

Trustees Annual Report for the period 1 April 2024 — 31 March 2025

Charity Name: Marlow Opportunity Playgroup

Registered Charity number: 1177581

Charity's principal address :

Scout HQ

Watery Lane

Woburn Green

HP10 ONE

Names of the charity Trustees who manage the charity:

- o Paul Finch, Chair
- o John Prout, Vice-Chair
- o Sherida Atherton, Treasurer (retired November 2025)
- o Catherine Austin, Governance, Treasurer
- o Susan Smith, Secretary
- o Jane Gibbons

Structure, Governance and Management

The year ended March 2025, was our fourth full financial year as a CIO. Marlow Opportunity playgroup operated for many years as an unincorporated charity with all assets moved to the CIO effective January 1st 2021.

The CIO operates under a Foundation Model Constitution and currently holds an Outstanding Ofsted rating (Ofsted URN 2576749, last inspected on 22 November 2022).

Objectives and Activities

Our objectives and activities remain to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment where children, primarily with special needs, can learn through play. To operate under charitable status managed by a voluntary committee and run by qualified staff.

The main activities undertaken for the public benefit are:

1. To advance the education of children, in particular but not exclusively, those with special needs through the provision of nursery and pre-school care.

2. To advance the education and training of persons in the provision of such pre-school care.

Achievements and Performance

The year ended March 2025 was successful and rewarding for Marlow Opportunity Playgroup (MOP), delivering a full and varied programme to our current cohort of special children.

The children on MOP's register have a wide range of complex physical, learning and medical needs that require a high staff to child ratio (often 1:1) and lots of therapeutic input. This is very expensive and only the generous donations we receive from organisations and individuals make this possible. MOP is very fortunate to receive fantastic financial support from the local community as well as from national grant-making bodies.

Demand for places at MOP is high. We currently have 68 places per week, with 25 children on our register. There are currently fifteen children on the waiting list, to whom we are currently unable to offer a place.

We always look for ways to enhance the playgroup by offering a variety of rich and diverse experiences that help to develop each child's potential. Donations and grants help MOP to offer a full programme of music therapy as well as all the essential opportunities for these special children to learn through play and therapy.

Future Outlook

Over the course of the financial year in review, Bucks Council ceased to provide the High Needs Block Funding (HNBF), which formed an essential component of our sustainability over the past few years. HNBF provided additional financial support to MOP for children who do not have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and as such, are not provided with additional funding. MOP works with the families and therapists involved to develop EHCPs, but these are often in place only in time for the child to move onto their next setting. The High Needs Block Funding was effectively 'topping up' the Early Years Funding in recognition that MOP provides a vastly different level of support to mainstream settings. In the year to March 2024, the HNBF received by MOP was £20,473 and from September 2024 this had ceased completely. Bucks Council have however identified a new funding source, and in November 2025 MOP has received both a sustainability grant and an Exceptional Support Request payment in recognition of the higher needs of our children, and the essential community resource MOP provides.

The Trustees have also been pursuing alternative funding opportunities, and a huge amount of support was provided by other organisations in the year ended March 2025. In particular, the Bernard Lewis Family Charitable Trust donated £30,000 and have pledged the same for the next two years. The Rothschild Foundation have also committed £10,000 per year for three years, and The National Lottery Community Fund (finalised in August 2024) provides £30,000 per year for five years. We are therefore confident that Marlow Opportunity Playgroup remains a viable going concern.

Financial Performance

MOP received income over the financial year of £337k, of which 68% comes from grants and donations. Expenses for the year were £308k resulting in an operating surplus of £29.7k. This small boost to our reserves covers the prior year's deficit.

Reserves

It is the intention of the Trustees to build a reserve equal to nine months' operating costs. Based on the year ended March '25, the intended reserve equates to £228k. Our ambition is to ensure that if one of our main funding sources is discontinued, we could remain open until alternative provision is found for the children on the register. At year-end, reserves stand at £183k, which is £45k short of our target.

Independent Examination

The accounts have been reviewed and approved by an Independent Examiner, in line with Charity Commission guidance. Michelle Heer was appointed as our Independent Examiner for the year ended March 2025.

Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustee's report above. Signed on behalf on the charity's trustees

Signature(s)

Full name(s) Paul Finch

Position

CHAIRMAN

TRUSTEE

MARLOW OPPORTUNITY PLAYGROUP

Registered Charity number 1177581

Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2025	Total funds 2024
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Income	3[a]	287,968	30,400	318,368	275,994
Activities for generating funds	3[b]	16,986		16,986	14,085
Investment income	3[c]	2,057		2,057	2,071
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		307,011	30,400	337,411	292,150
RESOURCES USED					
Charitable activities	4	277,267	30,400	307,667	314,480
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		<u>277,267</u>	<u>30,400</u>	<u>307,667</u>	<u>314,480</u>
NET INCOMING RESOURCES / [EXPENDITURE]		<u>29,744</u>		<u>29,744</u>	<u>(22,330)</u>
TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS		-	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		<u>29,744</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>29,744</u>	<u>(22,330)</u>
BALANCES BROUGHT FORWARD AT 1 APRIL				<u>153,839</u>	<u>176,169</u>
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 MARCH			<u>-</u>	<u>183,583</u>	<u>153,839</u>

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2024-25	2023-24
FIXED ASSETS		-	-
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash in bank and in hand		13,956	9,824
Short term deposits		172,561	130,504
Debtor - BCC Spring Term payments	5	-	16,595
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>186,517</u>	<u>156,923</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Sundry creditors and accruals	6	2,933	3,083
Deferred income	7		
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>183,584</u>	<u>153,840</u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS		<u>183,584</u>	<u>153,840</u>

For the year ending 31 March 2025, the organisation was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with FRS102 SORP.

Signed: Paul Finch

Notes to the accounts

Note 1 Basis of preparation

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.

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

1.3 Changes to previous accounts

No changes have been made to accounts for previous years

Note 2 Accounting policies

This standard list of accounting policies has been applied by the charity except for those deleted. Where a different or additional policy has been adopted then this is detailed in the box below.

INCOMING RESOURCES

Recognition of incoming resources	These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the charity becomes entitled to the resources; the trustees are virtually certain they will receive the resources; and the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.
Incoming resources with related expenditure	Where incoming resources have related expenditure (as with fundraising or contract income) the incoming resources and related expenditure are reported gross in the SoFA.
Grants and donations	Grants and donations are only included in the SoFA when the charity has unconditional entitlement to the resources.
Donated services and facilities	These are only included in incoming resources (with an equivalent amount in resources expended) where the benefit to the charity is reasonably quantifiable, measurable and material. The value placed on these resources is the estimated value to the charity of the service or facility received.
Volunteer help	The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the accounts but is described in the trustees' annual report.
Investment income	This is included in the accounts when receivable.

EXPENDITURE AND LIABILITIES

Liability recognition	Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources.
Governance costs	In the year ended March 31 2019 Marlow Opportunity Playgroup incurred no cost in the preparation and examination of statutory accounts, or for trustee meetings or legal advice to trustees on governance or constitutional matters.

ASSETS

Tangible fixed assets for use by charity	We have no tangible fixed assets
Investments	We have no investments, cash is held in bank account

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

3. INCOMING RESOURCES

Restricted Funds

Unrestricted funds represent the funds of Marlow Opportunity Playgroup that are not subject to any restrictions regarding their use, and are available for application on the general purpose of the paygroup.

Restricted funds represent donations and grants received for a specific objective, and may only be expended on the specific objective for which they were given. Any balance remaining unspent at the end of each year must be carried forward as a balance on that fund.

Restricted funds recognised in these accounts relate to: [1] The Big Lottery fund. We received £30,400 between April '24 - March '25 to fund the role of Playgroup Supervisor.

INCOMING RESOURCES		Unrestricted	Restricted Big Lottery	Total Funds	
				2025	2024
3[a] Voluntary income					
	Funding	47,549		47,549	37,716
	Support Assistance	24,436		24,436	74,191
	Grants	128,772	30,400	159,172	58,561
	Fees	8,350		8,350	4,690
	Donations	69,999		69,999	90,798
	Other	8,863		8,863	6,271
		<u>287,968</u>	<u>30,400</u>	<u>318,368</u>	<u>272,228</u>
3[b] Activities for generating funds					
	Fundraising	<u>16,986</u>	-	<u>16,986</u>	<u>7,879</u>
3[c] Investment Income					
	Bank deposit interest	<u>2,057</u>	-	<u>2,057</u>	<u>690</u>
3[d] Incoming Resources				<u>337,411</u>	<u>280,798</u>
4. RESOURCES USED		Unrestricted	Restricted Big Lottery	Total Funds	
				2025	2024
	Charitable activities				
	Staff Costs	237,337	30,400	267,737	268,963
	Transport			-	-
	Rent	7,253		7,253	7,695
	Services	9,022		9,022	9,089
	Training	1,482		1,482	725
	Equipment & materials	10,870		10,870	18,233
	Expenses	750		750	679
	Other	10,553		10,553	9,095
		<u>277,267</u>	<u>30,400</u>	<u>307,667</u>	<u>314,480</u>
5. DEBTORS				2025	2024
Current Debtors - Spring Term receipt from BCC				-	<u>16,595.09</u>
6. CURRENT LIABILITIES (Creditors and Accruals)				2025	2024
[a] Sundry creditors and accruals					
	PH Cleaning			-	
	HMRC - PAYE			2,933	3,083
				<u>2,933</u>	<u>676</u>

7. RESERVES

It is the intention of Marlow Opportunity Playgroup to operate with a reserve equal to nine month's operating costs in order to build financial resilience. Our income varies depending on a number of factors and we aim to cover costs and sustain playgroup places for children in the event of a funding shortfall for at least nine months.

Notes to the accounts (cont)

Note 8 Details of certain items of expenditure

8.1 Trustee expenses

Number of trustees who were paid expenses
Nature of the expenses
Total amount paid

This year	Last year
None	None
£0	£0

8.2 Fees for examination or audit of the accounts

Independent examiner's or auditors' fees for reporting on the accounts

Other fees (for example: advice, consultancy, accountancy services) paid to the independent examiner or auditor

This year £	Last year £
None	None
None	None

Note 9 Paid employees

9.1 Staff Costs

Gross Wages, Salaries and Benefits in Kind
Employer's National Insurance costs
Pension costs

This year £	Last year £
219,425	218,567
34,865	38,284
13,447	12,112
267,737	225,387

9.2 Average number of full-time equivalent employees in the year

All paid employees at Marlow Opportunity Playgroup work in the playgroup setting.

Fundraising
Charitable activities
Governance
Other

This year	Last year
0	0
10	10
0	0
0	0
10	10

9.3 Defined contribution pension scheme

A defined contribution scheme is operated (using Nest Pensions), in accordance with employment law. If an employee earns £10,000 per year they are automatically enrolled, but all employees have the option to join. Playgroup contributes 3%, employee pays 5%.

The costs of the scheme to the charity in the year
The amount of any contributions outstanding at the end of the year
The amount of any contributions prepaid at the end of the year

This year	Last Year
N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name

MARLOW OPPORTUNITY PLAYGROUP

On accounts for the year
ended

31 MARCH 2025

Charity no
(if any)

1177581

Set out on pages

4 - 9

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Responsibilities and
basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended '31/3/2025'

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 **ACCA**

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:

7/12/25.

Name:

MICHELLE HEER.

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

ACCA.

(membership 2058729)

Address:

2, BEAUFORT CLOSE
LEE-ON-THE-SOULT.
AMPSHIRE PO13 8EN

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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