallagher, Darnell Roki, Narinder Thaper and Callum Hicks. We also had a good number of returning staff members.

## **FUNDRAISING**

- We received £18,000 from Creation Theatre to host their Summer Season at SOAP. This covered the additional expenses that the project incurred including portaloos, more regular cleaner and trade waste collection but also presented a significant source of income for our core provision.
- Grant funding came from: Councillor Priority Fund from Oxfordshire County Council, Woodward trust and Doris Field.
- Donations from: NEU, New College, Exeter College, Trinity, St Johns, Jesus, All Souls and Magdalen
- Income from Fundraising events: Summer Sizzle, Silent Disco and the Christmas Fair
- Income from site lettings and party hire including an increased number of schools and community groups

## **CONSIDERATIONS AND LEARNING**

- Learn from the experience of having a manager and scope out the possibility of a job share to ensure more of the management responsibilities are being fulfilled by paid staff rather than volunteers.

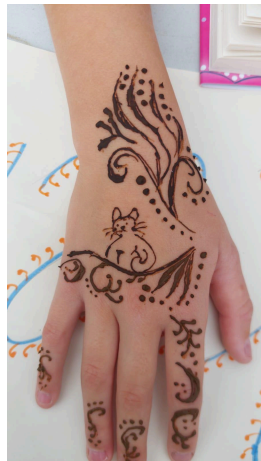
- Continue to develop and fine tune the registration app and SOAP's shared drive and calendar
- Continue to develop the use of the wood and consider how it can be incorporated more fully into the wider site.
- Continue to regularly monitor the proportion of unaccompanied children, those aged 7+, children accompanied by adults, and the proportion under 7.
- Explore options to better serve priority target groups, including strategies to increase access for over 7s. This should include how to improve the quality of age appropriate child-led free play and activities.
- Consider how to best celebrate SOAP's 50th Anniversary and to use it as an occasion to kick start fundraising to upgrade the hut.
- Consider how to attract a wider range of active volunteers to the committee and make sure the position of secretary is filled.
- Consider how to ensure grant fundraising returns to normal levels or explore additional streams of income to safeguard SOAP's future.

## THANK YOUs

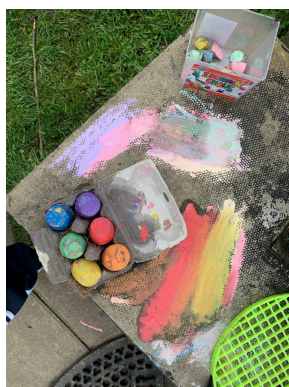
Thank you to our community, donors, and to all the volunteers who have made SOAP work this year with particular mentions for Megan Douthwaite, Phil Doubtfire, John Appleby-Alis, Kai Tabacek, Sophie Bowell, Tom Currie, Emily Sharp, Tamar Shirley, Cath Unia, Graham Cowgill.













# Independent examiner's report on the accounts

## Section A

## Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name  
South Oxford Adventure Playground (SOAP)

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 December 2023

Charity no  
(if any)

1157509

Set out on pages

1 & 2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Respective  
responsibilities of  
trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

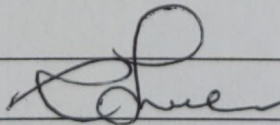
Basis of independent  
examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent  
examiner's statement

- In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention
1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
    - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
    - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
  2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Date:

25 October 2024

Name:

R Smith

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

Address:

5 The Ley



Woodstock

Oxon OX20 1UX

## Section B

## Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Report to the trustees members of	South Oxford Adventure Playground (SOAP)
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2023 Charity no. 1157809 (if any)
Set out on pages	1 & 2

Respective  
responsibilities of  
trustees and examinerBasis of independent  
examiner's statementIndependent  
examiner's statement

Signed:

Name:

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

Address:

Date: 25 October 2024

H Smith

**South Oxford Adventure Playground (SOAP)**  
**Income and Expenditure Account**  
**for the year ending 31st December 2023**

<b>Income</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Grants		
Oxford City Council	£2,000.00	£4,500.00
Oxfordshire County Council		£4,003.29
National Lottery		£10,000.00
Woodward Trust	£750.00	
Doris Field	£667.25	
Lettings of Site	£32,636.50	£16,501.00
Donations and Sponsorship	£9,415.21	£8,860.28
Event sales and Miscellaneous	£9,085.40	£4,401.14
Zurich Insurance Claim	£1,417.20	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£55,971.56</b>	<b>£48,265.71</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Staff		
Wages and Employer's NI	£28,452.08	£30,792.48
Pensions	£257.93	£0.00
Payroll	£615.30	£393.90
Staff Training	£712.85	£1,338.93
DBS Checks	£73.00	£247.00
Site rental and maintenance		
Insurance (includes employee and public liability)	£2,991.77	£2,107.71
Equipment	£423.27	£2,101.64
Refuse Collection	£385.78	£0.00
Telephone	£119.69	£216.34
Electricity	£1,892.83	£1,112.77
Rates	£349.92	£291.20
Rent	£5.00	£5.00
Hut and site expenses	£16,348.15	£5,820.83
Materials (play & domestic)	£1,329.40	£432.29
Activities	£199.69	£1,751.50
Website	£435.00	£15.00
Fundraising costs	£3,518.60	£1,192.76
Account charges	£293.50	£385.54
Refunds	£290.00	£190.00
Sundry payments	£271.83	£496.73
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£58,965.59</b>	<b>£48,891.62</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit (-) of Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>-£2,994.03</b>	<b>-£625.91</b>



## South Oxford Adventure Playground (SOAP) Balance Sheet at 31st December 2023

Current Assets	2023	2022
Cash	£0.00	£9.00
Balance at HSBC	£0.00	£0.00
Balance at Barclays	£31,469.30	£37,224.92
Balance in Paypal account	£0.00	£0.00
Balance in Zettle account	£923.40	£0.00
Total Current Assets	£32,392.70	£37,233.92
Debtors		
Brownies Invoice BRN-AUT-23	£550.00	
Zurich Insurance Claim	£1,417.20	
Total Current Debtors	£1,967.20	
Creditors		
SOAP Hire Refund Bloxham	£120.00	
Total Current Liabilities	£120.00	
Net Assets	<b>£34,239.90</b>	<b>£37,233.92</b>
Represented by:		
Accumulated Fund		
Balance b/fwd	£37,233.93	£37,859.84
Surplus/Deficit (-) of Income over Expenditure	-£2,994.03	-£625.91
Balance c/fwd	£34,239.90	£37,233.93

### Memorandum

Restricted Funds		
Youth Club		£4,532.37
Fence		£5,000.00
Designated Funds		
Reserves	£3,000.00	£3,000.00
Building & Grounds Contingency Fund	£5,000.00	
Contingency Fund	£4,000.00	
Total Restricted Funds		£9,532.37
Total Designated Funds	£12,000.00	£3,000.00
Unrestricted Funds	£22,239.90	£24,701.56
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>£34,239.90</b>	<b>£37,233.93</b>

Restricted Funds:	
Youth Club	Oxfordshire County Council Youth Opportunity Grant awarded in 2020
Fence	Semble Grant awarded in 2021
Designated Funds:	
Reserves	To cover the utilities, services and winding up costs that would be required if SOAP were to cease its activities.
Building & Grounds Contingency Fund	To cover any repairs or improvements to the premises and grounds.
Contingency Fund	To protect the organisation against predicted reductions in funding, particularly (but not exclusively) to be spent on payroll to protect core activities.

### Expenditure of 2023 Restricted Funds

Youth club expenditure 2023	
<a href="#">Wages</a>	£3,648.29
Payroll @15% pro rata	£92.30
Insurance @15% pro rata	£448.77
Telephone @15% pro rata	£17.95
Electricity @15% pro rata	£283.92
Rates @15% pro rata	£52.49
Rent @15% pro rata	£0.75
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£4,544.47</b>
<a href="#">Fence invoice</a>	£9,000.00