CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

England & Wales · Charity number 1160184

Details

Other names	COG LTD
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	09210771
Registered	2015-01-27
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Cirencester Opportunity Group Beeches Road Cirencester GL7 1BW
Phone	01285659117
Email	cog@opportunity-group.co.uk
Website	www.opportunity-group.co.uk

Activities

Objects: TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN SO THAT THEY CAN FULFILL THEIR POTENTIAL IN AN INTEGRATED, STIMULATING AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT. IN FURTHERANCE OF THIS OBJECT THE GROUP WILL:A) PROVIDE A PLAY-BASED CURRICULUM FOR SPECIAL NEEDS AND COMMUNITY CHILDREN AT A DEDICATED CENTRE;B) FOSTER MUTUAL HELP AND CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE FAMILIES AND CARERS OF SPECIAL NEEDS AND COMMUNITY CHILDREN;C) PROVIDE EARLY INTERVENTION AND OUTREACH SUPPORT SERVICES FOR FAMILIES WHERE THIS IS IN THE CHILDREN'S INTEREST.

Activities: We welcome every child and their family from birth to 4 years. We provide Early Intervention support, as well as our Early Years education Pre-school programme. We also offer a variety of group sessions for children to attend with their parents, as well as offering parenting support. With specialisms in supporting children with additional needs and those who may be vulnerable.

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Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services
- **What:** Education/training, Disability
- **Who:** Children/young People, People With Disabilities

Geography

- Gloucestershire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-08-31	£286,556	£284,084	-	-
2024-08-31	£263,537	£269,599	-	-
2023-08-31	£231,076	£251,520	-	-
2022-08-31	£209,339	£242,351	-	-
2021-08-31	£237,331	£220,944	-	-
2020-08-31	£229,881	£196,696	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Kevin Traish	Chair	2022-06-30
Adam Baggs		2025-04-29
Andrew Ian Cheesman		2026-01-12
Elizabeth Avril York		2025-04-29
Hugh William Yarrow		2024-09-05
Jane Burr		2019-04-13
Matthew James Hooper		2022-05-10
Michelle Violet Bignell		2025-09-30
Rebecca Slough		2026-05-18

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CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

England & Wales - Charity number 1160184

Accounts

Cirencester
Opportunity Group

CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

(A Company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)

REPORT AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31/8/2025

CHARITY NO. 1160184

COMPANY NO. 9210771

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

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Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Legal and Administrative Information

Year ended 31 August 2025

The Trustee Board presents their report, together with the financial statements, for the period from 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025.

Reference and administrative details of the charity, its directors and advisors

Cirencester Opportunity Group is a registered charity, number 1160184 and is a charitable company limited by guarantee, number 9210771. The charity number, company number, present Trustees (being directors of the charitable company) and advisors are noted below:

Trustee Board

The members of the Trustee Board (who are also the directors of the charitable company) during the period were as follows:

Chair:	Kevin Traish
Treasurer:	Gaynor Hutton (resigned September 2025)
Company Secretary:	Paul Robertson
Trustees:	Jane Burr (Nominated Individual, Safeguarding)
	Matt Hooper
	Hugh Yarrow (appointed September 2024)
	Adam Baggs (appointed April 2025)
	Avril York (appointed April 2025)
	Sylwi Duzniak (resigned October 2024)
	Sophie Langer (resigned October 2024)
	Shahedur Rohman (resigned September 2024)
Advisors:	Russell Jones-Walker
	Robert Bickerdike
	Peter Stone (resigned to join advisory board May 2024)
	Shahedur Rohman (resigned to join advisory board September 2024)

Company registered number: 9210771

Charity number: 1160184

Bankers: HSBC, King Street, Stroud, GL5 3DS

Registered Office: Beeches Road, Cirencester, GL7 1BW

Independent Examiner: Wenn Townsend, Watermoor Point, Watermoor Road, Cirencester, GL7 1LF

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

Year ended 31 August 2025

Structure, governance and management

Cirencester Opportunity Group (COG), operating as a specialist early years and family support centre, is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

It is governed by Articles of Association, which were approved and adopted on 17 October 1974 (upon registration as a charitable company). COG became a limited company on 9 September 2014, when a new Charities Commission registration was issued. The articles of association were amended to reflect this change and were amended again on 20 June 2019.

COG seeks volunteers with new skills and experience and, inevitably, must replace volunteers who can no longer work with the charity for various reasons. As such, the charity has to "induct" new Trustee Directors on a reasonably regular basis. To provide a consistency and thoroughness of introduction that will maximise the new trustee director contribution as quickly as possible, there is an induction process which is both simple and yet sufficiently flexible to take account of individual's needs and availability. The process is outlined in the *Information for New Trustees* document which is reviewed regularly, and includes:

- Attending at least one Board Meeting as an observer
- Completing an application form, which outlines the contribution that the potential Trustee feels they will make to the charity, and includes a skills and experience audit.
- Providing two written references
- Agreeing a written trustee role specification, specific to their role on the Board where applicable
- Signing the *Trustee Code of Conduct* detailing their commitment to the charity, including completion, within 3 months of appointment, of a Safeguarding Children Level 1 course (usually on-line) and the same for the Prevent Duty.

Upon appointment as a Trustee Director, the Chairperson will inform the Company Secretary and Centre Administrator, who will inform Companies House and The Charity Commission of that appointment, and the new Trustee Director will complete the Ofsted EY2 on-line registration process. When appointing key management, and when reviewing their remuneration packages, external benchmarking is undertaken against directly compatible roles, wherever possible. The Trustee Board is responsible for setting and agreeing the remuneration package of the CEO. The CEO reviews and recommends changes to the remuneration packages of their team (see below), which must be agreed by the Trustee Board. COG adheres to the *Charity Governance Code* and believes the main principles and processes of governance adhere closely to the seven principles of good governance contained within the code. As the Trustee Board and ways of working are developed, directors will check progress made against these principles and their underlying directional guidance.

Organisational structure and decision making process

The Trustee Board delegates day-to-day management of the operations of the charity to the Centre Manager and one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), Catharine Fowler, who was appointed in September 2017. A Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprises of Ben Jayne; Pre-School Manager and Victoria Chase; Outreach Team Lead and DSL. Sharon Pitts, who stepped down as Pre-School Manager in July 2024, remained as DSL until February 2025, when Ben Jayne completed training and became a Deputy DSL.

The wider team comprises of two Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinators (SENDCos), Jane Pilgrim and Ben Jayne, both of whom are part of the early intervention team alongside Catharine Fowler, Evie Downes-Hall, Claire Ellis and Kelly Loxton, who joins this year as an Apprentice Early Years Practitioner; all of whom support the Family Outreach Team to deliver family services through COG's early intervention programme. Hannah Luffingham works within the Outreach Family Support early intervention team, led by Victoria Chase.

Supporting these roles are Stephanie Smyth, Charity Fundraiser (SLT member); Paul Robertson, Centre Administrator and Sharon Smith, Pre-school Cook.

During 2024/25, in order to facilitate as many Trustees as possible being able to attend full board meetings, the Board decided to continue the policy of hybrid meetings. With more members of the Board than previously being in full-time employment, it was felt this approach would support decision-making to continue with minimal impact. During this year, while trustees attend meetings in person where possible, having the option to attend via Teams has been notably helpful in supporting attendance and efficiency in decision-making.

Objectives and activities

We have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing our objectives and activities and in planning for the future.

During this year, the Trustee Board faced challenges due to some trustees stepping down for various reasons, including maternity and retirement. It has become notably more difficult this year to recruit new trustees leading the Board to review recruitment processes to increase success rates and to understand the wider landscape of trustee recruitment.

The Chair reviewed work on updating the strategic plans of the Charity, which had stalled during this year amid continuing challenges for operational staff to devote time to workshops and the numbers of trustees reducing during this year. The Company Secretary worked closely with the Centre Administrator to ensure meetings, reporting and managing Board paperwork would continue to be completed effectively, once they stepped down from post. Following the offer of hybrid meetings, acknowledging trustees' busy working lives, this year saw a return to more people attending meetings in person, with fewer attending remotely. It was felt this supported better discussion and decision-making when possible, and the trustee team was able to be more cohesive.

The aims and objectives of the charity were reviewed and plans to make any updates needed to support the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the charity, amid a changing landscape politically, economically and holistically for children and families, are ongoing and will feed into the revised strategic plan. This year's activities and service delivery reflected COG's vision and mission statements, carrying out the charity's ethos of responding to need in the community, through its support of young children and families living with significant challenges, SEND and other additional needs, and supporting them through proven early intervention methods.

Vision Statement: *Creating Positive Beginnings for Young Children and Families*

Mission: *Cirencester Opportunity Group provides a warm, welcoming and safe environment for all families. We work in partnership with families and other agencies to promote inclusive care and early years education to all children, delivering both specialist learning through play, and family support by responding to the changing needs of our local community.*

Within this framework, our objectives are:

To meet the evolving needs of young children and families in our local community:

- Recognise, respect and support the rights and early childhood development of all children, particularly those with SEND and additional and emerging needs (whether through physiological condition or environment), and the aspirations of their families for them, through a varied and appropriate programme of early interventions, for children and their carers, depending on need and requirements.
- Strive for wider inclusion for children in their early years and share best practice and specialist knowledge within our community.
- Foster a sense of belonging where learning can thrive, helping every child to build confidence and resilience throughout their early years, with an understanding that support and care for, and empowering, children's immediate carers will also benefit children themselves.
- Support the wellbeing of our service users and staff team through training, continuous improvement and following our ethos of care.
- Ensure a best transition for every child to their next stage of life and education, through understanding their unique learning styles, stages of development and support required moving forward.

Our core values provide a focus for both operational and strategic planning:

- Inclusivity is at the heart of all we do; we respect, value and focus on the needs of the individual, celebrating unique qualities while providing the right support to enable children living with SEND/additional needs to thrive.
- We work in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals to ensure positive beginnings for every child and their family.
- We encourage ongoing development of our team, children and families in a caring, enriching and stimulating environment.
- We create enabling environments to support children's learning and to empower families to make strong, safe and effective choices to help them succeed.

Our Centre at Beeches Road in Cirencester is owned by the charity following a donation of the land by Gloucestershire County Council in 1982.

Risk Management - The Board of Trustees' risk management process identifies key events or incidents that could affect the charity's ability to achieve its aims. This process results in a record of the most significant internal and external risks facing the charity, the possible impact or consequence of each risk and the required action to mitigate it. The Board of Trustees seeks reasonable assurance that these risks have been adequately managed, and that appropriate procedures and controls are in place to identify, manage and mitigate the key risks as far as possible.

Achievements and performance

During the year, COG experienced both successes and challenges. Children and families enjoyed memorable, engaging experiences that built confidence, cultural capital and social value within our inclusive, non-judgemental environment. Our new pre-school manager settled in well, supported by the previous post holder and Centre Manager, bringing fresh ideas and perspective. The team's creativity led to new activities and experiences, while increased family engagement days gave parents and carers valuable opportunities to play, bond, and better understand early years learning in a supportive, pressure-free setting.

National economic and political changes continued to create challenges, including increased employer National Insurance contributions and threshold changes imposed by the UK Government. These additional costs, amounting to nearly a full staff salary, have limited progress against our strategic plans this year. Locally, changes to early help provision in the Cotswolds significantly increased the workload for COG's operational staff, particularly the family support team. This has impacted productivity and staff morale, and the leadership team has worked hard to provide support and address these challenges collectively.

Points to highlight this year include:

Summer Provision

In August 2025, COG delivered its four-week Summer Playscheme, prioritising children with SEND and emerging needs to help families stay connected during the long summer break. A total of 62 families (112 children) booked places, with 79% of children identified as having SEND; siblings also attended, enriching the experience. Hot meals and snacks were provided for every child, and 85% of families attended at least one session.

The playscheme offered an accessible, welcoming option for families unable to attend activities unsuitable for their children, due to safety for children with SEND, poor transport links or affordability, for example. While providing many different themed activities over the 4 weeks, COG also partnered with local community groups, including the Hook and Loop Collective, Cirencester Children's Librarian and Chedworth Roman Villa, to deliver engaging activities that built children's cultural capital and social value.

Some comments from families, when asked to share their favourite things about playscheme:
'We love Hook and Loop sessions and all the amazing things to play with at the centre including the crafts. '
'We attended the Chedworth Roman Villa session and loved the craft. We also enjoyed just being able to use the nursery facilities.'
'Our favourite thing about the playscheme was forest session- absolutely loved it! '
'For my children it was the outdoor space to run around and play sports, plus Lisa reading and the craft sessions.'
When asked about the lunch that was provided:
'Amazing! One less thing to worry about in a day. '
'Very useful as she is always ready to eat around 11.30am. Lovely to see her sit with her friends to eat and socialise.'
When asked how important COG Playscheme was in comparison to other summer activities available in the town:
'It has given my child continuity through the summer. The summer holidays are long for a 3 year old and going back in September would have been a lot. '
'We struggle in the holidays for "inclusive" things to do. My children do not cope in busy places. I love the safe enclosed space and the staff are also great! '

Launch of new website

COG's plans to renew the website came to fruition in December 2024, after many months of hard work, when COG launched its new website and refreshed 'Ted' logo. Having won a '12 Days of Giving' competition, COG was given the opportunity to refresh its logo by marketing company Hamilton Brown. The staff team and a focus group of service users was involved in decisions around the new logo, as well as the general look and feel of the website, which is designed to highlight the work COG does to support young children and families, with information relevant to prospective and current service users as well as current and potential funders, supporters, doners and other professionals/community partners. The aim was to make the website more interactive and to provide more easily updatable information, ensuring that it remains current and can be updated quickly. The look and feel is designed to reflect COG's nurturing and supportive ethos, highlighting the importance of outdoor, natural elements to children's play and development, giving a calming and holistic impression through the colour schemes and design elements. Feedback received to date has been incredibly positive. We will, however, strive to make improvements, for example around increased accessibility.

People Learning Together

This year we launched our People Learning Together (PEEP) Groups which support parents and carers who find larger groups more difficult to attend, for various reasons including a lack of confidence due to trauma, mental health and conditions these challenges can bring about, having learning challenges themselves or inexperience in parenting a child with SEND, including fear of being judged in busy environments. A successful combination of small group settings and one-to-one support has allowed time to build confidence, resilience, interpersonal skills and more in a nurturing, non-judgemental environment. Our measure of success is that families have moved into larger groups and have developed supportive friendships that have carried on outside of COG groups. Additionally, we have observed that when the time comes for children to progress into our play-based learning and development sessions, without their parents/carers, both adults and children have found this transition easier and smoother thanks to the work that began in our PEEP groups. The flexibility afforded by COG to PEEP group families, in terms of how long they stay in the smaller group, is key to preparing them to move onto larger groups and services we provide, as well as the confidence to access services outside COG and to parent successfully without so much support.

Hot lunch programme

COG continues to provide snacks and two-course, nutritionally balanced home-cooked lunches for up to eighteen 2–4 year olds, five days a week for 38 weeks of the year, including a Christmas dinner supported by Tesco's donation of ingredients, and lunch and snacks for up to 30 children (up to 8 years) for twelve days during the Summer. Over the year, more than 3,500 lunches were served to children who may not otherwise receive a daily hot meal. By July, around 83 lunches were being provided each week and more during Summer weeks. Beyond nutrition, our mealtimes support children's social and emotional development, particularly for those who are disadvantaged, have sensory needs, or experience food aversions, helping them explore new foods and build confidence eating with peers. This provision remains fully funded through fundraising efforts, and we are grateful to have sustained it for another year.

COG received funding for a new freezer in February 2025, enabling us to store surplus food to pass on to families as part of our response to the cost-of-living crisis, and also to support our children's hot meals programme.

Partnership working in collaboration with local community organisations and external professionals:

In September 2024, conversations took place with community partners, including The Churn, Home Start, the Health Visiting Team, Midwives, Family Action (Early Help Provider) and Active Impact, asking them to contact and signpost COG to families with children aged 0–4 years, who have SEND. This was to ensure that children who need support, including those with SEND or experiencing delays due to deprivation/disadvantage and other challenges such as parental mental health, are identified early and able to access help from COG.

Children and families were invited to the Barn Theatre at Christmas time to see a special performance of The Three Musketeers. COG children were able to occupy the whole theatre which meant families could relax, not feel judged and allow their children to move around and watch the performance in their own ways. The performance itself was adapted to meet their many needs. COG staff accompanied to support families with children and to make sure everything went smoothly. This was a wonderful, collaborative treat for all.

New Brewery Arts came to COG's Inspire group sessions, to deliver craft activities to parents and carers; a wonderful parcel of 'me time' for parents/carers who often feel overwhelmed not only by the needs of their children, but because of the constant battle for support for their own wellbeing as well as their children development needs. NBA also visited the children in one of their play sessions, in which they made leaf crowns as part of the community celebration, Orpheus 2025! This was a fantastic way for children and parents, who joined this activity, to celebrate and be a part of a big event in their town, fostering an enhanced sense of belonging and community spirit.

COG hosted the Good Day Farm at a funded full day interactive farm event in our grounds. The mobile farm brought a very large sheep and pig, and a miniature pony, along with ducklings, chicks, bantum hens and a very fluffy rabbit! Specifically curated to be inclusive, the day provided many new and valuable experiences to build confidence, resilience and cultural capital in our children and families, many of whom had never seen nor had the opportunity to handle these animals before. Some parents of children with SEND gained confidence and told us they would now feel more comfortable taking their children to similar experiences open to the public, when previously they been too afraid to try due to not knowing how their children might react.

Collaborative working with Cirencester Men's Shed, who have worked hard all year to support COG children. They kindly replaced hooks in the children's bathroom for more fit-for-purpose models, enabling them to more easily hang up their coats and bags; encouraging the development of independence skills, and towards the end of the year, surprised us with a beautifully restored Thomas the Tank Engine wooden play train that children could sit in and pretend to drive!

As the Lidl Toy partner this year, COG was able to collect new toys generously donated by the local community at Christmas. COG staff worked hard to ensure that every child would receive a gift from their parents/carers, who were invited to join staff for a hot drink and a mince pie, and to select and wrap a gift for their children. This activity was organised to ensure that families most in need received appropriate gifts for their children.

Cirencester Children's Librarian continues to visit the children every week to read stories, providing them with a community connection and new perspective, with her bright, story-related attire and way of bringing characters to life. This encourages children's understanding of stories and love of books. An invaluable part of our week, which means children are more likely to visit our town library as they know they will see her there, providing a link with the community and also promoting this valuable resource.

Experienced volunteers

COG was fortunate this year to benefit from the work, generosity and commitment of highly qualified, experienced and motivated volunteers in our playroom including two qualified teachers, two ex-speech and language therapists and one Level 2 qualified student placement (for 2 years) studying for their Level 3 Childcare and Early Years qualification. We were also pleased to recruit two new Directors for the Board of Trustees this year, particularly because this has proven to be more difficult following the 'covid years' and subsequent cost-of-living crisis.

Volunteers bring significant practical and social value to COG by increasing capacity, reducing costs, and allowing more funding to reach our frontline services. Contributing valuable skills and fresh perspectives, they actively strengthen our effectiveness to meet the needs of service users. Beyond practical support, our volunteers build community trust, raise awareness, and act as ambassadors for the charity. We are grateful to all our volunteers for the contributions they make and in addition we aim to create social value by improving wellbeing, developing skills, and fostering a sense of purpose and belonging for all our volunteers.

Regulator Inspection

In October 2024 COG was inspected by Ofsted, and is very pleased and proud to have been awarded a 'Good' grading, with excellent elements. The inspector recognised the specialist elements of COG's work, and the robust culture of safeguarding.

"Children... with SEND... make good progress from their widely varying individual starting points. Children ... explore using their senses."

"Children receive a warm welcome from the friendly, caring staff. Many of the children arrive with great enthusiasm and set off to explore the planned activities and accessible resources. Those who find separating from their carers more difficult receive sensitive support and encouragement to help them settle."

"Management monitors the effectiveness of practice and the provision competently to identify ways to continuously improve. They have an excellent understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, and staff embrace training opportunities to enhance their skills. Partnerships with parents are excellent. Parents give high praise for the support they and their children receive from the staff team."

Co-Production work

COG promotes co-production by involving service users in shaping parent and carer groups. For example, when a parent expressed interest in sharing their crochet skills during an Inspire Group session, COG invited a crochet expert to support the session. This enabled the parent to build confidence demonstrating the activity to others, with the aim of leading similar sessions independently in the future.

Celebrating staff achievement

This year, staff successfully achieved the Dingley's Promise Inclusion Friendly Mark of Achievement, a respected recognition that highlights COG's highly specialist work. This award reflects the positive experiences of children and families and reinforces COG's reputation for delivering inclusive, high-quality services.

Improving service users' experiences

Thanks to new funding, COG replaced two outbuildings, improving storage and access to resources. As a result, children can now more easily choose what they want to play with and enjoy activities in a new, attached undercover play area, enhancing their independence and play experience. Furthermore, resources are better housed leading to improved longevity.

New Music Therapist

We were delighted to welcome our new Music Therapist, Rosie Blackwood, whose specialist expertise and experience working with young children will further strengthen this valuable support within our services. Music therapy supports children with complex and emerging needs through child-led musical interaction. It helps children make sense of their world, build confidence and communication skills, and supports their social, emotional, and mental health development, while providing a calm environment where they can develop self-regulation and process difficult experiences.

Training Opportunities

Staff at COG undertook a range of training opportunities during the year, reflecting the charity's commitment to investing in people and strengthening the quality of its services. This included Safer Recruitment training to ensure fair, safe, and compliant recruitment practices. The newly appointed Nursery Manager also completed Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead training, strengthening safeguarding links across the charity's services supporting children's play, development, and family support.

The wider staff team successfully completed Dingley's Promise Inclusion Training, achieving the organisation's mark of inclusive practice and further enhancing COG's ability to support children with additional needs.

COG also continued to invest in workforce development through apprenticeships. One apprentice reached the Gateway stage of their Level 3 Early Years Educator qualification, which will be completed next year. In addition, a new member of staff began a Level 2 Early Years Educator Apprenticeship. This individual has lived experience of family members being supported by COG, reflecting the charity's commitment to creating opportunities within the local community. Supporting staff development in this way strengthens the organisation, builds skills within the team, and reinforces COG's strong community-focused ethos.

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2025

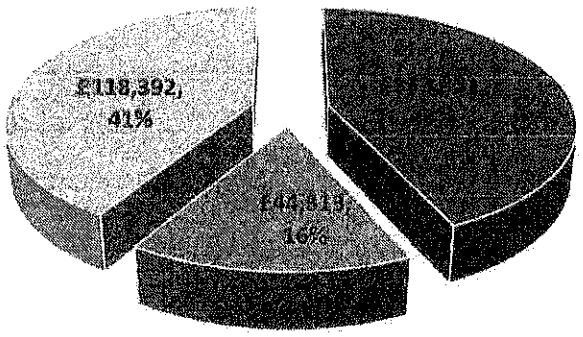
Financial review

During the year, Cirencester Opportunity Group declared an overall surplus of £2,473 compared to last year's deficit of £6,062.

Our reserves at 31/8/2025 were:

- Restricted reserves £54,489 (£52,786)
- Designated reserves £40,000 (£40,000)
- Unrestricted reserves £84,105 (£83,335)
- Value of fixed assets (inc. buildings) £106,688 (£108,303)

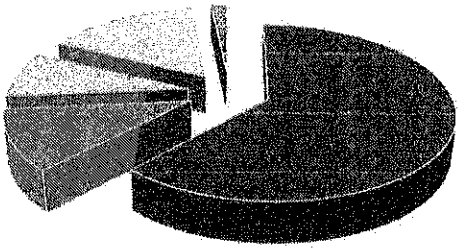
Income analysis:



Income totalled £286,556 (£263,537) which reflects an increase of 8.7% from the previous year.

	2025		2024	
Fee Income	£123,851	*43%*	£106,939	*41%*
Unrestriced Income	£44,313	*15%*	£26,403	*10%*
Restricted Income	£118,392	*41%*	£130,195	*49%*
	£286,556		**£263,537**	

Expenditure analysis



- Delivery of services
- Nursery equipment, Hot meals, Forest School & Activities
- Building operations
- Office, administration & cost of raising funds
- Depreciation & Governance

	2025	2024
Delivery of services	£176,372	£183,612
Nursery equipment, Hot meals, Forest School & Activities	£32,036	£23,080
Building operations	£24,672	£18,398
Office, administration & cost of raising funds	£46,150	£39,757
Depreciation & Governance	£4,854	£4,752
	£284,084	£269,599

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have set a reserves policy which requires that the reserves be maintained at a level which ensures that COG's core activities could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty and that these reserves are maintained in a readily realisable form. The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of COG's planning, budgeting and forecasting cycle. It takes into account the risks associated with unexpected variations in the stream of income and expenditure, given planned activity levels and COG's future commitments.

The Trustees assess the reserves policy on an annual basis. They monitor and discuss levels of readily realisable reserves and COG's future commitments. The main risks to both income and expenditure plus the requirements for working capital and adequate cash flow are assessed.

The trustees use this information to ensure an adequate level of readily realisable reserves is maintained. A Free Cash Reserve target of between 2 to 4 months of future annual expenditure is used. As at 31/8/25, the Free cash reserves were £71,906 (3 months) including the designated reserves as detailed -

The Trustees have set aside £40,000 as Designated reserves, this is made up of:

- £35,000 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision should the charity be forced to close during the upcoming year.
- £5,000 to undertake a comprehensive review of premises security - to facilitate an enhanced working environment for staff by updating access controls and lighting.

Plans for future periods

We will continue to build on our strategic vision, which we plan to review and formalise in a written strategic plan.

- Evaluate and work to maximise our current assets to optimise and expand, where possible, the direction of the charity to meet the needs of current and new service users.
- Continually review and evaluate our early intervention provision of play-based learning to ensure sustainability and viability in the face of continued and growing concerns around recruitment, retention and funding in the early years sector; particularly ensuring we continue to meet the needs of children with SEND and other additional needs, including children experiencing disadvantage which affects their development.
- Consider increasing the number of Apprentices employed to combat increasing staff costs; consider recruiting to replace a member of staff who left and was not replaced.
- Continually review and evaluate early intervention family support provision to ensure we understand and respond to the changing needs of our local community, particularly during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and the national economic and political picture; the known and unforeseen impacts they bring. Focus on the needs of parents/carers who are hard to reach/ engage with, to support their confidence in attending groups with their children and their following transition to early intervention sessions.
- Continue to focus on, review and extend staff wellbeing protocols to ensure physical safety and emotional support for staff members is in place, and we will continue to try to attract funding to support this outcome.
- Continue to identify and evaluate funding opportunities to improve office space, facilities and infrastructure for staff to accommodate a team that has grown in number over the past decade, and outgrown space available—this is very difficult to achieve through fundraising alone but could be part of a new capital project.
- Consider a capital project to increase space available to meet needs of service users, through expanding current projects and/or launching a new project(s) to meet community need.
- Actively seek out and say 'yes' to opportunities to get involved in national research and training to extend and enhance our specialist knowledge in order to reach our goals, as well as take up opportunities to be involved in community projects throughout our town, to enhance cultural and creative experiences for service users who may not otherwise have such chances.
- Continue to build a robust and effective Board of Trustees through a programme of recruitment, including an analysis of skills needed to provide beneficial areas of expertise.
- Continue to enhance the capabilities of the Board of Trustees through opportunities to meet key staff members for focussed discussions; understanding challenges and ways they can be met; offer training opportunities for trustees whenever possible and work to improve and continually enhance our trustee induction package.
- Work towards building a group of patrons to support the charity, with the view to them supporting the work of COG through social media, publicity and advocacy of our work, as well as building a strong team of Advisors to the Board.

Statement of directors' responsibilities

The Charity Trustees (who are also the Directors of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited for the purposes of company law) 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 Trustees 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 as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the directors should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and the group 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. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Print name: Kevin Traish

Date: 12 MAY 2026

Signed:

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Independent Examiner's Report

Year ended 31 August 2025

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 August 2025 which are set out on pages 15 to 22.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity Trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.

Miss Ruth Herbert FCCA

Signed: Ruth Herbert

Date: 12 May 2026

Wenn Townsend Accountants Limited
Watermoor Point
Watermoor Road
Cirencester
GL7 1LF

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Statement of Financial Activities and Income and Expenditure Account

Year ended 31 August 2025

Statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	2024
Income and endowments					
Donations (see note 4)	£34,000		£118,382	£152,382	£144,620
Earned from charitable activities	£123,851			£123,851	£108,959
Earned from other activities	£5,718			£5,718	£5,856
Investment and other income	£4,595			£4,595	£5,922
Total	**£168,164**	**£0**	**£118,382**	**£286,546**	**£263,537**
Expenditure					
Cost of raising funds	£15,778		£0	£15,778	£13,439
Expenditure on charitable activities (see note 5)	£151,616		£116,680	£268,306	£256,160
Total	**£167,394**	**£0**	**£116,680**	**£284,084**	**£269,599**
Net income/Expenditure	**£770**	**£0**	**£1,703**	**£2,473**	**£(6,062)**
Transfer between funds	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Net movement in funds	**£770**	**£0**	**£1,703**	**£2,473**	**£(6,062)**
Total funds brought forward	£83,335	£40,000	£52,786	£176,121	£182,183
Total funds carried forward	**£84,105**	**£40,000**	**£54,489**	**£178,594**	**£176,121**

The statement of financial activities include all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 15 to 22 form part of these financial statements.

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Balance Sheet

Year ended 31 August 2025

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2025	2024
Fixed Assets	(See note 8)	£106,688		£106,688	£108,303
Current Assets					
Debtors				£0	£0
Cash at bank and in hand		£47,027	£108,978	£156,005	£155,732
Total Current Assets		£153,715	£108,978	£262,693	£264,035
Creditors (falling within one year)	(See note 10)	£29,610	£54,489	£84,099	£87,914
Total Assets less current liabilities		£124,105	£54,489	£178,594	£176,121
Financed by:					
Unrestricted funds		£84,105		£84,105	£83,335
Designated funds		£40,000		£40,000	£40,000
Restricted funds			£54,489	£54,489	£52,786
Net Assets		£124,105	£54,489	£178,594	£176,121
Funds		£124,105	£54,489	£178,594	£176,121

In approving these financial statements as directors of the Company we hereby confirm:

a) The Company is entitled to the exemption from audit under Section 477(c) of the Companies Act 2006 from the year ended 31/8/2025. The Trustees have not required the Charitable Company to obtain an audit of its financial statement for the year ended 31/8/2025 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

b) That we acknowledge our responsibilities for:

i. ensuring that the Company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and

ii. preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company as at the end of the financial year, and of its profit or loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of section 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements so far as applicable to the Charitable Company.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with FRS102 and the Charities SORP (FRS102). The notes on the following pages form part of these accounts.

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf by:

Kevin Traish Dated: 14 MAY 2026 Signed:

Company number 09210771

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 August 2025

1) Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice. Cotswold Counselling meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

The Charity has applied Update Bulletin 2 as published on 5th October 2018 and does not include a cash flow statement on the grounds that it is applying FRS 102 Section 1A.

Fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at rates calculate to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

- Land and Buildings 2% reducing balance
- Fixtures and Equipment 20% reducing balance

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use in accordance with the charitable objectives. Restricted funds are funds which have been given for particular purposes and projects.

Income

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories income:

Fee income is included in full in the statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

- The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.
- Investment income is included when receivable.
- Incoming resources for generating funds are accounted for when earned.

Expenditure and Irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of less than three months from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account activity.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Financial instruments

The trust only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as a basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised as a transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1) Pensions

Since September 2017, employees are automatically enrolled into a defined contribution pension scheme operated by The People's Pension. Employees can subsequently opt out. Employees joining the scheme, contract directly with the pension company.

The charity made a matching contribution of 3% of qualifying earnings to this pension scheme and acts as an agent in collecting and paying over employee contributions. The contributions made for the accounting period treated as an expense and were £5,131 (2024 = £4,964)

2) Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per member of the charity. The charity is registered and incorporated in England and Wales and it's registered address is : Beeches Road; Cirencester; Glos; GL7 1BW

3) Financial performance of the charity

The statement of Financial Activities states the financial performance of the charity.

4) Income

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
A1 - Donations & Grants				
Active Impact OCWC		£5,528	£5,528	£2,677
Arnold Clark		£714	£714	£1,000
B&Q Neighbourly			£0	£500
Barnwood Trust		£10,892	£10,892	£11,520
Benevact Group - Movement for Good	£1,000		£1,000	
Cirencester Vicars & Churchwardens			£0	£368
Cirencester Girls Club		£250	£250	
Cirencester Ladies Skittles			£0	£312
Cirencester Town Council		£1,000	£1,000	£3,000
Cotswold Primrose Trust		£545	£545	£3,065
E-Qualitas			£0	£7,000
Falco Construction	£917		£917	
Gary Bulpett Fund	£1,000		£1,000	
Glos Funders - One Glos		£7,900	£7,900	£7,900
Gloucestershire Community Foundation		£6,900	£6,900	
Gloucestershire Community Foundation - Poverty Hurts Fund			£0	£2,464
Gloucestershire County Council		£2,263	£2,263	£3,875
Gloucestershire Funders - Julia and Hans Rausing Trust		£16,748	£16,748	£20,097
KD Winstone Charitable Trust			£0	£5,000
Kemble All Saints Church	£600		£600	
LIDL Community Fund	£280		£280	£500
Masonic Charitable Foundation	£3,333		£3,333	£950
Neighbourly GoGive		£500	£500	
NFU Mutual	£5,906		£5,906	
Oakesey Golf Club	£5,315		£5,315	
Peter Long Children's Trust		£36,333	£36,333	£44,932
Pied Piper Appeal			£0	£4,890
RMC Retro	£4,662		£4,662	
Round Table	£1,000		£1,000	
Running Somewhere Else	£3,192		£3,192	
Smiths Cirencester Charity			£0	£280
Society of the Holy Child Jesus			£0	£5,000
Somerfield Grocery		£1,596	£1,596	
St James Place CSR Volunteering			£0	£170
St James Place Foundation		£15,000	£15,000	£10,000
Tesco Stronger Starts		£1,500	£1,500	£925
The Dorothy Minnis Trust - Soroptimists		£700	£700	£650
The National Lottery		£6,023	£6,023	
The Yarrow Trust	£5,833		£5,833	
Woodroffe Benton Foundation	£500		£500	
Various donations & grants	£462		£462	£7,825
Total	**£34,000**	**£118,392**	**£152,392**	**£144,920**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
A2 Earned from charitable activities				
GCC Nursery fees	£119,263	£0	£119,263	£100,207
Parent fees	£4,588	£0	£4,588	£6,732
Total	**£123,851**	**£0**	**£123,851**	**£106,939**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
A3 Earned from other activities				
Fund raising activities	£2,156	£0	£2,156	£2,106
Building hire	£3,423	£0	£3,423	£3,750
Interest income	£4,595	£0	£4,595	£4,962
Miscellaneous	£139	£0	£139	£960
Total	**£10,313**	**£0**	**£10,313**	**£11,778**

5) Expenditure

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
Expenditure on charitable activities				
Delivery of services	£69,600	£106,772	£176,372	£183,612
Nursery equipment, Hot meals, Forest School & Activities	£22,118	£9,918	£32,036	£23,080
Building operations	£24,672		£24,672	£16,398
Office, Administration and cost of raising funds	£30,372		£30,372	£39,757
Depreciation	£2,654		£2,654	£2,552
Governance* & Independent examination	£2,200		£2,200	£2,200
Total	**£151,616**	**£116,690**	**£268,306**	**£289,599**

* Trustees received no remuneration and were not reimbursed for any of their expenses in the period.

6) Paid Employees:

Average number of 'full time equivalent' employees in the year:	2025	2024
Fundraising	1	1
Administration	1	1
Charitable Activities	8	8

7) Movement in Funds:

	Funds as at 31/08/2024	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Funds as at 31/08/2025
Unrestricted Funds	**£83,335**	**£188,164**	**£187,394**	**£84,105**
Designated Funds	**£40,000**	**£0**	**£0**	**£40,000**
Restricted Funds				
Active Impact OCWC	£612	£5,509	£5,629	£492
Arnold Clark	£1,000		£715	£286
Barnwood Trust	£10,892		£10,892	£0
Big Give & Global's Make Some Noise		£9,865	£0	£9,865
Cirencester Girls Club		£250	£250	£0
Cirencester Town Council		£1,000	£1,000	£0
Cotswold Primrose Trust		£2,000	£545	£1,455
E-Qualitas	£4,568		£179	£4,389
Gloucestershire Community Foundation		£17,735	£6,988	£10,747
Gloucestershire Funders—One Glos	£7,900		£7,900	£0
Gloucestershire Funders - Julia and Hans Rausing Trust	£16,748		£16,748	£0
Gloucestershire County Council	£1,000	£1,263	£2,263	£0
Lidl Local Community Fund		£500	£0	£500
Neighbourly Spring Fund 2024		£500	£500	£0
Peter Lang Children's Trust	£3,500	£40,000	£38,334	£5,166
St James's Place Foundation	£9,666	£15,000	£15,000	£9,666
Strengthening Local Communities		£3,000	£0	£3,000
Tesco Community Grant		£1,125	£1,125	£0
The Dorothy Minnis Trust - Soroptimists		£700	£700	£0
The National Lottery - Awards for All		£19,945	£8,023	£11,922
Other	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total Restricted	**£52,786**	**£118,392**	**£116,690**	**£84,489**
Total Funds	**£176,121**	**£286,556**	**£284,084**	**£176,594**

Designated Reserves:

The Trustees have continued to review areas of the Charity's operations and aligned with it's strategic analysis; Centre Development Plan and Risk Register , have decided to identify the following areas of operations that should be defined as "Designated Reserves".

- £35,000 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision as at 31/8/2025 - should the charity be forced to close.
- £5,000 to undertake a comprehensive review of premises security - to facilitate an enhanced working environment for staff by updating access controls and lighting.

8) Tangible Fixed Assets:

	Land & Buildings	Fixtures & Fittings etc.	Total
Cost			
At 1st Sept 2024	£129,405	£12,110	£141,515
Additions in Year	£0	£1,038	£1,038
Disposals	£0	£0	£0
At 31st August 2025	**£129,405**	**£13,148**	**£142,553**
Depreciation			
Balance brought forward	£22,592	£10,620	£33,212
Charge for the Year	£2,136	£517	£2,653
Disposals	£0	£0	£0
At 31st August 2025	**£24,728**	**£11,137**	**£35,865**
Net Book Value			
At 31st August 2025	£104,677	£2,011	£106,688
At 31st August 2024	£106,813	£1,490	£108,303

9) Taxation:

As a charity, Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within the Section 478 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent these are applied to its charitable objections.

10) Creditors:

	2025	2024
Income in advance	£76,769	£84,857
Accruals	£7,310	£3,057
Total	**£84,099**	**£87,914**

11) Capital Commitments

The company had no known capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

13) Government Grants:

The following income was received from government bodies during the year.

	2025	2024
Gloucester County Council	£1,263	£3,675
Cirencester Town Council	£1,000	£3,000

CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

England & Wales - Charity number 1160184

Accounts

Cirencester
Opportunity Group

CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

(A Company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)

REPORT AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31/8/2024

CHARITY NO. 1160184

COMPANY NO. 9210771

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

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Year ended 31 August 2024

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Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Legal and Administrative Information

Year ended 31 August 2024

The Trustee Board presents their report, together with the financial statements, for the period from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024.

Reference and administrative details of the charity, its directors and advisors

Cirencester Opportunity Group is a registered charity, number 1160184 and is a charitable company limited by guarantee, number 9210771. The charity number, company number, present Trustees (being directors of the charitable company) and advisors are noted below:

Trustee Board

The members of the Trustee Board (who are also the directors of the charitable company) during the period were as follows:

Chair:	Kevin Traish (appointed October 2022, Chair from April 2023)
Vice Chair:	Shahedur Rohman (Vice Chair from April 2023)
Treasurer:	Gaynor Hutton (Treasurer from April 2023)
Company Secretary:	Sylwia Duzniak (Co. Sec. from April 2023)
Trustees:	Peter Stone (stepped down as Chair April 2023)
	Jane Burr (Nominated Individual, Safeguarding)
	Matt Hooper
	Andrew Cheesman (Resigned October 2023)
	Sophie Langer (Appointed April 2023)
Advisors:	Russell Jones-Walker
	Robert Bickerdike (stepped down as Treasurer April 2023)

Company registered number: 9210771

Charity number: 1160184

Bankers: HSBC, King Street, Stroud, GL5 3DS

Registered Office: Beeches Road, Cirencester, GL7 1BW

Independent Examiner: Miss Ruth Herbert FCCA, Wenn Townsend Accountants Limited, Gosditch House, 5 Gosditch Street, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 2AG

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

Year ended 31 August 2024

Structure, governance and management

Cirencester Opportunity Group (COG), operating as a specialist early years and family support centre, is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

It is governed by Articles of Association, which were approved and adopted on 17 October 1974 (upon registration as a charitable company). COG became a limited company on 9 September 2014, when a new Charities Commission registration was issued. The articles of association were amended to reflect this change and were amended again on 20 June 2019.

We seek volunteers with new skills and experience and, inevitably, we must replace volunteers who can no longer work with us for various reasons. As such, the charity has to "induct" new Trustee Directors on a reasonably regular basis. To provide a consistency and thoroughness of introduction that will maximise the new Trustee Director contribution as quickly as possible, we follow an induction process which is both simple and yet sufficiently flexible to take account of individual's needs and availability. The process is outlined in the Information for New Trustees document updated annually, and includes:

- Attending at least one Board Meeting as an observer
- Completing an application form, outlining the contribution that the potential Trustee feels they will make to Cirencester Opportunity Group, and completing a skills and experience audit.
- Providing two written references
- Agreeing a written Trustee Role Specification specific to their role on the Board
- Signing the Trustee Code of Conduct detailing their commitment to the organisation, including completion, within 3 months of appointment, of a Safeguarding Children Level 1 course (usually on-line) and the same for the Prevent Duty.

Upon appointment as a Trustee Director, the Chairperson will inform the Company Secretary and Centre Administrator, who will inform Companies House and The Charity Commission of that appointment, and the new Trustee Director will complete the Ofsted EY2 on-line registration process. When appointing key management, and when reviewing their remuneration packages, external benchmarking is undertaken against directly compatible roles, wherever possible. The Trustee Board is responsible for setting and agreeing the remuneration package of the CEO. The CEO reviews and recommends changes to the remuneration packages of their team (see below), which must be agreed by the Trustee Board. We adhere to the Charity Governance Code and believe our main principles and processes by which we govern adhere closely to the seven principles of good governance contained within the code. As we develop our Trustee Board and ways of working, we will check our progress against these principles and their underlying directional guidance.

Organisational structure and decision making process

The Trustee Board delegates day-to-day management of the operations of the charity to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/ Centre Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Catharine Fowler, who was appointed in September 2017. Following a re-organisation of roles in 2018, the CEO has a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprising of Sharon Pitts; Pre-School Manager and DSL and Victoria Chase; Outreach Team Lead and DSL.

The wider team comprises of two Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinators (SENDCos), Jane Pilgrim and Ben Jayne, both of whom are also part of the early intervention team alongside Rachel Malins, Evie Downes-Hall, who works as an Apprentice Early Years Practitioner, Claire Ellis and Sophie Pitman; all of whom support the Family Outreach Team to deliver family services through COG's early intervention programme. Hannah Luffingham works within the Outreach Family Support early intervention team, led by Victoria Chase.

Supporting these roles are Stephanie Smyth, Charity Fundraiser (SLT member); Paul Robertson, as Centre Administrator and Sharon Smith, Pre-school Cook.

During 2023/24, in order to facilitate as many Trustees as possible being able to attend full board meetings, the Board decided to continue the policy of hybrid meetings. With more members of the Board than previously being in full-time employment, it was felt this approach would support decision-making to continue with minimal impact. During this year, while trustees attend meetings in person where possible, having the option to attend via Teams has been notably helpful in supporting attendance and efficiency in decision-making.

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

Objectives and activities

We have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing our objectives and activities and in planning for the future.

During this year, the Trustee Board consolidated personnel changes in key roles that were actioned at the AGM in April 2023. The Chair set priorities for work on the strategic direction of the Charity, which continues with the support of the Senior Leadership Team. The new Company Secretary worked closely with the Centre Administrator to ensure meetings, reporting and managing Board paperwork were completed effectively. Good progress was made in streamlining trustee roles so that everybody was able to contribute within their time constraints and working lives to the benefit of the Board and Charity as a whole, and one new trustee began the onboarding process.

Plans to review the aims and objectives of the charity are ongoing and will feed into the new strategic plan. This year's activities and service delivery reflected COG's vision and mission statements, carrying out the charity's ethos of responding to need in the community, through its support of young children and families living with significant challenges, SEND and other additional needs.

Vision Statement: *Creating Positive Beginnings for Young Children and Families*

Mission: *Cirencester Opportunity Group provides a warm, welcoming and safe environment for all families. We work in partnership with families and other agencies to promote inclusive care and early years education to all children, delivering both specialist learning through play and family support, by responding to the changing needs of our local community.*

Within this framework, our objectives are:

To meet the evolving needs of young children and families in our local community:

- Recognize, respect and support the rights and early childhood development of all children, particularly those with SEND and additional needs (whether through physiological condition or environment), and the aspirations of their families for them, through a varied and appropriate programme of early interventions, for children and their carers, depending on need and requirements.
- Strive for wider inclusion for children in their early years and share best practice and specialist knowledge within our community.
- Foster a sense of belonging where learning can thrive, helping every child to build confidence and resilience throughout their early years, with an understanding that support and care for, and empowering, children's immediate carers will also benefit children themselves.
- Support the wellbeing of our service users and staff team through training, continuous improvement and following our ethos of care.
- Ensure a best transition for every child to their next stage of life and education, through understanding their unique learning styles, stages of development and support required moving forward.

Our core values provide a focus for both operational and strategic planning:

- Inclusivity is at the heart of all we do; we respect, value and focus on the needs of the individual, celebrating unique qualities while providing the right support to enable children living with SEND/additional needs to thrive.

- We work in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals to ensure positive beginnings for every child and their family.

- We encourage ongoing development of our team, children and families in a caring, enriching and stimulating environment.

- We create enabling environments to support children's learning and to empower families to make strong, safe and effective choices to help them succeed.

Our Centre at Beeches Road in Cirencester is owned by the charity following a donation of the land by Gloucestershire County Council in 1982.

Risk Management - The Board of Trustees' risk management process identifies key events or incidents that could affect the charity's ability to achieve its aims. This process results in a record of the most significant internal and external risks facing the charity, the possible impact or consequence of each risk and the required action to mitigate it. The Board of Trustees seeks reasonable assurance that these risks have been adequately managed, and that appropriate procedures and controls are in place to identify, manage and mitigate the key risks as far as possible.

Achievements and performance

COG's annual Summer playscheme ran in the August torrential downpours and then improved weather leading onto a heatwave. This was considered and responded to by staff, providing activities in the shaded area and continuous access to cold drinks. In wet weather the activities moved inside the playroom and families enjoyed using COG's soft play space for an allotted time. At the end of each session, every child could take home a picture/reading book, a new colouring book and crayons (all donated throughout the year to COG) along with their craft creation. Feedback collected revealed that the provision is a valuable resource to local families, particularly the outdoor space and activities provided, and chance for parents/carers to talk to other adults. A free packed lunch included in each session was overwhelmingly appreciated – tough financial positions cited, as well as value of social experience. When asked how important Playscheme was of all the summer activities provided in the town, 100% of respondents stated that it was important.
Some quotes from attendees:

- The staff are excellent and very friendly.
- The volunteers were all lovely.
- Just a big thank you to everyone, especially the effort that is put into getting to know the children
- I feel so incredibly lucky to have such a wonderful, understanding place to bring my son.
- Over the last 18 months, it (COG) has been my safe space with W....., there's always a smiling face and an understanding ear to listen.
- We feel very lucky to be part of the COG family.

A member of the family support team completed their probationary period successfully during the early part of the year, as did two new staff members who work within the early intervention team, supporting children's development and also running early intervention toddler groups. We continue to work on being able to replace another member of staff who left us last year.

Points to highlight this year include:

COG's growing garden - COG children have done a wonderful job of growing their very own vegetables, such as runner beans! They really enjoy planting, looking after and picking the veg too and giving it to our Cook Sharon to cook for their lunch!

Men's Shed Magic - Local wood craft group Men's Shed made some very special fairy doors for COG's woodland area! The children at COG enjoyed exploring each one, with their beautiful colours and unique designs. Men's Shed also fixed up and painted several picnic benches for us too.

Pumpkins galore - Tesco Community Champion, Melanie Scrivens, took the time to visit us at COG to show COG families, staff and volunteers a beautiful collection of colourful pumpkins! COG families also made cheese muffins together, to go with the pumpkin soup that COG Cook Sharon made them for their lunch.

House of Lords visit - COG Centre Manager, Catharine Fowler, and Charity Fundraiser, Stephanie Smyth, were honoured to attend the Westminster launch of the Manifesto for Early Years Inclusion by Dingley's Promise at The House of Lords, In November 2023, to learn more about their recommendations to improve the sector. All attendees shared Dingley's vision and commitment to inclusion for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Thoughtful Lidl customers - COG was touched to be chosen as beneficiaries of Neighbourly and Lidl's 'Festive Toy Donation Scheme'. Kind and generous Lidl customers selected and donated toys for COG children to help make Christmas extra special!

Festival bunting - COG was delighted to be invited to be part of the fabulous Phoenix Festival. We were asked to decorate some bunting to be displayed at the festival and the children enjoyed taking part in this special craft activity. The bunting was on display all weekend in the Abbey Grounds, so families could visit and see their artwork.

National Early Years SEND Forum– COG Centre Manager, Catharine Fowler, now sits on the EY SEND Forum, along with other leaders of early years settings and charities. The Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (EYSEND) Forum is a national coalition of Early Years Specialist providers dedicated to supporting children aged 0-5 with SEND through lobbying for change and sharing best practice.

St James's Place heroes - Volunteers from St James's Place have supported us so much this year by helping us to transform areas of COG, both inside and outside! They have painted several indoor spaces for us, including our confidential meeting room and our soft playroom, making them brighter and lighter. They have also painted the children's undercover play area and all of their wooden play structures, to keep them protected from the elements all year round! Our large car park has also been transformed by SJP volunteers too!

Small charities week 2024 - We took part in Small Charities week 2024, to reach out and ask the local community to show their LOVE for small charities like COG by:
L = Listening to and learning about what small charities in their neighbourhood do.
O = Organising something and getting involved with local small charities.
V = Volunteering to support small charities with their time, voice, and money.
E = Engaging with and doing a bit more to make their community better.

Refreshed Ted - This year we introduced our new refreshed Teddy logo to our local community. The wonderful team at Hamilton-Brown Creative Agency **https://www.hamilton-brown.com/** kindly donated their expertise to help us give our Ted a little make over. The feedback we have received so far about our new Teddy logo has been very positive and we feel very fortunate to have been chosen by Hamilton-Brown Creative Agency to be beneficiaries of their expertise.

Ted logo 1973

Ted logo - 50th birthday version 2023

Ted logo refresh 2024

Special visitor - A very special visitor attended the first week of COG's Summer Playscheme this year, we were delighted to welcome our new MP for South Cotswolds, Dr Roz Savage, who came to see the wonderful work and fun activities provided for young children and families in Cirencester by COG during the Summer holidays. Dr Savage was welcomed by Chair of Trustees, Kevin Traish, and Centre Manager, Catharine Fowler.

The world of the Romans - We also welcomed special visitors from Chedworth Roman Villa to our Summer Playscheme this year, who came dressed in authentic Roman costumes and shared lots of exciting activities with COG families.

COG's response to the cost-of-living crisis: - We have continued to support families with surplus food and also in practical ways, using our additional funding from the Gloucestershire Community Foundation's Poverty Hurts Campaign.

- To look into ways to further support families, we also met with the project manager of Feeding Gloucestershire to discuss concerns that Early Years children miss out and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are also not catered for below the age of five, by the Government's HAF scheme. We also discussed the promotion of Healthy Start vouchers with eligible families and COG's commitment to working closely with families to encourage them to make good use of these vouchers.
- We also attended the Cotswold Food Network Strategic Event, to meet with and discuss where the gaps are in the area's food provision for families in need, with partner organisations in the Cotswolds.
- Our team have continued to volunteer their time twice a week on a collection rota, so that we can collect surplus food from Aldi (via Neighbourly) and from Tesco (via FareShare) twice a week, to keep our Sharing Shed well stocked with additional food items, including tins, packets, toiletries and fresh food items too.
- Our wonderful working relationship with the Thomas Frank's Foundation has also benefitted COG families this year, as we took delivery of a large quantity of fruit and veg direct from Worcester Produce. This donation enables us to bag up a wonderful selection of fresh and colourful fruit and veg for all of our families requiring additional support to access fresh food and it was extremely rewarding for our team, to be able to help the families in this practical way.

- We have also co-ordinated the collection of good quality coats, clothing, waterproofs, wellies and shoes for COG children and we displayed them alongside our Sharing Shed, for COG families to access and make use of. This was especially important during extremely hot or cold times of the year when access to weather appropriate clothing is more important than ever.

Cooking on a budget sessions - This year we offered a series of cooking sessions to parents, and we asked them to let us know what they would like to cook. One of the early discussions we had with parents, helped us to identify that buying pizzas was a costly treat and something that they cannot do, so having a go at making our own pizzas together, became a winning idea! We costed out the ingredients with the parents and demonstrated the cooking, whilst they each created their own pizza. We also used this as an opportunity to talk about healthy topping choices and having side salads with the pizza, using inexpensive lettuce, cucumber, and tomatoes.

Training opportunities - This year all members of COG's Early Intervention team attended a 2 day Paediatric First Aid training course with observed and written examinations.
Members of the Early Intervention team also attended the Parents' Relationships Matter Gloucestershire Conference 2024 and gained a great deal from the 'How to engage dads in parental conflict work' session. This training was particularly useful, as we now have more dads engaging with our Early Intervention Outreach team, due to them being the main care giver to their child, accessing support from us through our Learning Together PEEP group and our Inspire group, specifically for parents.
Several members of staff have embarked on training this year, which not only adds value to their own continuing professional development. COG is currently supporting an Apprentice, who gained their Level 2 qualification with distinction, and also a staff member completing their Level 6 Early Years Initial Teacher Training. These qualifications are invaluable in our delivery of play-based learning techniques as well as understanding child development, particularly around responding to the needs of children who may have experienced trauma in their lives, or other additional needs, which lead to developmental delays in the three prime area of learning, and whose first 1001 days have been negatively impacted.

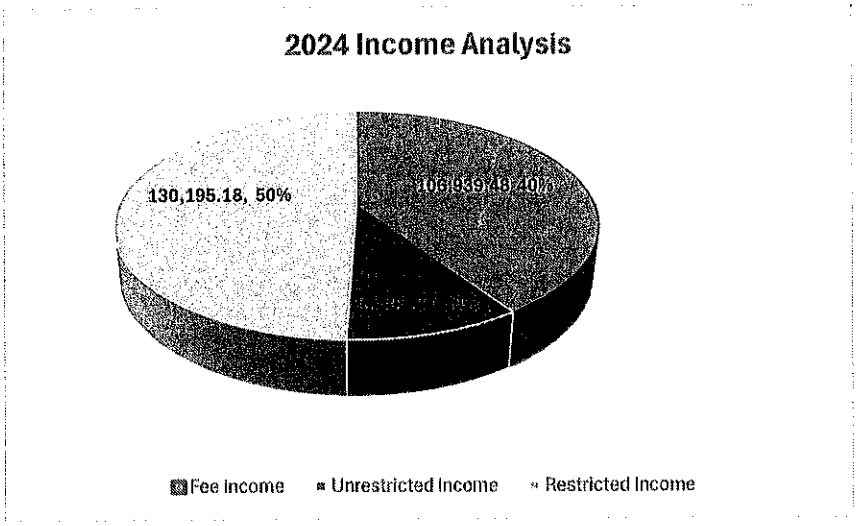
Financial Review

During the year, Cirencester Opportunity Group declared an overall deficit of £6,061.71 compared to last year's deficit of £20,444

Our reserves at 31/8/2024 were:

- Restricted reserves £52,786
- Designated reserves £40,000
- Unrestricted reserves £83,335
- Value of fixed assets (buildings) £108,303

Income analysis:



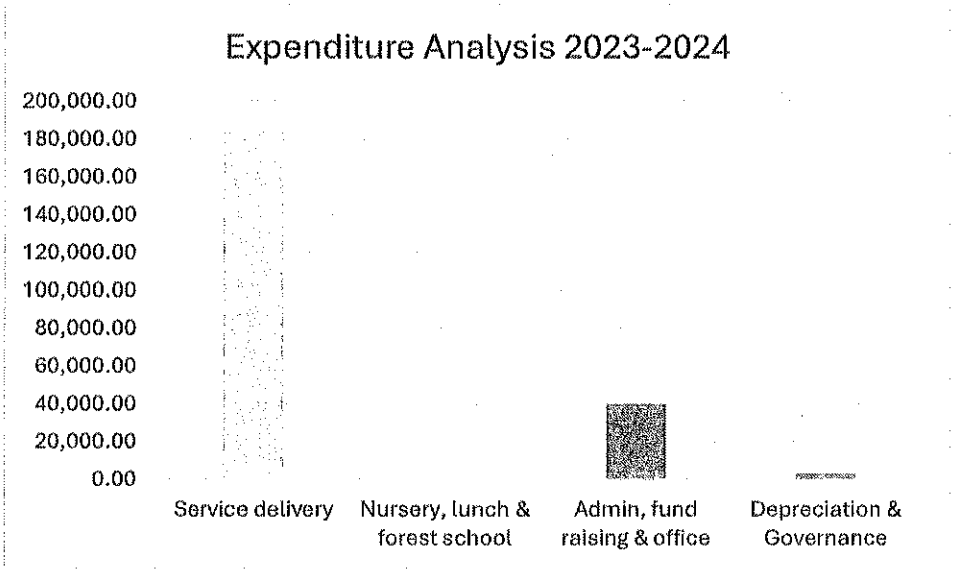
Income totalled £263,537 which reflected an increase of 14% from the previous year.

- Fee income at £106,939 showed an increase of £17,340 (19%) from the previous year.

- Restricted grants and donations totalled £130,195 which was up 15% from last year's figure of £113,182 and accounted for almost exactly half of the total income, in line with the 49% it made up last year.

- Unrestricted income amounted to £26,403, similar to last year's £28,294

Expenditure analysis:



Total expenditure across the year of £269,599 showed an increase of only 7% which, given in particular the increase in electricity and minimum wage costs, is a credit to the management team.

- Delivering services (staffing costs; outsourced Music Therapy; other play activities, lunchtime meals) at £183,612 or 68% of total expenditure is spent directly on delivering activities and in line with the 2023 figure of 70% of total expenditure
- Nursery materials and equipment; hot lunch time meals; running the building and our Forest School reflect a further £41,478 or 15% of the total spend (compared to 14% of total spend last year)
- The total administration; fundraising and office costs of £39,757 represents 15% of total expenditure. This includes completion of the website re-design and regular accounting and HR procedure costs
- Depreciation and Governance costs (including Inspection fee) make up the remaining £4,752 or 2% of the charity's total costs. No Trustee received any expenses.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have set a reserves policy which requires that the reserves be maintained at a level which ensures that COG's core activities could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty and that these reserves are maintained in a readily realisable form. The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of COG's planning, budgeting and forecasting cycle. It takes into account the risks associated with unexpected variations in the stream of income and expenditure, given planned activity levels and COG's future commitments.

The Trustees assess the reserves policy on an annual basis. They monitor and discuss levels of readily realisable reserves and COG's future commitments. The main risks to both income and expenditure plus the requirements for working capital and adequate cash flow are assessed.

The trustees use this information to ensure an adequate level of readily realisable reserves is maintained. In October 2024 the reserves policy was reviewed and based on this risk analysis, a Free Cash Reserve target of between 2 to 3 months of future annual expenditure (£44,643 and £66,964) was confirmed. At 31/8/24, the Free cash reserves were £67,818 including the designated reserves as detailed -

The Trustees have set aside £40,000 as Designated reserves, this is made up of:

- £35,000 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision should the charity be forced to close during the upcoming year.
- £5,000 to undertake a comprehensive review of premises security - to facilitate an enhanced working environment for staff by updating access controls and lighting.

Plans for future periods

We will continue to build on our strategic vision, which we plan to review and formalise in a written strategic plan.

◊ Evaluate and work to maximise our current assets to optimise and expand, where possible, the direction of the charity to meet the needs of current and new service users including the launch of a new website, which has been delayed but hoping to launch late 2024.

◊ Continually review and evaluate our early intervention provision of play-based learning to ensure sustainability and viability in the face of continued and growing concerns around recruitment, retention and funding in the early years sector; particularly ensuring we continue to meet the needs of children with SEND and other additional needs, including children experiencing disadvantage which affects their development.

◊ Recruit an additional member of staff, to join our specialist team, to enable us to offer support to more local families. To also consider further expanding our team by providing additional Apprenticeship opportunities, thereby sharing the expertise of our experienced staff with the next generation of Early Years professionals.

◊ Continually review and evaluate early intervention family support provision to ensure we understand and respond to the changing needs of our local community, particularly during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and the national economic and political picture; the known and unforeseen impacts they bring. Focus on the needs of parents/carers who are hard to reach/ engage with, to support their confidence in attending groups with their children and their following transition to early intervention sessions.

◊ Continue to focus on, review and extend staff wellbeing protocols to ensure physical safety and emotional support for staff members is in place, and we will continue to try to attract funding to support this outcome.

◊ Continue to identify and evaluate funding opportunities to improve office space, facilities and infrastructure for staff to accommodate a team that has grown in number over the past decade, and outgrown space available—this is very difficult to achieve through fundraising alone but could be part of a new capital project.

◊ Consider a capital project to increase space available to meet needs of service users, through expanding current projects and/or launching new projects to meet community need.

◊ Actively seek out and say 'yes' to opportunities to get involved in national research and training to extend and enhance our specialist knowledge in order to reach our goals, as well as take up opportunities to be involved in community projects throughout our town, to enhance cultural and creative experiences for service users who may not otherwise have such chances. This will also enable COG to create more partnership working opportunities with other community groups and organisations, to benefit staff, volunteers and beneficiaries.

◊ Continue to build a robust and effective Board of Trustees through a programme of recruitment, including an analysis of skills needed to provide beneficial areas of expertise.

◊ Continue to enhance the capabilities of the Board of Trustees through opportunities to meet key staff members for focussed discussions; understanding challenges and ways they can be met; offer training opportunities for trustees whenever possible and work to improve and continually enhance our trustee induction package.

◊ Work towards building a group of patrons to support the charity, with the view to them supporting the work of COG through social media, publicity and advocacy of our work, as well as building a strong team of Advisors to the Board.

Statement of directors' responsibilities

The Charity Trustees (who are also the Directors of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited for the purposes of company law) 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 Trustees 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 as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the directors should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and the group 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. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Print name: Gaynor Hutton

Date: 15th May 2025

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Independent Examiner's Report

Year ended 31 August 2024

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 August 2024 which are set out on pages 14 to 22.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity Trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Since the Charity's consolidated gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Chartered Institute of Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.

Miss Ruth Herbert FCCA

Signed: Ruth Herbert

Date: 22/5/2025

Wenn Townsend Accountants Limited
Gosditch House
Gosditch Street
Cirencester
GL7 2AG

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Statement of Financial Activities and Income and Expenditure Account
Year ended 31 August 2024

Statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted funds	Designated Funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments					
Donations	14625		130195	144820	132350
Earned from charitable activities	106939		0	106939	89600
Earned from other activities	5856		0	5856	5913
Investment and other income	5922		0	5922	3213
Total	133342	0	130195	**263537**	**231076**
Expenditure					
Cost of raising funds	11807		1632	13439	12915
Expenditure on charitable activities	119127		137033	254420	238605
Other expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Total	130934	0	138665	269599	251520
Net Income/Expenditure	2408		-8470	-6062	-20444
Transfer between funds	0	0	0	0	0
Net movement in funds	2408	0	-8470	-6062	-20444
Total funds brought forward	80927	40000	61256	182183	202627
Total funds carried forward	**83335**	**40000**	**52786**	**176121**	**182183**

The statement of financial activities include all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 15 to 22 form part of these financial statements

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Balance Sheet

Year ended 31 August 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	8	108303	0	108303	110856
Current Assets					
Debtors		0	0		
Cash at bank and in hand		18089	137643	155732	150773
Total Current Assets		126392	137643	264035	261629
Creditors (falling within one year)	10	3057	84857	87914	79446
Total Assets less current liabilities		123335	52786	176121	182183
Financed by:					
Unrestricted funds		83335		83335	80927
Designated funds		40000	0	40000	40000
Restricted funds		0	52876	52786	61256
Net Assets		123335	52786	176121	182183
Funds		123335	52786	176121	182183

In approving these financial statements as directors of the Company we hereby confirm:

a) The Company is entitled to the exemption from audit under Section 477(c) of the Companies Act 2006 from the year ended 31/8/2024. The Trustees have not required the Charitable Company to obtain an audit of its financial statement for the year ended 31/8/2024 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

b) That we acknowledge our responsibilities for:

i. ensuring that the Company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and

ii. preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company as at the end of the financial year, and of its profit or loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of section 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements so far as applicable to the Charitable Company.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with FRS102 and the Charities SORP (FRS102). The notes on the following pages form part of these accounts.

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf by:

G. Hutton Dated: 15th May 2025 Signed:

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 August 2024

1) Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice. Cotswold Counselling meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

The Charity has applied Update Bulletin 2 as published on 5th October 2018 and does not include a cash flow statement on the grounds that it is applying FRS 102 Section 1A.

Fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at rates calculate to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

◊ Land and Buildings 2% reducing balance

◊ Fixtures and Equipment 20% reducing balance

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use in accordance with the charitable objectives. Restricted funds are funds which have been given for particular purposes and projects.

Income

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories income:

Fee income is included in full in the statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

◊ The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

◊ Investment income is included when receivable.

◊ Incoming resources for generating funds are accounted for when earned.

Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of less than three months from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account activity.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Financial instruments

The trust only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as a basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised as a transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1) Pensions

Since September 2017, employees are automatically enrolled into a defined contribution pension scheme operated by The People's Pension. Employees can subsequently opt out. Employees joining the scheme, contract directly with the pension company.

The charity made a matching contribution of 3% of qualifying earnings to this pension scheme and acts as an agent in collecting and paying over employee contributions. The contributions made for the accounting period treated as an expense and were £4964 (2023 = £5126)

2) Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per member of the charity. The charity is registered and incorporated in England and Wales and it's registered address is : Beeches Road; Cirencester; Glos; GL7 1BW

3) Financial performance of the charity

The statement of Financial Activities states the financial performance of the charity.

4) Income:

A1 – Donations & Grants	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
Barnwood Trust		11520	11520	12200
Gloucestershire Funders– Julia and Hans Rausing Trust		20097	20097	21717
Children in Need				11207
St James Place CSR Volunteering	170		170	210
St James Place Foundation		10000	10000	
Global Make Some Noise				11263
Peter Lang Children's Trust		44932	44932	40000
Society Holy Child Jesus`	5000		5000	4167
Arnold Clark		1000	1000	
LIDL Local Community Fund		500	500	
Cirencester Town Council		3000	3000	
B&Q Neighbourly		500	500	
Soroptimists Dorothy Minnis		550	550	550
Active Impact OCWC		693	693	
Smiths Cirencester Charity		280	280	
Gloucestershire County Council		3875	3875	
KD Winstone Charitable Trust		5000	5000	
Glos Funders—One Glos		7900	7900	15800
NFU Mutual				537
Tesco Community Grant		925	925	1110
Kemble Church				600
Cotswold Primrose Trust		3065	3065	
E-Qualitas		7000	7000	
Active Impact OCWC		1984	1984	
Poverty Hurts—GCF		2484	2484	
Pied Piper Appeal		4890	4890	
Titch Tetley (Photographer)				525
Cirencester Ladies Skittles	312		312	
Ciren Vicars & Churchwardens	368		368	
Masonic Charitable Foundation	950		950	
Various donations & grants	7825		7825	12464
Total	14625	130195	**144820**	132350

A2 Earned from charitable activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
GCC Nursery fees	100207	0	100207	85589
Parent fees	6732	0	6732	4011
Total	106939	**0**	**106939**	**89600**

A3 Earned from other activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
Fund raising activities	2106	0	2106	1813
Building hire	3750	0	3750	4100
Interest Income	4962	0	**4962**	**2657**
Miscellaneous	960	0	**960**	**556**
Total	11778	**0**	**11778**	**9126**

5) Expenditure:

Expenditure on charitable activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
Delivery of services	51246	132366	183612	176365
Nursery equipment and hot meals	18303	2807	21110	8078
Forest school and garden	1970		1970	2438
Building operations	16538	1860	18398	23489
Office & administration	38125	1632	39757	36744
Depreciation	2552		2552	2690
Governance* & Independent examination	2200		2200	1716
Total	130934	138665	**269599**	**251520**

* Trustees received no remuneration and were not reimbursed for any of their expenses in the period.

6) Paid Employees:

Average number of 'full time equivalent' employees in the year:	2024	2023
Fundraising	1	1
Administration	1	1
Charitable Activities	8	8
Governance	0	0

7) Movements in Funds:

	Opening	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Transfer Of Funds	At 31/8/2024
	£	£	£		£
Unrestricted Funds	**80927**	133342	130934		**83335**
Designated Funds	**40000**	**0**	**0**		**40000**
Restricted Funds					
Active Impact OCWC Waterplay		693	181		512
Arnold Clark		1000			1000
Soroptimist Dorothy Minnis	550	550	1100		
GCC Global DCMS	5493		5493		
Glos. Funders Julia and Hans Rausing Trust	16748	20097	20097		16748
St James Place Foundation	90	10000	3424		6666
Cirencester Town Council		3000	3000		
Barnwood Trust	11520	11520	12148		10892
Peter Lang Children's Trust	10500	44932	51932		3500
Glos Funders—One Glos	15800	7900	15800		7900
Cotswold Primrose Trust		3065	3065		
E-Qualitas		7000	2432		4568
Lidl Local Community Fund		500	500		
Tesco Community Grant	555	925	1480		
Smiths Cirencester Charity		280	280		
Active Impact OCWC Summer		1984	1984		
Gloucestershire County Council		3875	2875		1000
Glos Community Foundation		2484	2484		
Poverty Hurts Pied Piper Appeal		4890	4890		
Neighbourly Spring fund		500	500		
KD Winstone Trust		5000	5000		
Total Restricted	**61256**	130195	138665		**52786**
Total Funds	**182183**	263537	269599		176121

Designated Reserves:

The Trustees have continued to review areas of the Charity's operations and aligned with it's strategic analysis; Centre Development Plan and Risk Register , have decided to identify the following areas of operations that should be defined as "Designated Reserves".

◊ £35,000 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision as at 31/8/2024 - should the charity be forced to close.

◊ £5,000 to undertake an IT infrastructure review and subsequently deliver a more secure; reliable and ergonomically effective working environment

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

8) Tangible Fixed Assets:

	Land & Buildings	Fixtures & Fittings etc.	Total
	£	£	£
Cost			
At 1st Sept 2023	129405	12110	141515
Additions in Year	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31st August 2024	129405	12110	141515
Depreciation			
Balance brought forward	20412	10247	30659
Charge for the Year	2180	373	2553
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31st August 2023	22592	10620	33313
Net Book Value			
At 31st August 2024	106813	1490	108303
At 31st August 2023	108993	1863	110856

9) Taxation:

As a charity, Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within the Section 478 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent these are applied to its charitable objections.

10) Creditors:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Income in advance	84857	75990
Accruals	3057	3456
Total	87914	79446

11) Capital Commitments

The company had no known capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

13) Government Grants:

The following income was received from government bodies during the year.

	2024	2023
	£	£
Gloucester County Council	3875	
Cirencester Town Council	3000	471

CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

England & Wales - Charity number 1160184

Accounts

CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

(A Company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)

REPORT AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31/8/2023

CHARITY NO. 1160184

COMPANY NO. 9210771

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

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Year ended 31 August 2023

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Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Legal and Administrative Information

Year ended 31 August 2023

The Trustee Board presents their report, together with the financial statements, for the period from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.

Reference and administrative details of the charity, its directors and advisors

Cirencester Opportunity Group is a registered charity, number 1160184 and is a charitable company limited by guarantee, number 9210771. The charity number, company number, present Trustees (being directors of the charitable company) and advisors are noted below:

Trustee Board

The members of the Trustee Board (who are also the directors of the charitable company) during the period were as follows:

Chair:	Kevin Traish (appointed October 2022, Chair from April 2023)
Vice Chair:	Shahedur Rohman (Vice Chair from April 2023)
Treasurer:	Gaynor Hutton (Treasurer from April 2023)
Company Secretary:	Sylwia Duzniak (Co. Sec. from April 2023)
Trustees:	Peter Stone (stepped down as Chair April 2023)
	Jane Burr (Nominated Individual, Safeguarding)
	Matt Hooper
	Andrew Cheesman (appointed April 2023)
	Sophie Langer (appointed April 2023)
Advisors:	Russell Jones-Walker
	Robert Bickerdike (stepped down as Treasurer April 2023)

Company registered number: 9210771

Charity number: 1160184

Bankers: HSBC, King Street, Stroud, GL5 3DS

Registered Office: Beeches Road, Cirencester, GL7 1BW

Independent Examiner: Wenn Townsend, Gosditch House ; 5 Gosditch Street Cirencester, Glos. GL7 2AG

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

Year ended 31 August 2023

Structure, governance and management

Cirencester Opportunity Group (COG), operating as a specialist early years and family support centre, is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

It is governed by Articles of Association, which were approved and adopted on 17 October 1974 (upon registration as a charitable company). COG became a limited company on 9 September 2014, when a new Charities Commission registration was issued. The articles of association were amended to reflect this change and were amended again on 20 June 2019.

We seek volunteers with new skills and experience and, inevitably, we must replace volunteers who can no longer work with us for various reasons. As such, the charity has to "induct" new Trustee Directors on a reasonably regular basis. To provide a consistency and thoroughness of introduction that will maximise the new Trustee Director contribution as quickly as possible, we follow an induction process which is both simple and yet sufficiently flexible to take account of individual's needs and availability. The process is outlined in the Information for New Trustees document dated January 2023, and includes:

- Attending at least one Board Meeting as an observer
- Completing an application form, outlining the contribution that the potential Trustee feels they will make to Cirencester Opportunity Group, and completing a skills and experience audit.
- Providing two written references
- Agreeing a written Trustee Role Specification specific to their role on the Board
- Signing the Trustee Code of Conduct detailing their commitment to the organisation, including completion, within 3 months of appointment, of a Safeguarding Children Level 1 course (usually on-line) and the same for the Prevent Duty.

Upon appointment as a Trustee Director, the Chairperson will inform the Company Secretary and Centre Administrator, who will inform Companies House and The Charity Commission of that appointment, and the new Trustee Director will complete the Ofsted EY2 on-line registration process. When appointing key management, and when reviewing their remuneration packages, external benchmarking is undertaken against directly compatible roles, wherever possible. The Trustee Board is responsible for setting and agreeing the remuneration package of the CEO. The CEO reviews and recommends changes to the remuneration packages of their team (see below), which must be agreed by the Trustee Board. We adhere to the Charity Governance Code and believe our main principles and processes by which we govern adhere closely to the seven principles of good governance contained within the code. As we develop our Trustee Board and ways of working, we will check our progress against these principles and their underlying directional guidance.

Organisational structure and decision making process

The Trustee Board delegates day-to-day management of the operations of the charity to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/ Centre Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Catharine Fowler, who was appointed in September 2017. Following a re-organisation of roles in 2018, the CEO has a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprising of Sharon Pitts; Pre-School Manager and DSL and Victoria Chase; Outreach Team Lead and DSL.

The wider team comprises of two Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinators (SENDCos), Jane Pilgrim and Catherine Chidley, both of whom are also part of the pre-school practitioner team alongside Margaret Hartnell, Benjamin Jayne, Rachel Malins and Evie Downes-Hall, who works as an Apprentice Early Years Practitioner; all of whom support the Family Outreach Team to deliver family services through COG's early intervention programme. Jemima Collishaw worked solely within this team, with the Outreach Team Lead, to deliver family services and support, until she resigned and was replaced by Hannah Luffingham in May 2023.

Supporting these roles are Stephanie Smyth, Charity Fundraiser (SLT member); Paul Robertson, as Centre Administrator and Sharon Smith, Pre-school Cook.

During 2022/23, in order to facilitate as many Trustees as possible being able to attend full board meetings, the Board decided to continue the policy of hybrid meetings begun during covid lockdown times. With more members of the Board than previously being in full-time employment, it was felt this approach would support decision-making to continue with minimal impact. During this year no full Board meetings have been purely online and Trustees attend in person whenever they are able and as a preference.

Objectives and activities

We have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing our objectives and activities and in planning for the future.

During this year, the Trustee Board underwent significant changes when a new Chair and new Treasurer were voted in at the AGM in April 2023. This led also to new posts in the roles of Vice Chair and Company Secretary. Overcoming the challenges brought about by circumstances such as the global pandemic, changes in working patterns and other linked factors have delayed opportunities to initiate change. However, good progress into the plans to strengthen and refresh the Board has been made this year, which brought a positive outlook for the future.

Plans to review the aims and objectives of the charity are ongoing and will feed into a new strategic plan. This year's activities and service delivery consolidated COG's new vision and mission statements, reflecting the charity's ethos of responding to need in the community, through its support of young children and families living with significant challenges and additional needs.

Vision Statement: *Creating Positive Beginnings for Young Children and Families*

Mission: *Cirencester Opportunity Group provides a warm, welcoming and safe environment for all families. We work in partnership with families and other agencies to promote inclusive care and early years education to all children, delivering both specialist learning through play and family support, by responding to the changing needs of our local community*.

Within this framework, our objectives are:

To meet the evolving needs of young children and families in our local community:

- Recognize, respect and support the rights and early childhood development of all children, including those with additional needs (whether through physiological condition or environment), and the aspirations of their families for them.
- Strive for wider inclusion for children in their early years and share best practice and specialist knowledge within our community.
- Foster a sense of belonging where learning can thrive, helping every child to build confidence and resilience throughout their pre-school journey.
- Support the wellbeing of our service users and staff team through training, continuous improvement and following our ethos of care.
- Ensure a best transition for every child to their next stage of education, through understanding their unique learning styles and stages of development.

Our core values provide a focus for both operational and strategic planning:

 Inclusivity is at the heart of all we do; we respect, value and focus on the needs of the individual.

 We work in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals to ensure positive beginnings for every child and their family.

 We encourage ongoing development of our team, children and families in a caring, enriching and stimulating environment.

 We create enabling environments to support children's learning and to empower families to make strong, safe and effective choices to help them succeed.

Our Centre at Beeches Road in Cirencester is owned by the charity following a donation of the land by Gloucestershire County Council in 1982.

Risk Management

The Board of Trustees' risk management process identifies key events or incidents that could affect the charity's ability to achieve its aims. This process results in a record of the most significant internal and external risks facing the charity, the possible impact or consequence of each risk and the required action to mitigate it. The Board of Trustees seeks reasonable assurance that these risks have been adequately managed, and that appropriate procedures and controls are in place to identify, manage and mitigate the key risks as far as possible.

Achievements and performance

In line with our updated Safeguarding procedures, a meeting was held with the trustee responsible for Safeguarding at the start of the academic year. All policies were reviewed and actions drawn up. A new safeguarding noticeboard was displayed in the foyer; an obvious place for all staff members to have access to, and stay up-to-date with, any Safeguarding changes or notices. Alongside this, a Safeguarding folder for staff was actioned; this includes, among other documents stored here, a new Staff Code of Conduct.

This year, in the wake of covid-19 and the war in the Ukraine, Britain entered into a cost-of-living crisis. During this year, this hit the country hard and as is often seen, those most vulnerable in our society are worst affected. COG's service users did not escape this and the Family Outreach Support Team led our response to this with support from COG's fundraiser and the leadership team. Details below of COG's response.

The Trustee Board underwent changes in key roles this year, with a new Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer being voted in at the AGM. The Charity is still looking to bolster their numbers of Trustees and the new Board is moving forward positively, with plans to address strategic direction and to improve COG's position in the face of national challenges of small charities, and also those in the struggling early years sector.

Towards the end of the year, in May 2023, the Early Intervention (EI) Outreach Team welcomed a replacement member of staff, and in the Pre-School two new replacement members of staff were recruited to begin in September 2023, the start of the new academic year. In the current recruitment and retention crisis in the early years sector, this speaks well of COG's standing as an organisation and employer in our local area.

Points to highlight this year include:

a) **COG's 50th Anniversary** - COG staff, trustees and volunteers all felt extremely proud this year to celebrate COG's 50th anniversary and to mark the occasion, gave their time on a sunny Saturday in June; with kind and generous support from individuals and businesses in our local community, to provide a **free of charge 'Family Day'** at our centre. We had donated refreshments, crafts, games and a bouncy castle and we welcomed families that have been supported by COG over the years. It was a wonderful, emotional and inclusive celebration day which included a stall of household items, books and gifts available to families to take free of charge to support their wellbeing and circumstances, as well as a host of activities to take part in.

b) **King Charles' Coronation** - we provided a special activity for parents and children to take part in together, creating a flag to celebrate the King's Coronation! The children created the King's carriage and enjoyed sitting in it, taking turns to be the King and wear the crown. Parents told us they felt this was a fun way to mark the occasion of the coronation with their children. We also worked in partnership with **Cirencester Town Council** who allocated vouchers for many of the families we support to have free food and drink at the town's official coronation celebration event in the Abbey Grounds. This was a fantastic initiative to be part of for the benefit of COG families, so they could be part of this community event. This partnership working with Cirencester Town Council also enabled us to give a small 'Coronation Celebration' box of wildflower seeds to each child, to plant. The town had some designated areas where parents could take their children, to plant their seeds and we made sure that each parent had a map of those locations.

c) **Kitchen Club** - this year we worked closely with the **Beeches Engagement Neighbourhood Project**, which chose to fund a series of weekend cooking sessions, delivered by the Kitchen Club, at our Family Centre. These Saturday cooking sessions were hosted in our purpose built annexe, funded via the NHS, for families that need support to learn how to cook on a budget. We referred several COG families to these completely free sessions in which The Kitchen Club supported parents and carers to make new connections, while giving tips on how to produce healthy meals; learning how to be economical with produce and appliances whilst cooking. The aim of the sessions was to support the parents and children to learn new skills together and to identity ways to save money. The families also got the opportunity to eat what they made together as part of a shared lunch experience! Several COG families attended and enjoyed these sessions, reporting back to us that they learned a lot too.

d) Cost-of-living crisis - we were granted funding from the **Cirencester Town Council Emergency Cost of Living Fund**, during the cold winter months, which allowed us to purchase duvets and blankets for families in need during this time. We also made a successful application to **Gloucestershire Community Foundation** to access some specific cost of living grant money. This enabled us to tailor our response to the cost of living challenges experienced by the families we support. We assessed need and co-ordinated the purchase of specific items and vouchers to support families in practical ways, helping to provide additional support to pay fuel costs or to buy items such as cooking equipment etc. Our cost of living response was further strengthened by our successful application to the **Lidl Hygiene Fund**. This fund enabled us to assess need and co-ordinate the purchase of toothpaste, shampoo, sanitary products and soap, among other items.

e) **Gloucestershire Steps Ahead programme -** We had the opportunity to work in partnership with the Gloucestershire Steps Ahead programme, specifically designed to support *Babies and Young Children born in Lockdown and their Families*. We welcomed a designated Community Nursery Nurse to our Little Teds sessions on a monthly basis, to offer additional support to families with babies and toddlers born during the lockdowns. The Nursery Nurse combined her time in our sessions, with home visits when required and has continued to make positive connections with the families we support. This has enhanced the support network available to each family; something we feel is very important. This partnership working also supported our work in identifying possible domestic abuse within a family home and parental mental health issues that need addressing.

f) Two members of our EI Outreach team attended 3 sessions of the **Parents Relationships Matter Gloucestershire** Virtual Conference 2023:

- Understanding separated families in conflict
- Child to parent violence and abuse
- The differences between parental conflict and domestic abuse

These sessions were extremely useful and informative and will support our ongoing work with families, where the parental relationship is causing conflict and even abuse within the family unit.

g) Increased use of **Ages and Stages Questionairres—Social and Emotional development** - ASQ-SEs as a measurement tool for pre-school children to assess social and emotional development continued. We were able to analyse the results we were getting as children began to have their second assessment and to understand where the challenges were, and how successful any interventions were. Use of these questionnaires was increased last year to better support children's social and emotional development following the pandemic. We are now seeing the bigger picture of the impact of these years on our children, through extensive use of this measurement tool which combines observations at home and in our early years setting; and are able to focus intervention work to support improvements.

h) While Volunteer recruitment remains challenging, we are very lucky to have two new volunteers this year; both of whom are parents of past COG children, both having an education background, as qualified teachers. We are fortunate to retain the volunteering services of our retired speech and language therapist too. This year, as part of our drive to support the development of young people into the early years sector, we entered into a relationship with Cirencester College to support their T-Level Childcare students. We were fortunate with our student this year, who was so helpful and used her initiative well in sessions, and even supported COG events and our Summer Playscheme.

i) The use of the Xero accounting system continues to grow and payroll was brought in-house in September 2022, so the year began in a new financial era for the Charity. Payroll is now led by the Centre Manager and Administrator, with the support of local Accountants, The Number Crunchers.

j) We were fortunate to be kindly granted some funding by **B&Q** to support the redecoration and re-flooring of our Therapy Room this year, including rugs to support the acoustics for Music Therapy delivery. The Therapy Room was repainted by a fabulous group of volunteers, and can now be more multi-purpose, enabling us to use our spaces more efficiently to better support the needs of our service users, both children and families.

k) Following a trial period, **Cirencester Foodbank** continue to use COG as a hub for their services in the town. Promoting collaborative working and beneficial for COG families, who feel comfortable in our environment, Foodbank bring with them a CAB advisor, and COG families have easier access to this service with it being on site.

l) The **Arts Society Corinium**, supported by Viv and Paul Styles of **Cotswold Primrose Trust**, kindly funded parents/carers to create six mosaic plaques, as part of a wellbeing activity facilitated by artist, Nicky Swettenham. This celebrated COG's heritage as a Roman Archaeological site, and the plaques are now displayed at the front of our building and in the children's playground area.

m) We were fortunate to have volunteer help to update some of our spaces this year, to refresh and make them more welcoming for our service users. In September, a team from **Mitsubishi Motors** painted our Annex space, kitchen and toilet, where we hold all of our parent/carer and toddler groups. This space is also hired out to further support our families and the sustainability of the Charity, for example to Cirencester Foodbank. They returned to fully repair our children's outdoor playhouse, and supported us with several other grounds maintenance projects.

n) COG's foyer was redecorated by a working party of volunteers from **Nationwide**, meaning this area could be re-purposed allowing for more office space and a layout more conducive to collaborative working. Possibilities for more face-to-face and virtual meetings supports the vital work we do for our children and families. This wonderful team also made us some beautiful planters for the garden and replaced all of the children's coat pegs in their cloakroom.

o) A team from **SJP** spent a day fixing, clearing and painting areas of our outdoor spaces to keep them in good repair for the children's use. This also helped provide a wonderful backdrop for **children's photographer, Katharine Tetley**, who again gave her time and specially priced packages to allow parents to purchase professional portrait photographs of their children that they may not usually be able to afford, or to access easily if their children have additional needs.

p) Local business **Havas Helia**, chose COG to be the beneficiaries of their *Make a Difference Day* when a large team spent the day treating all the wooden structures in the children's play areas, maintaining them and helping to ensure their longevity and children's enjoyment of them.

q) As is COG's mission, provision in pre-school continues to **go beyond usual levels to support children with developmental delay** due to challenges and circumstances in their lives, as well as children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). COG continues to provide the services of two SENDCOs, who co-ordinate the SEND offer, ensuring children are supported through Individual learning plans to meet achievable outcomes, allowing them to progress from their starting points. Staff have particular expertise and training in supporting self regulation and emotional development in children with SEND as well as continuing to provide an environment of Total Communication. In a time when children with SEND are struggling to access the levels of support they need, COG offers an inclusive space where each child is encouraged based on individual needs, where progress, however small, is celebrated. Children move onto the next stage of their journey with solid foundations and support in place to help them access the services and specialist help they may need.

r) Family events and initiatives to support **parent attachment and engagement** were increased this year, following the years of covid restrictions. See point 'l' regarding family mosaicking sessions. Parent/carer Stay and Play events were held at several points throughout the year at the start and end of the day to facilitate times that as many people as possible could attend. Parents were encouraged to celebrate their children's achievements through Wow vouchers, and engaging with the online learning journal. Events and activities are well publicised via our Facebook page and parents are encouraged to engage with these. Our EI Outreach Team also work hard to connect with families in the best ways for them to make sure they stay up-to-date and don't miss out on events due to circumstances beyond their control.

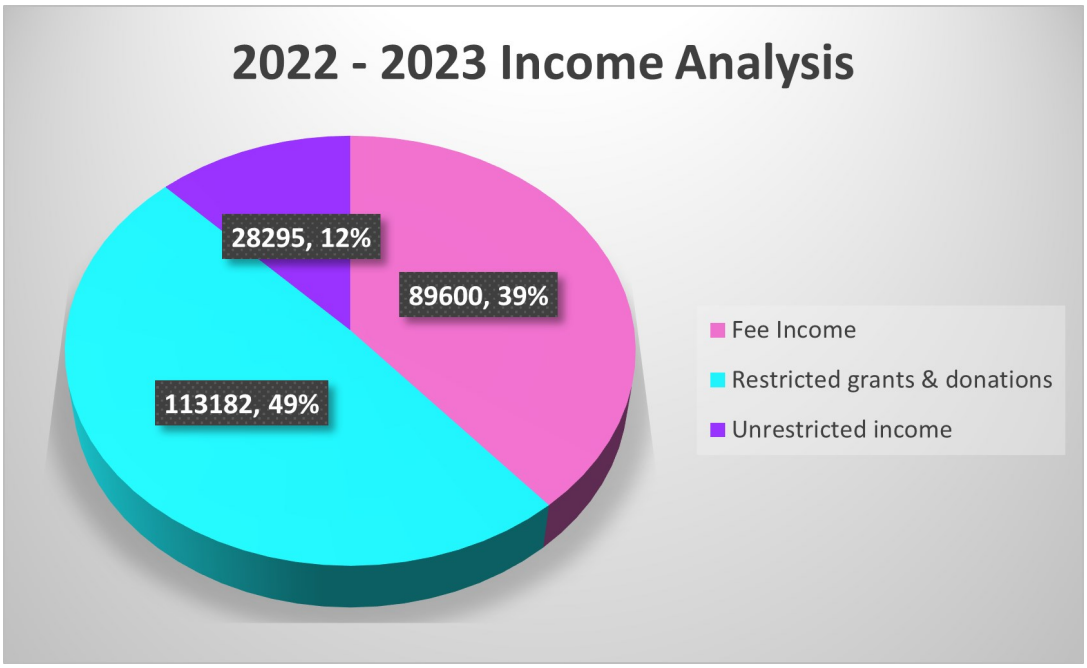
Financial Review

During the year, Cirencester Opportunity Group declared an overall deficit of £20,444 as compared to last year's deficit of £33,012, an improvement of 38%.

Our reserves at 31/8/2023 were:

- Restricted reserves £61,256
- Designated reserves £40,000
- Unrestricted reserves £80,893
- Value of fixed assets (buildings) £110,856

Income analysis:



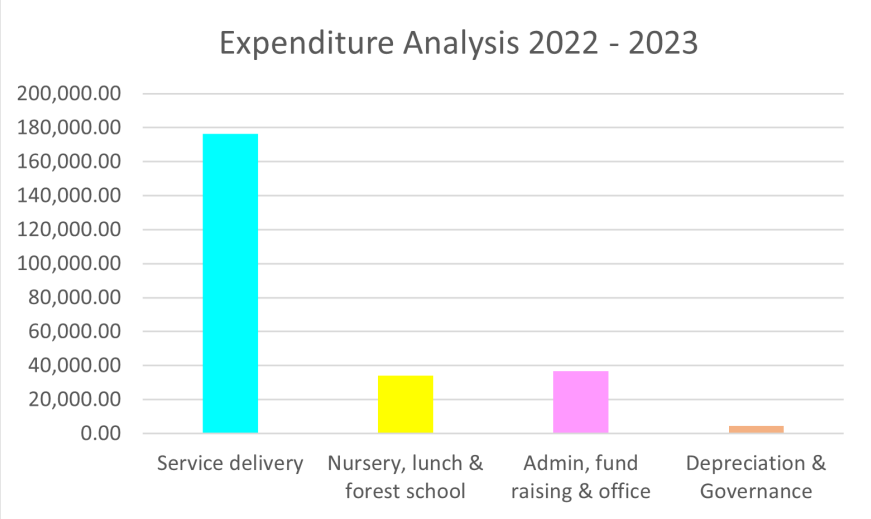
Income totalled £231,076 which reflected an increase of 10% from the previous year.

- Fee income at £89,599 showed an increase £11,5209 (15%) from the previous year.

- Restricted grants and donations totalled £113,182 which was very much in line with last year's figure of £113,997 but only made up 49% of total income compared with last year's 54%.

- Unrestricted income amounted to £28,294 an increase of £11,031 over last year.

Expenditure analysis:



Total expenditure across the year of £251,520 showed an increase of only 4% which, in the current financial climate, is very impressive.

- Delivering services (staffing costs; outsourced Music and Play Therapy; other play activities, lunchtime meals) at £176,365, that is 70% of total expenditure is spent directly on delivering activities
- Nursery materials and equipment; hot lunch time meals; running the building and our Forest School reflect a further £34005 or 14% of the total
- The total administration; fundraising and office costs of £36744 represents 14% of total expenditure. This figure does include ongoing infrastructure expenditure including website re-design and upgrades to our accounting and HR procedures
- Depreciation and Governance costs (including Inspection fee) make up the remaining £4,406 or 2% of the charity's total costs. No Trustee received any expenses.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have set a reserves policy which requires that the reserves be maintained at a level which ensures that COG's core activities could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty and that these reserves are maintained in a readily realisable form. The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of COG's planning, budgeting and forecasting cycle. It takes into account the risks associated with unexpected variations in the stream of income and expenditure, given planned activity levels and COG's future commitments.

The Trustees assess the reserves policy on an annual basis. They monitor and discuss levels of readily realisable reserves and COG's future commitments. The main risks to both income and expenditure plus the requirements for working capital and adequate cash flow are assessed.

The trustees use this information to ensure an adequate level of readily realisable reserves is maintained. In November 2023 the reserves policy was reviewed and based on this risk analysis, a Free Cash Reserve target of between 3 to 6 months of future annual expenditure (£62,880 and £125,760) was confirmed.

At 31/8/23, the Free cash reserves were £71,327 including the designated reserves as detailed -

The Trustees have set aside £40,000 as Designated reserves, this is made up of:

- £35,000 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision should the charity be forced to close during the upcoming year.
- £5,000 to undertake a comprehensive review of premises security - to facilitate an enhanced working environment for staff by updating access controls and lighting.

Plans for future periods

We will continue to build on the new strategic plan begun this year:

- ◊ Evaluate and work to maximise our current assets to optimise and expand, where possible, the direction of the charity to meet the needs of current and new service users including the launch of a new website.
- ◊ Continually review and evaluate our early intervention pre-school provision to ensure sustainability and viability in the face of growing concerns around recruitment, retention and funding in the early years sector; particularly ensuring we continue to meet the needs of children with SEND and other additional needs including children experiencing disadvantage which affects their development.
- ◊ Continually review and evaluate early intervention family support provision to ensure we understand and respond to the changing needs of our local community, particularly in the wake of the global pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and the national economic and political picture; the known and unforeseen impacts they bring.
- ◊ Focus on staff wellbeing to ensure physical safety and emotional support for staff members is in place, and we will continue to try to attract funding to support this outcome.
- ◊ Continue to identify and evaluate funding opportunities to improve office space, facilities and infrastructure for staff to accommodate a team that has grown in number over the past decade, and outgrown space available—this is very difficult to achieve through fundraising alone.
- ◊ Actively seek out and say 'yes' to opportunities to get involved in national research and training to extend and enhance our specialist knowledge in order to reach our goals.
- ◊ Continue to build a robust and effective Board of Trustees through a programme of recruitment, including an analysis of skills needed to provide beneficial areas of expertise.
- ◊ With new appointments to the Board of Trustees, continue to review and update risk management policy and procedures; re-evaluate rising need for more comprehensive HR and H&S provision to ensure knowledge and action regarding updates in employment and health and safety law/procedures, to meet staffing needs and enhance wellbeing.
- ◊ Continue to enhance the capabilities of the Board of Trustees through opportunities to meet key staff members for focussed discussions; understanding challenges and ways they can be met; offer training opportunities for trustees whenever possible and work to improve and continually enhance our trustee induction package.
- ◊ Work towards building a group of patrons to support the charity, with the view to them supporting the work of COG through social media, publicity and advocacy of our work, as well as building a strong team of Advisors to the Board.

Statement of directors' responsibilities

The Charity Trustees (who are also the Directors of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited for the purposes of company law) 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 Trustees 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 as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the directors should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and the group 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. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Signature:

Print name: Gaynor Hutton

Date: 11 April 2024

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Independent Examiner's Report

year ended 31 August 2023

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 August 2023 which are set out on pages 14 to 21.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity Trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.

Miss Ruth Herbert FCCA

Signed: Ruth Herbert

22 May 2024

Wenn Townsend Accountants Limited

Gosditch House

Gosditch Street

Cirencester

GL7 2AG

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Statement of Financial Activities and Income and Expenditure Account year ended 31 August 2023

Statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted funds	Designated Funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments					
Donations	19168		113182	132350	127621
Earned from charitable activities	89600		0	89600	78079
Earned from other activities	5913		0	5913	2344
Investment and other income	3213		0	3213	1295
Total	**117894**		**113182**	**231076**	**209339**
Expenditure					
Cost of raising funds	7915		5000	12915	11763
Expenditure on charitable activities	187025		51580	238605	230588
Other expenditure	0		0	0	0
Total	**194940**		**56580**	**251520**	**242351**
Net Income/Expenditure	-77046		56602	-20444	-33012
Transfer between funds	0		0	0	0
Net movement in funds	-77046	0	56602	-20444	-33012
Total funds brought forward	157973	40000	4654	202627	235639
Total funds carried forward	**80927**	**40000**	**61256**	**182183**	**202627**

The statement of financial activities include all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 15 to 21 form part of these financial statements

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Balance Sheet

year ended 31 August 2023

	Note	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	8	110856	0	110856	113546
Current Assets					
Debtors		0	0	0	1731
Cash at bank and in hand		13527	137246	150773	168923
Total Current Assets		124383	137246	261629	284200
Creditors (falling within one year)	10	3456	75990	79446	81573
Total Assets less current liabilities		120927	61256	182183	202627
Financed by:					
Unrestricted funds		80927		80927	157973
Designated funds		40000		40000	40000
Restricted funds			61256	61256	4654
Net Assets		120927	61256	182183	202627
Funds		120927	61256	182183	202627

In approving these financial statements as directors of the Company we hereby confirm:

a) The Company is entitled to the exemption from audit under Section 477(c) of the Companies Act 2006 from the year ended 31/8/2023. The Trustees have not required the Charitable Company to obtain an audit of its financial statement for the year ended 31/8/2023 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

b) That we acknowledge our responsibilities for:

i. ensuring that the Company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and

ii. preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company as at the end of the financial year, and of its profit or loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of section 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements so far as applicable to the Charitable Company.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with FRS102 and the Charities SORP (FRS102). The notes on the following pages form part of these accounts.

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf by:

G. Hutton Signed: Dated: 22 May 2024

Company number 09210771

1) Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice. Cotswold Counselling meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

The Charity has applied Update Bulletin 2 as published on 5th October 2018 and does not include a cash flow statement on the grounds that it is applying FRS 102 Section 1A.

Fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at rates calculate to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

◊ Land and Buildings 2% reducing balance

◊ Fixtures and Equipment 20% reducing balance

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use in accordance with the charitable objectives. Restricted funds are funds which have been given for particular purposes and projects.

Income

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories income:

Fee income is included in full in the statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

◊ The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

◊ Investment income is included when receivable.

◊ Incoming resources for generating funds are accounted for when earned.

Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of less than three months from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account activity.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Financial instruments

The trust only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as a basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised as a transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Pensions

Since September 2017, employees are automatically enrolled into a defined contribution pension scheme operated by The People's Pension. Employees can subsequently opt out. Employees joining the scheme, contract directly with the pension company.

The charity made a matching contribution of 3% of qualifying earnings to this pension scheme and acts as an agent in collecting and paying over employee contributions. The contributions made for the accounting period treated as an expense and were £5126 (2022 = £4154)

2) Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per member of the charity. The charity is registered and incorporated in England and Wales and it's registered address is : Beeches Road; Cirencester; Glos; GL7 1BW

3) Financial performance of the charity

The statement of Financial Activities states the financial performance of the charity.

4) Income:

A1 – Donations & Grants	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
Barnwood Trust		12200	12200	
Gloucestershire Funders– Rausing		21717	21717	4568
Children in Need	875	10332	11207	10332
St James Place		210	210	10000
Global Make Some Noise		11263	11263	12930
Peter Lang Trust		40000	40000	40000
Society Holy Child Jesus`	4167		4167	22214
Arnold Clark				500
Ciren Girls Club				500
Cirencester Town Council				500
B&Q Neighbourly				3268
Soroptimist		550	550	500
Summerfield				1595
Co-op Local				475
Comic Relief Community Fund				1333
Glos County Council				930
Cotswold Primrose Trust				4352
Glos Funders—One Glos		15800	15800	0
NFU Mutual	537		537	0
Tesco		1110	1110	
Kemble Church	600		600	500
Naunton Downs Seniors				3000
Local Answer				1000
P. Marner				1000
RWE Generation				500
Do It				1000
Titch Tetley (Photographer)	525		525	
Various donations & grants	12464		12464	6123
Total	19168	113182	**132350**	**127620**

A2 Earned from charitable activities	Unrestricted	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
GCC Nursery fees	85589	0	85589	71927
Parent fees	4011	0	4011	6152
Total	**89600**	**0**	**89600**	**78079**

A3 Earned from other activities	Unrestricted	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
Fund raising activities	1813	0	1813	1331
Building hire	4100	0	4100	1012
Total	**5913**	**0**	5913	**2343**

5) Expenditure:

Expenditure on charitable activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
Delivery of services	127706	48659	176365	163659
Nursery equipment and hot meals	7146	931	8078	10238
Forest school and garden	2389	49	2438	9464
Building operations	21549	1940	23489	12863
Office & administration	31744	5000	36744	29026
Depreciation	2690	0	2690	2852
Governance* & Independent	1716	0	1716	2486
Total	194940	56580	251520	**230588**

* Trustees received no remuneration and were not reimbursed for any of their expenses in the period.

6) Paid Employees:

Average number of 'full time equivalent' employees in the year:	**2023**	**2022**
Fundraising	1	1
Administration	1	1
Charitable Activities	8	8
Governance	0	0

7) Movements in Funds:

	Opening	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Re-sources	Transfer Of Funds	At 31/8/2023
	£	£	£		£
Unrestricted Funds	**157973**	19168	96214		**80927**
Designated Funds	**40000**	**0**	**0**		**40000**
Restricted Funds					
					0
Soroptimist		550			550
GCC Spoken Autism					0
Glos. Funders - The Julia and		21717	4969		16748
Glos. Comm Foundation					0
St James Place		210	120		90
GCC Build back Better					0
Barnwood Trust		12200	680		11520
SHCJ					0
Peter Lang Trust		40000	29500		10500
Children in Need	444	10332	10776		0
Glos Funders—One Glos		15800			15800
Cotswld Primrose Trust	2104	0	2104		0
Cirencester Town Council					0
Global Make Noise	556	11263	6326		5493
Tesco		1110	555		555
Comic Relief .					
Co-Op Local					0
B&Q Neighbourly			0		0
Other - public	1550	0	1550		0
Total Restricted	**4654**	113182	56580		**61256**
Total Funds	**202627**	132350	152794		**182183**

Designated Reserves:

The Trustees have continued to review areas of the Charity's operations and aligned with it's strategic analysis; Centre Development Plan and Risk Register , have decided to identify the following areas of operations that should be defined as "Designated Reserves.

◊ £35,000 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision as at 31/8/2023 - should the charity be forced to close.

◊ £5,000 to undertake an IT infrastructure review and subsequently deliver a more secure; reliable and ergonomically effective working environment

8) Tangible Fixed Assets:

	Land & Buildings	Fixtures & Fittings etc.	Total
	£	£	£
Cost			
At 1st Sept 2022	129405	12110	141515
Additions in Year	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31st August 2023	129405	12110	141515
Depreciation			
Balance brought forward	18188	9781	27969
Charge for the Year	2224	466	2690
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31st August 2022	20412	10427	27969
Net Book Value			
At 31st August 2023	108993	1863	113546
At 31st August 2022	111217	2329	116398

9) Taxation:

As a charity, Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within the Section 478 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent these are applied to its charitable objections.

10) Creditors:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Income in advance	75990	73943
Accruals	3456	7630
Total	79446	81573

11) Capital Commitments

The company had no known capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

13) Government Grants:

The following income was received from government bodies during the year.

	2023	2022
	£	£
Gloucester County Council - Nursery Grant		71927
Cirencester Town Council (Cost of Living)	471	500
Gloucestershire County Council – Autism Community Support		930

CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

England & Wales - Charity number 1160184

Accounts

CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

(A Company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)

REPORT AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31/8/2022

CHARITY NO. 1160184

COMPANY NO. 9210771

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

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Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Legal and Administrative Information

Year ended 31 August 2022

The Trustee Board presents their report, together with the financial statements, for the period from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022.

Reference and administrative details of the charity, its directors and advisors

Cirencester Opportunity Group is a registered charity, number 1160184 and is a charitable company limited by guarantee, number 9210771. The charity number, company number, present Trustees (being directors of the charitable company) and advisors are noted below:

Trustee Board

The members of the Trustee Board (who are also the directors of the charitable company) during the period were as follows:

Chair:	Peter Stone
Treasurer:	Robert Bickerdike
Trustees:	Jane Burr (Nominated Individual, Safeguarding)
	Sylwia Duzniak
	Lynda Draper (appointed April 2021)
	Matt Hooper (appointed 22 June 2022)
	Russell Jones-Walker (resigned as trustee to become advisor 24 March 2022)
Advisors:	Russell Jones-Walker (from March 2022)
	Kevin Traish (no voting rights, EY2 in progress)
	Shahedur Rohman

Company registered number: 9210771

Charity number: 1160184

Bankers: HSBC, King Street, Stroud, GL5 3DS

Registered Office: Beeches Road, Cirencester, GL7 1BW

Independent Examiner: Wenn Townsend, Gosditch House ; 5 Gosditch Street Cirencester, Glos. GL7 2AG

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Director's Annual Report

Year ended 31 August 2022

Structure, governance and management

Cirencester Opportunity Group (COG), operating as a specialist early years and family support centre, is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

It is governed by Articles of Association, which were approved and adopted on 17 October 1974 (upon registration as a charitable company). COG became a limited company on 9 September 2014, when a new Charities Commission registration was issued. The articles of association were amended to reflect this change and were amended again on 20 June 2019.

We seek volunteers with new skills and experience and, inevitably, we must replace volunteers who can no longer work with us for various reasons. As such, the charity has to "induct" new Trustee Directors on a reasonably regular basis. To provide a consistency and thoroughness of introduction that will maximise the new Trustee Director contribution as quickly as possible, we follow an induction process which is both simple and yet sufficiently flexible to take account of individual's needs and availability. The process is outlined in the *Information for New Trustees* document dated January 2023, and includes:

- Attending at least one Board Meeting as an observer
- Completing an application form, outlining the contribution that the potential Trustee feels they will make to Cirencester Opportunity Group and completing a skills and experience audit.
- Providing two written references
- Agreeing a written Trustee Role Specification specific to their role on the Board
- Signing the Trustee Code of Conduct detailing their commitment to the organisation, including completion, within 3 months of appointment, of a Safeguarding Children Level 1 course (usually on-line) and the same for the Prevent Duty.

Upon appointment as a Trustee Director, the Chairperson will inform Companies House and The Charity Commission of that appointment and the new Trustee Director will complete the Ofsted EY2 on-line registration process.

When appointing key management, and when reviewing their remuneration packages, external benchmarking is undertaken against directly compatible roles, wherever possible. The Trustee Board is responsible for setting and agreeing the remuneration package of the CEO. The CEO reviews and recommends changes to the remuneration packages of their team (see below), which must be agreed by the Trustee Board.

We adhere to the Charity Governance Code and believe our main principles and processes by which we govern adhere closely to the seven principles of good governance contained within the code. As we develop our Trustee Board and ways of working, we will check our progress against these principles and their underlying directional guidance.

Organisational structure and decision making process

The Trustee Board delegates day-to-day management of the operations of the charity to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/ Centre Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Catharine Fowler, who was appointed in September 2017. Following a re-organisation of roles in 2018, the CEO has a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprising of Sharon Pitts; Pre-School Manager and DSL and Victoria Chase; Outreach Team Lead and DSL.

The wider team is comprised of two Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinators (SENDCos), Jane Pilgrim and Catherine Chidley, both of whom are also part of the pre-school practitioner team alongside Margaret Hartnell, Benjamin Jayne and Rachel Malins; all of whom support the Family Outreach Team to deliver family services through COG's early intervention programme. Jemima Collishaw works solely within this team, with the Outreach Team Lead, to deliver family services and support.

Supporting these roles are Stephanie Smyth, Charity Fundraiser (SLT member); Mary Forrest, who was replaced by Paul Robertson in February 2022, as Centre Administrator and Sharon Smith, Pre-school Cook.

During 2021/22, to be able to continue to hold full board meetings and to stay in touch with COVID-related issues, the Board met online or as a hybrid meeting of online and physically present, so that decision-making could continue with minimal impact.

Objectives and activities

We have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing our objectives and activities and in planning for the future.

During this year, the Trustee Board began a review of the aims and objectives of the charity, to feed into a new strategic plan. COG's vision and mission statements were refreshed and brought up-to-date to reflect the charity's ethos of responding to need in the community, through its support of young children and families living with significant challenges and additional needs.

> **Vision Statement**: *Creating Positive Beginnings for Young Children and Families*
>
> **Mission**: *Cirencester Opportunity Group provides a warm, welcoming and safe environment for all families. We work in partnership with families and other agencies to promote inclusive care and early years education to all children, delivering both specialist learning through play and family support, by responding to the changing needs of our local community.*

Within this framework, our objectives are:

To meet the evolving needs of young children and families in our local community:

- ◊ Recognize, respect and support the rights and early childhood development of all children, including those with additional needs (whether through physiological condition or environment), and the aspirations of their families for them.
- ◊ Strive for wider inclusion for children in their early years and share best practice and specialist knowledge within our community.
- ◊ Foster a sense of belonging where learning can thrive, helping every child to build confidence and resilience throughout their pre -school journey.
- ◊ Support the wellbeing of our service users and staff team through training, continuous improvement and following our ethos of care.
- ◊ Ensure the best transition for every child to their next stage of education, through understanding their unique learning styles and stages of development.

Additionally, we reviewed and updated our core values, in order to provide a focus for our ongoing strategic review:

- ◊ **Inclusivity** is at the heart of all we do; we respect, value and focus on the needs of the individual.
- ◊ We work in **partnership** with parents, carers and other professionals to ensure positive beginnings for every child and their family.
- ◊ We encourage ongoing **development** of our team, children and families in a caring, enriching and stimulating environment.
- ◊ We create **enabling** environments to support children's learning and to empower families to make strong, safe and effective choices to help them succeed.

Our Centre at Beeches Road in Cirencester is owned by the charity following a donation of the land by Gloucestershire County Council in 1982.

Risk Management

The Board of Trustees' risk management process identifies key events or incidents that could affect the charity's ability to achieve its aims. This process results in a record of the most significant internal and external risks facing the charity, the possible impact or consequence of each risk and the required action to mitigate it. The Board of Trustees seeks reasonable assurance that these risks have been adequately managed, and that appropriate procedures and controls are in place to identify, manage and mitigate the key risks as far as possible.

Post COVID-19, the charity's risk register is in the process of being reviewed and updated in order to maximise potential opportunities while minimising the adverse effects of risks. At the time of writing, the Board is undergoing a review of roles and responsibilities, and a new risk register committee is being developed. Work is proceeding to ensure that all risk category sections are fully populated, to enable a more focussed and quality-driven approach to recognising and addressing higher priority risk items; identifying whether the anticipated impact may present threats or opportunities, in order to assign appropriate mitigation strategies.

As a charity providing care for children, the trustees recognise that once of the key risks relates to the safety of children whilst in our care. Strong safeguarding controls have been implemented and are regularly reviewed to ensure they mitigate the likelihood of this risk. Training and vetting of staff and clear policies create an effective safeguarding culture. There is a trustee in place with specific oversight of safeguarding policies and procedures, who liaises directly with staff and reports to the Trustee Board.

Achievements and performance

COG's activities for the year until 31 August 2022 were still, in part, affected by the covid-19 pandemic, particularly early during the academic year when some restrictions and guidance were still in place. Risk assessments were retained and staff tested twice weekly while tests were still freely available; results recorded until guidance was removed. All staff chose to be fully vaccinated. Toddler groups continued to be held outside until the weather became prohibitive for very small children and babies. Staff and parents continued to wear protective face coverings, as did visitors, and for much of the year parents were still not permitted to enter the building. By the end of the academic year, all restrictions had been removed and parents began re-entering the building. However, this stopped as covid numbers rose significantly again. Parents of new starters were exempt from this as it was deemed more important for children's mental health/personal, social and emotional development for them to settle their children in the playroom, amid a notable increase in anxieties of young children being left in the care of others, some of whom had never left their parents due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. It is a reflection of the care, commitment and diligence of COG staff, as well as good planning, that toddler groups and pre-school sessions remained open to all throughout the year. This year saw a period of recovery and resilience for COG families and the work of the Centre very much focussed on supporting families to rebuild confidence and navigate the changes and challenges brought about by events of the previous year.

Following the annual safeguarding audit and in discussion with the trustee lead on this subject, a new Safeguarding Leaflet was drawn up and introduced to enable all visitors to the Centre to be briefed on safeguarding expectations and requirements while onsite. DSLs now meet annually with the Safeguarding trustee lead, to complete and submit the Safeguarding Audit.

Points to highlight this year include:

a) In November 2021, St James Place (SJP), with the support of Splash Community Projects, launched a week-long big build in which 250 SJP volunteers prepared and constructed a new outdoor play area in COG's grounds. The main area of work transformed the 'hardstanding play area' immediately outside the playroom. The problematic gravelled areas were removed and replaced with structures that provide open-ended play opportunities to enable children to develop physically using gross motor skills, and also in many other development areas through being able to engage in imaginative play. These structures included a wooden train engine with four carriages, a bike track with a bridge and two play structures that can be a café, shop, electric charging station; the opportunities are endless. COG's large sandpit was covered with a big canopy with clear Perspex roof to allow for all-weather play and a 'water-wall' was included to enable the children to wet the sand for sandcastles, as well as providing play in its own right. In addition, the small boat on the grassed area was removed and replaced with a much bigger and more exciting 'ship' and a gated slide was built over one of the grassy humps. COG's gratitude for this large-scale donation and investment in its future of providing inclusive care and education to young children cannot be underestimated.

b) Following a review of staff terms of employment, it was noted that we needed to update these to ensure they were robust, correct and up-to-date with employment law, offering both staff members and the charity the correct levels of contractual protection. This was achieved smoothly in consultation with staff members.

c) The charity took the decision to review and improve the general accounting system leading to adopting a new, cloud-based approach with the introduction of Xero and Dext. This process is ongoing as we transition to the new system and way of working, which it has been identified will be more a robust and less time-consuming way of managing the charity's finances.

d) Our SENDCos have worked hard alongside practitioners to put all support needed in place for SEND children and this year COG was allocated named advisors from GCC and the EHCP team. The Centre Manager now sits on the EY SEND Forum which is led by Dingley's Promise and includes several other 'Opportunity Groups' and other settings specialising in supporting children with SEND. Our hope is that we will be able to share best practice, advice and support particularly in terms of ways to increase support for children with SEND. The Centre Manager and SENDCos formally responded to the green paper SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) review.

e) The DfE launched the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework in September 2021 with the aims of improving outcomes at age 5, particularly in early language and literacy and reducing workload such as unnecessary paperwork, so practitioners can spend more time with the children in their care. By the end of the year, this had been embraced by all staff who worked hard to scaffold up children's skills and provide activities to focus strongly on children's individual

developmental stages and needs. Feedback from staff is that it has reduced some paperwork time for practitioners when supporting typically developing children but is difficult and, therefore, more time consuming to use to support children with SEND and vulnerable children with significant ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) that have caused developmental delay.

f) Following a review of our assessment and monitoring of children's development due to the introduction of the new EYFS, feedback from staff and in discussion with Peter Lang Children's Trust (PLCT), we introduced the systematic use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire for Social and Emotional development (ASQ-SE). Our intention in using this particular questionnaire is to monitor more closely and therefore better support the social and emotional development of children in the wake of the pandemic, to address the shortfalls in assessing that of children with SEND and ACEs through the new EYFS and to provide more opportunities for parental engagement with COG staff includes their child's key person. We will monitor the success of this with staff and parents as this progresses.

g) Parent engagement has clearly been impacted by the pandemic. Over the course of this year, we have worked hard to re-engage with parents in meaningful ways to support their children's development. Parent stay and play sessions were re-introduced successfully, being kept outdoors to keep everyone safe. Father Christmas attended the new outdoor play area to give gifts in a socially distanced way from the new train (decorated as Santa's sleigh) and our Christmas raffle was held again here. Additionally, parents joined us for the leavers party and the grand opening of our new play area. Our Outreach team were able to re-launch their primary school starters talks amongst other support for parents.

h) One positive effect coming from national lockdowns has been the changes made to staff training. All training is now almost exclusively online, which has meant vastly increased ease of access and affordability. For example, numerous safeguarding courses were undertaken alongside EYFS training on characteristics of effective teaching and learning; staff wellbeing; training specific to a child such as PEG feed awareness; childhood development training including brain development and supporting anxious children; yoga for children and addressing behaviour to name just some of the training undertaken this year.

i) Through the new EYFS, there has been a national focus on the oral health of children. We have been able to purchase new resources to help promote our teaching in this area and our outreach family support team have also seen a lot of need in this area. This year, the outreach team have worked hard to get dental appointments for children who have not had access to a dentist due to the pandemic and other reasons. This comes at a time when NHS dental appointments have been difficult to obtain anyway. We have been successful in highlighting this issue to parents and the need to look after their children's teeth.

j) The Cotswold Primrose Trust supported COG this year to provide additional communication and language support for children with SEND and which also benefitted all children, as part of our recovery and resilience work following the pandemic. 'Chatterbugs' has been successful in supporting children for whom language development has been impacted due a developmental delay and also due to the months of isolation from social situations, which would usually naturally support this side of a child's development.

k) COG has received funding this year from Global Make Some Noise to run a programme of recovery and resilience in the wake of the pandemic, to deliver social and emotional support to children, while learning through play, called 'How do you feel today?'. This has included the introduction of Children's Yoga amongst other activities which allow children to explore, identify and name their feelings and emotions, learning self-regulation skills and techniques in an age appropriate way. To support parents and carers, this programme also includes training to enable us to trial The Triple P – Positive Parenting Program. This trial works alongside our existing Solihull Approach. Both programmes give parents simple and practical strategies to help them build strong, healthy relationships, confidently manage their children's behaviour and prevent problems developing.

l) We continue to work with a wide range of external agencies to support the best outcomes for our children and families, including our local Health Visitor network, who have introduced the roles of Public Health Nurse Practitioners. They will provide support to families of children with SEND and now work closely with our SENDCos, where the Health Visitors will retain those families with Safeguarding challenges, who may be in need of, or are being, supported by Social Care and/or Early Help, and who continue to work closely with our outreach family support team.

m) Parenting support groups have proved to be of great importance to parents/carers this year, as we emerge from the pandemic, and we have provided several groups to support recovery and resilience while working hard to ensure they remained in place through various changes in restrictions. These proved successful in providing a forum for parents/carers to discuss their feelings

and emotions around the impact of the pandemic, share experiences and be a source of mutual support. We delivered cooking sessions, as requested by parents/carers, where new skills were learned and opportunities to build confidence in the kitchen were provided. Participants requested that every 6 weeks they play a board game and have chance to 'chill out and chat'. During one of these events, COG provided a special croissant breakfast as a treat to support mental health.

n) As part of our wider community work, and to contribute towards the sustainability of the charity, we now provide hire of our Annexe building for *Family Group Conferences*, to enable families to come together to discuss how and who can help and support them. This building is also now the *Cirencester Foodbank Hub* on a Thursday afternoon, where clients come to collect food parcels and acquire advice and support with a range of challenges. We are trialling this new relationship this year, and hope to continue it next year. Additionally, we are now collaborating with a group of *local childminders* who use our woodland learning area to provide safe outdoor learning space for their children. All of this community working adds value to our mission and ethos, enabling us to truly collaborate and provide joint working with other organisations, which benefits the children and families in our local community.

o) We have started to see an increase in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) work again after the pandemic, with a group of colleagues from St James's Place who cleared and re-marked the spaces in our car park, and re-painted our Therapy Room. We hope that this corporate team building work will continue next year as more companies allow staff to enter premises safely again.

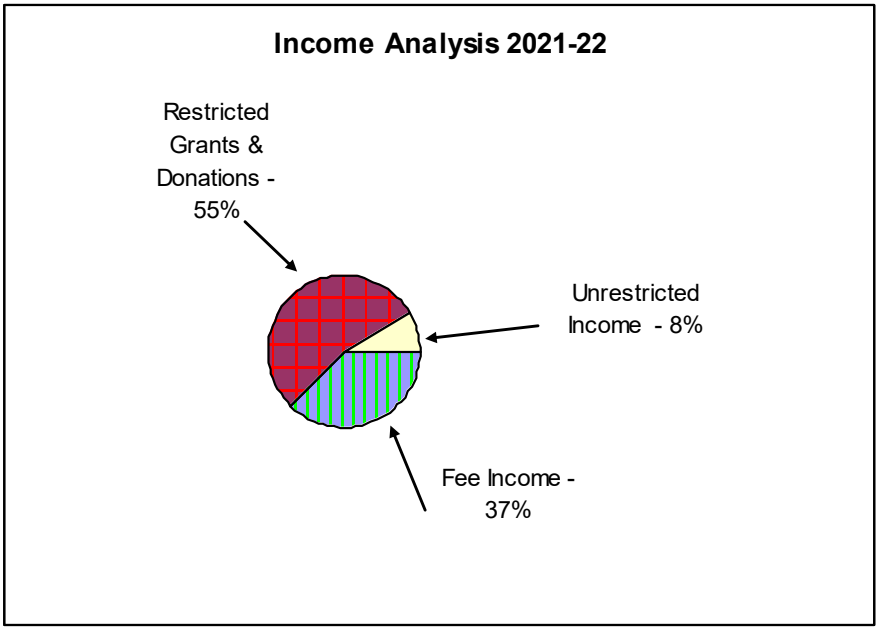
Financial Review

During the year, the group declared an overall deficit of £33,012 as compared to last year's surplus of £16,387.

Our reserves at 31/8/2022 were:

- Restricted reserves £4,654
- Designated reserves £40,000
- Unrestricted reserves £44,426
- Value of fixed assets (buildings) £113,546

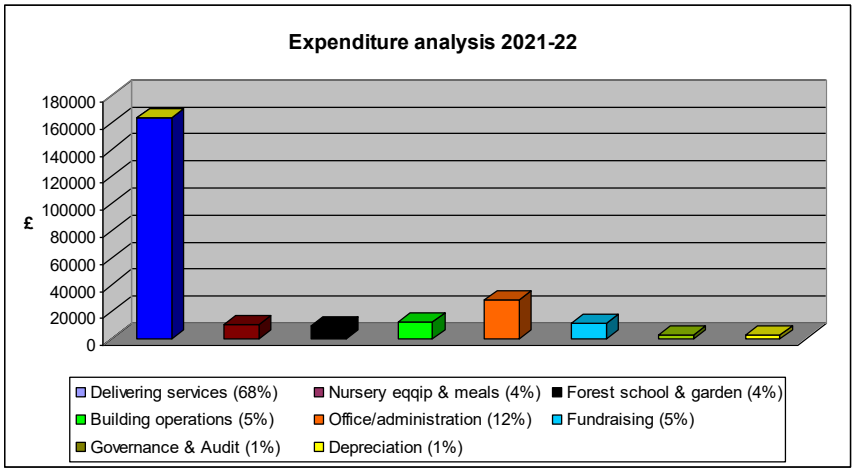
Income analysis:



Income totalled £209,339 which reflected a decrease of 12% from the previous year.

- Fee income at £78,079 showed a decline of £9959 (11%) from the previous year. Whilst Pre School fees only reduced by 1%, our funding for areas such as Inclusion fell by £8,322 or 46%
- Restricted grants and donations totalled £113,997, down by 11% from last year. These continue to now contribute over 54% of our total income - a continued fantastic result from our fund raising efforts
- Unrestricted income amounted to £17,263 an increase of £4,167 over last year.

Expenditure analysis:



Total expenditure across the year of £242,351 showed a 10% increase over the previous year. However, a significant proportion of this related to the planned strategy from last year's establishment of designated reserves (and utilisation of Covid-related funding) to improve our facilities, people traffic flow, cleaning and hygiene regime; and also to undertake a comprehensive Health & Safety and Human Resources (HR) procedures and policy review.

- Delivering services (staffing costs; outsourced Music and Play Therapy; other play activities) at £163,659 reflects that 68% of total expenditure is spent directly on delivering activities
- Nursery materials and equipment; hot lunch time meals; running the building and our Forest School reflect a further £32,569 or 13% of the total
- The total administration; fundraising and office costs of £40,789 represents 17% of total expenditure. This figure does include "one off" infrastructure expenditure including website re-design (ongoing); upgrade to our accounting and HR procedures
- Depreciation and Governance costs (including Inspection fee) make up the remaining £5,338 or 2% of the charity's total costs. No Trustee received any expenses.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have set a reserves policy which requires that the reserves be maintained at a level which ensures that COG's core activities could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty and that these reserves are maintained in a readily realisable form. The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of COG's planning, budgeting and forecasting cycle. It takes into account the risks associated with unexpected variations in the stream of income and expenditure, given planned activity levels and COG's future commitments.

The Trustees assess the reserves policy on an annual basis. They monitor and discuss levels of readily realisable reserves and COG's future commitments. The main risks to both income and expenditure plus the requirements for working capital and adequate cash flow are assessed.

The trustees use this information to ensure an adequate level of readily realisable reserves is maintained. In September 2022 the reserves policy was reviewed and based on this risk analysis, a Free Cash Reserve target of between 3 to 6 months of future annual expenditure (£52,500 and £105,000) was confirmed.

At 31/8/2022, the actual Free cash reserves were £44,426.

In addition the Trustees have set aside £40,000 as Designated reserves, this is made up of:

- £35,000 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision as at 1/9/2022 - should the charity be forced to close during the upcoming year.
- £5,000 to undertake a comprehensive review of premises security - to facilitate an enhanced working environment for staff by updating access controls and lighting.

Plans for future periods

We will continue to build on the new strategic plan begun this year:

◊ Evaluate and work to maximise our current assets to optimise and expand, where possible, the direction of the charity to meet the needs of current and new service users; including the launch of a new website, amongst other celebratory plans, to mark COG's 50th year in 2023.

◊ Focus on staff wellbeing to ensure physical safety and emotional support for staff members is in place, and continue to try to attract funding to support this outcome

◊ Continue to try to attract funding for a capital project to improve office space for staff to accommodate a team that has grown in number over the past decade, and outgrown space available—this is very difficult to achieve through fundraising

◊ Actively seek out and say 'yes' to opportunities to get involved in national research and training to extend and enhance our specialist knowledge in order to reach our goals

◊ Continue to build a robust and effective Board of Trustees through a programme of recruitment, including an analysis of skills needed to provide beneficial areas of expertise

◊ With new appointments on the Board of Trustees, we plan to review our risk management policy and procedures, including a re-evaluation of the rising need for more comprehensive HR and H&S provision to ensure knowledge and action regarding updates in employment and health and safety law/procedures, to meet staffing needs and enhance wellbeing

◊ Continually review and evaluate our pre-school provision to ensure we are able to remain sustainable and viable in the face of growing concerns around recruitment and retention in the early years sector, particularly ensuring we continue to meet the needs of children with SEND

◊ Continually review and evaluate outreach family support provision to ensure we understand and respond to the changing needs of our local community, particularly in the wake of the global pandemic; the known and unforeseen impacts it brings.

Statement of directors' responsibilities

The Charity Trustees (who are also the Directors of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited for the purposes of company law) 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 Trustees 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 as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the directors should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

Director's Annual Report (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2022

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and the group 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. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Signature:

Print name: Robert Bickerdike

Date: 28 February 2023

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Independent Examiner's Report

Year ended 31 August 2022

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 August 2021 which are set out on pages 14 to 21.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity Trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.

Miss Ruth Herbert FCCA

Signed: Ruth Herbert

20 March 2023

Wenn Townsend Accountants Limited

Gosditch House

Gosditch Street

Cirencester

GL7 2AG

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Statement of Financial Activities and Income and Expenditure Account

Year ended 31 August 2022

Statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted funds	Designated Funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments					
Donations	13623		113997	127620	147262
Earned from charitable activities	78079		0	78079	88038
Earned from other activities	2344		0	2344	733
Investment and other income	1296		0	1296	1298
Total	**95342**		**113997**	**209339**	**237331**
Expenditure					
Cost of raising funds	6763		5000	11763	10358
Expenditure on charitable activities	115057		115531	230588	210586
Other expenditure	0		0	0	0
Total	**121820**		**120531**	**242351**	**220944**
Net Income/Expenditure	-26478		-6534	-33012	16387
Transfer between funds	0		0	0	0
Net movement in funds	-26478	0	-6534	-33012	16387
Total funds brought forward	184451	40000	11188	235639	219252
Total funds carried forward	**157973**		**4654**	**202627**	**235639**

The statement of financial activities include all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 15 to 21 form part of these financial statements

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Balance Sheet

Year ended 31 August 2022

	Note	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	8	113546	0	113546	116398
Current Assets					
Debtors		1731	0	1731	3251
Cash at bank and in hand		90326	78597	168923	145323
Total Current Assets		205603	78597	284200	148574
Creditors (falling within one year)	10	7630	73943	81573	29333
Total Assets less current liabilities		197973	4654	202627	235639
Financed by:					
Unrestricted funds		157973		157973	184451
Designated funds		40000		40000	40000
Restricted funds			4654	4654	11188
Net Assets		197973	4654	202627	235639
Funds		197973	4654	202627	235639

In approving these financial statements as directors of the Company we hereby confirm:

a) The Company is entitled to the exemption from audit under Section 477(c) of the Companies Act 2006 from the year ended 31/8/2022. The Trustees have not required the Charitable Company to obtain an audit of its financial statement for the year ended 31/8/2022 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

b) That we acknowledge our responsibilities for:

i. ensuring that the Company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and

ii. preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company as at the end of the financial year, and of its profit or loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of section 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements so far as applicable to the Charitable Company.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with FRS102 and the Charities SORP (FRS102). The notes on the following pages form part of these accounts.

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf by:

R. Bickerdike R. Bickerdike Dated: 28.2.2023

Company number 9210771

1) Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice. Cotswold Counselling meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

The Charity has applied Update Bulletin 2 as published on 5th October 2018 and does not include a cash flow statement on the grounds that it is applying FRS 102 Section 1A.

Fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at rates calculate to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

◊ Land and Buildings 2% reducing balance

◊ Fixtures and Equipment 20% reducing balance

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use in accordance with the charitable objectives. Restricted funds are funds which have been given for particular purposes and projects.

Income

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories income:

Fee income is included in full in the statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

◊ The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

◊ Investment income is included when receivable.

◊ Incoming resources for generating funds are accounted for when earned.

Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of less than three months from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account activity.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Financial instruments

The trust only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as a basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised as a transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Pensions

Since September 2017, employees are automatically enrolled into a defined contribution pension scheme operated by The People's Pension. Employees can subsequently opt out. Employees joining the scheme, contract directly with the pension company.

The charity made a matching contribution of 3% of qualifying earnings to this pension scheme and acts as an agent in collecting and paying over employee contributions. The contributions made for the accounting period treated as an expense and were £4154 (2021 = £4264)

2) Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per member of the charity. The charity is registered and incorporated in England and Wales and it's registered address is : Beeches Road; Cirencester; Glos; GL7 1BW

3) Financial performance of the charity

The statement of Financial Activities states the financial performance of the charity.

4) Income:

A1 – Donations & Grants	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
Gloucestershire Funders		4568	4568	1500
Children in Need		10332	10332	15351
St James Place		10000	10000	15833
Global Make Some Noise		12930	12930	20000
Peter Lang Trust		40000	40000	40000
Society Holy Child Jesus`		22214	22214	22170
Arnold Clark		500	500	0
Ciren Girls Club		500	500	0
Cirencester Town Council		500	500	500
B&Q Neighbourly		3268	3268	0
Soroptimist		500	500	522
Summerfield		1595	1595	0
Co-op Local		475	475	0
Comic Relief Community Fund		1333	1333	2667
Glos County Council - Spokan		930	930	0
Cotswold Primrose Trust		4352	4352	3000
CAF Resilience Fund			0	12049
Barnwood Trust			0	1245
Woodruff	500		500	500
Kemble Church	500		500	600
Naunton Downs Seniors	3000		3000	
Local Answer	1000		1000	
P. Marner	1000		1000	
RWE Generation	500		500	
Do It	1000		1000	
Various donations & grants	6123		6123	11325
Total	**13623**	**113997**	**127620**	**147262**

A2 Earned from charitable activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
GCC Nursery fees	71927	0	71927	82560
Parent fees	6152	0	6152	5478
Total	**78079**	**0**	**78079**	**88038**

A3 Earned from other activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
Fund raising activities	1332	0	1332	733
Building hire	1012	0	1012	0
Total	**2344**	**0**	**2344**	**733**

5) Expenditure:

Expenditure on charitable activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
Delivery of services	64083	99576	163659	149116
Nursery equipment and hot meals	4571	5667	10238	13011
Forest school and garden	7514	1950	9464	3094
Building operations	8694	4169	12863	18160
Office & administration	24857	4169	29026	22082
Depreciation	2852	0	2852	3044
Governance* & Independent examination	2486	0	2486	2079
Total	**115057**	**115531**	**230588**	**210586**

* Trustees received no remuneration and were not reimbursed for any of their expenses in the period.

6) Paid Employees:

Average number of 'full time equivalent' employees in the year:	2022	2021
Fundraising	1	1
Administration	1	1
Charitable Activities	8	8
Governance	0	0

7) Movements in Funds:

	Opening	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Re-sources	Transfer Of Funds	At 31/8/2022
	£	£	£		£
Unrestricted Funds	**184451**	**95342**	**121820**		**157973**
Designated Funds	**40000**	**0**	**0**		**40000**
Restricted Funds					
Arnold Clark	0	500	500		0
Cirencester Girls Club	0	500	500		0
Soroptimist	0	500	500		0
Cots District Council	0	500	500		0
Glos. Funders	1175	4568	5743		0
Glos. Comm Foundation	1091	0	1091		0
St James Place	0	10000	10000		0
RAF Brize Norton	600	0	600		0
Barnwood Trust	1245	0	1245		0
SHCJ	0	22214	22214		0
Peter Lang Trust	0	40000	40000		0
Children in Need	3651	10332	13539		444
Tesco	876	0	876		0
Cotswld Primrose Trust	0	4352	2248		2104
GCC Spokan	0	930	930		0
Global Make Noise	0	12930	12374		556
Summerfield	0	1595	1595		0
Comic Relief .	0	1333	1333		0
Co-Op Local	0	475	475		0
B&Q Neighbourly	0	3268	3268		0
Other - public	2550	0	1000		1550
Total Restricted	**11188**	**113997**	**120531**		**4654**
Total Funds	**235639**	**209339**	**242351**		**202627**

Designated Reserves:

The Trustees have continued to review areas of the Charity's operations and aligned with it's strategic analysis; Centre Development Plan and Risk Register , have decided to identify the following areas of operations that should be defined as "Designated Reserves.

◊ £35,000 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision as at 31/8/2023 - should the charity be forced to close.

◊ £5,000 to undertake an IT infrastructure review and subsequently deliver a more secure; reliable and ergonomically effective working environment

8) Tangible Fixed Assets:

	Land & Buildings	Fixtures & Fittings etc.	Total
	£	£	£
Cost			
At 1st Sept 2021	129405	12110	141515
Additions in Year	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31st August 2022	129405	12110	141515
Depreciation			
Balance brought forward	15918	9199	25117
Charge for the Year	2270	582	2852
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31st August 2022	18188	9781	27969
Net Book Value			
At 31st August 2022	111217	2329	113546
At 31st August 2021	113487	2911	116398

9) Taxation:

As a charity, Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within the Section 478 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent these are applied to its charitable objections.

10) Creditors:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Income in advance	73943	21269
Accruals	7630	8064
Total	81573	29333

11) Capital Commitments

The company had no known capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

13) Government Grants:

The following income was received from government bodies during the year.

	2022	2021
	£	£
Gloucester County Council - Nursery Grant	71927	82560
Cirencester Town Council	500	500
Cotswold County Council – Autism Community Support	930	4750

CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

England & Wales - Charity number 1160184

Accounts

CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

(A Company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)

REPORT AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31/8/2021

CHARITY NO. 1160184

COMPANY NO. 9210771

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COG staff Facebook post during the first national lockdown

An independent early years centre specialising in inclusive care, support and education for all.

Annual Report 2020—2021
Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited

Beeches Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1BW
Registered Office

T:01285 659117
E:cog@opportunity-group.co.uk
W:www.opportunity-group.co.uk
cirencesteropportunitygroup

Registered in England and Wales No.9210771
Registered Charity no. 1160184
A company limited by guarantee and not having share capital.

Covid-safe toddler groups at COG

Fun in the fresh air - supporting children's physical and emotional development , after the enforced lockdowns

Welcome from the Chair of Trustees

I would like to introduce the 2020-2021 Annual Report for Cirencester Opportunity Group. A small charity with a big heart, the following pages demonstrate how COG has again this year successfully navigated these uncertain times, identifying and prioritising the changing needs of its local community and service users.

Who would have thought that for another whole academic year, the global pandemic would rage on and continues to do so in various ways? At the start of this academic year, there were still restrictions in place and COG staff have continued to face guidance and legislation that often seems to change daily.

I hope that by reading this inspirational annual report, you will see how the staff have diligently protected the children and families they support through careful planning and safety measures, that their hard work and care has meant that not a single working day was lost to the pandemic, and that every child was able to access as much time at their pre-school sessions and family groups as possible. I firmly believe this is something to be incredibly proud of in the present climate.

This year, the majority of trustee meetings have been virtual although latterly we have been able to hold some face-to-face meetings, when guidance has allowed. Happily, we have been able to welcome new Trustees on board and it has been gratifying to see this, even through the adversity the country, and world, is facing.

You will see, through reading the story of this year, that we have been able to make many improvements to both the fabric of the setting and the delivery of the service provided. Much of this has been borne out of necessity to be able to keep equipment and the environment clean, safe and to allow for better airflow and the ability to be outside more. Some improvements have been on our wish list for a number of years and it is only now, through the generous support of COG's funders and supporters, that we have been able to achieve some of these longer-term goals. These were not only essential to help us to follow government guidance but will also now stand us in good stead and help us to drive forward to a more sustainable and successful future.

For those who know us well, you may have seen that we have adopted a new vision statement, which can also be seen in this report. Trustees felt that the time was right to update our vision for the future of COG, reflecting something to which our ethos, priorities and the service we provide can all be strongly linked. I hope you find that the following pages truly show how COG is...

creating positive beginnings for young children and families

Pete Stone
Chair, Cirencester Opportunity Group

What does COG do?

Cirencester Opportunity Group is a thriving, busy and welcoming Specialist Early Years Centre set in a wonderful natural environment in the heart of the Cotswolds town of Cirencester. As an independent charity (#1160184) we have been providing an inclusive and nurturing environment for babies, toddlers and young children since 1973. Since that time our services have grown to offer in-depth support and advice to the families of our children, meeting a wide variety of need within our local community and further afield to outlying villages.

We have a high percentage of children with additional needs, comprising more than half of our children at any one time. Our strength and commitment to supporting all our children and their families is key to our success. Children's needs may be special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or may stem from a number of different circumstances in a child's life, and could result in a delay in their development, which needs specialist support to help them overcome.

Families can be referred through professional agencies such as the Health Visiting Team, Social Care Team, health professionals such as Speech and Language or through private recommendations. Every family can be sure of a warm welcome, nurturing care for their children and support that is non-judgemental and confidential.

Mission Statement

Cirencester Opportunity Group will provide a warm, welcoming and safe environment for all families. We will work in partnership with parents and other agencies to promote inclusive care and education and to respond to the ever changing needs of the community.

Our Vision

Creating positive beginnings for young children and families

Organisational structure

Governance and Management: Our Board of Trustees

Pete Stone	Chair of Trustees	Dominic Curnock	Risk, Premises, HR
Ben Forshaw	Vice Chair	Sylwia Duzniak	Co. Secretary, Media
Bob Bickerdike	Treasurer	Shahedur Rohman	Co. Secretary, Legal
Jane Burr	Nominated Individual, Safeguarding	Lynda Draper	Assistant Treasurer
Russell Jones-Walker	Risk, Premises, Media		

Centre Staff

Catharine Fowler	Centre Manager (SMT) Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sharon Pitts	Pre-School Manager (SMT) Designated Safeguarding Lead
Jane Pilgrim	Sendco Pre-school practitioner	Victoria Chase	Outreach Team Lead (SMT) Designated Safeguarding Lead
Catherine Chidley	Sendco Pre-school practitioner	Jemima Collishaw	Outreach Team & Pre-school practitioner Designated Safeguarding Lead
Margaret Hartnell	Pre-school practitioner Early Intervention	Stephanie Smyth	Charity Fundraiser
Benjamin Jayne	Pre-school practitioner Early Intervention	Mary Forrest	Centre Administrator
Rachel Malins	Pre-school practitioner Early Intervention	Sharon Smith	Pre-school cook

Our Trustees join us from a variety of backgrounds and are the final decision-makers for the charity, overseeing paid staff and setting direction for the executive strategy. They support governance, financial and strategic planning. We are very fortunate to have some key Trustees who are active in supporting the duties of Centre Staff and are available to offer practical help and advice.

Hellos and Goodbyes

We welcomed Sharon Smith, Jemima and Mary this year, each role in a different area of service delivery. We are excited to have them on board and we're sure their skills in family support, administration and cooking will bring new elements to their roles and the service we provide.

This year we welcome Lynda Draper and Shahedur Rohman to the Board of Trustees, who between them bring a wealth of experience from the financial and legal sectors. We hope their time with COG will be fulfilling and we are excited to have them on board.

We said goodbye, in July 2020, to Emiko McGill who, after many years as a dedicated pre-school practitioner, decided it was time to retire. We wish Emiko all the very best for a fulfilling and relaxing retirement, with our thanks and gratitude for all her hard work.

Volunteers

This academic year, despite fears around covid still being at the forefront of people's minds, we were fortunate to have two volunteers in our playroom for parts of the year . We were so grateful for their support, and also that of the twelve volunteers during our Summer Provision, which was again held outside following current social distance and covid-safe measures. When allowed we also welcomed teams to help with our grounds maintenance. As always we are extremely grateful for all of this support, especially in the circumstances of the continuing global pandemic.

The story of our year

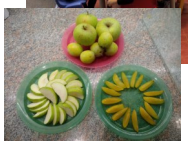
COG Pre-School

Much of COG's work is rooted in Gloucestershire's Early Help Graduated Pathway where we form part of the wider early help partnership with Health Visitors, Speech and Language Therapists, Families First and social workers; and alongside other local charities including The Churn Project and Homestart. To support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) we work closely with Gloucestershire County Council Early Years Service (GCC EYS) as well as Educational Psychologists (EP) and the Advisory Teaching Service (ATS), when a child is placed on the Social and Communication (SCOM) Pathway by a Health Visitor. We also work with Speech and Language Therapists (SALT), Occupational Therapists (OT) and Physiotherapists, amongst other specialist medical teams to ensure the right support is in place for our children and families.

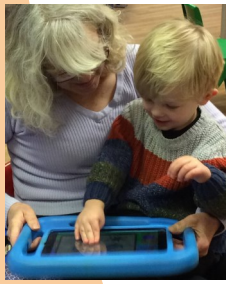
Our Pre-school Team delivers the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum to children from 2 to 4 years. The start of the 2020/21 academic year saw a big change for both staff and children with a major overhaul to pre-school sessions. With the work/life patterns of our families changing, in part due to the covid-19 pandemic, we wanted to offer a more contemporary and flexible approach to childcare. Our aim is to support families to schedule existing working hours around their childcare, as well as to attend appointments and groups around their health, mental health and other challenges they are facing. This would include attending support groups/meetings with other charities and agencies in our local area as well as our own parenting groups here at COG and/or our toddler groups with younger siblings. To facilitate this, we now offer the following:

- children aged 2-4 years can now attend **either a morning or afternoon session** - previously mornings had been for 3-4 year olds in their year before primary school and afternoons for Rising 3s (2-3 year olds).
- children aged 3 years and above can attend **full day sessions** - previously we only offered half day sessions.
- To help combat food poverty, **all children are invited to join us for a 2 course, home cooked and nutritionally balanced lunch** - previously this offer was extended only to children in our morning sessions.

New lunchtimes: proving popular with parents and children.



Bountiful fresh produce: apples and pears from COG's garden, picked by the children for their snacks.



Our commitment to working in partnership with parents, particularly through their active engagement in their child's online learning journal, was extended by reviewing our prospective parent procedures and settling-in policy. Thanks to covid-19 restrictions lifting (some albeit temporarily!), we were able to make several improvements and decided to keep some aspects in place which had worked well during restricted times. We continue to celebrate and share children's achievements with parents online and this is something we strive to encourage parents to participate in, especially when restrictions have prevented us engaging with them face-to-face in the same ways as we would previously have done.

This year, our SENDCo Team ensured that COG children with SEND and their families were fully supported, despite covid-19 restrictions meaning that the input from professional services, such as EPs, ATS and SALT, as well as Health Visitors, were severely limited. All the Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) applied for were agreed, albeit severely behind schedule due to the pressures of the pandemic. Regardless, COG staff worked incredibly hard to ensure smooth and successful transitions to primary school for all children, especially those who needed extra support to help them overcome their challenges. This included much discussion with teachers from the receiving schools as well as facilitating outdoor visits for teachers to come and meet their new children. We also facilitated OT involvement in setting up school visits for a family to ensure all equipment which was needed to support a child's physical needs was in place ahead of them starting school in September. Our SENDCos also successfully worked with Wiltshire Council, whose processes are very different from Gloucestershire's, to support a family through the EHCP process.

This year our SENDCo and staff team have:

* Successfully applied for and secured a high number of **EHCPs** to support children with SEND
* Supported **children** with a **My Plan+** and **My Plan** to help them achieve their outcomes.

We continued to develop the role of the key person, enhancing responsibilities for working alongside SENDCos to deliver activities and small group work, which directly support and encourage a child with a My Plan(+) to work towards their individual developmental targets; reporting on and evidencing outcomes in regular review meetings with parents and external professionals.

The story of our year

COG Pre-School - pandemic journey

By the start of the 2020/21 academic year, we had lived through the first and subsequent national lockdowns. At COG, surrounded by stories of early years settings having had to close permanently, we felt fortunate that our funders and supporters had all done their best to help us through this global pandemic, throughout which we had, to date, remained fully open to support our children and families. While restrictions were easing, although not permanently as it turned out, there were still many restrictive measures in place in September 2020 and this would continue throughout the year. We ensured that parents were fully aware of any changes in procedures, government guidance and all expectations around how and when to bring their child to pre-school, as well as all of the safety measures we had and continue to have in place. Over the year, this has been a complex issue with government self-isolation and testing guidance continually changing.

During this year, we were so fortunate to be able to make some big improvements to our pre-school setting both in and outdoors, in order to maintain excellent levels of hygiene and cleanliness, and also to maximise play and learning experiences and opportunities for the children, many of whom had suffered in various ways over the past year of lockdowns; from lack of exercise and fresh air, anxieties around leaving parents due to little socialisation, to delays in speech and development in some cases.

<u>Improvements we were able to make:</u>

Fencing around the covered outdoor area of the playroom to allow for increased free flow for children; this area can now be supervised by fewer staff meaning greater opportunities for outdoor play, activities, fresh air and increased abilities to ventilate the playroom well.

Replacement safety flooring in the main playroom and additional smaller playroom; not only ensuring better cleanliness but also replacing old flooring that was becoming no longer fit for purpose.

Replacement tables and chairs in the playroom; flexible use with the ability to reduce/increase height and tilt tables to support children with limited mobility to encourage muscle strengthening and gross and fine motor skills, and allowing for better hygiene and cleanliness.

New play kitchen with thanks to the SJP Local Community Grant; larger and beautifully contemporary to allow for more harmonious, relevant and calming play experiences for role playing and developing communication and understanding.

Redecoration in main and smaller playrooms; staff gave their time to paint the walls a neutral cream. Along with flooring and furniture, all colours were chosen to provide a calming environment to help children who feel overwhelmed by busy environments due to anxieties or conditions including autism spectrum tendencies.

Story Tree with thanks to *Allan Robertson from Long Newnton* for kindly donating the beautiful piece of Oak. Bringing the outside in, this inspires much communication from the children. It can often be seen decorated with artwork from a focus story we may be working on, or something to celebrate a festival or season.

Before (above) and after (left) - COG's main playroom with new play kitchen, floor, tables and chairs,

Our fabulous Story tree (right), which provides a back-drop for Circle and Story Times and encourages communication and engagement.

Left: First week of the Summer Holidays, dedicated Team COG stay on to paint the playroom.

The new fence (right) which facilitates free-flow for the children to choose whether they want to be outdoors or indoors.

The story of our year

COG Pre-School - pandemic journey continued - *Gallery of Activities*

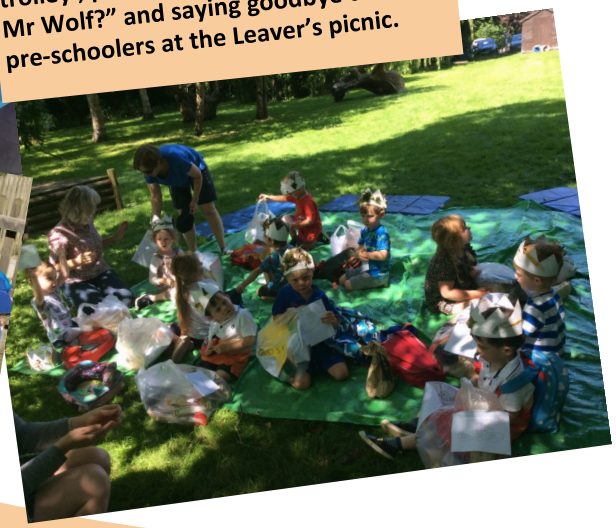
Using technology to celebrate World Book Day with some virtual events - lots of fun for little book worms!

Book focus fun - creating the rocket from 'Whatever Next?', painting in the garden; and zooming to the moon. Planets decorate the Story tree.

Music time and sensory play - exploring sounds, textures and lights.

Exploring our emotions with Plume Bear during Children's Mental Week . Beginning with an adult supported Circle Time, the children looked at facial expressions and matched them to emotions. We also sang emotions songs like 'if you're happy and you know it…' and made up actions to go with each emotion.

Fresh air fun in the garden! The 'big red trolley', playing catch, "What's the time, Mr Wolf?" and saying goodbye to the pre-schoolers at the Leaver's picnic.



The children made an outdoor puppet theatre and put on shows in the sunshine

The story of our year

Music Therapy

As part of our programme of enhanced support and experience here at COG, we continue to provide specialist Music Therapy for COG children.

Our Music Therapist Melanie Boswell, works closely with COG Key Workers and SENDCos, as part of their work in supporting children's emotional and social development, especially within the following areas:

- Encouraging self-expression and communication
- Developing confidence and self-esteem
- Reducing anxiety
- Helping to regulate feelings

Our Music Therapist builds a therapeutic relationship with each child that she works with and provides written progress reports, so that parents are kept fully informed about their child's experiences and achievements, whilst on their Music Therapy journey with us.

This therapeutic programme has greatly supported the children most affected by the pandemic and lockdowns and has supported us to enable the children to work towards achieving their individual learning outcomes.

BAMT BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC THERAPY

Play Therapy

Our Play Therapy provision has also played an important role in supporting the children to recover from the negative effects of the pandemic and lockdowns.

Play Therapy at our centre is a collaboration between our Early Intervention (EI) team and our Play Therapist Dr Sarah Wall, to support specific children with their emotional and social development.

The first stage of this therapy begins with our EI team assisting our Play Therapist in a face-to-face meeting with parents to successfully complete a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) assessment about their child (an EI key worker SDQ and a Parent SDQ is required for each child) and these assessment meetings are then followed up as part of the progression monitoring for each child.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a widely used behavioural screening questionnaire. It is a valuable tool for exploring the strengths and difficulties a child may present with at the start of their therapeutic journey, as well as for monitoring change and progress throughout the process and at the completion of their therapy experience.

Our aim in providing this therapy for selected children, is to allow each child the time and space they need to express themselves emotionally and socially, whilst our Play Therapist works with them in an integrative holistic way using non-directive play therapy. This approach allows each child to choose from the different play mediums in the room and to explore the themes that are most pertinent to them, alongside the introduction of more directed interventions when appropriate.

We are committed to continue to offer professional Play Therapy at our centre, to enhance our specialist services to further support children and their families.

ptuk Play Therapy United Kingdom

The story of our year

Early Intervention Outreach Support

Our Early Intervention Outreach Team work within the scope of Gloucestershire's Early Help Graduated Pathway and alongside other professionals to enable positive changes to be achieved. They are instrumental in supporting children deemed 'at risk' through Social Care Plans, attending multi-agency Case Conferences and Core Group meetings. In addition, they plan, provide and evaluate a weekly timetable of activities held in our Annex building for children and families, which is reviewed regularly to ensure that we are truly meeting the needs of the families we work with.

This year, we continued to successfully remain open to provide our Outreach services for COG families, retaining contact in the best ways possible while adhering to current restrictions and guidelines. This support delivered continuity of care for children and their parents at a challenging time and included providing our parent and child group sessions, our parent support group sessions, our one to one parent support meetings, 'doorstep' home visits to deliver food parcels, phone calls and texts to families. We also maintained a high level of contact with professionals also involved in meeting the needs of each family, including social care contact and liaison with foodbank, including their voucher referrals.

We worked hard to make it possible to re-start face to face, small group family sessions; completing risk assessments and putting several procedures in place, such as:

- **Sessions held in our outdoor classroom and/or woodland area**
- **All families pre-booked their place**
- **A maximum of 8 families per group**
- **Hand gel to be used on arrival**
- **Temperatures of adults taken on arrival (when indoors)**
- **Test and Trace forms completed**
- **Adults brought their own refreshments cup**
- **No cross contamination of equipment/toys**

Outdoor Stay and Play groups return to COG

Being able to re-start two of our family sessions was vital and received positive feedback from parents, who saw us as 'a lifeline'. Many new parents had not been able to take their new babies anywhere following their births. Our vulnerable families had missed that opportunity to experience fun activities together, with our guidance and support, and we felt proud to safely bring those experiences back to them. We have observed parents connecting and engaging with their children during music, craft and play sessions provided in our outdoor classroom. As the weather became colder, we appealed to our local authority Early Years Service to bring our groups back indoors, with safety measures in place. They agreed that it was entirely appropriate for our 'targeted' stay and play groups to resume, as these would be classed as adult learning and support sessions, which are permitted to continue at this time, and our request was granted. We are proud that we were able to provide this safely and would like to extend our thanks to all the families who respected what we asked of them while attending our groups.

During primary school applications, we supported families to navigate the different ways schools approached this time, due to ongoing concerns around covid-19. Some families need support to make online applications and many families of children with SEND need a lot of support in knowing questions to ask and how the process works for them. In addition to this, the Outreach team have continued to make referrals to GDASS for domestic abuse; P3, a charity that supports people in financial difficulties and Homestart, a charity offering support to people in their homes as well as other agencies. This year we saw increased waiting lists for families to access many services, due to deployment to the covid frontline, among other issues. We have continued to support families in the best ways we can until they can be seen by the appropriate agency.

The story of our year

Cirencester's Children's Librarian is a regular visitor to COGs groups and pre-school. It was important for us to find safe ways for this to continue when possible.

Early Intervention Outreach - recovery and resilience

We became aware that the pandemic and lockdowns had brought more mental health issues to the surface for many of the parents we work with. We addressed this sensitively to support the family unit using our **Mental Health First Aid training**. We also re-started our **Inspire group for parents to provide a small supportive group environment for them to share their concerns and learn coping strategies.** We felt that due to the increase in the volume of challenges around mental health affecting parenting ability at times, there was further need for us to provide more time to engage with families. To meet this we created our **Bounce Back support group** for parents to further support their recovery.

Our commitment to Multi-Agency working has been vital to keep the children and families safe:
Throughout the pandemic and lockdowns we continued our strong working relationships with Social Workers, the Cotswold and Families Social Care Team, the Re-Unification Team, Early Help team, Families First +, Cirencester Health Visiting Team, the Community Nursery Nurse, Speech and Language Therapy and Mental Health Workers at Let's Talk. As well as Bromford Housing Association, the Housing Department at Cotswold District Council. Local Primary schools, Cirencester Foodbank, The Long Table, Fareshare, Neighbourly, The Churn Project, Homestart, Citizens Advice Bureau, Cirencester Furniture Bank, Barnwood Trust and All Sorts.

A new member of the team:
This year we said goodbye to Nikki Curtis, who left us to study to become a Social Worker. We wish Nikki all the very best and are hopeful our paths may continue to cross professionally in the future. We welcomed Jemima Collishaw in January 2021, who brings with her a wealth of knowledge around mental health and the challenges, as well as the rewards, that a child with additional needs can bring to family life. Jemima joins us at a critical time for our families and at the time of writing has become a valued member of the Outreach team and someone with whom families have already developed trusting relationships. We are sure that Jemima will offer a breadth of ideas to help strengthen COG's family support provision.

COGs stay and play groups re-starting safely as soon as possible was very important.

Right: Story time at Little Teds
Left: Exploring the woods
Bottom left: The outdoor classroom set up for Stay2Play
Bottom right: covid-safe timetable of groups

COG Stay and Play Groups Timetable - November—December 2020

We are now able to return indoors for the Winter! Please see our timetable and booking instructions below. Groups will follow Covid-safe guidelines at all times and we ask for your co-operation and understanding in helping us to ensure they can continue. ALL GROUPS START WEEK COMMENCING MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2020

NEW!! - We are excited to offer 2 groups on Wednesdays and Fridays! Numbers will be limited. Booking essential.

	Group	Time	Group	Time
Monday	SPOKAN	12.00—1.00pm (Monthly—1st Monday of every month)		
Wednesday	Music Makers	9.15—10.15am	Music Shakers	10.45—11.45am
Thursday	Little Ted's	9.15—10.15am		
Friday	Stay2Play	9.15—10.15am	Stay2Play	10.45—11.45am

£2 suggested donation per family for all groups (excluding SPOKAN)

Drink and snack provided for children. Hot drinks for adults (see 'How to book' below)

NHS Test and Trace

How to book...

- Bookings open **one week in advance** of the date of the session.
- Please book via email **cog@opportunity-group.co.uk** or phone **01285 659117**
- To help us remain covid safe, on arrival:
  - **One adult only admitted per family**
  - All adults must wear a mask/face covering in our indoor sessions
  - Adults, please bring your own mug if you would like a drink. We will record your name and contact number for the NHS Test & Trace service
  - Check your temperature (adults and children) with a non-contact thermometer

SPOKAN— A parent group supporting families with children with additional needs. All welcome.

Music Groups— birth to 4 years for fun exploring of sounds; with songs, rhymes and instruments

Little Ted's—stimulating and fun activities for children from birth to 4 years

Stay2Play—stimulating and fun play for approx. 2yrs + Younger siblings welcome.

- If we have to cancel a group at short notice due to a change in covid restrictions/related staffing issues, we will be unable to contact you individually. We will:
  - Post a notice on our Facebook Page
  - Put a notice up outside our Centre

COVID 19 Keeping us all safe

The story of our year

Combatting food poverty

The COG team of staff is committed to volunteering their time to collect surplus food from our surrounding supermarket partners, as part of our mission to provide families with access to fresh food and to help keep local children well fed. We also know that our work within this area, helps to support parents by taking some of the stress and anxiety they are experiencing over being able to feed their families.

We use the surplus food to help us to cook the free hot lunch we provide for COG children each weekday, supported by our Meal Appeal Hero funders! Our aim is to be fully inclusive, so all children have the chance of a nutritious hot meal at least once a day. We also share the surplus food with COG families, so they can choose from a selection of surplus food that we have collected. We also use this food as an opportunity to discuss how to prepare and cook certain vegetables, to encourage families to try new foods at home.

We are also passionate about providing lots of opportunities for the children to explore and learn about as many different foods as they can. Therefore, we take the time to show them how to plant, nurture and then pick fruits and vegetables in our COG garden and then we have wonderful cooking sessions with the children too.

This year our crop of runner beans were a big hit with all of the children!

This pizza and salad meal made by our Cook, Sharon, used surplus food that we collected. The different colours, flavours and textures of this meal are designed to enhance children's experiences and knowledge about healthy food, and most importantly to taste yummy! We share images of our meals with parents on our Facebook page to show them what their child has eaten and to hopefully inspire them with their own meal ideas too! Parents often ask us for recipes and vice versa, especially when we are celebrating other cultures.

Our partnership working with Cirencester Foodbank also enables us to further support families experiencing food poverty. We are authorised to issue Foodbank vouchers to families, following an assessment of their needs and we work closely with each family and Cirencester Foodbank to monitor and offer support during difficult times.
Our mission is to help reduce the negative impact of food poverty on the development and wellbeing of all family members, by making a difference to their access to and experience of food.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Aldi, Lidl, Tesco, and Waitrose for their ongoing support and donations of surplus food and our wonderful Meal Appeal Heroes...
All Saints Church Kemble and The Dorothy Minnis Trust.

The story of our year

Summer Provision

Our knowledge of the varying needs of the local families that we support, informs us that our planned summer provision is needed more than ever. We provided activity packs, support and activities during the six-week summer holiday, to continue to aid the recovery of the families and children in the wake of the global pandemic.

We welcomed local families to our Centre, many with children attending COG preschool sessions including those who were moving on to primary school and those children starting their early intervention pre-school sessions with us in September 2021.

We also supported many families that attend our early intervention groups at COG, open to our local community, such as Music Makers, Little Teds, Stay2Play, Bounce Back, Inspire and our monthly parent support group, SPOKAN. Older siblings up to the age of 8 years were eligible to attend and three slightly older children were invited to attend at staff's discretion to support the whole family unit.

To keep the families, staff, and volunteers safe, we did have to make the safety decision, to restrict our numbers, due to rising numbers of Covid-19 cases in the area. Our summer provision risk assessment was always enforced; including using an online booking system, following the test and trace procedure, enhanced hygiene and social distancing which was still active at the time.

Every week was themed; Olympics/Sports, Minibeasts, Under the Sea and a Dinosaur week. Each were accompanied by fun activities for the children to engage in with their parents.

The Playscheme was extremely well attended by 53 children joined by their parents, across the 4 weeks of planned activity.

We also made a substantial packed lunch for each child attending (in total we made 224 healthy packed lunches) to help minimize the food poverty that many families were experiencing at this time.

Here's what families said about our Summer Playscheme:

Written feedback from parents/carers after attending the playscheme:

Of the summer activities available in Cirencester, was the Playscheme important to you and your family? Please explain why.

"It gave us something to look forward to each week and the kids were very excited to still be at COG."

"Great to meet different families would have been lost without the playscheme"

"It was a chance for my child to visit the school before September and play."

"It was important to keep contact with the playgroup setting for p..... and gave him something to do in the holidays."

"It allowed us to explore, socialize, and have fun together locally with no expense."

"Yes, it's established, and we felt very comfortable with the setting"

Please feel free to leave any other comments or feedback

"Thank you all for your hard work to make this happen, we enjoyed coming"

"Thank you for taking the time and effort to provide these opportunities over the summer break."

Funding and support

How we are funded

Cirencester Opportunity Group provides a high quality of education and care for each child. We are unique and fully inclusive, and we tailor our specialist services to meet the individual needs of each child, making a real difference to the life chances of the children we work with, but how are we funded?

The universal government funding that we receive for our three-year-old children and the 'Achieving Two Year Olds' funding that we receive for some of our two-year-old children, only covers 40% of our delivery costs.

We work hard to build partnerships and secure funding and donations to raise the remaining 60% delivery costs that we need to keep our wonderful centre achieving all that it does, and we accomplish this in a variety of ways:

- ◊ **Applying for grants from charitable trusts**
- ◊ **Receiving donations and sponsorships from local businesses and private individuals**
- ◊ **Organising and running our own fundraising events**

A huge thank-you to our wonderful funders and supporters!

COG staff, trustees and volunteers are extremely grateful to the following organisations and individuals for their belief in our work with children and families and for their generous support this year:

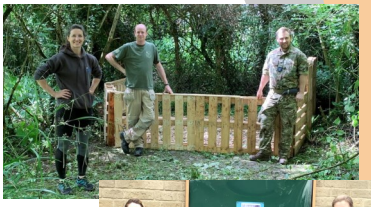
Aldi
All Saints Church, Kemble
Barnwood Trust
BBC Children in Need
Bluestone Insurance
CAF Resilience Fund
Cirencester Baptist Church
Cirencester Chamber of Commerce
C J Hole
Comic Relief
Cotswold Town Council
Cotswold Primrose Trust
Dominic Curnock
Dorothy Minnis Charitable Trust
Earl Bathurst Freemasons Lodge
Ecclesiastical Insurance
Eurovia Management Limited
Fareshare
Global Make Some Noise
Gloucestershire Community Foundation
Gloucestershire County Council – Community Activity Fund
Gloucestershire County Council - Growing our Communities Fund
Gloucestershire Disability Fund
Jack Lane Charitable Trust
Lidl
Lumley Insurance
National Lottery
Neighbourly Community Fund
Quakers, Cirencester Friends
Peter Lang Children's Trust
Philip Marner Charity
RAF Brize Norton Air 1 Mobility Wing
Ridgeway Web Design
Society for the Holy Child Jesus
South Western Specialised Tapes
Stagecoach Performing Arts, Cirencester
St James's Place Foundation
St James's Place Corporate Social Responsibility
Tesco Bags of Help
The Family of Brenda Baker
The Masonic and Military Order of the Red Cross
The Number Cruncher
The Woodroffe Benton Foundation
Titch Tetley Photography
Waitrose Community Matters

Funding and support

Supporter Stories

We feel so genuinely fortunate here at COG to have such wonderful support from our amazing local community.

RAF Brize Norton 1 Air Mobility Wing Charity Committee



Thank you to *Maddie, Mike and Dan* of the 1 Air Mobility Wing for donating your time to build us a pallet fence, clear nettles and upscale some play room furniture! Thank you too to our Foreman for the day, *Steve Cole*, and our pallet fence sponsors **Cotswold Labels in Love Lane, Cirencester**.....COG is so grateful for your support.

COG Centre Manager, Catharine Fowler, took delivery of delicious chocolate selection boxes for COG children at Christmas and again at Easter with lots of chocolate eggs from The Committee; who also arranged a **donation of £600** to COG's fundraising campaign to improve our play facilities!

St James's Place Thank you to St James's Place for their continuing wonderful support! Team SJP volunteers and volunteer Foreman *Steve Cole* gave our carpark and grounds a much needed makeover! Thank you!

Tesco A huge thank you to our *Tesco Extra store* and *Community Champion Mel Scrivens* for supporting our hot meal project for COG children! Mel kindly provided us with new baking tins and a large wok pan, so our cook Sharon can continue to make scrummy food for COG children to enjoy! Like this bright and beautiful bolognaise sauce, followed by fruity crumble!

Our **Christmas fundraising** had to be a little different this year, so we took part in the 'Give Back 2020' fundraising campaign on Virgin Money Giving. Our aim with this campaign was to involve our supporters in helping us to achieve something positive from such a challenging year, by supporting our fundraising efforts to update and make our play facilities even more fun for COG children! **Our wonderful supporters helped us to raise a truly fantastic amount of £1,204.95!**

Waitrose We have been fortunate that our local Waitrose store have been donating a huge amount of fresh surplus food to us. We shared this food with COG families and our Cook, Sharon, used the food to make some delicious and nutritious hot meals for COG children. Here are two of the dishes they enjoyed; a colourful stir fry and bread and butter pudding made with croissants! Yummy, thank you Waitrose!

Thank you to **Katharine Tetley of Titch Tetley Photography** for capturing amazing photos of COG children and supporting COG with a **generous donation** to support our work with children and their families, thank you!

Thank you to our friends at **Catalyst Personal Training** (right) for organising a small competition and raising **£150 for COG!** Well done and thanks, everyone!

Christmas at COG—With thanks to Joy Cranston, Lumley Insurance and our Tesco Extra Store Community Champion Mel Scrivens.

Once again the Christmas party that we create for COG children each December, is a perfect illustration of how kind gestures and generosity come together to make the day very special for each child.

Our Christmas celebrations were a little different this year, with a virtual visit from Santa, but each child received a gift of a hand knitted toy, made and donated by Joy Cranston, and Mel from Tesco provided all of the ingredients and trimmings we needed to provide Christmas dinner for all of the COG children to enjoy!

Christmas here at COG was extremely special for the children and their families, after a challenging year!

Thank you so much from all of the children, staff, trustees and volunteers at COG

The future of COG

Looking ahead to 2021 - 2022

We were honoured to attend the The Royal Foundation's online event, 'What the UK thinks about the Early Years', as we too believe in the vital importance of early childhood development. Our work with families to make a difference as early as possible, will continue throughout 2021 and into 2022.

New Curriculum

In September 2021, the DfE will implement a new EYFS curriculum. There will be a greater emphasis on trusting the professional judgement of Early Years Practitioners, allowing for more interaction and practical support of children with a less data heavy approach. We will focus on a language-rich environment with good modelling of language based on individual needs and starting points of each child. Oral health and healthy choices are also given more importance, something that we feel links perfectly with our holistic work with families, as part of our Family Outreach provision.

New projects

In response to both curriculum changes and the effects of the pandemic, we are planning to seek funding to enable us to implement the following new areas of service provision:

How Do you Feel Today? - Building on work started during Child Mental Health Week and supporting the children to identify different emotions, this project will help teach children self-regulation and understanding of their emotions.

Chatterbugs - Using the innovative work of independent speech and language therapist, Andrea Richards, and her Chatterbugs communication programme.

Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P) - one of the most effective evidence-based parenting programmes in the world, with more than 35 years of ongoing research, this gives parents simple and practical strategies to help them build strong, healthy relationships, confidently manage their children's behaviour and prevent problems developing. Used in more 30 countries and shown to work across cultures, socio-economic groups and in many different family structures.

Combatting Food Poverty - Having our very own 'COG food shed' to provide fresh surplus food to support the needs of all families, whilst also maintaining a sense of choice, easy access and dignity for everyone.

New Outdoor space - We are delighted to have been chosen by St James's Place Wealth Management (SJP) to be beneficiaries of their wonderful large scale volunteer programme with Splash Community Projects, to give something back to their local community! Watch this Space!!

Promoting the fantastic work of COG

We are planning to spread the word of our work with children and their families far and wide and so we are planning:

- A new website – we want to provide a better, more current user-experience for everyone visiting our website. We hope to achieve a more user-friendly, interactive and dynamic website, to better serve our beneficiaries, supporters and professionals.
- Welcome banner – we need a large visual 'Hello' in the form of a banner, to attach to our fence, to shout about our wonderful services for children and families, so that all local families that need our support will know about us!

Some of our pre-schoolers, who are due to start primary school, heading off on a new adventure! Saying goodbye at the 'Leaver's Picnic' in July 2021

We will continue our community fundraising and work within the area of building relationships with charitable trusts, businesses and individuals, to create a varied support system of funding for all of our project work.

Our hope for this coming year is for COG to continue to support children and families, whilst adapting and developing our services to meet the changing needs of families within our community. We can only do this each year because of our dedicated staff, volunteers and trustees and the wonderful support we receive from our funders.

As ever, we would like to future-proof our organisation by making COG a more sustainable charity, so that we can continue to make a difference in the early years sector by

creating positive beginnings for young children and families

Annual Accounts

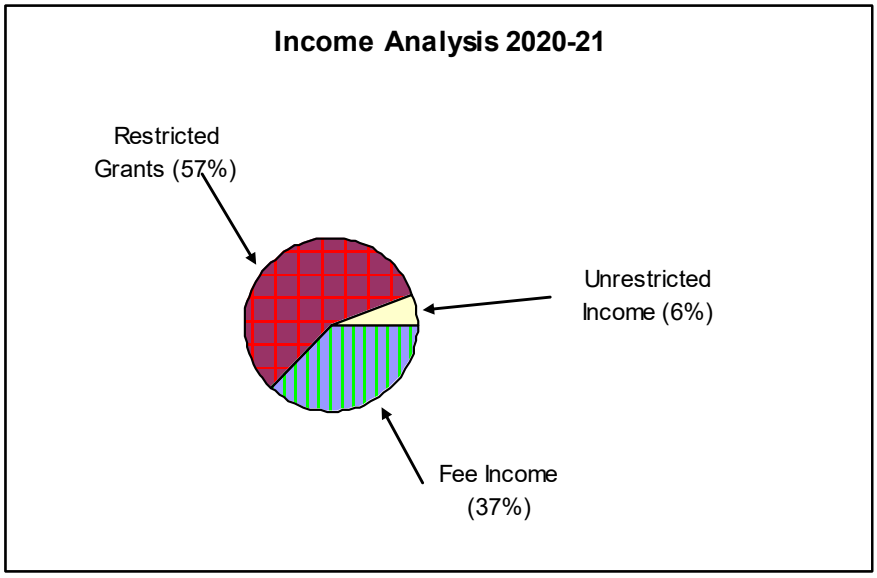
Financial Overview 1/9/20 to 31/8/21

Overall the group declared a surplus of £16,387 compared to last year's surplus of £33,185 (this was significantly impacted by extra ordinary COVID related support grants/income).

Our cash reserves at 31/8/2021 were:

- Restricted reserves £11,188
- Designated reserves £40,000
- Unrestricted reserves £68,053
- The value of fixed assets (buildings) - £116,398

Income analysis:



Income totalled £237,331 which reflected an increase of 3% over the previous year, a fantastic performance given that during last year we received an additional Covid related income of £57,295.

- Fee income at £88,038 showed an improvement of 23% from the previous year. This reflected the very hard work of our staff to re-configure the timings and availability of pre-school sessions throughout the week, thereby reversing last year's decline and returning us to the level of prior years.

- Restricted grants and donations totalled £136,197. These now contribute 57% of our total income - a fantastic result from our fund raising efforts and was 3(% higher than the previous years high level.

Unrestricted income, amounted to £13,096 a decline of £3789 from last year – unfortunately COVID continued to curtail our fundraising activities.

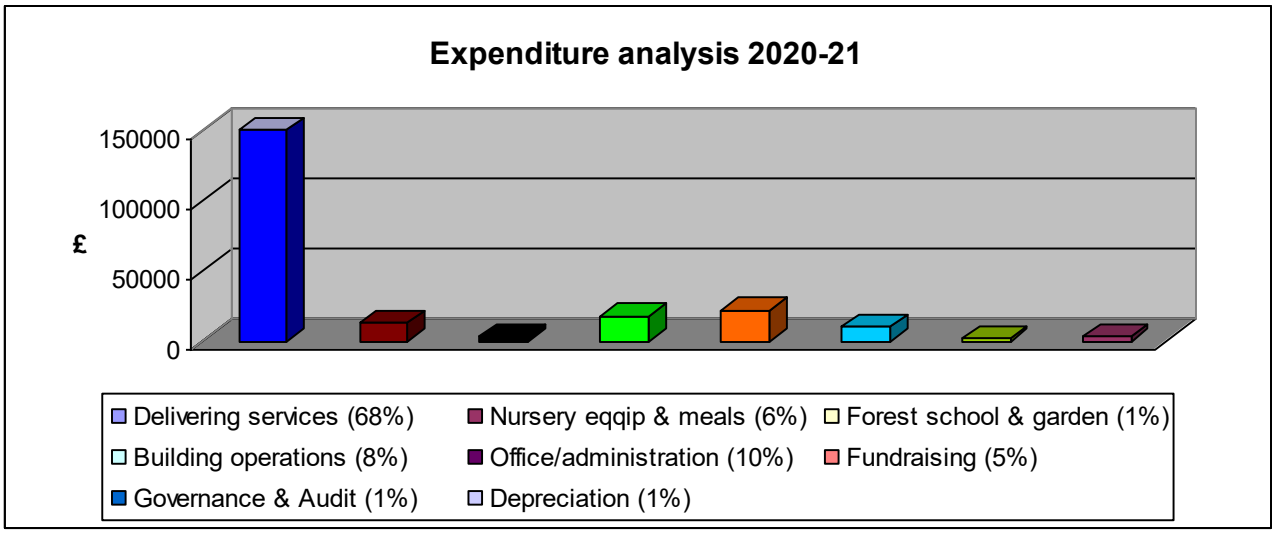
Annual Accounts

Financial Overview 1/9/20 to 31/8/21 continued...

Expenditure analysis:

Total expenditure of £220,944 showed a 12% increase over the previous year.

However, a significant proportion of this increased expenditure related to the planned strategy from last year's establishment of designated reserves (and utilisation of COVID related funding) to improve our facilities, people traffic flow, cleaning and hygiene regime and also undertake a comprehensive Health & Safety + H.R. procedure and policy review.



- Delivering services (staffing costs; outsourced Music & Play Therapy; other play activities) at £149,116 reflects that 68% of total operating expenditure is spent directly on activities
- Nursery materials and equipment; hot lunch time meals; running the building and our Forest School reflect a further £34,265 or 15% of the total
- The total administration; fundraising and office costs of £32,440 represents 15% of total expenditure
- Depreciation and Governance costs make up the remaining £5,123 or 2% of the charity's total costs.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees' reserves policy, which is assessed on an annual basis, requires that reserves be maintained at a level that ensures COG's core activities continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty, and that they are maintained in a readily realisable form - these levels are discussed and monitored. This calculation is an integral part of COG's planning, budgeting and forecasting cycle, taking account of the risks associated with unexpected variations in the stream of income and expenditure, given planned activity levels and COG's future commitments. The main risks to both income and expenditure plus the requirements for working capital and adequate cash flow are assessed.

In September 2021 the reserves policy was reviewed and based on this risk analysis, a Free Cash Reserve target of between £52,500 and £105,000 was confirmed.

At 31/8/2021, the actual Free cash reserves were £68, 053.

In addition the Trustees have set aside £40,000 as Designated reserves, made up of:

- £22,000 Staff redundancy liability provision as at 1/9/2022 - should the charity be forced to close.
- £5,000 to facilitate a sector relevant "Quality Assurance" accreditation.
- £5,000 to undertake/complete a finance system upgrade and completion of HR and Health and Safety review
- £7,000 to improve PR, Marketing and internet-based communications and public reach (website and enhanced social media capability
- £1000 to install fully accessible ramp to further improve disability access to the Centre

Full Financial Report 1/9/20 to 31/8/21

Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited (A company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)
Trustees Report For the year ended 31/8/2021

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

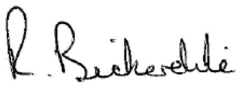
The Charity Trustees (who are also the Directors of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing a Trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice)

Company Law requires the Trustees 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 as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the council should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and the group 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. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Signature: 

Print name: Robert Bickerdike

Date: 21 April 2022

Full Financial Report 1/9/20 to 31/8/21

Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited (A company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)
Trustees Report For the year ended 31/8/2021

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 August 2021 which are set out on pages 22 to 30.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity Trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.

Miss Ruth Herbert FCCA
Wenn Townsend Accountants Limited
Gosditch House
Gosditch Street
Cirencester
GL7 2AG

Signed: Ruth Herbert

Date: 22 April 2022

Full Financial Report 1/9/20 to 31/8/21

Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited (A company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)
Trustees Report For the year ended 31/8/2021

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES & INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/8/2021

	Unrestricted funds	Designated Funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	2020
	£	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments					
Donations	11065	-	136197	147262	153047
Earned from charitable activities	88038	-	0	88038	71493
Earned from other activities	733	-	0	733	4409
Investment and other income	1298	-	0	1298	932
Total	**101134**	-	**136197**	**237331**	**229881**
Expenditure					
Cost of raising funds	10358	-	0	10358	8699
Expenditure on charitable activities	60816	-	149770	210586	187997
Other expenditure	0	-	0	0	0
Total	**71174**	-	**149770**	**220944**	**196696**
Net Income/Expenditure	29960	-	-13573	16387	33185
Transfer between funds	-9200	9200	-	0	0
Net movement in funds	20760	-	-13573	16387	33185
Total funds brought forward	163691	30800	24761	219252	186067
Total funds carried forward	**184451**	**40000**	**11188**	**235639**	**219252**

The statement of financial activities include all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Notes on pages 23 - 30 form part of these financial statements.

Full Financial Report 1/9/20 to 31/8/21

Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited (A company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)
Trustees Report For the year ended 31/8/2021

BALANCE SHEET As at 31/08/2021

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2021	Total 2020
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	8	116398	0	116398	119442
Current Assets					
Debtors		**0**	**3251**	**3251**	**-**
Cash at bank and in hand		116117	29206	145323	140702
Total Current Assets		116117	32457	148574	140702
Creditors (falling within one year)	10	8064	21269	29333	40892
Total Assets less current liabilities		**224451**	**11188**	**235639**	**219252**
Financed by:					
Unrestricted Funds		184451	-	184451	163691
Designated Funds		40000	-	40000	30800
Restricted Funds			11188	11188	24761
Net Assets		224451	11188	235639	219252
Funds		224451	11188	235639	219252

In approving these financial statements as directors of the company we hereby confirm:

(a) The company is entitled to the exemption from audit under Section 477(c) of the Companies Act 2006 from the period ended 31/8/2021. The Trustees have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its financial statement for the period ended 31/8/2021 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

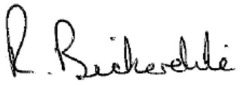
(b) That we acknowledge our responsibilities for:

1) ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and

2) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of section 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the Charitable Company.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with FRS102 and the Charities SORP (FRS102). The notes on the following pages form part of these accounts.

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf by:

R. Bickerdike Signed: 

Company number 9210771 Date: 21 April 2022

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31/08/2021

1) Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice. Cotswold Counselling meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

The Charity has applied Update Bulletin 2 as published on 5th October 2018 and does not include a cash flow statement on the grounds that it is applying FRS 102 Section 1A.

Fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at rates calculate to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

Land and Buildings 2% reducing balance

Fixtures and Equipment 20% Reducing balance

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use in accordance with the charitable objectives. Restricted funds are funds which have been given for particular purposes and projects.

Income

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories income:

Fee income is included in full in the statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

- ◊ The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.
- ◊ Investment income is included when receivable.
- ◊ Incoming resources for generating funds are accounted for when earned.

Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of less than three months from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account activity.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Financial instruments

The trust only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as a basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised as a transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Pensions

Since September 2017, employees are automatically enrolled into a defined contribution pension scheme operated by The People's Pension. Employees can subsequently opt out. Employees joining the scheme, contract directly with the pension company.

The charity made a matching contribution of 3% of qualifying earnings to this pension scheme and acts as an agent in collecting and paying over employee contributions. The contributions made for the accounting period treated as an expense and were £4372 (2020 = £3534)

2) Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per member of the charity. The charity is registered and incorporated in England and Wales and it's registered address is : Beeches Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1BW.

3) Financial performance of the charity

The statement of Financial Activities states the financial performance of the charity.

Full Financial Report 1/9/20 to 31/8/21

Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited (A company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)
Trustees Report For the year ended 31/8/2021

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31/8/2021

4) Income

A1 – Donations & Grants	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2021	Total 2020
Barnwood Trust		1245	1245	1000
Gloucestershire Funders		1500	1500	0
Children in Need		15351	15351	13039
St James Place		15833	15833	16667
Global Make Some Noise		20000	20000	0
Peter Lang Trust		40000	40000	37833
Society Holy Child Jesus`		22170	22170	0
Tesco Groundworks		1000	1000	0
RAF Brize Norton		600	600	0
Cirencester Town Council		500	500	0
Glos. Community Foundation		2730	2730	0
Soroptimist		552	552	0
CAF Resilience Fund		12049	12049	0
Comic Relief Community Fund		2667	2667	0
Neighbourly	400		400	0
Primrose Trust	3000		3000	0
Woodruff	500		500	0
Kemble Church	600		600	600
Baptist Church	250		250	0
Bluestones Insurance	500		500	0
Various donations & grants	5815		5815	26612
Sub total	**11065**	**136197**	**147262**	**95751**
Covid 19 related income				**57296**
Grand Total	**11065**	**136197**	**147262**	**153047**
A2 Earned from charitable activities				
GCC Nursery fees	82560	0	82560	68830
Parent fees	5478	0	5478	2663
Total	**88038**	**0**	**88038**	**71493**
A3 Earned from other activities				
Fund raising activities	733	0	733	3764
Building hire	0	0	0	645
Total	**733**	**0**	**733**	**4409**

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31/8/2021

5) Expenditure

Expenditure on charitable activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2021	Total 2020
Delivery of services	25808	123308	149116	143949
Nursery equipment and hot meals	7437	5574	13011	6785
Forest school and garden	1638	1456	3094	1870
Building operations	17880	280	18160	10092
Office & administration	2930	19152	22082	19718
Depreciation	3044	0	3044	3273
Governance* & Independent examination	2079	0	2079	2310
Total	**60816**	**149770**	**210586**	**187997**

*Trustees received no remuneration and were not reimbursed for any of their expenses in the period.

6) Paid Employees:

Average number of 'full time equivalent' employees in the year:	**2021**	**2020**
Fundraising	1	1
Administration	1	1
Charitable Activities	8	8
Governance	0	0

Full Financial Report 1/9/20 to 31/8/21

Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited (A company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)
Trustees Report For the year ended 31/8/2021

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31/8/2021

7) Movements in Funds:

	Opening £	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Transfer Of Funds	At 31/8/2021 £
Unrestricted Funds	**163691**	**101134**	**71174**	**-9200**	**184451**
Designated Funds	**30800**	**0**	**0**	**9200**	**40000**
Restricted Funds					
Glos Disability Fund	1500	0	1500		0
Cots District Council	1456	0	1456		0
Glouc. Funders	0	1500	325		1175
Glos. Comm Foundatn	0	2730	1639		1091
St James Place	0	15833	15833		0
RAF Brize Norton	0	600	0		600
Barnwood Trust	1000	1245	1000		1245
SHCJ	0	22170	22170		0
Peter Lang Trust	0	40000	40000		0
Children in Need	5631	15351	17331		3651
Tesco	1158	1000	1282		876
Global Make Noise	0	20000	20000		0
Comic Relief Com Fnd.	0	2667	2667		0
CAF Resilience Fund	0	12049	12049		0
Other - public	2550	1052	1052		2550
Sub Total	13295	136197	138304		11188
Covid 19 related					
Nat. Lottery Com Fund	9248	0	9248		0
CinNeed Booster	1514	0	1514		0
Others	704	0	704		0
Total Restricted	**24761**	**136197**	**149770**		**11188**
Total Funds	**186067**	**237331**	**220944**	**0**	**235639**

Designated Reserves:

The Trustees have continued to review areas of the Charity's operations and aligned with it's strategic analysis; Centre Development Plan and Risk Register , have decided to identify the following areas of operations that should be defined as Designated Reserves.

- £22,000 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision as at 1/9/2022 - should the charity be forced to close.
- £5,000 to facilitate a sector relevant "Quality Assurance" accreditation
- £5,000 to undertake/ complete both a finance system upgrade and completion of the HR and Health and Safety review
- £7,000 to improve our PR; Marketing and internet based communications and public reach (web site and enhanced social media capability
- £1000 install fully accessible ramp to further improve disability access to the Centre

8) Tangible Fixed Assets

	Land & Buildings	Fixtures & Fittings etc.	Total
Cost	£	£	£
At 1st Sept 2020	129405	12110	141515
Additions in Year	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31st August 2021	129405	12110	141515
Depreciation			
Balance brought forward	13602	8471	22073
Charge for the Year	2316	728	3044
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31st August 2021	13602	8471	22073
Net Book Value			
At 31st August 2021	113487	2911	116398
At 31st August 2020	115803	3639	119442

9) Taxation:

As a charity, Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within the Section 47 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent these are applied to its charitable objections.

10) Creditors:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Income in advance	21269	36923
Accruals	8064	3969
Total	29333	40892

11) Capital Commitments

The company had no known capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

12) Contingent Liabilities

There were no known contingent liabilities at the balance sheet date.

13) Government Grants:

The following income was received from government bodies during the year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Gloucester County Council - Nursery Grant	82560	68830
Cirencester Town Council	500	0
Cotswold District Council – Water Play; Forest School & Play therapy		4750
Cotswold District Council – Covid Discretionary Grant Fund		25000
Cotswold District Council – Covid food		320
HMRC CJRS		13264

CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

England & Wales - Charity number 1160184

Accounts

CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

(A Company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)

REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31/8/2020

CHARITY NO. 1160184

COMPANY NO. 9210771

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COG staff Facebook post during the first national lockdown

An independent early years centre specialising in inclusive care, support and education for all.

Annual Report 2019—2020
Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited

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Registered in England and Wales No.9210771
Registered Charity no. 1160184
A company limited by guarantee and not having share capital.

Covid-safe support groups at COG

World Book Day, just before the fist national lockdown!

Welcome from the Chair of Trustees

Welcome to the 2019-20 Annual Report for Cirencester Opportunity Group. For those of you who may be established supporters of our charity or have read previous annual reports, you will see that this report while still in its fairly new format of bringing colour, and a variety of photographs to enhance your view of the vital work carried out at COG, is this year very much a tale of two halves.

As well as every organisation in Britain and further afield, COG has had to significantly adapt its provision and methods of operation due to the covid-19 pandemic. As you will see in this report, not all the changes have been negative. Through necessity, we have learned new ways of doing things, have identified the positives and plan to build on them for a more secure, efficient and sustainable future for the children and young families for whom, for many, COG has become more of a lifeline than it ever was.

As Trustees, we have been unable to meet face-to-face since the announcement of the first lockdown. We have taken to Zoom, Webex and Teams (we've tried them all out!) which is a new experience for many of us. Along with many charities, the restrictions caused a delay to our AGM and this may impact us for a short time. Hence this Annual Report is delivered later than we would have intended. However, I hope that once you have read it (and it is longer than usual due to the sheer amount that has happened this year), you will join with me in congratulating a team of staff who have shown the utmost dedication and commitment during one of, if not the most challenging year the organisation has known. Our Trustees have also been on hand to help with support and advice wherever possible and I would like to extend a personal thanks to Bob Bickerdike, COG's Treasurer, who spent many hours and days seeking and gaining a good understanding of the government initiatives offered to UK charities, to ensure COG could access the support available to help steer us through such difficult times.

Thanks must also be given to COG's funders who kept in touch with the Centre, were willing to listen to the issues that arose, and offer the flexibility where needed to help staff make changes in provision to enable the best continuity of service possible.

I hope you find the following pages as heart-warming and inspirational as I have.

Pete Stone
Chair, Cirencester Opportunity Group

What does COG do?

Cirencester Opportunity Group is a thriving, busy and welcoming Specialist Early Years Centre set in a wonderful natural environment in the heart of the Cotswolds town of Cirencester. As an independent charity (#1160184) we have been providing an inclusive and nurturing environment for babies, toddlers and young children since 1973. Since that time our services have grown to offer in-depth support and advice to the families of our children, meeting a wide variety of need within our local community and further afield to outlying villages.

We have a high percentage of children with additional needs, comprising more than half of our children at any one time. Our strength and commitment to supporting these and all children and their families is key to our success. Children's needs may be special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or may stem from emotional need that could come from a number of different circumstances in a child's life, and result in different forms of support that we can offer to our families and children.
Families often come to us through referrals from other professional agencies such as the Health Visiting Team or through private recommendations. However they find us, every family can be sure of a warm welcome, nurturing care for their children and support that is non-judgemental and confidential.

Mission Statement

Cirencester Opportunity Group will provide a warm, welcoming and safe environment for all families. We will work in partnership with parents and other agencies to promote inclusive care and education and to respond to the ever changing needs of the community.

Our Vision

Our aim is for each child to have the best possible start in life, and for every individual to have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Organisational structure

Governance and Management: Our Board of Trustees

Pete Stone	Chair of Trustees
Bob Bickerdike	Treasurer
Jane Burr	Nominated Individual, Safeguarding
Rachael White (left May 2020)	Nominated Individual, Safeguarding

Russell Jones-Walker	Premises
Dominic Curnock	Premises
Sylwia Duzniak	New trustee
Ben Forshaw	New trustee

Centre Staff

Catharine Fowler	Centre Manager (SMT) Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sharon Pitts	Pre-School Manager (SMT)
Jane Pilgrim	Sendco Pre-school practitioner	Victoria Chase	Outreach Team Lead (SMT) Designated Safeguarding Lead
Catherine Chidley	Sendco Pre-school practitioner	Nicola Curtis	Outreach Team & Pre-school practitioner Designated Safeguarding Lead
Margaret Hartnell	Pre-school practitioner	Stephanie Smyth	Charity Fundraiser
Emiko McGill	Pre-school practitioner	Emma Hine	Business Administrator
Benjamin Jayne	Pre-school practitioner	Amanda Makin	Pre-school cook
Rachel Malins	Pre-school practitioner		

Our Trustees join us from a variety of backgrounds and are the final decision-makers for the charity, overseeing paid staff and setting direction for the executive strategy. They support governance, financial and strategic planning. We are very fortunate to have some key Trustees who are active in supporting the duties of Centre Staff and are available to offer practical help and advice.

Hellos and Goodbyes

We welcomed Rachel Malins to the pre-school team at the beginning of the year. We were all very much looking forward to working with her and at the time of writing, Rachel is an established and valued member of the team.

Our thanks and gratitude to Rachael White, who left our Board of Trustees in May 2020, following her relocation from the area. Rachael will be succeeded as Nominated Individual by Jane Burr who has also taken on the Safeguarding role, for which we are very grateful. This year we welcome Sylwia Duzniak and Ben Forshaw to the Board of Trustees and we hope their time with COG will be fulfilling. They bring valuable experience in procurement and analysis and we are excited to have them on board.

We said goodbye, in July 2019, to Julie Morriss who joined COG in 2016 first as a Senior pre-school practitioner and then as part of our SENDCo team. Julie decided it was time to retire and although we were sad to see her go, we were so pleased she decided to return as a volunteer in our playroom.

Volunteers

Our team of volunteers grew this year, despite covid-19 restrictions meaning they were unable to help out in our playroom from 23 March 2020. We were so grateful for the support of volunteers during our Summer Provision, which was rather different this year and held outside following social distance and other covid-safe measures. When allowed we also welcomed teams to help with our grounds maintenance. As always we are extremely grateful for all of this support, especially in the circumstances of a global pandemic.

The story of our year

COG Pre-School - September 2019 to March 2020

The first half of this year saw COG continuing our work with existing and new children and families, putting new initiatives in place as part of our early intervention programme of learning and support.

Much work at COG is rooted in Gloucestershire's Early Help Graduated Pathway where we form part of the wider early help partnership within our geographical area and within which we liaise with Health Visitors, Speech and Language Therapists, the Families First Team and social workers; and alongside other local charities including The Churn and Homestart. To support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) we liaise with Gloucestershire County Council Early Years Team (GCC EYS) as well as Educational Psychologists and the Advisory Teaching Service, when a child is placed on the Social and Communication (SCOM) Pathway by a Health Visitor. We also work with Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists, amongst other specialist medical teams to ensure the right support is in place for our children and families.

Our Pre-school Team delivers the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum to children from 2 to 4 years within our pre-school environment. This operates during morning sessions for 3 and 4 year olds during the year before they start formal education; and afternoon sessions for our younger 'Rising 3s' children (aged 2 and 3 years).

Our commitment to working in partnership with parents , particularly through their active engagement in their child's online learning journal (launched last year) continued successfully and became embedded in our child-centred approach. This also allows us to celebrate and share children's achievements more often with parents and is something we continually encourage parents to participate in.

Catherine Chidley began her role of SENDCo, alongside Jane Pilgrim, and together they bring a wealth of experience and skills to their roles. This year they successfully navigated a comprehensive overhaul to the EHCP request procedures implemented by GCC while ensuring children with SEND and their families were still fully supported.

Rachel Malins joined our Early Intervention Team to work directly with children in our pre-school and also families by co-running our Stay2Play parent/carer and toddler group. Using her Level 4 BSL (British Sign Language) qualification, and a wealth of experience in a classroom setting, Rachel has facilitated staff and children learning many new signs to further their 'total communication' abilities.

COG pre-school children making soup and bread rolls for lunch.

As part of our ongoing commitment to enrich our provision, this year we introduced a more robust system of monitoring and assessing children's progress which, during the first part of this year, was proving to be a successful development; enhancing our delivery of the EYFS curriculum. Additionally we provided further opportunities for children to become more independent in their learning by encouraging them more frequently to put on their own coats, hats and gloves for example, and to have more involvement at snack and lunch times by pouring their own drinks and even making soup, fruit salad and pizza! With all staff working more consistently towards the same goals for the children we also focussed on providing different levels of challenge for them within individual and group activities, such as Circle Time.

We continued to develop the role of the key person, now responsible for working alongside SENDCos to deliver activities which directly support and encourage a child with a My Plan (+) to work towards their individual developmental targets; reporting on and evidencing outcomes in regular review meetings with parents and external professionals.

The story of our year

COG Pre-School - March 2020 to July 2020

The Playroom—stripped of any soft toys and furnishings to make it more covid-safe

With very little notice or guidance from the government as the first national lockdown was announced, we made the decision, as an early years pre-school setting, to remain open to vulnerable children (with an EHCP or a social worker) and those of key workers. Although many in our sector, in those early days, closed their doors we contacted parents individually to confirm their status and needs.

During this time we ran sessions to fit around the needs and working patterns of COG families, while ensuring we could maintain staffing levels with contingency plans in place to remain open as long as possible should any members of staff have had to self-isolate. Throughout this time we we able to provide continuity and consistency at an unsettling and challenging time for children. We focussed sessions on learning within the 3 Prime Areas of the EYFS which includes the personal, social and emotional development of the children who attended sessions, as well as their communication and language and their physical development. By following this government guidance we hoped to minimize the impact that lockdown was having on our children and families.

For children who were not able to attend sessions, and for all children during the following Easter and half term holidays, we created and shared activity ideas on our Facebook page to support home learning and play opportunities. For example, we recorded and posted songs from our 'song bag', and with actions and signs, designed to be both fun and familiar to our children. We also included recordings of children's favourite stories, with props, such as Dear Zoo and Giraffes Can't Dance. This all provided opportunities for pre-school routines and activities to be experienced at home and for children to see members of staff who they would normally see regularly at sessions. Activities were themed around seasons and festivals, supporting learning outcomes such as counting, colour recognition, experiencing nature and to encourage physical development and getting 'fresh air' when possible.

Making a rainbow to show our support for the NHS

From June 2020, the DfE encouraged the wider re-opening of all schools and early years provision. We re-evaluated and updated our risk assessments in line with this guidance and welcomed all children back into the setting in a phased return which best met their needs. At this time we were also able to return to providing a hot home-cooked 2 -course lunch, alongside the healthy snacks that we had continued to provide throughout lockdown. During lockdown we were not able to cook for the children but we did provide a packed lunch to vulnerable children that they enjoyed as a picnic in Forest School. During this time, our SENDCos maintained working relationships with external professionals to ensure that each child with high needs was able to access the best transition to primary school possible under the circumstances. We arranged socially distanced, outside visits for all schools who were able to come, to attend COG and meet the children they would be teaching the following year. The process of getting EHCP support in place was more difficult this year as health visitors had been re-deployed to frontline healthcare and many other external professionals were not allowed to make visits to observe and report on children's needs. However, our SENDCos were successful in gaining this support going forward for all children who we felt needed it and for which parents were very grateful. Transition records for children moving onto primary school looked different this year but because we had maintained contact with parents on a regular basis through our Early Intervention team, we were still able to provide valuable, up-to-date information to schools through both written and verbal communication.

Summer Mermaid and Merman art

The story of our year

Music Therapy

For many years now COG has provided Music Therapy, as part of the learning and experience programme of support we offer, to enable each child to reach their individual developmental milestones.
Our Music Therapist Melanie Boswell, works closely with COG Key Workers and SENDCos, as part of their work in supporting children's emotional and social development, especially within the following areas:

- Encouraging self-expression and communication
- Developing confidence and self-esteem
- Reducing anxiety
- Helping to regulate feelings

Our Music Therapist builds a therapeutic relationship with each child that she works with and provides written progress reports, so that parents are kept fully informed about their child's achievements and Music Therapy journey.

BAMT BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC THERAPY

Play Therapy

We are pleased to announce the introduction of professional Play Therapy at COG!
Play Therapy at our Centre is a collaboration between our Early Intervention (EI) team and our Play Therapist Dr Sarah Wall, to support specific children with their emotional and social development.
The first stage of this therapy begins with our EI team assisting our Play Therapist in a face-to-face meeting with parents to successfully complete a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) assessment about their child (an EI key worker SDQ and a Parent SDQ is required for each child) and these assessment meetings are then followed up as part of the progression monitoring for each child.
The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a widely used behavioural screening questionnaire. It is a valuable tool for exploring the strengths and difficulties a child may present with at the start of their therapeutic journey, as well as for monitoring change and progress throughout the process and at the completion of their therapy experience.
Our aim in providing this therapy for selected children, is to allow each child the time and space they need to express themselves emotionally and socially, whilst our Play Therapist works with them in an integrative holistic way using non-directive play therapy. This approach allows each child to choose from the different play mediums in the room and to explore the themes that are most pertinent to them, alongside the introduction of more directed interventions when appropriate.
We are proud to now be able to offer professional Play Therapy at our centre, to enhance our specialist services to further support children and their families.

pfuk Play Therapy United Kingdom

The story of our year

Early Intervention Outreach - September 2019 to March 2020

The Outreach Team began this year as planned, supporting and helping families with multiple needs. Central and fully integrated into our pre-school/early intervention work, this team provides stability and support for struggling families; empowering them to parent and help their children to become confident, resilient and achieve a healthy and successful start.

Our Outreach Team work within the scope of Gloucestershire's Early Help Graduated Pathway and alongside other professionals to enable positive changes to be achieved. They are instrumental, and often lead professionals, in supporting children deemed 'at risk' through Social Care Plans, attending multi-agency Case Conferences and Core Group meetings. In addition, they plan, provide and evaluate a weekly timetable of activities held in our Annex building for children and families, which is reviewed regularly to ensure that we are truly meeting the needs of the families we work with.

Outreach continued to run their full Groups timetable this year, offering four sessions a week which are open to the community and are led and co-led by outreach and also early intervention workers. Families receive full support when needed and sessions are fully integrated for children with significant SEND, where activities are planned to be fully accessible to all. We receive continuous positive feedback from parents about how positive this feature is and all sessions are popular and very well attended.

One of two weekly stay and play music groups at COG.

This year we have expanded our provision to support parental mental health and by the end of January 2020, all members of staff at the Centre had attended Mental Health First Aid Training to better meet the growing mental health needs of COG families.

Last year we successfully trialled a new way of 'joined-up' working to enhance the service we offer to families of children with SEND. From this year, all SEND review meetings are now attended by a SENDCo and a member of the Outreach team. This enables information relating to homelife and parents' challenges from the outreach team contributing to pre-school developmental information about the child which together mean more positive and targeted help can take place between the Outreach team, Sendco team and families to improves outcomes for the child. Family targets can also be added to Plans based on knowledge of the family and the help they require that has been identified through this more cohesive way of working.

The Outreach team successfully acquired funding for carpets for a COG family this year and worked with the Salvation Army to provide toy and food hampers at Christmas, as well as with Cirecnester FoodBank to provide some party food items for the Stay and Play groups Christmas celebrations. The annual new and used toy/gift sale provided COG and other local families the opportunity to purchase low cost gifts at what is an expensive time of year, when some families have to make very difficult choices.

Children have the opportunity to show which songs and music they enjoyed during the session.

In January families were supported to make primary school applications for their pre-school children during which time there are reminders of key dates and families are encouraged to visit school open days. Some families need support to make online applications and many families of children with SEND need a lot of support in knowing questions to ask and how the process works for them. In addition to this the Outreach team have made referrals to GDASS for domestic abuse; P3, a charity that supports people in financial difficulties and Homestart, a charity offering support to people in their homes; and have accompanied families to Citizen's Advice Bureau.

The story of our year

Early Intervention Outreach - March 2020 to July 2020

COG's Early Intervention Outreach team continued to provide the Family Outreach service for COG families throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, despite government guidance meaning we were unable to run our family stay and play sessions. The support we were able to put in place instead provided continuity of care for children and their parents at an extremely challenging time and this support included home visits to deliver food parcels, phone calls and texts to families and 'doorstep' home visits . A high level of contact with professionals was maintained as well as involvement in meeting the needs of each family, including social care contact and liaison with foodbank for voucher referrals. This support was extended over the Easter holidays and May half term due to the increased vulnerabilities of COG families during this challenging time. Staff supervision was also continued during this time to ensure staff wellbeing was considered and addressed.

During the first three months of Lockdown 1 we:

- Made **29 Home Visits** (socially distanced) taking food parcels, activities for children, children's clothing and providing mental health information for parents. Other visits were to check on vulnerable children with social care involvement.
- **Supported 34 higher need COG Families** intensively during this period, using phone calls, texts, emails, WhatsApp messages, Facebook and home visits. We also supported a further **12 COG Families** who have children attending nursery sessions with **challenges, such as additional needs, emotional and behavioural difficulties.** We assessed need and evidenced this need, in preparation for future tailored Early Years and SEND provision. Our monthly SPOKAN support group for families with children with additional needs moved online and turned into a Monthly newsletter with lots of tips and advice. This newsletter was written and emailed out monthly to **22 families target families.**
- We responded to a **total of 29 requests** for Foodbank support, providing Foodbank vouchers, as well as handing out **22 COG created food parcels** created from surplus food and food donations COG received.
- That is in total **59 children** plus an additional 10 siblings of school that we supported during lockdown with our ongoing Early Intervention Outreach support, including three pregnant mums, one of whom gave birth during the lockdown.
- During the first three months of Lockdown 1, we had **175 phone calls** with families, sent over **180 texts** and **48 WhatsApp** messages and had **80 face to face meetings/discussions** with parents (socially distanced).
- Our Early Intervention Outreach Team also attended **5 Child in Need** Meetings, **2 Child Protection** Meetings, **1 Child Protection Case Conference** and **1 Looked After Child** Meeting.

Socially distanced pick-up and drop-off in June 2020

Our commitment to Multi-Agency working has been vital to keep the children and families safe.

Throughout the lockdown we continued our strong working relationships with Social Workers, the Cotswold and Families Social Care Team, the Re-Unification Team, Early Help team, Families First +, Cirencester Health Visiting Team, the Community Nursery Nurse, Speech and Language Therapy and Mental Health Workers at Let's Talk. As well as Bromford Housing Association, the Housing Department at Cotswold District Council. Local Primary schools, Cirencester Foodbank, The Long Table, Fareshare, Neighbourly, The Churn Project, Homestart, Citizens Advice Bureau, Cirencester Furniture Bank, Barnwood Trust and All Sorts.

In addition, alongside activities and maintained contact for children on Facebook through the Pre-School team, the Outreach Team regularly posted Mindfulness activities on COG's Facebook page as well as relevant information signposting support in a variety of ways. As a staff, COG also posted with positivity and light-heartedness to bring a smile and stay connected to COG families. Comments received from these posts indicated their value to our service users and supporters.

The story of our year

Combatting Food Poverty - March 2020 to July 2020

At COG we are committed to our schedule of weekly surplus food collections from Aldi, Lidl, Tesco, and Waitrose. Our team of staff collect the surplus food in their own time, showing their dedication to helping to keep local children well fed and to support parents by taking some of the stress and anxiety they are experiencing over being able to feed their families.

We use the surplus food to help us to cook the free hot lunch we provide for COG children each weekday, supported by our Meal Appeal Hero funders! Our aim is to be fully inclusive, so all children have the chance of a nutritious hot meal at least once a day. We also share the surplus food with COG families, so they can choose from a selection of surplus food that we have collected. We also use this food as an opportunity to discuss how to prepare and cook certain vegetables, to encourage families to try new foods, such as sweet potato for example.

We are also passionate about providing opportunities for the children to learn about and taste as many different foods as they can. Therefore, we cook with them, support them to learn how to grow fruits and vegetables in our COG garden and we encourage them to taste new foods, to explore flavours and textures!

Our partnership working with Cirencester Foodbank also enables us to further support families experiencing food poverty. We are authorised to issue Foodbank vouchers to families, following an assessment of their needs and we work closely with each family and Cirencester Foodbank to monitor and offer support during difficult times.

Our mission is to help reduce the negative impact of food poverty on the development and wellbeing of all family members, by making a difference to their access to and experience of food.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Aldi, Lidl, Tesco, and Waitrose for their ongoing donations of surplus food and our wonderful Meal Appeal Heroes...RAF Brize Norton, All Saints Church Kemble and The Dorothy Minnis Trust.

'O HELP STOP FOOD WAST
ALDI UK WILL DONATE
FOOD TO CHARITIES ALL
YEAR ROUND

The story of our year

Summer at COG

Peter Lang Children's Trust funded summer activity packs!

COG children and parents were delighted to receive their PLCT funded activity packs. These packs included story books, crayons, pencils, glue, tissue paper and card, colouring sheets, bunting to decorate, stickers, stampers and bubbles and some age-appropriate toys. These packs, coupled with our summer playscheme provision, the activity packs were a great way to ensure that parents had prepared activities to do with their children at home when most of the usual summer activity within our town was simply not available to them.

COG Summer Provision for families 2020

We were very aware that it was essential for us to still find a way to provide support and activities during the six-week summer holiday, to aid the recovery of the families and children after a lengthy lockdown.

Due to COVID-19 and the Government guidance at the time, we had to do things a little differently, based on our risk assessments, but we still provided lots of family friendly fun!

We adhered to bubbles of six, with strict social distancing and we ensured that all families in need had access to our summer provision pre-booking system. We made the best use of our extensive outside space and the Playscheme Team divided our grounds into three areas with a bubble of six in each section at a time. We were able to still run for our usual four weeks, three sessions a week with a maximum of eighteen attending daily in the three bubbles.

We also make a substantial packed lunch for each child attending, to help minimize the food poverty that many families experienced at this time.

Every week was themed; Minibeasts, Music and Nursery Rhymes, Fairy Tales and a Seaside week and we had fun activities, such as bug hunts with magnifying glasses in Forest School, musical instrument making and ice creams for a treat in seaside week and the children loved them all.

Families' feedback on the COG Summer 'lockdown' Provision

Of all the summer activities available in Cirencester, was the COG playscheme important to you and your family? Please explain why.

- Yes, it was. My boys are used to going to the playgroup & everyone is always friendly & welcoming
- Very important it got us out the house and helped with my anxiety :)
- Yes, it was a long summer and nice to have something to take the children to
- Yes, there wasn't much to do otherwise was nice to get a break from staying indoors
- Yes, only one we attended
- Yes, as a family COG has been an important part of normal weekly activities and help for our son's progression
- Thank you for having the play scheme, it's such a lovely place to come & there is so much to do for the children especially the outside area
- The play scheme was great! Thanks for running it!
- Thank you for doing this we loved it
- It was great for our child to keep in touch with COG
- As a whole we are extremely happy and deeply appreciate all that COG have done and would highly recommend thank you

Funding and support

How we are funded

Cirencester Opportunity Group provides a high quality of education and care for each child. We are unique and fully inclusive, and we tailor our specialist services to meet the individual needs of each child, making a real difference to the life chances of the children we work with, but how are we funded?

The universal government funding that we receive for our three-year-old children and the 'Achieving Two Year Olds' funding that we receive for some of our two-year-old children, only covers 40% of our delivery costs.

We work hard to build partnerships and secure funding and donations to raise the remaining 60% delivery costs that we need to keep our wonderful centre achieving all that it does, and we accomplish this in a variety of ways:

- ◊ **Applying for grants from charitable trusts**
- ◊ **Receiving donations and sponsorships from local businesses and private individuals**
- ◊ **Organising and running our own fundraising events**

A huge thank-you to our wonderful funders and supporters!

COG staff, trustees and volunteers are extremely grateful to the following organisations and individuals for their belief in our work with children and families and for their generous support this year:

Aldi
All Saints Church, Kemble
Barnwood Trust
BBC Children in Need
Cirencester Baptist Church
Cirencester Chamber of Commerce
Cotswold District Council
Cotswold Primrose Trust
Dominic Curnock
Dorothy Minnis Charitable Trust
Ecclesiastical Insurance
Fareshare
Gloucestershire County Council – Community Activity Fund
Gloucestershire County Council - Growing our Communities Fund
Gloucestershire Disability Fund
Havas Helia
Jack Lane Charitable Trust
Lesley Simms Gardening
Lidl
Lumley Insurance
Neighbourly Community Fund
NFU Mutual
Peter Lang Children's Trust
Philip Marner Charity
RAF Brize Norton Air 1 Mobility Wing
Ridgeway Web Design
Seasalt
Society for the Holy Child Jesus
St James's Place Foundation
St James's Place Corporate Social Responsibility
Tesco Bags of Help
The Lawrence Family
The Licata Family
The Number Cruncher
The Woodroffe Benton Foundation
Titch Tetley Photography
Waitrose Community Matters
Wildwood Ecology

Funding and support

Supporter stories

RAF Brize Norton Air 1 Mobility Wing surprised us with a cheque for £1,100, to support our hot meal programme for COG children, as well as helping to fund some staff training too. The team also did an amazing job revamping our grounds! Thank-you so much!

St James's Place always ensure that we have teams of wonderful volunteers to support us. Thank-you to Laura, Nicola, Sally, Christopher, Paul, Richard, and Matthew from Team SJP, helping remove stinging nettles, brambles and clearing our wooden walk-way ready for the children to explore!

A huge thank you too, to everyone who supported us to be part of the Combined Charities Christmas Fayre. In total we raised an amazing £239.41. Special thanks to Janet and Rose for their beautiful hand knitted creations and thank you too to our super team of volunteers on the day; Lyn, Glynnis, Anne from Seasalt and Alison from St James's Place.

Thank-you to the team at Jesse Smith's Butchers and Farm Shop for choosing to support COG with a fundraising hamper raffle at their festive late night shopping event! Just over £73 was raised for our charity and we are extremely grateful to them and everyone who bought a ticket to support us.

A heartfelt thank you also to the wonderful team at Havas Helia for surprising us with a Christmas present for COG children! A fantastic new sand and water play unit for the children to explore and enjoy.

Wildwood Ecology chose COG as their charity of the year and they have been regular visitors to our Early Years Centre, helping us to maintain our Forest School and grounds. They also presented us with a very generous donation of £1008.00, which was a wonderful Christmas gift!

The Christmas party each December is a perfect illustration of how kind gestures and generosity come together to make the day very special for each child. Lumley Insurance choose to sponsor our children's Christmas Party each year, covering the cost of entertainment for the children and ensuring that they each receive a Christmas gift from Santa.

A huge thank you too to our local Lidl store for donating our Christmas turkey to us and to Tesco for providing all of the other ingredients and trimmings we needed to provide Christmas dinner for all of the COG children to enjoy! Christmas here at COG was extremely special for the children and their families.

The RAF Brize Norton Air Mobility Wing always remember COG at Christmas too and they took the time to come and visit us to have a sing song and to create a festive trail for COG children to enjoy! The children had fun finding the hidden baubles and all got to take home a delicious chocolate selection box too!

Justine from St James's Place (SJP) took the time to come and visit us all at COG and she brought a GIANT cheque with her too!! We were very fortunate that our request for funding to support our Early Intervention work was granted by SJP and Justine came to tell us the good news!

Funding and support

COG 2.6 Challenge

To coincide with the date of the cancelled 26 mile long London Marathon, COG asked supporters to **join thousands of people across the UK from the 26th April 2020, for one of the nation's biggest fundraising events of the year — The 2.6 Challenge!**

From walking, running or cycling 2.6 miles, dancing non-stop for 26 minutes or creating a 26 question quiz, we asked supporters to take part in an activity based around the numbers 2.6 or 26 and help raise money for Cirencester Opportunity Group!

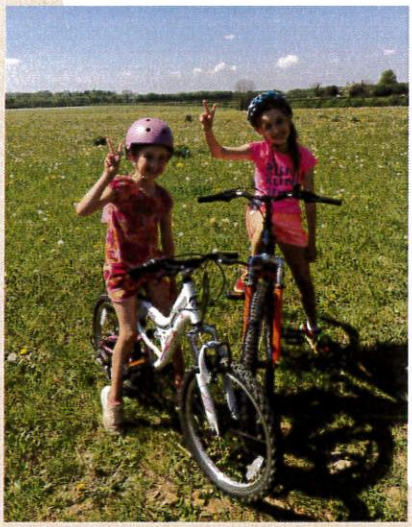
We asked supporters to complete their challenge in a safe way, following Government guidelines on exercise and social distancing.

We were overwhelmed by the fantastic effort and generous support of everyone involved and all of the money raised has supported our direct work with children and their families, thank you.

Enjoy the photographs below which show some of the activities that helped raise an amazing **£1,478.90**

A huge thank you to Terrie, Oli, River, Jocelyn, and Reg the dog too for completing their 2.6-mile adventure around their village, to raise funds for COG! They had lots of fun in the sunshine and managed to raise a fantastic £427.50 for COG, to support our Covid response work with children and families.

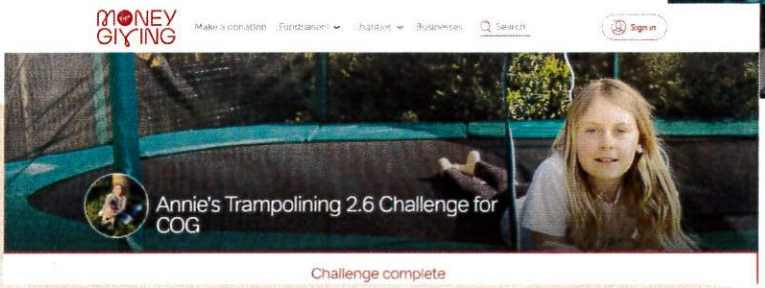
Emma and her son, Christian, ran 2.6 miles for COG.



Eliza and Violet cycled 2.6 miles singing all the way to raise money for COG's 2.6 challenge.

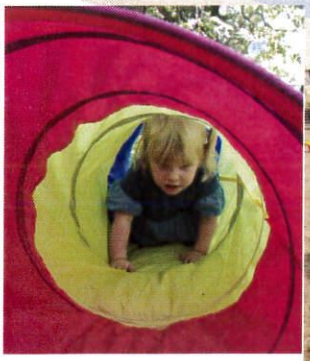
Annie's trampolining challenge involved 26 flips in under 2.6 minutes.

CONGRATULATIONS and thank-you to everybody who completed their challenges and thank-you to all their sponsors!



The future of COG

Looking ahead to the coming year



Adventures abound at COG, where our dedicated staff have kept things as normal and fun as possible for our children, in these uncertain times.

During the first National Lockdown, we were able to use some time to evaluate our resources, the look and feel of our playroom as well as the provision we had in place. Prior to 23 March 2020, we had been following our Centre Development Plan and could already see positive changes coming from our self-evaluation of the previous year, much of which has been discussed in this report.

This lockdown not only immediately changed the provision we were asked to provide by the Government but also led to quite significant changes in the needs of our service users, namely our children and families. At the time of writing this report we have seen more lockdowns and significantly increased need around the mental health of parents and families, and the resilience and developmental needs of babies and pre-school aged children that has been highlighted and caused by the pandemic.

Our consideration of how we might, as an organisation, change to meet these needs going forward has meant that in the coming year we hope to be able to:

- Deliver some changes to our pre-school session times to better support working families
- Offer our home-cooked, 2-course lunch to a greater number of our pre-school children to help combat food poverty
- Provide adjustable tables to help children with complex needs, that are also more hygienic/easily cleanable
- Replace the flooring in our playroom—currently a mixture of old vinyl and carpet tiles which is difficult to keep as clean as we would like especially with new measures of control of infection in place.
- Look at ways to expand our Outreach provision to better meet the increased needs of our families.

We are grateful to have been able to continue our vital work with children and families, throughout 2019-2020 despite the restrictions and measures of control we had to put in place from 23 March 2020. We hope, and plan, to continue this work throughout 2020-2021 and we will strive to do this whatever the pandemic may bring.

Last year, we spoke of maximising the use of our beautiful grounds and outside spaces. We have been forced to do this due to covid measures of control and fully intend to continue and broaden this way of working. There have been many positives that have come from having to more fully utilise our outside space with obvious benefits for children and families. As part of this we continue to look at ways in which we might re-energise our hard-standing outdoor play area to enhance play opportunities and experiences for a wider range of children and families. Alongside this we continue to explore ways in which our charity can become more sustainable by working more closely with local community groups, maximising the use of our beautiful site and grounds and raising our profile locally and further afield.

Our hope for this coming year is for COG to be able to continue to support children and families, whilst still adapting and developing our services to meet the changing needs of our families and community. We can only do this each year because of our dedicated staff, volunteers and trustees and because of the wonderful support that we receive from our funders.

We also plan to continue our recruitment campaign for new trustees in order to strengthen our trustee board. Our aim is to ensure a range of skills and diversity in our management committee. Please look out for more information on this and consider ways in which you might be able to offer a helping hand in whatever ways you can.

Thank you.

Some of our COG pre-schoolers, who are due to start primary school in these uncertain times, heading off on a new adventure!

Annual Accounts

Financial Overview 1/9/19 to 31/8/20

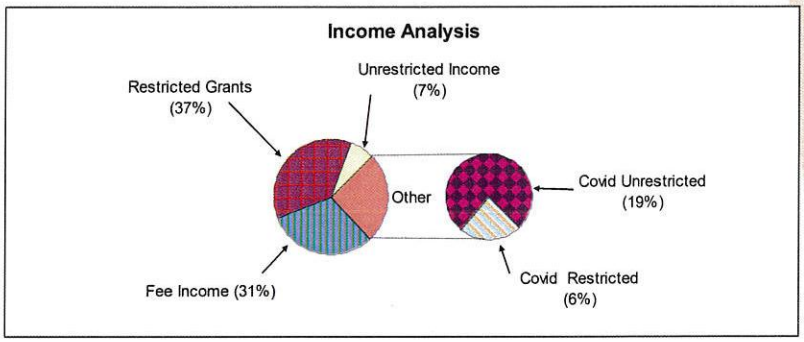
As described earlier within this report – our financial year was significantly disrupted by the onset of the Covid pandemic starting in March 2020. Our charity made the decision, during these challenging times, to stay open and adapt operational delivery to best meet the needs of local vulnerable families and to follow Government guidance regarding restricted opening of our pre-school setting. This ultimately enabled the charity to secure specific Covid related funding assistance.

However, it needs to be recognised that these were 'one off' abnormal revenues and have thereby distorted the overall financial position of the charity during the year in, thankfully, a positive way as explained later.

Overall, during the year, the group declared an overall surplus of £33,185 versus a deficit of £10,042 during the previous year.

Our cash reserves at 31/8/2020 are as follows:

- Restricted reserves £24,761
- Designated reserves £30,800
- Unrestricted reserves £44,249
- Value of fixed assets (buildings) £119,442



Income analysis:

Our normal - 'non Covid related' income totalled £172,586 which reflected a decline of 10% from the previous year. However, the additional Covid related income of £57,295 boosted the total income to £229,881 - a 21% increase on the previous year.

Normal COG income £172,586

- Fee income at £71,493 reflected a decline of 23% from the previous year which had been boosted to a higher-than-normal level of additional fees associated with deprivation, disability, and special education needs. Although the need was still prevalent, these funds were not available to us this year.
- Restricted grants and donations totalled £97,839 - a fantastic result from our fundraising effort, this value was £16,515 higher than the previous year.
- Unrestricted income amounted to £16,885, an increase of 13% on last year.

Covid related income: £57,295

Whilst £13,632 was received as Restricted grants to support our family support Covid activities, the greater proportion of income of £43,664 was unrestricted, key contributors were:

Cotswold District Council Discretionary Grant: during the pandemic - District Councils were able to award Business Rates relief to businesses but as a charity we were not eligible for this assistance. The Govt decided to support charities with a similar scheme by awarding grants based on the rateable value of a property if it was used for charitable purposes. We were encouraged to apply for this and were awarded £25,000.

HMRC CJRS payments of £13,300 resulting from furloughed staff salary recovery. When accessing this scheme, we worked hard, despite guidelines on Early Years sector government funding support changing numerous times, to claim only the percentage of our "public funding aspect" of the full 80% grant.

Resulting from this additional income, the trustees have been able to set aside a total of £30,800 as Designated reserves (see following comments).

Overview continued on next page...

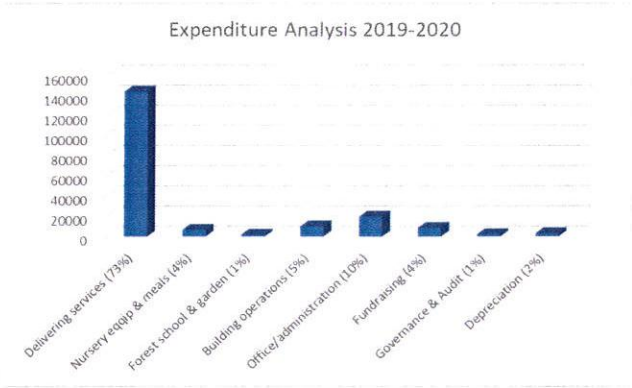
Annual Accounts

Financial Overview 1/9/19 to 31/8/20 continued...

Expenditure analysis:

Total expenditure in the year of £196,696 showed a small 1% decrease from the previous year.

- Delivering services (staffing costs; outsourced Music & Play Therapy; swimming and other play activities) at £143,949 reflects that 73% of total operating expenditure is spent directly on activities.
- Nursery materials and equipment; hot lunch time meals; running the building and our Forest School reflect a further £18,747 or 10% of the total.
- The total administration: fundraising and office costs of £28,417 represents 14% of total expenditure.



Depreciation and Governance costs make up the remaining £5,583 or 3% of the charity's total costs.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have set a reserves policy which requires that the reserves be maintained at a level which ensures that COG's core activities could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty and that these reserves are maintained in a readily realisable form. The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of COG's planning, budgeting, and forecasting cycle. It considers the risks associated with unexpected variations in the stream of income and expenditure given planned activity levels and COG's future commitments.

The Trustees assess the reserves policy on an annual basis. They monitor and discuss levels of readily realisable reserves and COG's future commitments. The main risks to both income and expenditure plus the requirements for working capital and adequate cash flow are assessed.

The trustees use this information to ensure an adequate level of readily realisable reserves is maintained. In September 2020, the reserves policy was reviewed and based on this risk analysis, a Free Cash Reserve target of between £52,500 and £105,000 was confirmed.

At 31/8/2020, the actual Free cash reserves were £44,249.

In addition, the Trustees have set aside £30,800 as Designated reserves, this is made up of:

- £17800 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision should the charity be forced to close. The trustees recognise the heightened risk of this eventuality given the economic pressures placed on the Early Years and Nursery UK sector.
- £8000 for planned building modifications to enable improved and better controlled people traffic flow into and around the facility. New floor coverings will be installed to facilitate an improved cleaning and hygiene regime to operate.
- £5000 to improve our internet-based communications public reach (web site and enhanced social media capability)

Full Financial Report 1/9/19 to 31/8/20

Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited (A company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)
Trustees Report For the year ended 31/8/2020

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The trustees (who are also directors of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The trustees

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 FRSSE;
- 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation

The Trustee Board is responsible for maintaining proper 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. The Trustee Board is 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.

Members of the Management Committee
Members of the Trustee Board, who are directors for the purpose of company law and trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out on page 7.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by effective 1st January 2015 and in accordance with the special provisions of Part VII of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small entities.

Signature: R. Bickerdike

Print name: Robert Bickerdike

Date: 20.4.2021

Full Financial Report 1/9/19 to 31/8/20

Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited (A company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)
Trustees Report For the year ended 31/8/2020

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 August 2020 which are set out on pages 22 to 29.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity Trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.

Miss Ruth Herbert FCCA
Wenn Townsend Accountants Limited
Gosditch House
Gosditch Street
Cirencester
GL7 2AG

Signed: Ruth Herbert

Date: 21 April 2021

Full Financial Report 1/9/19 to 31/8/20

Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited (A company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)
Trustees Report For the year ended 31/8/2020

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES & INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/8/2020

	Unrestricted funds	Designated Funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	2019
	£	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments					
Donations	55208		97839	153047	89773
Earned from charitable activities	71493		0	71493	93071
Earned from other activities	4409		0	4409	5465
Investment and other income	932		0	932	1037
Total	**132042**		**97839**	**229881**	**189346**
Expenditure					
Cost of raising funds	0		8699	8699	7997
Expenditure on charitable activities	109058		78939	187997	191391
Other expenditure	0		0	0	0
Total	**109058**		**87638**	**196696**	**199388**
Net Income/Expenditure	22984		10201	33185	-10042
Transfer between funds	-30800	30800		0	0
Net movement in funds	-7816	30800	10201	33185	-10042
Total funds brought forward	171507		14560	186067	196109
Total funds carried forward	**163691**	**30800**	**24761**	**219252**	**186067**

The statement of financial activities include all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Notes on pages 24 - 29 form part of these financial statements.

Full Financial Report 1/9/19 to 31/8/20

Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited (A company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)
Trustees Report For the year ended 31/8/2020

BALANCE SHEET As at 31/08/2020

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2020	Total 2019
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	8	119442	0	119442	122715
Current Assets					
Debtors		0	0	0	549
Cash at bank and in hand		79016	61684	140702	67502
Total Current Assets		79016	61684	140702	68051
Creditors (falling within one year)	10	3969	36923	40892	4699
Total Assets less current liabilities		**194762**	**24761**	**219252**	**186067**
Financed by:					
Unrestricted Funds		163961			
Designated Funds		30800			
Restricted Funds			24761		
Net Assets		194761	24761	219252	186067
Funds		194761	24761	219252	186067

In approving these financial statements as directors of the company we hereby confirm:

(a) The company is entitled to the exemption from audit under Section 477(c) of the Companies Act 2006 from the period ended 31/8/2020. The Trustees have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its financial statement for the period ended 31/8/2020 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

(b) That we acknowledge our responsibilities for:

1) ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and

2) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of section 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the Charitable Company.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with FRS102 and the Charities SORP (FRS102). The notes on the following pages form part of these accounts.

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf by:

R. Bickerdike Signed: R. Bickerdike

Company number 9210771 Date: 20.4.2021

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31/08/2020

1) Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice. Cotswold Counselling meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

The Charity has applied Update Bulletin 2 as published on 5th October 2018 and does not include a cash flow statement on the grounds that it is applying FRS 102 Section 1A.

Fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at rates calculate to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

Land and Buildings 2% reducing balance

Fixtures and Equipment 20% Reducing balance

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use in accordance with the charitable objectives. Restricted funds are funds which have been given for particular purposes and projects.

Income

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories income:

Fee income is included in full in the statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

- ◊ The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.
- ◊ Investment income is included when receivable.
- ◊ Incoming resources for generating funds are accounted for when earned.

Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of less than three months from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account activity.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Financial instruments

The trust only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as a basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised as a transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Pensions

Since September 2017, employees are automatically enrolled into a defined contribution pension scheme operated by The People's Pension. Employees can subsequently opt out. Employees joining the scheme, contract directly with the pension company.

The charity made a matching contribution of 3% of qualifying earnings to this pension scheme and acts as an agent in collecting and paying over employee contributions. The contributions made for the accounting period treated as an expense and were £4372 (2019 = £3534)

2) Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per member of the charity. The charity is registered and incorporated in England and Wales and it's registered address is : Beeches Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1BW.

3) Financial performance of the charity

The statement of Financial Activities states the financial performance of the charity.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31/8/2020

4) Income:

A1 – Donations & Grants	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2020	Total 2019
Barnwood Trust	0	1000	1000	1500
Glouc. Disability Fund	0	1500	1500	0
Children in Need	0	13039	13039	17048
St James Place	0	16667	16667	12500
Cotswold District Council	0	4750	4750	0
Peter Lang Trust	0	37833	37833	42500
Cotswold Primrose Trust	0	7196	7196	0
Philip Marner Trust	1000	0	1000	1000
Wildwood Ecology	1008	0	1008	0
Kemble Church	600	0	600	0
Ecclesiastical	1000	0	1000	0
NFU Mutual	3164	0	3164	0
Various donations & grants	4772	2222	6944	16225
Sub total	**11544**	**84207**	**95751**	**89773**
Covid 19 related income				
Nat. Lottery Community Fund	0	9248	9248	0
Children in Need Booster	0	3420	3420	0
Cotswold District Council	25000	0	25000	0
Cotswold Primrose Trust	5000	0	5000	0
HMRC CJRS	13264	0	13264	0
Various donations & grants	400	964	1364	0
Sub total	**43664**	**13632**	**57296**	**0**
Grand Total	**55208**	**97839**	**153047**	**89773**

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31/8/2020

5) Expenditure

Expenditure on charitable activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2020	Total 2019
Delivery of services	70054	73895	143949	146071
Nursery equipment and hot meals	4700	2085	6785	7178
Forest school and garden	1470	400	1870	1937
Building operations	9942	150	10092	11540
Office & administration	17309	2409	19718	19384
Depreciation	3273	0	3273	3548
Governance* & Independent	2310	0	2310	1733
Total	**109058**	**78939**	**187997**	**191391**

*Trustees received no remuneration and were not reimbursed for any of their expenses in the period.

6) Paid Employees:

Average number of 'full time equivalent' employees in the year:	2020	2019
Fundraising	1	1
Administration	1	1
Charitable Activities	8	8
Governance	0	0

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31/8/2020

7) Movements in Funds:

	Opening £	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Transfer Of Funds	At 31/8/2020 £
Unrestricted Funds	**171507**	**132042**	**109058**	**-30800**	**163691**
Designated Funds	**0**	**0**	**0**	**30800**	**30800**
Restricted Funds					
Glos Disability Fund	0	1500	0		1500
Glos Comm. Fund	836	0	836		0
Cotswold Primrose T.	0	7196	7196		0
Cots District Council	0	4750	3294		1456
St James Place	0	16667	16667		0
Barnwood Trust	1500	1000	1500		1000
Peter Lang Trust	2500	37833	40333		0
Children in Need	3254	13039	10662		5631
Tesco	1158	0	0		1158
Play Therapy	5000	0	2450		2550
Other - public	312	2222	2534		0
Sub Total	14560	84207	85472		13295
Covid 19 related					
Nat. Lottery Com Fund	0	9248	0		9248
CinNeed Booster	0	3420	1906		1514
Others	0	964	260		704
Total Restricted	**14560**	**97839**	**87638**		**24761**
Total Funds	**186067**	**229881**	**196696**	**0**	**219252**

Designated Reserves:

Resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic operational issues from March to July and resulting unrestricted funding received (Note 4 A1 above), three Designated Reserves have been transferred from Unrestricted funds totalling £30800:

- ◊ £17800 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision should the charity be forced to close. The trustees recognise the heightened risk of this eventuality given the economic pressures placed on the Early Years and Nursery UK sector.
- ◊ £8000 for planned building modifications to enable improved and better controlled people traffic flow into and around the facility. New floor coverings will be installed to facilitate an improved cleaning and hygiene regime to operate
- ◊ £5000 to improve our internet based communications public reach (web site and enhanced social media capability)

8) Tangible Fixed Assets

	Land & Buildings	Fixtures & Fittings etc.	Total
	£	£	£
Cost			
At 1st Sept 2019	129405	12110	141515
Additions in Year	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31st August 2020	129405	12110	141515
Depreciation			
Balance brought forward	11239	7561	18800
Charge for the Year	2363	910	3273
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31st August 2020	13602	8471	22073
Net Book Value			
At 31st August 2020	115803	3639	119442
At 31st August 2019	118166	4549	122715

9) Taxation:

As a charity, Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within the Section 47 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent these are applied to its charitable objections.

10) Creditors:

	2020	2019
	£	£
Income in advance	36923	0
Accruals	3969	4699
Total	**40892**	**4699**

11) Capital Commitments

The company had no known capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

12) Contingent Liabilities

There were no known contingent liabilities at the balance sheet date.

13) Government Grants:

The following income was received from government bodies during the year

	2020	2019
	£	£
Gloucester County Council - Nursery Grant	68830	86351
Cotswold District Council – Water Play; Forest School & Play therapy	4750	0
Cotswold District Council – Covid Discretionary Grant Fund	25000	0
Cotswold District Council – Covid food	320	0
HMRC CJRS	13264	0