

End of year report & Independently Examined Financial statements

For the Year Ended 31st March 2021

Charity number: 1161092

The Pod

Reports and Accounting

For the Year ended 31st March 2021

CONTENTS

	Pages
Trustee report	1
Report of the Trustees	2 - 5
Structure, Governance & Administration	5 - 6
Statement of Financial Activities	6 - 7
Independent Examiners Report	8
Accounts	9 - 10

Trustee report

During these unprecedented times, the charity has been tested, it has not been straightforward or easy but it has been positive. The pandemic forced us to make decisions that would have taken us much longer to reach, trustees became more involved in day-to-day operations and supported a new administrator, a post which continues to add value to the Pod's resources and ability to support more families.

Looking back at the last year, Pod projects have adapted and moved from weekly social clubs to engagement 7 days a week at the peak of the pandemic without pausing services. The teams have put in place bespoke support for young people and families where this has been needed.

Covid-19 may have tried to slow us all down, but the charity did not slow down, the achievements of young people and teams has been exceptional; a young person's idea led to a published lockdown recipe book including poems and stories, a keepsake from a strange year that will always remind our young people and families of the fun times and that it wasn't all bad.

Zoom became the new normal method of communication. It certainly took some getting used to (I include myself and fellow board members in this to!) but, it has been a pleasure to receive updates on the positive outcomes from all three projects and from the new online talking café.

Welfare check in's, activity pack production and distribution became the new normal, not just for the young people we know but for siblings too. There have been many other highlights I could mention however the one stand out point to myself and the board is the strength and resilience the team and young people have shown over the last 12 months and the difference Pod has made to the families we work with.

As our community recovers the charity will continue to adapt to the long-term effects of Covid-19, we have already begun to evaluate the alternative support methods used in the last 15 months and are taking this learning forward into future activities.

As I look back on the last year, my sixth and final year with Pod it is with so many fond memories. The time has come for me to step down as trustee, but I do so in the full knowledge that Pod will continue to grow from strength to strength. There are many ideas in the pipeline including the scrapstore and make and sell project and I am confident they will be as successful as our current projects with thanks to a committed and loyal team who continue to strive to deliver first class projects with, and not just for our members.

A Liggatt
Chair of Trustees

History - The Pod is a grassroots initiative, founded by parent carers in 2013 in response to a lack of services for disabled children in Mendip. Maintaining a service that is member led is essential in ensuring Pod beneficiaries support one another and reach their full potential.

Objectives - (taken from CIO) To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.'

The charity does this by providing the following services;

Pod Youth Club

The Youth club welcomes children with additional needs who are aged 10-17 years. The club would usually meet on a Tuesday evening in term time. The ratio is 1:3 and the team are skilled, experienced and understand how to enable the children to reach their full potential. Children learn important life skills and make friends at the youth club, many for the first time. There continues to be a long waiting list, historically children wait a year before they can join the group. One of the benefits of online support is that the charity has been able to offer support to families on the waiting list. As the youth club has reopened this online support has continued for children on the waiting list. 39 children have benefitted from the youth club support this year.

The Zone

The Zone is a youth club for Young Carers. The team have adjusted the age range from 10-18 to 8-16 years old, recognising that children will not join the group when they turn 16 but nor will we be asking them to leave. Many but not all the children are siblings of disabled children. The team have completed welfare checks, provided online support, and distributed activity packs. 22 children have benefitted from the project this year.

Pod Plus

Pod Plus is a social club for adults with additional needs aged 18-30 years. 20 young people have accessed the group this year which has provided online support every Monday evening, in addition to social media interaction 7 days a week. Team members interacted and set fun challenges which developed into young people setting their own challenges for their peers within a supportive framework using a 'safe' closed platform. The Pod Plus 18-30's group were the main beneficiaries however we received many positive reviews from other families and Friends of Pod who enjoyed the interactions and felt less isolated at home.

New - Talking café

June 2020

The Pod received a significant number of new enquiries from new parents needing support, the charity launched a support group for parent carers (of additional needs children) in partnership with Frome Town Council and Health Connectors initially. A consultation is taking place and we have plans to develop the service into a more traditional coffee morning setting.

Other Activities

This year has been unique and has led to many new initiatives;

- The charity collaborated with Frome Town Rotary and produced a free family treasure hunt for Frome families.
- The projects provided a 1-1 text chatroom, supporting young people's mental health and well-being, developing into a 'text to talk' service which continued for many months for a small group. 1-1 chat helped identify what young people and families needed the online offer to look like.
- Pod took part in a Covid-19 community group forum and cascaded information to the Pod community, this culminated in foodbank referrals and delivery, free cinema and open-air theatre tickets for Pod families.
- Pod Plus produced a lockdown recipe book which sold in the local bookshop.
- Families received Window Wanderland packs and created displays and a final Pod collage.
- Pod Plus members accessed a 10-week next steps program with a new volunteer, this project informed the National Lottery funded NDTI Time to Talk project.

The charity did not organise traditional holiday activities but did maintain connections during the holidays. Being online did not stop the projects from inviting visitors in to add value and teach new skills. Visitors included; a Zumba teacher, Openstorytellers sessions and Gallivanting Goblins theatre workshops.

All seasonal activities were cancelled; however, the groups did organise a combined family picnic at Palette and Pasture ice cream parlour, 48 family members came together. As restrictions lift and events begin, it is hoped the Pod community will be able to take part in seasonal fetes, the Frome marathon and other opportunities where the primary focus is to support families and young people to take part, grow in confidence and feel a part of the community.

The weekly bingo run by Pod, (partnership: Cheese and Grain) remains closed although will reopen shortly we hope. The project which supports learning disabled adults, plays a major part in our community engagement both in terms of fundraising but also reducing isolation and supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Presentations this year included; the Rotary who kindly nominated the Pod as their charity of the year, Children in Need Radio interviews for BBC Somerset and a Frome FM interview and discussion on the impact of Covid on the disabled community.

Our impact

'Although 'A' is a relative newcomer he gets so much out of sessions...we have been so impressed with how A was welcomed and settled from the outset and looks forward to sessions. Having everything so organised and with a weekly theme that is made available far in advance is great - it helps us prepare A which in turn helps him get the most out of the meetings'

'B' has loved looking at the tasks set on Facebook and misses Pod clubs a lot. It's meant the world to us as a family to have something that B could feel part of as he's never really been able to join a club like other children who just take it for granted'

'The Pod groups continue to play a vital part in our family, giving enormous support to our kids, as well as confidence, a safe place to let off steam, and a place to feel valued for who they are'

'Other clubs we have tried with 'C' have not been so successful and cause C great anxiety.... they are often run by different staff and it is not unusual that C is stressed when I pick up. C wants to go to Pod and is always happy and relaxed when I collect'

A young person's acrostic poem

*P People having fun
O open to everyone
D doing lots of fun activities*

*P place to hang out
L lots of laughs
U understanding to everybody
S Something for everyone*

A small selection of testimonials from young people and families. The success of the projects is founded on strong relationships with families and young people who are happier, healthier, and more confident as they form friendships and learn to be independent, outside of education where many struggle to be accepted and understood. The charity has an excellent reputation and strong partnerships, other groups consult Pod when planning events, ensuring they are accessible for all families. One of these partnerships led to the free treasure hunt with around 350 mainstream family members benefitting.

It is important to everyone that the children, young people and adults that access the projects have a say in their clubs, they help choose the activities, run their own tuck shop, and during the pandemic, their interview questions and views helped Pod to recruit a new employee on zoom. The charity has grown significantly but has not lost sight of its roots, Pod activities support whole families to be stronger, more confident and to find and use their voice.

Staff and Volunteers

The Charity employs a Part time Charity Manager (18 hrs) and a part time administrator (5hrs) effective August 2020, in addition to sessional workers as follows.

Pod Youth Club	1 Youth Leader / 4 Youth Workers - 1 volunteer
The Zone	1 Youth Leader / 1 Youth Worker - 2 volunteers
Pod Plus	1 Lead (+ administrator) 1 Club Assistant - 3 volunteers
Community volunteers	1 Gold D of E student

The trustees ensure that key policies are in place, reviewed and adhered to, with safeguarding at the top of the agenda. Service delivery is in the skilled hands of employed sessional workers. Day-to-day management and fundraising is undertaken by a part time Charity Manager. Like all small charities the Pod continues to be stretched by demand and the board continues to look for ways to respond to this demand.

Although the Pod does receive invaluable support from volunteers, the charity is unable to run its projects without paid sessional staff who provide consistency and stability for young people and training for volunteers.

Volunteer numbers are reduced due to less workers being required to deliver online support. Pod Youth Club and Zone supported many new children and focused on employees establishing relationships rather than recruiting volunteers. We continue to value volunteers and are very grateful for the hours they provide. Without their contribution of time and energy we would not be able to support as many families as we do. Salaries represent 84% of our annual expenditure this year. (2019/20 – 77%)

Furlough scheme

The charity made use of the furlough scheme in 3 phases. Out of a team of 10, 6 furloughed at some point. Once new delivery methods were working well the charity manager furloughed for three weeks in four in May and June, returning to part furlough from July to October. For a charity heavily led by a founder charity manager, the trustees saw this as an opportunity to step back, create a new administrator post and test contingency systems. Resources were stretched but this was successful, the charity now has a part time administrator. The new role enabled Pod to increase its reach to more families and create a bespoke service for members who needed this. Apart from a couple of shifts in January while the team renewed their consultation with families, all employees have come off furlough this year.

Structure, Governance and Administration

The Charity Manager reports to the board at every trustee meeting; this report provides up to date information on each project, community activities, safeguarding, finance and anything pertinent at the time. Board meetings generally take place in March, June, September & December, this year all meetings (except March) took place using Zoom technology. Trustees liaise and individually meet with the charity manager to discuss actions specific to their area of responsibility.

The Charity Manager line manages the administrator and 3 Club Leaders who in turn provide supervision to their project teams, made up of employees and volunteers.

A membership forum would usually take place alongside the Annual General Meeting in June, however, this year the trustees agreed to cancel the AGM. Although the usual forum did not take place the annual report was made available to all members and families (including potential beneficiaries) who have been provided with multiple opportunities to tell us what is and is not working for them, the teams have adjusted their activities to incorporate the feedback received from families, children, and young people they support.

Administration

Charity Registered address:

C/O Openstorytellers, RISE, Whittox Lane, Frome, BA11 3BY

Banking:

Co-operative bank, Po Box 250, Delf House, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

Payroll: In-house using Brightpay software.

Insurance: A 3-month extension was granted by Zurich because of the Coronavirus pandemic, the insurance policy renewal date is now the 25th February 2022.

Independent Examiner:

A.E Davies, Chartered Accountant, Gables, Wash Lane, Montacute, Somerset, TA15 6XA

Governance

Governing Document:

The charity formed as a community group on the 1st May 2013 and became a registered charity (CIO) with voting members on the 27th March 2015. If the CIO is wound up, the members of the CIO have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities. The number of members in the year ending 2021 is 23 (2020 – 38) The charity has focused on being flexible and adaptable throughout the pandemic and has not charged for 98% of its activities. Our membership is significantly reduced; however, this is not a reflection on capacity or level of support provided.

Trustee Appointments:

The trustee's skillset is regularly reviewed. The members or the charity trustees may at any time appoint a new charity trustee when there is an identified need. An interested trustee is provided with an 'essential guidance on being a trustee' They will attend a trustee meeting before their first appointment; receive a copy of the constitution, latest annual report and statement of accounts.

As a result of the AGM being cancelled in 2020, trustees agreed they would remain in post. In normal circumstances one-third of the charity trustees retire from office at the AGM. If the number of charity trustees is not three or a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one-third shall retire from office. Charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or benefits.

Trustee	Position	Dates acted if not whole year
M Melton		
S Drake	Treasurer	
A Liggatt	Chair	
A Tuffnell	Secretary	
E Wilson		
S Bennett		

Summary of Financial Activities

We always aim to minimize the cost of our services to disadvantaged families however we do acknowledge an income made up of voluntary contributions (weekly 'subs') in the financial reports. Charitable activity income (including fundraising) has significantly reduced during the pandemic due to event cancellations and the focus moving to remote forms of support. In 2020/21 charitable activity income generated £2,296.07 (2019/20 £11,580.93)

Fortunately, the charity maintains excellent relations with its funders and has a good track record with fundraising. Charitable donations and grants given by individuals, groups and grant making bodies totaled £43,203.67 (2019/20 £24,941.00)

The trustees would like to thank all our funders and donors both large and small for their support which has enabled us to develop and expand our services during this most unprecedented year. A full list of donors is presented on page 10 of this report.

The income for the year ending 31 March 2021 totaled £51,058.32 (2020: £36,521.93) against expenditure of £32,200.67 (2020: £40,057.90)

Reserves

The trustees acknowledge the challenges of the current funding climate; increased competition and the unknown implications of Covid-19. The Trustees will continue to monitor the level of unrestricted reserves which should be between £16,200 and £27,000. This represents 3-5 months of the charities annual operating costs in the year ending 2021/22.

The unrestricted reserves at the end of 2020/21 are £17,572.96 In addition to a further £23,311.46 of restricted reserves associated with all three projects and some core costs.

The projected charity costs in 2021/2022 are £65,660. The charity has secured a multi-year grant from Children in Need and the Masonic Charitable Trust in addition to other one-off grants and donations. There is currently a shortfall and fundraising target of at least £25,000 if we are to continue providing and developing essential services for vulnerable children, young people, adults and families.

The Trustees will continue to monitor the fundraising policy and reserves levels during the next financial year.

Declaration

Signed and approved by the board on 29th June 2021.

.......... (Trustee)

Independent examiner's report on the accounts of The Pod

for the year ended 31st March 2021

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and examiner

The Charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

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

Independent examiners statement


In the course of my examination no matter has come to my attention:

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:

To keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the act and

To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act; have not been met or

2. To which, in my opinion attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed		Date	25 th June 2021
Name	Andrew Davies		
Profession	Chartered Accountant		
Address	Gables, Wash Lane, Montacute, Somerset TA15 6XA		

**THE POD
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	TOTAL
INCOME			
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES			
Parent Contributions	799.00		
Membership	132.00		
Bingo	243.25		
Fund raising	1,121.82		
FURLOUGH GRANT		5,558.58	
DONATIONS			
Friends of Frome Hospital	220.00		
Frome Lions	500.00		
Selwood Rotary	500.00	1,000.00	
Leathersellers	1,500.00		
Morland	1,000.00		
Other donations	287.92	470.00	
GRANTS			
SCF Covid Response		3,000.00	
True Colours Trust		5,000.00	
National Lottery		9,482.00	
Children In Need		12,493.75	
SCF Discovery		3,750.00	
Bailey Thomas		1,000.00	
Gosling Foundation		2,500.00	
Local Giving		<u>500.00</u>	
TOTAL INCOME	<u>6,303.99</u>	<u>44,754.33</u>	
EXPENDITURE			
Wages and salary	741.60	26,496.97	
Insurance		493.61	
Telephone	216.00	72.00	
Administration	245.58	430.89	
Equipment	145.64	925.51	
Venue Hire		1,137.50	
Sessional activities	126.62	382.86	
Training	30.00	361.20	
Fundraising		350.00	
Miscellaneous and tuck	<u>44.69</u>		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>1,550.13</u>	<u>30,650.54</u>	
NET INCOME	<u>4,753.86</u>	<u>14,103.79</u>	
REPRESENTED BY:			
Opening Cash at Bank and in hand	12,819.10	9,207.67	22,026.77
Add: Net Income	<u>4,753.86</u>	<u>14,103.79</u>	<u>18,857.65</u>
Closing Cash at Bank and in hand	<u>17,572.96</u>	<u>23,311.46</u>	<u>40,884.42</u>

Signed AA Lygatt

TRUSTEE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED		
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021		
	2019/20	2020/21
INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES		
Tuck shop	702.70	64.50
Contributions	2,874.14	734.50
Membership	276.00	132.00
Bingo	6,044.45	243.25
Childrens festival	10.25	
Marathon	548.13	
Gift aid	98.75	30.00
Mendip Lottery	124.00	440.50
Collection buckets	120.05	
Francis Marathon	111.79	
Silent Disco	538.25	
Amazon smile	11.82	25.38
Makers Market	85.00	
Sales from donated gifts	35.60	124.94
Recipe Book Sales		501.00
Charitable activity - TOTAL	11,580.93	2,296.07
Furlough Reclaim ®		5,558.58
DONATIONS		
Recipe Book Donations ®		
Saputo 240/Rogers 150/Stoney St 50/Rye 30		470.00
Fair Frome		170.00
Friends of Frome Hospital		220.00
Selwood Rotary (1k ®)		1,500.00
Frome Lottery ®	216.00	
Frome Lions		500.00
Leathersellers		1,500.00
Hartfield Trust ®	300.00	
Woodlanders ®	200.00	
Sherborne Classic Cars ®	1,500.00	
Morland	1,000.00	1,000.00
Fryer/Bunce		117.92
GRANTS		
Children in Need ®	9,975.00	12,493.75
Gosling Foundation ®		2,500.00
True Colours Trust ®		5,000.00
Somerset Community Foundation 1.Discovery 2 + Covid®	3,750.00	6,750.00
Frome Town Council ®	2,000.00	
National Lottery Covid response ®		9,482.00
Local Giving ®		500.00
Sobell Foundation	6,000.00	
Baily Thomas ®		1,000.00
® indicates Ringfenced funding		
Grants/Donaton - Total	24,941.00	43,203.67
Total receipts	36,521.93	51,058.32