

Ecole des Copains
Chairman's report – Academic year: May 2023 – Jul 2024

Rachel Wallis

1. Introduction and background

École des Copains (EdC) is a charity created in June 2016, to promote the French language and francophone culture amongst bilingual families. The school creates a community where the practice of French is made part of the families' daily lives. A committee of volunteers, alongside the core support team (administrator & curriculum lead) 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 July 2023 to September 2024.

2. The Academic Year 2023/2024

This year has been our first year at our new school Beechwood school in Tunbridge Wells. We have been welcomed with open arms, and the team at Beechwood has worked with us to ensure that we felt at home each Saturday.

Key highlights this year are our boosted efforts to encourage early reading and writing amongst our younger pupils as well as the introduction of Librarika which is helping the librarian and the team track our stock better, and automate reminders for the returns of books. We also increased the cultural events with a show, and increased parent participation via project exposition and the school fete.

The start of the academic year 2024/2025 has also seen some changes for our teaching and teaching assistant teams. **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. We also need your help as members to promote EdC to anyone from the francophone community (or any super multilinguals!) to help us grow our numbers, as we are down on numbers compared to previous years with a rising cost base.**

3. Changes to constitution of the charity

We are proposing amendments to the following resolutions at the November 2024 AGM. Our constitution, also known as a governing document, is a legal document that outlines the rules and structure of a charity. It provides for a rulebook that helps trustees and other interested parties understand how the charity is run. The constitution has not been changed since its inception in 2016, and therefore has a number of outdated clauses. The charity commission now allows trustees to provide certain paid services to the charity as long as due diligence is done to ensure that payment is in the charity's best interest, and any conflicts of interests are identified. Therefore, we are proposing to amend Section 6.1.1 to allow trustees to propose their paid services. An example use case is where a trustee can become part of the teaching team on a long-term basis.

6.1 General provisions

6.1.1 No trustee or connected person may:

- (a) buy or receive any goods or services from the CIO on terms preferential to those applicable to members of the public;
- (b) sell goods, **services**, or any interest in land to the CIO; (**Removal of term services**)
- (c) be employed by, or receive any remuneration from, the CIO;
- (d) receive any other financial benefit from the CIO,

Section 6.2.2 then permits the supply of services as per section 185 to 188 of the Charities Act 2011

4. Treasurers report

EdC's financial report is provided as an appendix to the Chair's report. The finances of EdC are still sound, made possible by grants we received in previous years, but rising outgoing costs mean we have made an operating loss of £3,443 for 2023/2024 (excluding carry over expenses from previous years). Our budget therefore needs to be reviewed more closely to ensure that our school's future is not put in peril. We will therefore be reducing several expense lines as per the treasurer's report. The Treasurer report goes into a lot more details with figures.

The loss is due to the introduction of the increasing costs to stationery, a decrease in the number of families and students attending the school and a curriculum review programme which was introduced to ensure smoother transition for pupils in certain years.

4.1 What can you do?

- Carry on talking about EdC to the francophone community around you
- We will shortly send out pamphlets where we need parents to reach out to their current schools to promote EdC
- If you wish to sponsor part of/a particular project, take a look at the budget for the year ahead and get in touch with our treasurer/committee - comite@ecoledescopains.com

4.2 Fundraising, donations & bursaries

We have been able to raise £1129 thanks to Tonton Gilles, family donations and the book fair. We are also grateful to a private company for donating 15 laptops to our school as well as the donor who kindly helped us buy several accessories for laptops used by the teachers provided by EdC (£288).

We have also used the grants given in previous years to renew our library stock to provide a wide variety of books for all ages.

In the future, we are also considering changing bank accounts, and will update you in due course.

Bursaries are still available to families who need it, renewable on an annual basis, to ensure that we support those who need additional financial support.

5. Teaching highlights & team:

- We have continued with the Alpha method this year, then moving on to the "Leo et Léa" books (amongst others) to encourage early reading, alongside the British phonics systems. Thank you to Helene Stevens and teachers of our young readers for delivering this programme
- A special thank you to **Anne Reed-Musset** and **Melanie Brenchley** for helping our teachers and children to grow their reading skills throughout the year
- Our first secondary class, Les tigres, Leida's class, in partnership with our KS2 class led by Berengere have produced posters, a quiz and presented a popular theme "La production du cacao" (Chocolate production) which is now published on our website. They have also explored environmental themes on the impact of the Coca Cola company
- Each year, all our year groups are given the opportunity to make Christmas cards, 109 last December, for

elderly pensioners living in sheltered housing 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 July 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 also working towards introducing an internationally recognised example, the DELF, which would give our students a qualification to work towards to evidence their competency in the French language

6. 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 been lucky last April to host a show “La note de Scott” by Etienne Sibille, funded by our umbrella body FLAM (a charity which regroups all French language schools with similar aims and provides a number of support resources to all). This show was a hit with all the children, and parents & teachers who attended!
- Last November, a few members of the team attended the FLAM day which allows schools from around the UK to share their viewpoints, share how they resolve issues as well as gain a network of other schools to collaborate with. Following that, we have taken the initiative to organise coffee mornings with our teachers to improve communication amongst the teaching staff
- The end of the year was marked with an Olympic themed summer fete, which proved popular amongst parents and students with old fashioned games, quiz, grammatical race, cake, ice lollies, and medal giving
- We had the opportunity to restock our library with a selection of books, particularly for our older readers, as well as portable notice boards to display the work of all
- The safeguarding policy has been updated this year. It is signposted on the website

7. 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 as follows:

7.1 Teaching Team – the heart and soul of EdC

We would like to thank our teaching team: (from youngest to oldest age groups) **Lucy Zaug, Virginie Moore, Olivia Locicero, Hélène Moon, Caroline Van Eygen, Nadia Duros, Juliana Hernandez. Bérangère Mauduit, Leida Ouegnimaoua, Hélène Stevens** (also our curriculum lead), **Israël Togoh & Jacqui Nunes**, for their efforts and continuous support. The teaching team has two new members: **Alexia Kirk** (classe Les Oursons) and **Jo Adams** (classe Les Tortues)

Our teachers are also supported by a team of assistants. I would like to thank all the teaching assistants for their renewed dedication and unwavering support – **Alex Chammings, Stéphanie Ward, Gaëlle Déram and Pierre**

Castellan-Hamon, Ella Carmarans. We have said goodbye to a number of our teaching staff, who have other commitments - **Nadia Duros, Gaëlle Déram Pierre Castellan-Hamon, Anne Reed-Musset, Melanie Brenchley** They have given between them many years of service to EdC, and I would like to thank them for their dedication to our children.

Thank you also to our librarians, **Sophiann Ruaud-Glenn**, who has run our library this year. **Candice Machtus** was also key to setting up the Librarika system, and I would like to thank her for her contributions to EdC at the start of the 2023/2024 academic year.

7.2 Volunteers and Support Team

Thank you to all of you who volunteer your time to help in various ways – whether it's the team of reading angels supporting our pupils or all those who volunteer to help us during our events. And a warm thank you to our parent volunteers who have stepped in at very short notice to replace teachers and teaching assistants when they were absent, sometimes at very short notice, amongst many [We need more volunteers to join our ranks next year, to allow us to implement new projects – please do read our newsletter where this will be communicated in due course](#)

I also want to include a special note of thanks to **Koko**, our administrator, & **Hélène Stevens**, who both work tirelessly (and volunteers their own time above and beyond) to ensure that the school is run smoothly - from answering all email queries, student subscriptions, coordinating the teaching rota and taster sessions, enhancing our newsletters to members, best practices, preparing teaching resources, ensuring safeguarding policies are updated just to name a few, as well as keeping our records such as our safeguarding policies, to name just a few. Thank you, **Koko & Hélène!**

7.3 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: finances, policies, ensuring compliance with charity commission requirements, insurance, website maintenance, hire agreement, organising events for the Galettes des rois, easter and the school fete as well as safeguarding arrangements including DBS checks.

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

- I (**Rachel Wallis**) have helped coordinate our very capable team. I have two children attending EdC: Sophie in Berangere's class and Louis in Olivia's class.

*I, Rachel, am happy to remain Chair for the next academic year
Should anyone wish to be on the list of candidates for any position, they are welcome to email
president@ecoledescopains.com*

- Adrien Landreau is our treasurer, and has implemented better budget monitoring over the last year. His two daughters, Charlotte and Sophie are "EdC alumni"

Adrien is happy to remain the Treasurer for the next academic year

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

Gail will step down from her position as secretary, but is happy to remain as trustee (Events Lead) for the next academic year. The role of secretary is therefore vacant (1 candidate has been co-opted by the other trustees until the official vote at the AGM)

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

Aurelie is happy to remain trustee for the next academic year

- Emilie Dupuy (events lead). Emilie has been organising and coordinating EdC events such as Tonton Gilles, Galette des rois, Easter and Christmas raffles. Her daughter Marylou is in Alexia's class

*Emilie will step down EdC from her position as trustee. **Thank you, Emilie, for your many years of service***

- Stephanie Ramos, teacher liaison has held a number of roles within the board of trustees over the years, and has a long history supporting our charity. In her latest role as teacher liaison, she helped to ensure good lines of communication between the committee and the teachers during the year. She is the mum to Leo in Alexia's class and Maxime in Helene Stevens's class.

*Stephanie will step down EdC from her position as trustee. **Thank you, Stephanie, for your many years of service. Stephanie has been trustee since EdC's inception in 2016 and has a wealth of stories about our organisation.***

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 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.

8. School community and summary

By the end of 23/24, the EdC community included 76 families - 114 children and 5 adults, attending 11 classes and a teacher-led playgroup every Saturday. The team comprises 12 teachers, 4 assistants, a librarian, an administrator, a curriculum lead and the Committee.

9. 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.

10. Treasurer Report for the year 2023/2024 and comments on the start of 2024/2025

Refer to landscape provisional budget vs actual spend in next pages.

General comment on last year,

- We received **£53,545** in total. £45,788 in tuition, £5,886 in membership fees, £1,363 in mixed fundraising and the rest in other activities
- We spent **£66,807** in total. £39,609 for the overall teaching team, £14,300 on rent, £5,454 of administrative cost, £2,528 on Stationery and £2,450 on curriculum review.

Although this looks like a large loss, the actual operating loss was only £3,443 for 2023/24.

To explain, our opening bank balance was £32,786. £13,879 was owed from the previous year for outstanding rent and teachers' invoices. This means a net starting bank balance of £18,907. We ended the 2023/2024 year with a bank balance of £19,464. This did not account for one rent invoice for £4,000, due to Beechwood but received late. The final "cash" position of the school is £15,464.

Important notes

- "rent" includes £9,570 from 2022/2023 as the invoices were received in August 2023, but excludes £4,000 for Beechwood received after 2023/2024 year end. We hope that this delay will be over in the current school year to limit carry-overs.
- Due to a delay in dealing with the teachers' invoices, £4,309 in "Teachers 22-23" category relate to the 2022/2023 school year.
- We received a grant in previous years for a "Library project" which was implemented last year, increasing the spend in this category by £638.
- We also initiated a curriculum review to ensure a smoother transition for the pupils between certain years, increasing the cost of "Curriculum" to £2,450
- The change of school has also had an impact on the cost, firstly on our rent (although this was initially priced in our prevision) but also in the amount of "Stationery and equipment" for the teachers and the classrooms. This has almost doubled to £2,528 and we don't anticipate this to happen in following years.

This extra expenditure corresponds to the charity's objectives and contributes to the correct functioning of the school.

It is disappointing to note that we had expected more families and more children to attend the school, therefore it has reduced the actual income expected from £56,236 to only £51,674 (a reduction of over 4,500 or 8%). It is therefore even more important to note that for 2024/2025, we have further reduced the number of registered children by 30. This poses a few difficulties for balancing the books and actions have already been taken and further may be required to reduce the expenditure of the school.

To monitor this better, you will notice we have started to include a lot more detail in our budget and analysis of accounts. By doing this, we will be able to have a better handle on expenditure and allow us to better target reductions as and when needed.

We have resolved last year's issue with our accountancy software and the direct debit company, which required many hours of voluntary work and we are pleased to report that the problems have been resolved and we are on track this year, with only two families yet to make their payment and one family with a small catch up from last year. The delay had no financial impact on the school.

In 2023/2024, we had to increase the teachers' rates to ensure a stable teaching team and limit the disruption to the pupils who already had to adapt to a new school. In parallel, there was a limited increase of the fees as we are conscious of the financial burden for some families. This may have to be reviewed for 2025/2026 if the financial situation does not improve.

Provisional budget					Actual Spend/Income						
Income			Expenditure		Income			Expenditure			
Membership	£	6,347	£	12,000	Rent	Membership	£	5,886	-£	14,300	Rent
Tuition	£	49,899	£	38,820	Teachers	Tuition	£	45,788	-£	4,310	Teachers 22/23
Stationery	£	-	£	-	Reunion pedagogique	Subvention	£	-	-£	30,325	Teachers
Giftaid	£	1,587	£	-	Assistants	Giftaid	£	-	-£	295	Reunion pedagogique
Fundraising	£	170	£	1,440	Stationery	Fundraising	£	1,129	-£	4,680	Assistants
Parent Help	£	410	£	500	Insurance	Parent Helper Donation	£	244	-£	2,528	Stationery
Tonton Gilles	£	-	£	-	Curriculum/Safety Coordinator	Tonton Gilles	£	449	-£	426	Insurance
Extra Gifting	£	-	£	4,050	Admin / Book keeping	Interest	£	49	-£	5,454	Admin / Book keeping
			£	1,602	Website/BankCost/Misc				-£	1,200	Curriculum
									-£	1,250	Curriculum Review
Total Income	£	58,412	£	58,412					-£	844	Events
									-£	161	Membership (Flam)
									-£	638	Library
									-£	396	Fees (Bank, accounting etc)
						Total Income	£	53,545	-£	66,807	

The accounts were recently independently audited and validated by an external auditor, without a single question being raised, showing the good stead of our new accounting system. The accounts are public but do not include as much details as we have shared with our members.

Sharing this extra information allows us to openly present the accounts and ask for your renewed and increased support if you are able to afford it.

As some may wonder with news on Value Added Tax (VAT) on private school fees, we are currently below the threshold (£90,000 per annum) and do not anticipate that this will be an issue this year or the one after. However, we are keeping an eye on developments and will keep you informed.

A word on the year ahead:

Income			Expenditure		
Provisional		Actual	Actual	Provisional	
Membership*	£ 4,697	£4,505	£4,000	£ 13,125	Rent
Tuition	£ 43,302	£11,093		£ 4,000	Rent from previous year
Giftaid	£ -		£3,070	£ 32,400	Teachers
Fundraising	£ 170	£123	£120	£ 900	Reunion pedagogique
Parent Help	£ 410	£456	£190	£ 3,600	Assistants (incl Library)
Tonton Gilles	£ -	£67	£780	£ 2,500	Stationery
Extra Gifting	£ -		£431	£ 500	Insurance
				£ 850	Fetes / Events
			£134	£ 1,200	Curriculum/Safety Coordinator
			£1,170	£ 4,050	Admin
				£ 1,250	Curriculum Review
			£82	£ 1,602	Website/BankCost/Misc
Total Income £ 48,579		£16,244	£9,977	£ 65,977	Total Expenditure
		33.44%	15.12%		
					will be or has been reduced

We have significantly less children and families than previous years, in contrast, most of our expenditure is on fixed costs regardless of how many families attend the school.

As a first step, we have reduced or will be reducing the lines in orange above. For example, we have suspended the curriculum review, despite it being needed.

We need to increase the number of families attending or we will have to take other actions, such as regrouping classes and reducing the number of teachers and assistants.

Charity Name Ecole des Copains			Charity No (if any)	1167503	CC39a
Annual accounts for the period					
Period start date	1-Aug-23	To	Period end date	31-Jul-24	

Section A Statement of financial activities

Descriptions by natural category	Note	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total this year	Total last year
		£	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources (Note 3)		F01	F02	F03	F04	F05
		-	-	-	-	-
Donations, legacies and Grants		1,129	-	-	1,129	479
Income resources from charitable activities		51,966	-	-	51,966	47,799
Donations adjust from previous years		-	-	-	-	-
Other income		449	-	-	449	6,965
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
Total incoming resources	S01	53,545	-	-	53,545	55,244
Resources expended (Notes 4-7)						
		-	-	-	-	-
cost of charitable activities		43,620	-	-	43,620	30,005
cost of management and administration cost		23,247	-	-	23,247	6,961
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
Total resources expended	S02	66,867	-	-	66,867	36,966
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers	S03	- 13,322	-	-	- 13,322	18,278
Gross transfers between funds	S04	-	-	-	-	-
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before other recognised gains/(losses)	S05	- 13,322	-	-	- 13,322	18,278
Other recognised gains/(losses)						
Gains and losses on revaluation of fixed assets for the charity's own use	S06	-	-	-	-	-
Gains and losses on investment assets	S07	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	S08	- 13,322	-	-	- 13,322	18,278
Total funds brought forward	S09	-	-	-	-	-
Total funds carried forward	S10	- 13,322	-	-	- 13,322	18,278

Section B Balance sheet

	Note	Total this year £ F01	Total last year £ F02
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets (Note 8)	B01	-	-
	B02	-	-
Investments (Note 9)	B03	-	-
Total fixed assets	B04	-	-
Current assets			
Stock and work in progress	B05	-	-
Debtors (Note 10)	B06	-	-
(Short term) investments	B07	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand	B08	19,465	32,787
Total current assets	B09	19,465	32,787
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 11)	B10	-	-
Net current assets/(liabilities)	B11	19,465	32,787
Total assets less current liabilities	B12	19,465	32,787
Provisions for liabilities and charges (Note 11)	B13	-	-
	B14	-	-
Net assets	B15	19,465	32,787
Funds of the Charity			
Unrestricted funds	B16	19,465	32,787
Designated funds	B17		
Total unrestricted funds		19,465	32,787
Restricted income funds (Note 12)	B18	-	-
Endowment funds (Note 12)	B19	-	-
Total funds	B20	19,465	32,787

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Date of approval

Some information in this content remains in protected format. This protection can be removed from the tools menu

Note 1 Basis of preparation

This section should be completed by all charities.

1.1 Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared on the basis of historic cost (except that investments are shown at market value) in accordance with:

- Accounting and Reporting by Charities – Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005);
- and with* ☐ Accounting Standards;
- or ☐ Financial Reporting Standards for Smaller Enterprises (FRSSE);
- and with the Charities Act.

[** except for the following].

Give details in this box if a different standard has been followed.

* -Tick as appropriate:

- if all relevant disclosures shown in the pack have been given then please tick "Accounting Standards";
- if disclosures completed in these accounts have been restricted to those required by the FRSSE, then please tick
- ** - If no departures from the chosen standards have been made then delete these words; otherwise give details of any changes in the boxes

1.2 Change in basis of accounting

There has been no change to the accounting policies (valuation rules and methods of accounting) since last year (§ except for the following).

Give details in this box of any material changes that have been made.

§ if no changes have been made to accounting policies then delete these words.

1.3 Changes to previous accounts

No changes have been made to accounts for previous years (§§ except for the following).

Give details in this box of any material changes that have been made.

§§ if no changes have been made to accounts for previous periods then delete these words.

Note 3 Analysis of incoming resources

Incoming resources may be further analysed if this would help the reader of the accounts.

Analysis	Unrestricted £	restricted £	This year £	Last year £
Donations from previous years	-		-	
Other donations			-	
Fundraising	1,129		-	479
Gift Aid			-	
Total	1,129			479
Membership	5,886		-	4,070
Tuition fees	46,032		-	43,676
Other (bank interest)	49		-	54
			-	
Total	51,966			47,799
Sponsorship			-	6,421
Partnership	449		-	543
			-	
	449		-	
Total			-	6,965
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Total			-	
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
Total			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
Total			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
Total			-	-

Note 4

Analysis of resources expended

Resources expended may be further analysed if this would help the reader of the accounts.

[illegible]



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name
Ecole des Copains

On accounts for the year ended

31st July 2024

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 DD / MM / YYYY.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, 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 all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of applicable listed body]]. *Delete [] if not applicable.*

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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.

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.

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

Signed:

Date:

Name:

Relevant professional

qualification(s) or body (if any):

--

Address:

Section B

Disclosure

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

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

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