

# **Cwtch Together 2022-23 Annual General Meeting**

## **Registered Charity #1182360**

**Friday 14th April 2023**

### **In attendance:**

Chelsea Harrington - Chair  
Claire Ann Donoghue - Secretary  
Sarah D'Arcy - Manager

### **Apologies:**

Celia Brooks - Treasurer

### **Trustees / Staffing / Volunteers Update**

First, we'd like to start by welcoming the new members of our team, starting with Claire Ann Donoghue, our new Secretary. Claire has worked for the NHS for many years as a nurse, as well as having family members with learning/physical disabilities, and she is very knowledgeable and understanding. Claire has previously helped with setting up and clearing up our Saturday sessions and wanted to help further so joined our Board of Trustees.

Chelsea has now stepped up to the position of Chair, and Celia Brooks is now our Treasurer.

After a number of years serving on the Board of Trustees, Sarah D'Arcy has stepped down to become an employee. She will take the position of Project Manager. Sarah will continue her duties of organising, planning, advertising, and running the sessions, as well as ensuring the day-to-day communications, and the weekly paperwork is completed. We are able to pay Sarah up to 12 hours a week for the work she provides. Sam Jones will remain as our only employed Play Worker.

The Trustees and management have a WhatsApp group, which acts as a bridge between the Board and the Staff at the Saturday sessions, ensuring that all information relating to Cwtch is recorded in one place and is accessible for all involved in the running of Cwtch Together.

We have been lucky enough to take on new volunteers this year.

Non Humpries, who is a bilingual speaker, enabling us to better connect to our Welsh language session attendees. Non is able to update our Facebook page and answer any queries in both Welsh and English, as well as helping out during our sessions. Non also has a child with additional needs, and has autism herself.

Dave Shafto, Non's husband, who has a child with additional needs and is eager to help. Dave often has great ideas for our sessions, is our resident handy-man when we need things to be

repaired, and also helps out during our sessions.

Anastasia Lewis, who works at a special resource base in a school, and has family members with additional needs. Anastasia uses her own initiative while helping during our sessions.

Grace Smith, one of our newest volunteers, has family members with suspected additional learning needs, and is very eager to be part of our team.

Lastly, Chloe Bushett has joined us as part of her Duke of Edinburgh award. Chloe's twin has Downs Syndrome, and Chloe has been a young carer from an early age. It is evident how caring, patient, and understanding she is as she has been amazing with the children, playing with them and bonding with them. We have benefited greatly by having her on our team.

## **The Year at Cwtch Together**

This financial year we have been very busy with a variety of fun events including; Visits from reptiles, Ponies at my Party, and Ebbw Vale Owl Sanctuary. A football session, circus workshop, jubilee party, rock painting sessions, National Tent Day activities, and many more.

Every Saturday we have hosted two themed sessions. Quite often our morning sessions are sell-outs, we cap the sessions at 14-16 children so it isn't too busy or noisy for the families attending.

In the summer, we teamed up with Grangetown Art Trail, and took part in their Dinosaur Jurassic Trail. We hope to work with them again this year.

During half term we worked with Cardiff Council Play Services offering a free Friday play session. This worked really well and we have since repeated the sessions every half term offering extra sessions on a Friday. We will continue this partnership as it works well and is mutually beneficial. Our families find the extra sessions during the holidays helpful.

We worked with Single Parents Wellbeing to offer a session exclusively for single parents of children with additional needs.

We have also worked with Make A Smile, who come to our sessions every other week. The third Saturday of each month they run a session at the Scout Hall. Cwtch Together provide the hall space, staff, and toys, and Make A Smile run the session. We advertise the session jointly, and these sessions work really well for both Cwtch Together and Make A Smile. It is lovely to see the Make A Smile volunteers' confidence grow as they become more familiar with the setting and the children at our sessions.

We have been lucky enough to gain many new toys in this financial year, and have organised our storage units at the Scout Hall. We were able to donate some soft toys and blankets to a

local dog's home, and have given away books and craft supplies to help support our families on many occasions. We need to organise a cleaning rota going forward to ensure our toys are kept in the best condition for our children. From now on, our material beanbags, blankets, soft play items, and larger cushions, will only be used for indoor play to protect their longevity.

We will ask parents to continue to monitor their children's use of our toys and equipment, as although we don't mind most toys getting messy during play, we will ask them to stop if toys are being misused and damaged.

We are still in contact with our friends at Cwmpas, who have helped with advice and gardening.

We have also had the wonderful team of volunteers at The GoodGym Cardiff visit regularly on a Tuesday evening to help with gardening, maintenance, and any other tasks we have asked of them.

We are now helping over 130 families, with quite a few members regularly attending weekly sessions. Where possible, we are able to tailor activities to specific children's interests.

We have an increasing number of members, and to help organise our memberships and make it easier to manage, we charged just £1 per month before August 2023. In August, we will be launching our new membership scheme. This will be £20 a year for a family, and will offer many benefits including reduced admission, priority booking onto free sessions, exclusive discounts with Clickety Claire Photography, a membership card and booklet, and the opportunity to book a party package.

## Party Packages

### Package 1

Private hire for a session will be £40 for hall hire and staffing. Food can be provided for £40, or families are welcome to provide their own. Attendance will be £2.50 per child on top.

### Package 2 (Up to 10 children)

Hold your party during a regular Saturday session. Food can be provided for £40, or families are welcome to provide their own. Attendance for non-Cwtch Together attendees will be £3.00 per child on top. Session will be open to other families, but will be decorated and set up with toys the birthday child enjoys.

The second package is ideal for Children who don't have many other children to invite to their party, as it will be open for more children to attend. We will prepare an advertisement a week before the party to advertise on social media, and will communicate with the parents/guardians to ensure that we are advertising what they want provided.

If a parent/guardian is wanting to provide another source of entertainment, (such as a magician, animal visit, etc) we ask that they consult us prior to booking anything, and that they provide the entertainment financially. This is available for either party package.

These party packages start at the same time as our memberships - August 01 2023.

We have a WhatsApp group that Sarah is in with many of the parents and guardians at Cwtch Together, to pass on any information, and to get the parents input and advice on volunteers, ideas, and session plans.

The Scout Leader who we previously liaised with, Lewis Brown, had now left the Scouts, and our new point of contact going forward is Gerwyn.

Our insurance has been updated to include the electronic items we purchased last year. All of our electronic items passed the PAT testing in September 2022.

A fundraiser was held for us in November in memory of Bill Garvin. Bill was one of the first volunteers who worked with Cwtch Together in the early days. Bill's partner Cathy raised over £300 hosting a raffle and social night at Whitchurch Social Club. Cathy has been a fantastic supporter of Cwtch Together and has donated money and time on a few occasions.

Non Humpheries has kindly offered to fundraise for Cwtch Together by completing an organised run in May. We will hold a session dedicated to running and the benefits of physical activity to promote this at Cwtch Together.

We have had a few issues this year with the boiler at the Scout Hall and in the three weeks before Christmas we were without heat or hot water. We struggled again at the start of this year with the same issue. The Scouts have now had the issue fixed, and have ordered new gas canisters to hopefully prevent the issue from arising again.

During the winter, a member contacted Sarah to say she had seen unusual activity at the Scout Hall. Sarah visited the hall with Roy, volunteer and neighbour of the hall, and found that two people possibly experiencing homelessness were sleeping in between the storage units we use to store our equipment in. Our units had been tampered with, and some of our sheets, blankets, and pillows had been taken. We informed the Police and the Scouts, and following advice, Sarah and Anastasia cleared and cleaned the area surrounding the units, as well as disposing of any items that had been used and left behind. The interior of the units were sanitised and new locks were purchased for them. CCTV signage has been placed outside the building to hopefully deter anyone from tampering with the units in the future.

We have continually noticed that on days where Cardiff City Football Club are playing at home, just down the road, the surrounding areas can be quite busy, and we have had trouble near the Scout Hall on two occasions. Sarah is now in contact with the Football Violence Division of the South Wales Police, and will liaise with them when high tension matches are due to take place. On these occasions, session times may change to ensure we are providing as safe of an environment as we are able for our children and families.

Session prices vary weekly depending on the costs of the materials provided during the session,

but our members will always have a reduced price.

We have been lucky enough to be involved in a few publicity opportunities this financial year, including radio interviews with BBC Radio 4, Talk Radio, and BBC Radio Wales, as well as having reporters from The Cardiffian, and The Guardian, attend our sessions.

We hosted a Poppy Rock Drop again this year, and plan to make this an annual event. We paint rocks with poppy designs before Remembrance Sunday, and place them at the War Memorial Statue in Grange Gardens for the service the following day.

We now have a Rock Painting page on Facebook as well as our Support Network group, and our main public Facebook page.

We now have a lovely sign outside the Scout Hall, under the Scout's sign, with all of our information on, making it easier for people to find us.

Chelsea has recently updated our website, and our Facebook page is updated every few days. Although those running the page have children themselves, some with additional needs, we are unable to answer all queries instantly, but we aim to reply to all queries within a few hours.

In November, we learned about the existence of the back garden at the Scout Hall, (now nicknamed The Secret Garden as we spent so long not knowing it existed!) which needed clearing so that the drains could be cleared. This is one of the jobs that The GoodGym helped us with, and going forward we will now be able to keep on top of this.

## **Finance**

Our previous grant of £9,995 from the National Lottery's Awards For All scheme lasted from 2021 to January 2023. We have since applied for a further £10,000 from the scheme, and were lucky enough to be successful. We are very proud to be funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

We received a £1,160 grant from the Moondance Foundation towards the running of our sessions for a month.

We have been accepting admission costs via PayPal and Bank Transfer and regularly pay the money from our weekly Tuck Shop into the bank.

Chelsea and Sarah have ensured that the accounts and End Of Year finance information was completed, and sent into the Charity Commission on time.

A brief summary of the accounts for the 2022/2023 financial year will be available with the meeting minutes from this AGM.

## **The Future**

We are looking forward to a fun packed year including a Coronation Teddy Bears Picnic, a Running themed session, a Circus Workshop, as well as visits from reptiles and owls, and much more.

RSPB are hoping to work with us this year.

We are looking into designing our own t-shirts and hoodies for members to purchase over the next few months.

If anyone would like to volunteer, or become a member of our Board of Trustees, please get in touch and we can discuss this further.

If anyone has any requests or ideas for future sessions or services we can provide, or any other questions for the Management or Trustees, please email [cwtchtogether@gmail.com](mailto:cwtchtogether@gmail.com) or WhatsApp Sarah on 07986 553361.

Board of Trustees will remain as we are going forward into the 2023-24 financial year.

Chelsea Harrington - Chair

Celia Brooks - Treasurer

Claire Ann Donoghue - Secretary

### **Any other business?**

We have really enjoyed working with so many amazing people and organisations over the past year, we are happy to be able to provide fun and exciting sessions for so many families, and are looking forward to doing the same over the next 12 months.

Thank you for attending our AGM, and for your consistent support, we hope to see you again soon.

- **Cwtch Together Team #1182360**

Opening Balance	£10,910.07			
Month	Income	Expenditure	+/-	Balance
April 2022	529.03	1216.61	-687.58	10222.49
May 2022	129.60	2780.71	-2651.11	7571.38
June 2022	223.98	745.35	-521.37	7050.01
July 2022	44.00	1,438.40	-1394.40	5655.61
August 2022	1467.13	1993.84	-526.71	5128.90
September 2022	102.76	1469.98	-1367.22	3761.68
October 2022	579.63	551.03	28.60	3790.28
November 2022	718.26	1343.56	-625.30	3164.98
December 2022	323.35	1759.96	-1436.61	1728.37
January 2023	282.84	890.33	-607.49	1120.88
February 2023	11447.93	965.54	10482.39	11603.27
March 2023	455.52	2103.24	-1647.72	9955.55
Total	16304.03	17258.55	-954.52	
Closing Balance	£9,955.55			