



Registered Charity Number: 1176708

**Trustee Annual Report
& End of Year Accounts**

1st of June 2020 to 31st May 2021

Year Four

End of Year Accounts

1st of June 2020 to 31st May 2021

<u>Description</u>	<u>Outgoing</u>	<u>Income</u>
ADVERTISING	£243.44	
RENT	£310	
POSTAGE/COURIER	£357.17	
ATTENDANCE FEES		£731.53
MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT, RESOURCES	£6,042.85	
COVID RELATED MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT RESOURCES ETC	£550.01	
DONATIONS		£5,119.99
RESTRICTED FUNDS/NATIONAL LOTTERY PROJECT		£5,740.00
RESTRICTED FUNDS/MOONDANCE PROJECT		£2,000.00
MISCELLANEOUS	£407.50	
ASDAN	£1760.92	£3855.00
TOTALS	£9671.89	£17446.52

Annual Trustee Report 2020 - 2021

The lockdown year!

This year started with the entire UK still under COVID lockdown conditions with the news that schools would slowly begin to reopen. However it took many more months for community centres (which are the lifeblood of the elective home educating community) to be allowed to reopen. This continued the detrimental impact home educating children and their families have endured during the pandemic.

For Mountain Movers, the year came with many challenges of learning how to adapt in a fast changing environment of conflicting policies and regulations, to survive and how to help lessen the isolation and impact of the pandemic on home educated children.

Meeting Charitable Aims

Over the past 12 months, Mountain Movers has met its charitable aims in the following ways:

Aim 1} To advance education for children who are being educated otherwise than at school, in particular, but not exclusively, those children with disabilities through co-operative learning opportunities, enrichment arts and sporting activities, enabling the children to participate as fully as possible in society with a positive sense of community and belonging.

Whilst still under lockdown conditions we run many online activities including digital coffee morning for parents to connect and support each other as well as show and tell digital drop in sessions for children and young people.

We achieved funding via the Moondance Foundation for counselling and mindfulness project to help home educating children, young

people and parents to overcome any mental health difficulties caused by or worsened by the COVID pandemic. A project entitled Fun not Fear supported 20 families and helped the children overcome difficulties regarding socialising. Due to the regulations, this was an entirely outdoor project held at various locations, from a beach to a woodland, to the community centre's playground and beyond. We have been able to engage the services of a qualified counsellor who was able to run 6 sessions for young people or parents who needed solution based counselling. This has been well-received by the community with great project feedback.

We were fortunate to receive a generous donation from Neath Port Talbot Education Department of £5000. This allowed us to survive and adapt to the financial challenges sustained by the pandemic enjoying running in-person sessions when regulations limited us to 15 in the building. Without this donation, these sessions would not have been run.

We run specific dungeons and dragons games sessions for young people. Dungeons and dragons is a well evidenced role play game that has huge academic and social benefits. These sessions were highly valued by the young people who also really enjoyed having specific sessions just for them.

We run sensory messy play sessions for those younger children or those on the autism spectrum. Again these were highly valued and well received.

We also run topic themed weeks, such as Egypt with clay modelling, Vikings - building wooden boats which were highly enjoyed by those who were fortunate enough to get one of the very limited spaces.

When in lockdowns we moved activities online and ran highly successful projects like Bitesize Decades, exploring the 1950s, 1960s,

1970s, 1980s and 1990s and the epic There's A Caveman in My Body project. This was a trial project where a home kit of resources was sent to families and each week we covered a different area of the human body. Aimed at Key Stage 2 level but accessible to all. This project was well received with fantastic feedback. Making working models of how our respiratory system works and our digestive system for example, were very popular hands-on activities which made use of common household items such as a pair of tights and balloons.

The uncertainty challenges caused by the pandemic made us, as a charity, cautious of applying for funding for specific projects. However, by working with the Community Fund within the National Lottery, we were able to design a project called Planet Earth and Me - a journey through time and space which was funded in January 2021 and continued until February 2022. This project was developed in direct response and input from the children who accessed our online projects such as Bitesize Decades and There's a Caveman in My Body, who wanted to learn more about other countries, cultures, histories etc. The aim was to help develop and support the children to become active global citizens.

To combat the ever changing landscape of lockdowns and regulation changes, this project was broken down into two smaller projects called Destination Chocolate and Finding Dragons which is due to end in February 2022.

ASDAN

We have continued in providing UK wide access to ASDAN courses, during the lockdowns, demand went through the roof! We have volunteer moderators who donate their time freely. Whilst this keeps the costs of providing these courses accessible to families, with the increasing workload there has continued to be pressure to meet the demands on time. It is extremely hard to both find and

retain volunteers willing to donate their time to moderate for us and this is an area of concern for our few reliable moderators being able to continue at the same level for the future. With ASDAN reducing the number of courses available or suitable for us to be able to run, as well as other numerous organisations now offering ASDAN short courses, it may be that this is something we have to reconsider are we able to continue providing in the future.

Aim 2} To reduce social isolation of both the children and their families by providing a regular safe and confidential setting to allow the development of social skills as well as providing support, advice and signposting to additional services

Covid brought the need for many adaptations. Moving to weekly online projects to help children stay in contact and continue to provide support for families. This has been difficult given the high level of need for adaptive technology and the financial exclusion poverty brings to accessing these resources. We are working tirelessly to source adaptations and alternatives to reduce access barriers.

However, we have managed to reach significant numbers of home educating families with both our online and in-person activities when able with them valuing the continuity of friendships and activities that we can offer even during the difficulties of an isolating pandemic.

Aim 3} To improve the skills and knowledge of parent/carers who have taken legal responsibility for the education of their child(ren) through the providing of access to training, advice and support so they are better equipped to educate their child(ren) in a rounded and informed manner and 5) To promote greater understanding of elective home education to reduce hostility and the associated isolation for this minority group

Mountain Movers continued to engage with consultations impacting home educating families in Wales. Written to the Welsh Government

highlighting the difficulties home educating families are experiencing because of the pandemic for example. We have responded to calls for evidence.

We have had digital sessions aimed specifically for parents to help share knowledge and skills as well as to reduce isolation and worries during this challenging period.

Our project, 'There's a Caveman in my Body' was well received particularly amongst parents for helping them feel more confident and able to utilise common household items to enrich learning like Human Biology.

Aim 4} To reduce poverty and ease the financial burden faced by families who take legal responsibility for educating their child(ren) through the facilitation of educational opportunities and training as well as the sharing of educational resources

Mountain Movers continues to operate on a low-cost basis and the trustees work hard to achieve external funding wherever they can to reduce costs to families as well as securing third party discounts to activities to the benefit of members.

With the move to online activities and the increase in families experiencing financial hardship, we are operating on a free to access basis as much as possible.

Future direction

As we begin to learn how to live with this pandemic, Mountain Movers Trustees are looking to the future with a clear focus on readjusting and evaluating what is working, what isn't and how we can adapt to different needs, ways of working etc and reach our support and services to more home educating families.