



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From

Period start date

01 04 2020

To

Period end date

31 03 2021

Section A

Reference and administration details

Charity name

The County Toy Library

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any)

1166245

Charity's principal address

4A Park Square

Kings Heath

Northampton

NN5 7LQ

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Lorraine Elks	Chair		
2	Laura Furr	Board Member		
3	Eve Bond	Co-Secretary		
4	Debra Scott	Co-Secretary		

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address
Bank	HSBC	22 Abington Square, Northampton, NN1 2AN

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Elected at AGM

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- ☐ policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- ☐ the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- ☐ relationship with any related parties;
- ☐ trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

The relief and education of children in the county of Northampton shire for the public benefit by:

- (a) the provision of a not-for-profit lending library of educational, stimulating and age appropriate toys and equipment for babies and children;
- (b) promoting within the county the use and benefit of toy libraries for children, families and communities in such ways as the trustees think fit.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

A full report of the main activities are contained in section D.

Summary:

1. Continuation of key objectives of The County Toy Library for the benefit of the local community
2. Increasing awareness profile and ultimately membership of the library
3. Providing a wider range of high-quality toy and equipment and disposing of old stock in the most environmentally friendly and cost-effective manner possible
4. Increasing funding to enable the provision of a better level of service and to be working forwards becoming self-financing.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- ☐ policy on grantmaking;
- ☐ policy programme related investment;
- ☐ contribution made by volunteers.

Covid risk assessment

Continue to raise funds during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Section D

Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

The County Toy Library was closed this annual report period due to Covid 19 pandemic.

The County Toy Library had it's fourth AGM on 29th September 2020. This gave The County Toy Library the opportunity to reflect on the work undertaken in the previous year. The County Toy Library had positive feedback from the parents/carers who attended and one of these parents is hoping to become a County Toy Library volunteer. The Committee designated the meeting after last year's AGM to talk through the feedback parents/carers had given the committee at the AGM.

The County Toy Library Committee undertook the task to complete a Covid risk assessment and this risk assessment was reviewed at our 6 weekly meetings to ensure it was kept up to date. Our service purchased the safety equipment which was needed to ensure our volunteers/parents/carers were kept safe during this time.

The County Toy Library received grant funds in the sum of £4,234 on the 2nd May 2019. Receiving this grant enabled The County Toy Library to purchase specialist toys and equipment; to promote our services to families/groups involving children with special educational needs and to offer these families/groups free memberships for 1 year. These families/groups also had a monetary voucher to spend on toy hire. The project was due to end on 1st May 2020, however due to the Coronavirus outbreak, The County Toy Library had to temporarily close, therefore the project was brought to an end prematurely. The County Toy Library had 18 families/groups sign up under the scheme equating to a rise of 360% in SEN memberships.

During this year The County Toy Library agreed that a new software was needed as currently, from the viewpoint of the users of the service, the current system is not adequately accessible. There is no digital visibility of the toys and equipment available to hire. This is an outdated and inflexible solution requiring users to physically visit the shop and browse to find items that they want to borrow. Parents/carers/professionals have let The County Toy Library know on several occasions that they would find a click and collect system very useful. This is always been a challenge for our service due to the financial impact of updating our software to a platform that would enable this. Internally, The County Toy Library is also aware of the need to update their database software. The current software is out of date and has not been supported for a number of years. It is limited in terms of its functionality, future stability and is incompatible with currently supported versions of Microsoft Windows.

The new database software would...

- Facilitate a click and collect service for our toys/equipment
- Accept online payments
- Allow online browsing of the library of toys
- Function with current versions of windows
- Provides a more modern, flexible and user-friendly experience for both staff/volunteers and service users
- Enable cloud based backup of systems
- Allow users to manage their account online
- Increase the digital presence of the organisation, allowing it to integrate with social media platforms where it already has a presence, thus extending its reach

These features would make our service more accessible to families, thereby increasing memberships and ultimately, furthering The County Toy Library's key objectives with regard to the provision of stimulating toys and equipment. It would also provide a platform for the organisation that is fit for the future, stable and secure.

This database software would also enable our service to extract data and produce reports. These would enable analysis of loans, which in turn would support the service in becoming more relevant and targeted. Reports and data would also support the library with grant applications and demonstration of success. Obtaining grant money is critical to our ongoing operation and service development. Data for grant applications is extremely important and often without this data a grant application can be declined, something of a catch 22 situation in an organisation with limited data gathering capability.

The new database will...

- Draw in more users of the service and therefore benefit more children and their families
- Make it easier to access and use the service
- Assist foster carers in more quickly finding and securing the toy/equipment they need at short notice
- Continue to support a sustainability agenda through the reuse of toys/equipment, reducing plastic waste and landfill
- Introducing the value of sharing to a wider audience and promote the idea of looking after things that belong to others
- Helping to develop a sense of community and reducing the importance of ownership
- Help to keep the shop open and operational for future users
- Our service will encourage parents/carers/professionals to book online, particularly relevant at the current time of COVID-19.

Therefore, The County Toy Library will be applying for a grant for the Lend Engine System which will pay for three years subscription, Microsoft Windows 10 Pro and to pay volunteer to complete the transfer of data plus trailing the system.

During this time The County Toy Library has been in contact with Re:Store Northampton. Re:store seeks to support vulnerable people within the Borough of Northampton, through practical means. The charity aims to offer people a hand-up rather than just a hand out, and does this through equipping individuals and

families with skills for independent living. These aims are in line with The County Library's objectives, therefore working together brings greater outcomes for vulnerable families.

The County Toy Library would like to work collaboratively with Re:store Northampton. The projects which The County Toy Library would like to be involve in within Re:store are: the Food Bank, the Nest and the Growbaby. The food bank distributes food to those who have difficulty purchasing enough to avoid hunger. The Nest is a friendly and welcoming baby and toddler group for under 5's, with a fun mix of activities to encourage health and wellbeing. Growbaby is a family focused drop in for families who require practical help with children's clothing as well as additional support needs. The session provides families with a bundle of children's clothing and other essentials for children aged 0-5.

The County Toy Library would like to provide 30 free memberships and £30 in monetary vouchers to families accessing these projects at Re:store. These families will be able to access a year's free membership at The County Toy Library and then £30 to spend on toys/equipment during the membership. When the first year has ended these families will get a half price membership for The County Toy Library for a second year.

These memberships and the monetary vouchers would enable children to play, learn and develop. They would support early years education, with the hope that this sets them on a stronger footing to enable them to continue this development throughout their schooling life. These children will feel included with their peers as they will have access to age appropriate toys/equipment.

Parents/carers will be able to support their child(ren) by playing with them, which will in turn build positive relationships within the family. Parents/carers will be able to use the money they might have spent on toys/equipment on other important items for the family. Parents/carers will have less guilt as their child/ern will have the toys/equipment which they need to learn.

The family worker, staff and volunteers at Re:store will refer families as and when they feel a family could benefit from a free membership and monetary voucher.

The County Toy Library is aware that parents/carers who access Re:store are facing financial challenges and may struggle to feed and/or clothe their children. Therefore, it is logical to assume that these parents/carers may not have access to age appropriate toys/equipment to support their child/ren's education and development. We feel that there are benefits to the collaborative working proposed and mutual referral to each other's services.

The Chair of The County Toy Library proposed this project to Re:store and the response was very positive as they felt that there is a definite need for this project. They thought that this project would be a positive addition to the services they are already offering to families. Since the Covid pandemic Re:store have been busier than ever, providing food, clothing, toys and gifts to over 1500 children and adults in financial crisis through lockdown. Thereby indicating that there is a definite need for this project owing to the number of vulnerable families accessing Re:store.

The County Toy Library is currently waiting for Northampton Borough Council to open up their grant applications to proceed with this project.

The chair of The County Toy Library attended a training session, "Measuring Social Impact in November 2020". This training highlighted that there is now a requirement amongst funders and commissioners for voluntary and community organisations to provide measurable evidence of the impact or change the activities they provide makes to communities and individuals. It enforced that in recent years there has been a shift from simply counting inputs and outputs (for example the number of people using a service) to measuring outcomes (the difference that service has made to people). This has proved useful and has impacted the way in which our recent grant applications have been written.

The County Toy Library collected donations of unused/surplus toys and items donated by the public/members. These items (if of no use in the library) were sold online, generating funds of £2,450.

Section D

Achievements and performance

The County Toy Library signed up to Amazon Smile, which gives The County Toy Library payment of a small percentage of those funds spent on Amazon Smile by it's supporters. £65.63 has been raise this year - double the payment of the previous year.

The County Toy Library have raised £321 from the Northampton lottery, an increased from £207 last year.

The County Toy Library were successful in applying for the Discretionary Fund from Northampton Borough Council. Our service received £5,000. This has been vital for rent payments, Covid safety equipment and utility and running costs during the pandemic.

The County Toy Library policies were reviewed during the year and updated where needed. This includes: safeguarding, health and safety, volunteering, DBS, complaints, lone working, data protection, equal opportunity, equality and diversity. The risk assessments which have been updated are: health and safety and lone working.

The County Toy Library have developed a volunteer handbook, which includes what our service has to offer a volunteer, the recruitment process and key policies.

The yearly fire alarm was inspected in August 2020.

The County Toy Library completed its fourth Annual return for the Charity Commission in January this year. This included filing our accounts and Annual report.

Our website has been kept up to date.

The County Toy Library Facebook page at the end of March 2019 had 1,737 members and at the end of March 2021 had 1,944. Photos are regularly posted and parents/carers questions answered.

Section E

Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves	None
Details of any funds materially in deficit	None

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- ☐ the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- ☐ how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;

- ☐ investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

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Section F

Other optional information

The chair wishes to thank all the committee members and volunteers for their hard work and dedication over the last year, and it is the chair's view that with your continued assistance, The County Toy Library will not only continue to provide a much needed service but will expand and grow with the needs of the local community.

Thank you

Section G

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)

LElks

EBond

Full name(s)

Lorraine Elks

Eve Bond

Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)

Chair

Secretary

Date

28/9/21



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name
The County Toy Library

No (if any)
1166245

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

Period start date
01.04.20

To

Period end date
31.03.21

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Activities for generating funds	7,836	-	-	7,836	14,921
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	7,836	-	-	7,836	14,921
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	7,836	-	-	7,836	14,921
A3 Payments					
Insurance	778	-	-	778	770
Wages	130	-	-	130	3,460
Costs of charitable activities	925	-	-	925	5,882
Water and Sewerage	142	-	-	142	66
Telephone	489	-	-	489	463
Light and heating	414	-	-	414	587
Costs of generating voluntary income	-	-	-	-	-
Printing, postage, stationery and computer supplies	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	2,878	-	-	2,878	11,228
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	2,878	-	-	2,878	11,228
Net of receipts/(payments)	4,958	-	-	4,958	3,693
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	10,471	-	-	10,471	6,778
Cash funds this year end	15,429	-	-	15,429	10,471

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

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash in bank	14,270	1,159	-
			-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	14,270	1,159	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	Agreement Error	OK
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
	Lelks Ebond	Lorraine Elks Eve Bond	29.9.21 29.9.21	