



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



Registered Charity No. 1187504



CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT

The Engine Shed was set up in 2009 and was run as a community group until January 2020 when we became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

When we started in 2009 with an UnLtd grant we had no idea if the concept was going to be popular. However as parents of autistic children who loved trains we knew that there wasn't anything else like it - and so we gave it a go. The idea took off immediately and we have not looked back, expanding over the years to include days out, sibling activities, film nights, training, social events for parents and carers and sessions for autistic adults. Some children and young people have been coming for 8 or more years.

As well as the main attraction of the trains, people come along and find a ready-made community who have

walked the same path locally, ready to offer support and share relevant information. We are entirely run by volunteers.

This is our first reporting year to the Charity Commission and the reporting year covers a slightly longer period: 20 January 2020 to 31 March 2021. This period covers the Covid pandemic, during which we worked to keep as many activities going as possible and provided activity packs and care packages to Engine Shed attendees.

Thank you to everyone who has supported our work this year, including our wonderful team of volunteers.

SARAH SNOW, CHAIR

THE YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

The COVID Pandemic

Disabled people have been hard hit by the COVID pandemic - more than half of people who died of coronavirus in England and Wales had a disability. Many people lived without services throughout all the lockdowns; when schools closed in lockdowns, disabled children remained at home with wholly inadequate levels of support. Keeping autistic children, young people and adults safe and well in the pandemic has been a challenge for those with whom The Engine Shed works.

Community Sessions of The Engine Shed

The groups in Reading and in Chingford met when possible each month in their respective community halls - Katesgrove Children's Centre in Reading and St Francis Church Hall, Chingford. After 23 March 2020 sessions were halted and we kept in touch online and on Whatsapp with group members.

Training

Autistic-led organisation AutAngel ran a well-attended training session in Reading on Understanding Autism in conjunction with The Engine Shed in January 2020.

Care and Activity Parcels

We were able to send care packages and activity packs out to Reading Engine Shed attendees during the first lockdown – these included chocolate trains, Lego trains, puzzles, train magazines, along with appropriate items for siblings. This also gave us the opportunity to catch up with families on the doorstep safely and at a distance.

'Thank you so much for the parcel, Ben loved the items and could not believe it! It kept him happy and busy all week'.

PARENT OF ENGINE SHED
ATTENDEE

Wow! When you said you were dropping off an activity pack, we thought it would be a colouring book and some pens. What a box of treats...we are spreading them out with one item every few days so that we can make the fun last....we don't know how to thank you all '

PARENT OF ENGINE SHED
ATTENDEE

Bubble Sessions

As we came out of the first lockdown we began receiving enquiries about starting up the trains again. We could not safely bring everyone together but in Reading we began Bubble Sessions at a local charity Hub. We were able to offer individual group sessions with our trains, where people could bring members of their bubble together and play with the trains. These were very well received by families.

Other Activities

We normally join the Winter Ball at The Hilton for disability organisations in Reading, attending with parents and carers. This was cancelled in 2020 but we participated in the Winter Draw, raising essential funds for our work.

Looking Ahead

Coming out of lockdown, it became clear that the van which the Reading group has relied on for over ten years (owned and driven by our longtime volunteer JJ) was on its last legs. The van is used to transport our G gauge trains and the huge boards on which the track is laid. These are stored in the van during sessions. The large trains bring additional excitement to the Reading sessions – they are trains that people will not have at home and attendees enjoy driving them with the dual controls. We would like to have our own van to take the trains to sessions, and also enable us to deliver additional community sessions across the region. We receive lots of enquiries about bringing trains to community events and special schools and it would be great to have the flexibility to do this. We would also like to involve some of our adult group members in this process to provide further volunteering and possibly employment opportunities.

Trustees will be exploring funding opportunities this year, and we will also join the Winter Draw again, selling raffle tickets to support this venture. Two Engine Shed attendees have offered to do a sporting challenge too.

The Engine Shed
Year ended 31 March 2021

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Income			
Grants received:			
PEOPLE'S HEALTH TRUST	2,482.00		2,482.00
Persimmon		1,000.00	1,000.00
COVID Response	6,950.00		6,950.00
BERKS COMMUNITY FDN	2,190.00		2,190.00
Good Exchange	7,092.60		7,092.60
Local Connections Fund	1,800.00		1,800.00
Awards For All	9,750.00		9,750.00
Misc donations		1,047.53	1,047.53
other income	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total income	30,264.60	2,047.53	32,312.13
Expenditure			
Play sessions	7,445.98		7,445.98
Office rent	6,950.00		6,950.00
Charitable activities	8,304.62	2,845.54	25,546.14
Total expenditure	22,700.60	2,845.54	25,546.14
Total Income less Total Expenditure	7,564.00	(798.01)	6,765.99
Opening bank balance (22 Jan 20)	9,802.00	1,820.49	11,622.49
Surplus/(loss) from above	7,564.00	(798.01)	6,765.99
Closing bank balance	17,366.00	1,022.48	18,388.48

The Engine Shed
Year ended 31 March 2021

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021

	£
Current assets:	
Debtors	0
Cash at bank	<u>18,388</u>
Total current assets	18,388
Current liabilities	
creditors	0
Total net assets	<u><u>18,388</u></u>
Funds	18,388

Signed: 


Sarah Snow, Chair of Trustees

Date: 20 Nov '21

Signed 

Rod Leith, Treasurer

Date: 21.11.21

Signed 

Tim Miller, Independent Examiner

Date: 20 Nov 2021

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