

**Ecole des Copains**  
**Trustee's report – Academic year: Aug 2022 – Jul 2023**

May 2024

### **Introduction and background**

École des Copains (EdC) is a charity created in June 2016, to promote the French language and French culture amongst bilingual families, and families wanting to make French part of their daily lives. A committee of volunteers, alongside the core support team (administrator, bookkeeper) support the teaching team & librarian to oversee the running of EdC. This report covers the period of the year from the date of our last AGM in Aug 2022 to July . 2023

### **The Academic Year 2022/2023**

This year has been marked by our imminent departure from Hilden Grange in July 2023. Finding a new school was a big challenge given that we had been established at Hilden grange for over a decade (previously as Petite Ecole Kentoise Tonbridge), with a very competitive rental rate. We initially focussed our search around Tonbridge and Hildenborough, but it soon became apparent that schools within those areas were too small, out of budget (given the recent energy price rises), or not available. We then cast the net wider, and found Beechwood school in Tunbridge Wells, which shares many of the same values, and our passion for promoting languages to their students. We have been fortunate to secure this location at a good rate, which should set us in good stead for future years.

Beechwood School will provide us with a stable base where both our members from the Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells area as well as those from further afield can reach EdC easily. The school's headmaster shares our passion for languages, and we hope that this will be the start of a fruitful relationship between EdC and Beechwood with some collaborative projects together.

The start of the academic year was also marked with a recruitment drive for teachers and teaching assistant positions. **We are always in need of teachers and teaching assistants, so please let us know if you or anyone you know can be on our list of contacts for teaching staff.**

### **Teaching highlights:**

- A new programme, the Alpha method, which leverages phonics as learnt by our children in their English schools has had much success this year. This method has allowed the children to make excellent progress in their reading, and also writing. Thank you to Helene Stevens for introducing this and to the teachers for continuing to support it
- The playgroup has seen a rise in the number of students. The group boasts various activities such as messy play, themed activities, e.g. playdough or using leaves and twigs around the school, and learning through songs, dance and rhythms. This group also provides a network of parents who are trying to raise bilingual children
- We have also introduced reading support, which is run by volunteer parents, to give additional 1:1 support to our students who need it the most. Thank you to all volunteer parents

- The first secondary class, Les tigres, Leida's class, have made some fantastic posters on the French overseas territory – New Caledonia, which is now published on our website
- Each year, all our year groups are given the opportunity to make a Christmas cards for elderly pensioners in France, which really cheers them up
- Curriculum reviews - each year, we have at least one meeting amongst the teaching staff to allow us to re-evaluate our teaching method and delivery, and to harmonise our approach based on the progress made by the students. Our last meeting in June has allowed us to share what has worked well, and to prepare and refine our delivery of the curriculum for next year. This has allowed us over the years to see progress in our classes and to raise the bar of what we expect of both our students and teachers
- Observing classes also allows us to provide feedback to the teachers as to what they are doing well as well as provide constructive feedback
- We are pleased to report that all our teaching staff have pledged to continue our journey with us at Beechwood. We are grateful for their continuous commitment to our school

#### **Events and other highlights:**

- We have again this year been able to give back to our community with EdC funded events: Galettes des Rois, easter egg hunt, summer fête
- We have restyled our website with complimentary information, and wish to showcase a few of the projects the classes have been working on. Please look out for further updates via the newsletter
- The safeguarding policy has been updated this year. It is signposted on the website

#### **Recognition and thank you's**

EdC would not exist without all the people who believe in our cause and help make it a reality – and I would like to take the time to thank all of our teams - volunteers and teaching staff

#### **Trustees and committee members (the Committee)**

Our team of trustees work behind the scenes, and share the load, together with the administrator (Koko) and the curriculum lead's (Hélène Stevens) with matters such as: insurance, website maintenance, hire agreement, organising events including the upcoming School Fête, grants application from the French authorities, safeguarding including DBS checks.

We have had three new trustees, elected in June 2022:

- I (**Rachel Wallis**) have taken the role of chair since June 2022. I have two children attending EdC: Sophie in Hélène Moon's class and Louis in Lucy's playgroup class.

*I, Rachel, am happy to remain Chair for the next academic year*

- Gail Carmarans Catterick, our secretary, has 3 children - the family has spent a number of years in France, and would like to contribute to our bilingual community

*Gail is happy to remain the Secretary for the next academic year*

- Karima Blackman is our treasurer. Her daughter Khloe attends Hélène Moon's class.

*Karima will step down from her position as treasurer. **Thank you Karima for stepping in as our treasury to ensure the survival of our organisation.***

The following trustees have carried on supporting the daily functioning of the EdC

- Emilie Dupuy (events lead). Emilie has been organising and coordinating EdC events such as Tonton Gilles, Galette des rois, Easter raffles. She is also on hand most Saturday mornings at the school as a friendly face to support families or teachers as and when needed. Her daughter Marylou is in Olivia's class

*Emilie is happy to remain the Events lead for the next academic year*

- Julie Costa: Julie has been supporting EdC as a trustee for a number of years, designing our posters promoting various events or recruitment drive, as well as helping with the grant application with STAFE. Julie is Leon's mum in Helene Moon's class

*Julie will step down EdC from her position as trustee. **Thank you Julie for your many years of supporting EdC in various roles.***

- Aurelie Ander has been supporting the team as a trustee. She has stepped in to cover absences on Saturday mornings and helped for different events. Aurelie is Charlie's mum in Helene Moon's class

- *Aurelie is happy to remain trustee for the next academic year*

- Stephanie Ramos is our teacher liaison. She has been ensuring communication between the committee and the teachers during the year. Her role is to ensure good communication between the committee and the curriculum lead. She is the mum to Leo in Helene Moon's class and Maxime in Nadia D's class.

*Stephanie is happy to remain Teacher Liaison for the next academic year*

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the trustees for their hard work and dedication to keep EdC functioning as a well-oiled organisation. Joining the EdC as a trustee continues to be a great opportunity to support our wonderful teachers and teaching assistants who are the soul of the school.

### **School community and summary**

In 22/23, the EdC community included some 78 families, amounting to up to 114 children and 6 adults, attending 11 classes and a playgroup every Saturday. The team comprises 11 teachers, 4 assistants, a playgroup leader, a librarian, an administrator & now bookkeeper, a curriculum lead and the Committee.

### **Finance summary**

It is difficult to provide a complete analysis knowing that revenue and expenditure items have not necessarily been allocated in the same way as in previous years. We are putting in place a system which should allow a more detailed analysis from next year. The year closed with an additional reserve of over £18k, which is more than the previous year.

1) There has been a significant drop in rental costs, simply due to the fact that HildenGrange's invoices were not received before the closing date of the accounts.

2) We also received a donation from an organisation, of around £7k, which we had not received the previous year. So, apart from this pending expenditure (1) and this exceptional entry (2), the year ended with an amount equivalent to the previous year.

Inputs and outputs are grouped into the positions below:

Bookkeeping	-£960.00
Events	-£462.93
Fees	-£449.76
Fundraising	£479.20
Galettes	-£300.00
Gilles	£543.46
Insurance	-£362.32
Interest	£53.65
Rent	-£500.00
Sponsorship	£6,421.37
Stationary	-£981.12
Summer Fete	-£793.55
Teaching	-£32,155.99
Tuition	£43,675.83
Membership	£4,070.00

### **Fundraising, donations & grants**

We have been able to raise £543.36 thanks to Tonton Gilles, family donations and the book fair.

For next year, we are putting in place procedures to allocate bursaries to families who need it, renewable on an annual basis, to ensure that we support those who need additional financial support. This year, the trustees have approved bursaries for two families.

We have been fortunate to be granted two grants of 6952€ (£5930) (AEFE) and £491 (569€ - STAFE) to renew our book stock. This should allow us to keep fees for the upcoming year mostly unchanged while giving a small uptick in the rate paid to both teachers and teaching assistants

### **Conclusion**

The EdC is a unique community that aims to promote the use and love of the French language and French culture. Thanks to the work of the Committee, the teachers, support team and, critically, the support of our Members, the EdC has had a good year, despite some key challenges.

The EdC is turning a new page in its history as we move to Beechwood school, and I am sure we will all work together to ensure that the EdC goes from strength to strength.

Section A                      Statement of financial activities  
Descriptions by natural category

Incoming resources (Note 3)

Donations, legacies and Grants  
Income resources from charitable activities  
Donations adjust from previous years  
Other income

Total incoming resources  
Resources expended (Notes 4-7)

cost of charitable activities  
Governance cost management and administration cost

Total resources expended  
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers  
Gross transfers between funds  
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before other recognised gains/(losses)  
Other recognised gains/(losses)  
Gains and losses on revaluation of fixed assets for the charity's own use  
Gains and losses on investment assets  
Net movement in funds  
Total funds brought forward  
Total funds carried forward

Charity Name  
Ecole des Copains  
Annual accounts for the period  
Period start date

08/01/22 To

Note	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds
	£	£
	F01	F02
	-	-
		479 -
		47799 -
	-	-
		6965 -
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
S01		55244 -
	-	-
		30005 -
		6961 -
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
S02		36966 -
S03		18278 -
S04	-	-
S05		18278 -
S06	-	-
S07	-	-
S08		18278 -
S09	-	-
S10		18278 -

Charity No (if any) 1167503 CC39a

Period end date 07/31/23

Endowment funds £ F03	Total this year £ F04	Total last year £ F05
-	-	-
-	479	2014
-	47799	50763
-	-	8500
-	6965	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	55244	61277
-	-	-
-	30005	34420
-	6961	21501
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	36966	55920
-	18278	5357
-	-	-
-	18278	5357
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	18278	5357
-	-	-
-	18278	6909



**CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Independent examiner's  
report on the accounts**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Ecole des Copains

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31st July 2023

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1167503

**Set out on pages**

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 / 07 / 2023.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed 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 material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

**Signed:**

**Date:**

24.05.24

**Name:**

ANTHONY MCNAMARA



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

M.A.A.T.

Address:

12 BELL ROAD

ENFIELD

MIDDX. EN1 3JZ

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32,  
Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for  
examiners).