

Literacy Volunteers
(Registered charity, number 1167357)
Financial statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021

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**Literacy Volunteers
Trustees' annual report
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

Full name Literacy Volunteers

Organisation type Charitable incorporated organisation

Registered charity number 1167357

Principal address Woodthorpe Grange, Woodthorpe Drive, Nottingham, NG5 4HA

Trustees

Julia Gunn, Chair
Christine Wroe, Vice Chair
Alan Merrett, Treasurer
Gaynor Preston

Peter Furnell
Patricia Harman
Angela Beere
Bridget Riches, until 02/12/20

Independent examiner

John O'Brien, employee of Community Accounting Plus, Units 1 & 2 North West, 41 Talbot Street, Nottingham, NG1 5GL

Governance and management

The charity is operated under the rules of the CIO – Association constitution registered 25 May 2016.

New trustees are drawn from existing volunteers, member organisations and external candidates with an interest in the work and objectives of Literacy Volunteers. The Board of Trustees must have a minimum of five trustees and a maximum of twelve trustees at any one time.

Prospective trustees must preferably have a skill which will support the Charity. Once they have indicated their interest in the role of trustee a discussion is arranged with one of the team/trustees.

Following this discussion they will be invited to attend a scheduled Board of Trustees meeting after which, if they are a suitable/eligible appointment they will be invited to join the Board but neither party is under any obligation at this stage. Induction and training for the role is provided. An enhanced DBS check is carried out and their eligibility is checked against Charity Commission guidance.

At the AGM one third of existing trustees must step down in rotation and the trustees who have been appointed for the longest period since their last appointment/reappointment must stand down. Following this the vacancies created on the Board of Trustees are then filled at the AGM. Trustees can stand for re-election and other members can be nominated and elected. We operate under the guidance of our constitution adopted on 25th May 2016 when we became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and also in the spirit of our original constitution adopted in May 1996 when we came into existence as Literacy Volunteers in Nottinghamshire Schools.

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During 2020/21 we have focused on recruiting trustees who have experience in schools and child development and two new trustees were appointed in March 2021. We currently have three vacancies and we are actively seeking a Vice Chair to allow for succession planning.

Objectives and activities

To advance the education of children, adults and families by helping those experiencing difficulties in acquiring literacy, communication and social skills.

Public benefit statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit

Literacy Volunteers aims to develop and promote speech, language, communication, confidence, self-esteem, literacy, strategies for learning in the home and a genuine interest in reading for pleasure. We seek to advance the education of children in particular, by helping those experiencing difficulties in acquiring literacy skills. We do this in primary schools and early years' settings and we use a number of evidence based programmes and projects.

Firstly, in our primary schools' volunteers programme, we recruit, train, vet and support volunteers to support the development of reading confidence of children.

We are also developing and have begun delivering our Story Sharers project, to share the love of books and stories with children. The project places volunteers in schools with a story sack to share with children.

Finally, we also deliver our Learning to Love Books programme - our unique storytelling, songs and rhymes sessions - in libraries, schools and early years' settings such as nurseries and children's centres. This programme has grown considerably during this year with support from the Small Steps Big Changes, A Better Start Initiative.

The children benefit from our programmes that help to tackle the social disadvantage caused by poor literacy. Children participate for a variety of reasons e.g. they may be those whose engagement with reading is poor; they may be withdrawn and uncommunicative; they may have English as a second language; they may be finding it difficult to cope in the classroom environment and perhaps aren't being read to at home. All of these reasons mean that they may be at risk of disengaging with education or not achieving their full potential, all of which would mean that their life chances would be negatively affected. The children we work with show an improvement in their reading progress, but also in their confidence, concentration, communication, love of reading and self-esteem.

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The families that attend our Storytelling, Stay and Play sessions/courses want the best start for their children in terms of early literacy development. They may be families who live in disadvantaged parts of our City; they may have experienced the effects of inter- generational poverty and disadvantage; they may be suffering from the effects of disadvantage and poor aspiration; they may be from newly arrived communities and want to use the sessions to support their own confidence with the English language as well as that of their children.

What we know is, that when families become engaged with their children's education, the whole family benefits by:

- having an improved understanding of the positive outcomes associated with early literacy skills;
- feeling more confident in engaging in early literacy development through play and storytelling;
- improving their own skills in storytelling and engaging more freely in singing and fun activities with their children;
- establishing and understanding how to build and sustain positive early relationships and learn the skills their child will need as they grow and start school;
- learning how to join the library and being able to access and choose the resources effectively;
- becoming part of a group of children and parents who can form informal support networks outside the sessions.

Children will benefit by:

- having fun and developing socially, emotionally, physically, imaginatively and creatively before they start formal schooling;
- becoming better prepared for the transition into school.

Our volunteers are drawn from local communities; they are often (but not always) older people; can be retired and can be at risk of social exclusion. They benefit from inclusion in community life and from the intergenerational contact that can have a positive effect on social disadvantage. They can also be younger people, are often students and are seeking to develop skills to either enter or move on in the world of work. As such our activities greatly benefit the public.

Summary of the main achievements during the period

This year has been an extraordinary year in that the coronavirus pandemic has had a massive negative impact on our face-to-face work, both in schools and in our early years' sessions. In the light of the Covid restrictions we have adapted our early years' programme. Face-to-face sessions have been replaced by online Zoom story sessions and the delivery of Storyboxes directly to families. Each Storybox contained a book, flashcards for learning new words and parents' activity sheets to have fun and support the home learning environment. We extended this service and regularly delivered Storyboxes to families across Nottinghamshire. We have explored additional sources of funding to extend this successful programme.

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However, our primary school sessions suffered greatly due to the coronavirus restrictions, and for almost the entire year our volunteers were unable to attend school and support the children in their usual way. However, we kept in contact with schools and volunteers throughout the period to ensure that we maintained these valuable links whilst we tried to manage the problems associated with continuous lockdowns and changes of policy. We prepared new risk assessments to ensure that we could start to re-engage with schools as soon as they were able to welcome us back.

We also developed a Primary School Storybox project and 300 children and families benefited from this scheme. In partnership with The National Literacy Trust and Read On Nottingham we also delivered over 1,000 book boxes to families in Nottingham City.

We have spent some time learning new IT skills to enable some of our activity to take place online and we converted our training to online sessions and continued to recruit volunteers. In a small number of schools our volunteers were able to continue to support children in online sessions.

We updated our recruitment and vetting procedures. The staff team all completed Safer Recruitment training with the NSPCC and we amended our processes in line with the stated requirements.

Towards the end of the period of this Annual Report some of our volunteers had just returned to schools. Our current task is to recruit new volunteers to meet our challenging list of vacancies in schools - for whom the need to support children's reading is a priority given the fact that many children have lost valuable school time and fallen behind in their learning and development.

Other achievements in this year include: -

- We ended the year with a deficit which undid the good work we had done in the prior year in building up our unrestricted cash reserves, but it has not exhausted our funds so we have still been able to approach the new financial year with some optimism;
- Between 1 April 2020 and 30 March 2021, we continued to provide literacy support to over 1500 families;
- We have worked with our Board to recruit two new trustees;
- We have continued to hold volunteer network meetings online;
- We have identified and engaged with new community and corporate partnerships whilst continuing to strengthen our existing relationships with funders.

Literacy Volunteers

We have had excellent support from the following people and organisations:

Mr Brian O'Neill
Ms Tracy Terry
Mr. Van de Castele
Carol Smith and HSCB Bank
Patricia Harman
Charlotte Malik, Hub Manager, Read On Nottingham National Literacy Trust
Lynne Towle, Project Officer, Literacy Champions Nottingham, National Literacy Trust
Jane Streeter, The Bookcase, Lowdham
Mrs Liz Duffell, St Peter's Cross Keys Academy, Farndon
Nottingham City Libraries
The Nottinghamshire Community Foundation
The Sir John Eastwood Foundation
The Jessie Spencer Trust
The Jones 1986 Trust
The J N Derbyshire Trust
The Thomas Farr Charity
Craig Sharples and Browne Jacobson Charitable Trust
Mapperley Rotary Club
Nottinghamshire County Council
Nottingham City Council
The Forman Hardy Charitable Trust
The National Emergencies Trust Coronavirus Appeal Programme
Usbourne Books

Financial review

This year was an especially difficult one for the charity. We lost most of our subscriptions income, as schools closed due to the pandemic, and prevented us placing volunteers. Income from grants and other sources was also constrained as fundraising opportunities became more difficult to pursue during the lockdown periods. In these periods our focus shifted to non-school based project work - the various 'early years' and story box initiatives. These generated some much needed income and gainful employment for staff and volunteers in the latter half of the year. Nevertheless, total receipts were approximately half of those for the previous year.

We reduced our spending as best we could in the circumstances, but even with cost savings we ended the year with a loss of (£22,935). This undid the good work we had done in the prior year in building up our unrestricted cash reserves, but it has not exhausted our funds. We enter the next period with cautious optimism, although we recognise that there are still tough times ahead. At the end of 2020 we had managed to create a small surplus which we had hoped to invest in a new website and some hours to pay for a specialist to help us look at longer term funding options. However, as the year drew to a close it was becoming clear that there would be a financial issue with regards to the outbreak of the Coronavirus and we were not wrong with this forecast.

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The charity's policy on reserves

The Board recognises its responsibility in maintaining its reserves to include the required redundancy payments due to staff in the event of the closure of the Charity; to cover any subscriptions we would need to return to schools if we were unable to supply them with a volunteer and to cover the costs incurred in any closure period-likely to amount to a quarter's running costs. This is good practice for any charity.

This year, the trustees have designated the sum of £20,000 as a reserve to cover our liabilities regarding staff redundancy payments should closure become necessary. They also feel it is prudent to hold the sum of one term's salary expenditure and a small amount of running costs to finance general expenditure during a closure period, this figure has been agreed as £21,000. We feel it is also prudent to allocate a sum to cover refunds of subscriptions if we are unable to supply them with a volunteer. We have agreed that sum should be £3,000.

The target for total reserves have therefore been adjusted to £44,000.

The trustees will always strike a balance between trying to retain some level of reserves in case we can't meet our fundraising target and the need to reinvest in services that will have an effect on the issue we seek to support i.e. the promotion of reading for pleasure and the benefit this has in raising literacy levels in children. Whilst the trustees feel that some limited reserves are needed, because fundraising is a challenge and reserves are needed to cover potential shortfalls in fundraising targets, they regret that they can't plan to do this in this financial year.

All children in our area of benefit should leave primary school reading well for their age.

Finally it is important to note that the trustees review their reserves annually (following a review of the charity's position and the external environment) in order to account for changes in either area.

Financial risks

We have decided that the following risks are worth noting:

1. The County Council Local Improvement Scheme grant constitutes a significant proportion of our income, the loss of these funds would mean that our cash flow projection would be severely affected and the necessity for actions to mitigate against this loss should be considered.
2. Small Steps Big Changes have indicated that they will support the project in the next three years but as yet the level of funding hasn't been determined and this requires monitoring in terms of salary commitments and our reserves position. The 2021-2022 budget, as yet, doesn't include costs or income for this project from September 2021.

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3. We have previously concluded that we cannot pass on the full costs of recruiting and training volunteers to the schools we support. The evidence we have shows that, although schools will tolerate some small increases in the subscriptions they pay, school budgets will not cover the charge we would have to make if we applied full cost recovery (even though the service is highly rated). As such we have, for the last twenty years fundraised to keep these costs as low as we possibly can. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to raise this shortfall via our traditional routes of seeking donations from other trusts and charities.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed Julia Gunn
Julia Gunn, Trustee

Date 5/10/21

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of
Literacy Volunteers
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Literacy Volunteers (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

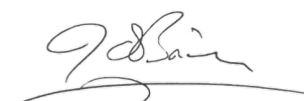
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

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

Signed  Date 05/10/2021
John O'Brien MSc, FCCA, FCIE
Employee of Community Accounting Plus

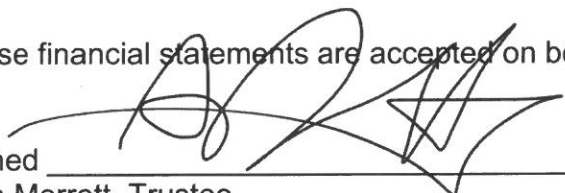
Literacy Volunteers
Receipts & payments account
for the year ended 31 March 2021

2020				2021
Total		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Funds		Funds	Funds	Funds
£	Note	£	£	£
	Receipts			
85014	Grants & donations	2 42902	37970	80872
3961	Fundraising	-	-	-
54684	Subscriptions	5102	-	5102
-	Fees	1250	-	1250
<u>143659</u>	Total receipts	<u>49254</u>	<u>37970</u>	<u>87224</u>
	Payments			
12300	Activities & materials	100	24026	24126
419	Advertising	-	-	-
112	DBS fees	53	-	53
17	Equipment, repairs & renewals	437	-	437
660	Independent examination fee	678	-	678
937	Insurance	1174	-	1174
994	Payroll service	979	-	979
7794	Professional fees & artists	646	816	1462
358	Publications & subscriptions	268	-	268
81028	Salaries, NI & pension	51531	27514	79045
1114	Stationery & office supplies	62	-	62
155	Sundry payments	-	-	-
313	Telephone, internet & postage	473	180	653
3217	Training & support	477	-	477
7116	Travel & subsistence	450	56	506
880	Volunteer resources	239	-	239
<u>117414</u>	Total payments	<u>57567</u>	<u>52592</u>	<u>110159</u>
26245	Net receipts/(payments)	(8313)	(14622)	(22935)
74730	Cash funds at start of this period	86587	14388	100975
-	Transfers between funds	(234)	234	-
<u>100975</u>	Cash funds at end of this period	<u>78040</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>78040</u>

Literacy Volunteers
Statement of assets and liabilities
at 31 March 2021

2020			2021
£	Cash assets	Note	£
100916	Bank accounts		77977
59	Cash in hand		63
<u>100975</u>			<u>78040</u>
	Other monetary assets		
78	Prepayment - Insurance		98
<u>78</u>			<u>98</u>
	Assets retained for the charity's own use		
	General equipment.		
	Liabilities		
(2828)	Creditors	3	(2045)
<u>(2828)</u>			<u>(2045)</u>

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the charity by:

Signed 
 Alan Merrett, Trustee

Dated 4/10/21

Literacy Volunteers
Notes to the accounts
for the year ended 31 March 2021

1. Receipts & payments accounts

Receipts and payments accounts contain a summary of money received and money spent during the period and a list of assets and liabilities at the end of the period. Usually, cash received and cash spent will include transactions through bank accounts and cash in hand.

2. Grants & donations

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
Sir John Eastwood Foundation	1000	-	1000
The Jessie Spencer Trust	5000	-	5000
Nottinghamshire County Council	17500	-	17500
The National Emergencies Trust Coronavirus Appeal Programme		5514	5514
Small Steps Big Changes	-	17008	17008
Browne Jacobson Charitable Trust	1400	-	1400
The Thomas Farr Charity	2000	-	2000
The National Literacy Trust	-	15448	15448
Usborne Books	750	-	750
The Forman Hardy Charitable Trust	500	-	500
HMRC JRS	13637	-	13637
Sundry grants & donations	1115	-	1115
	<u>42902</u>	<u>37970</u>	<u>80872</u>

3. Creditors

	£
Independent examination fee	678
Salaries, NI & pension (HMRC)	1367
	<u>2045</u>

4. Trustees' remuneration

Trustees received no expenses, remuneration or benefits in this period.

5. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in this period.

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6. Funds analysis

	Opening balance £	Receipts (Payments) £	Transfers £	Closing balance £
Restricted funds				
Learning to Love Books (SSBC3)	7197	- (7197)	-	-
Family & Community Learning	512	-	(512)	-
Sneinton Stay & Play	2595	- (2227)	(368)	-
Story Sharers	4084	- (4084)	-	-
Doorstep to Digital	-	15448 (15448)	-	-
Primary Story Boxes	-	5514 (5514)	-	-
Learning to Love Books (SSBC4)	-	17008 (18122)	1114	-
	14388	37970	(52592)	234
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	86587	49254 (57567)	(234)	78040
	86587	49254	(57567)	(234)
				78040

The transfers from the Family & Community Learning and Sneinton Stay & play funds to the General fund relates to activities which have ceased, and the release of any restrictions on the use of these funds.

The transfer from the General fund to the Learning to Love Books (SSBC4) is to cover the deficit on this activity.

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Learning to Love Books (SSBC3 & SSBC4), Family & Community Learning, and Sneinton Stay & Play – to run our Story Telling Stay and Play courses called “Learning to Love Books and Reading”.

Story Sharers - we recruit and train volunteers who go into schools and early year’s settings to read stories, poems and fiction and promote the love of books and reading to children individually or in groups.

Doorstep to Digital – to learn new IT skills to enable some of our activity to take place online.

Primary Story Boxes - programme to deliver Storyboxes directly to families.

Each Storybox contained a book, flashcards for learning new words and parents’ activity sheets to have fun and support the home learning environment.

7. Glossary of terms

Creditors: These are amounts owed by the charity, but not paid during the accounting period.

Prepayments: These are services that the charity has paid for in advance, but not used during the accounting period.

Restricted funds: These are funds given to the charity, subject to specific restrictions set by the donor, but still within the general objects of the charity.