ROAM

England & Wales · Charity number 1190230

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2020-07-02
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	10 Ashmore Road Birmingham B30 2HA
Phone	07876553 013
Email	naomi@roam.org.uk
Website	www.roam.org.uk

Activities

Objects: THE OBJECTS OF THE CIO ARE:3.1.1. TO HELP CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ESPECIALLY BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES, SO AS TO DEVELOP THEIR CAPABILITIES THAT THEY MAY GROW TO FULL MATURITY AS INDIVIDUALS AND MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.3.1.2. TO PROMOTE THE GOOD HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BY PROVIDING FACILITIES AND/OR ORGANISING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN OPEN-AIR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES,IN EACH CASE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC.

Activities: We run sessions in the West Midlands for children aged 12 and under, putting measures in place to remove the barriers to children playing freely. We use 5 different models to meet children's differing needs.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** Education/training, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** Children/young People

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Geography

- Throughout England

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£27,657	£28,624	-	-
2024-03-31	£24,896	£19,338	-	-
2023-03-31	£27,415	£25,325	-	-
2022-03-31	£12,406	£31,469	-	-
2021-03-31	£48,716	£25,776	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Mark Ernest Jason Guest	Chair	2024-06-06
Andrew David Hopkins		2026-01-07
Caroline Jayne Davis		2026-01-07
Gemma Weston		2026-01-07
Maria Richards		2026-01-07
Sarah Louise Binks		2024-11-28

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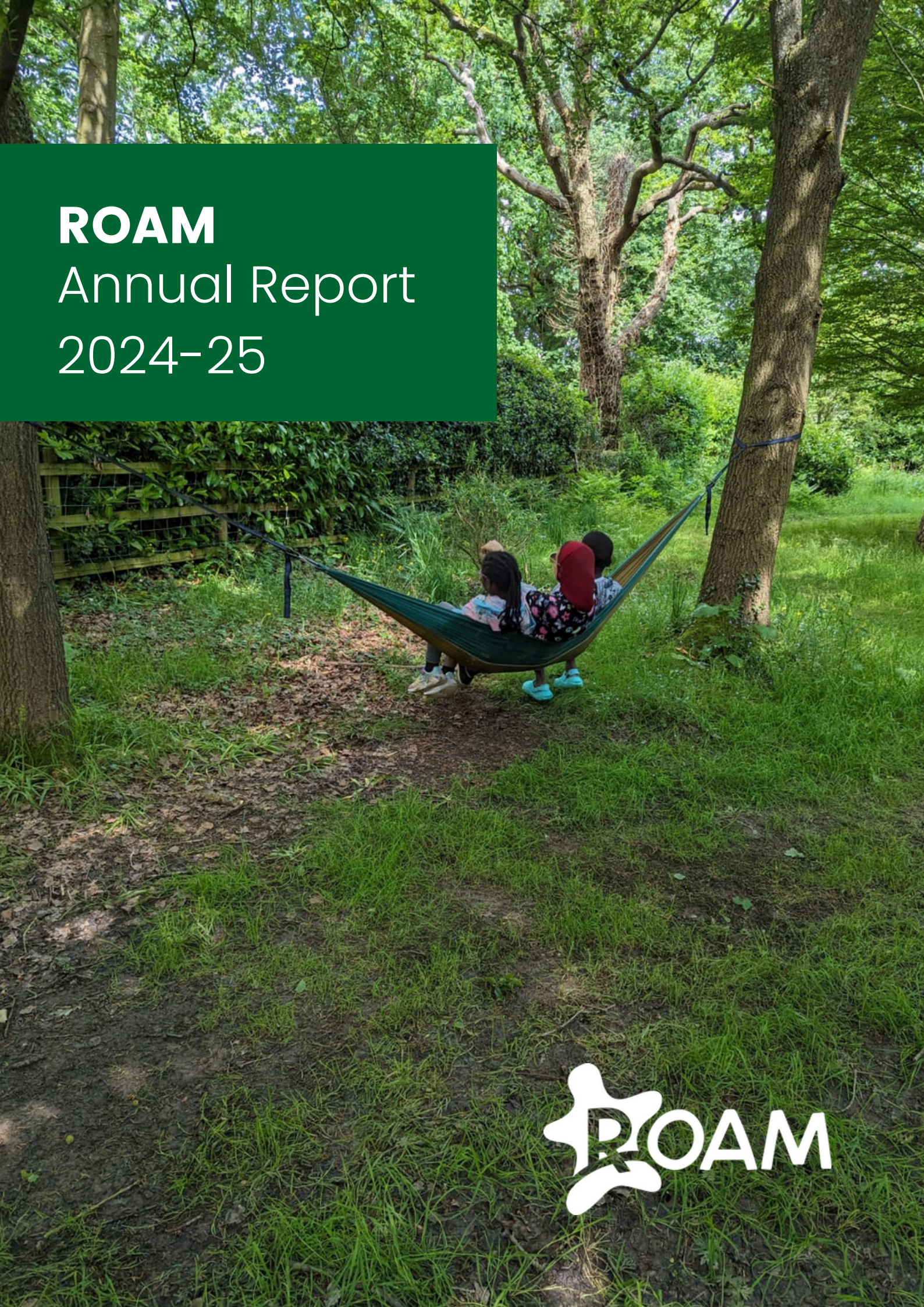
ROAM

England & Wales - Charity number 1190230

Accounts



ROAM
Annual Report 2024-25

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01 Foreword

We are delighted to present our fifth Trustees Annual Report. It is a colourful record of a year bursting with positive stories of play, nature and connection; three things that chldren instinctively seek out, that are fundamental to a happy and healthy childhood.

But many children are just not getting enough access to free play together in nature. Too often, play is overly structured, restricted or is adult-led, and children face barriers to accessing nature freely and safely. At ROAM, we are doing something about this, and this is celebrated in our Annual Report.

This year, we connected with almost 500 children at our sessions, ranging in age from 0 to 14, across five green spaces and including two new sites. We brought ROAM Free to a new park in an inner city neighbourhood, and relocated our ROAM IN sessions to a more central, accessible and nature-diverse site. We welcomed new cohorts of adventure-seekers to our ROAM Free sessions in Cotteridge Park and loved seeing them experience the exhiliration of unsupervised play in nature for the first time. Poignantly, some of these children first encountered ROAM as toddlers during the Covid pandemic, and parents told us that ROAM was their constant; their familiar, happy place.

It's also been a year of campaiging, urging decision-makers to put into policy the infrastructure; be that physical, in policy and in service delivery to enable and prioritise children's play. As families are increasingly criticised for the amount of time children are spending on screens, we are speaking up to make government invest in enabling better access to outdoor play in our public spaces.

At the end of another ground breaking year, we extend our deepest gratitude to all who make ROAM possible. We thank our dedicated team of session leaders, behind-the-scenes coordinators and volunteers whose passion brings ROAM magic to all our work. We thank the families and chlldren who are so enthusiastic in living our mission, our trustees and other supporters, funders and partners for their valuable contribution.

As we reflect on the last year, and look forward to the next one, our eyes are open to the challenges faced, as a charity and to the families we support. But we are ever more committed to our mission to enable children the most simplest af rights; the freedom to play together in nature.

Naomi Fisher, Strategic Lead and Co-founder

02 Objectives

Our Objects

ROAM was set up with the aim of facilitating children's freedom to explore nature unsupervised; something that was normal for primary school aged children until about 30 years ago yet has since almost disappeared in the UK.

Our Objects are:

- **To help children and young people especially but not exclusively through leisure time activities, so as to develop their capabilities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society.**
- **To promote the good health of children and young people by providing facilities and/or organising opportunities for young people to participate in open-air recreational activities.**

in each case for the benefit of the public.

Our Mission, Vision & Values

Our Mission

Our mission is to facilitate children's free play in nature with minimal supervision, to support others to do so, and to campaign for every child's right to independent play.

Our Vision

Our vision is to facilitate a culture where it is considered healthy and normal for children to play unsupervised in their natural environment.

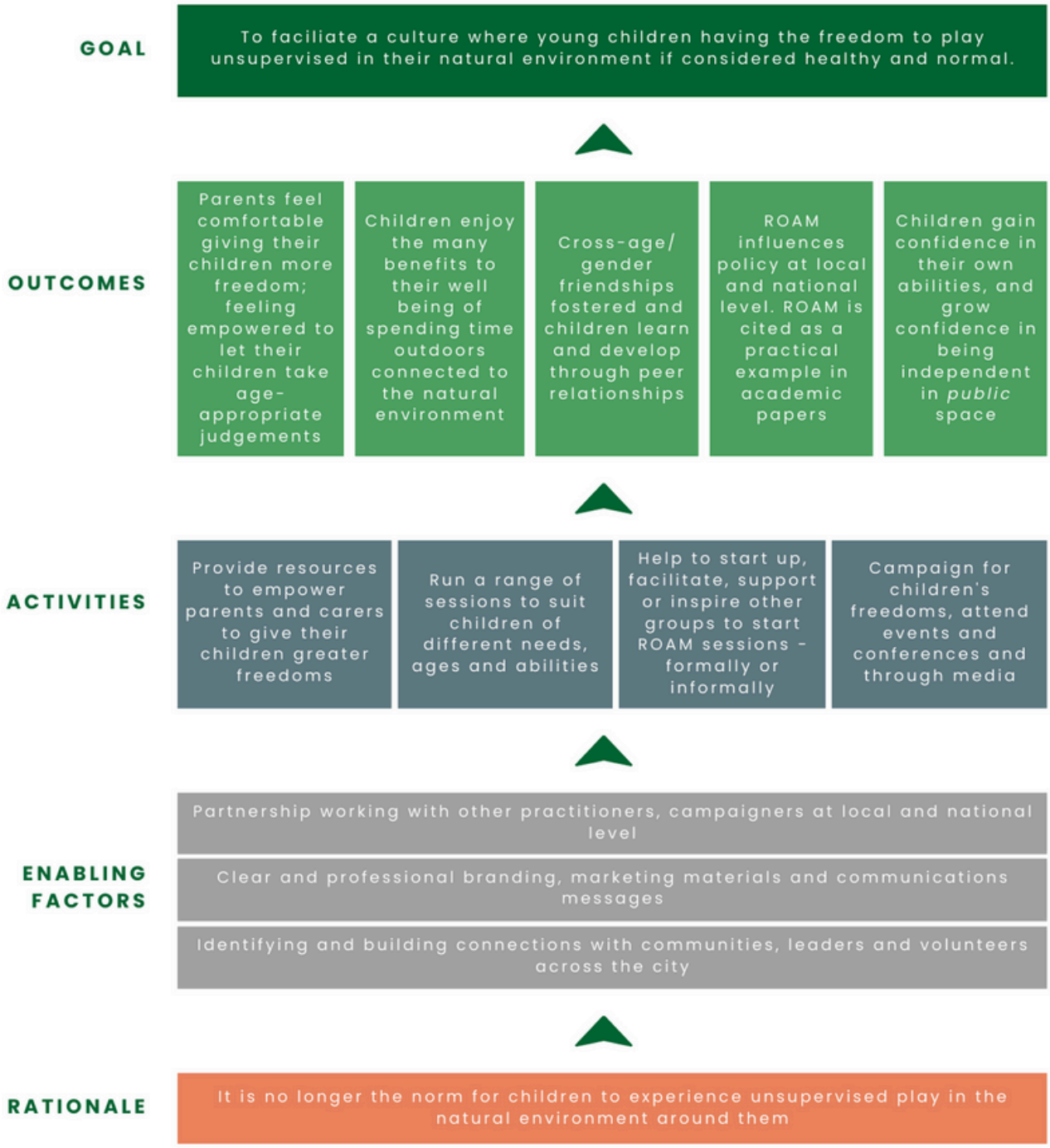
Our Values

- We are proactively inclusive; seeking ways to meet children's rights to independently play outside irrespective of their physical ability or any disability, social or economic barriers, gender, ethnicity, access to appropriate clothing, and any other barriers that we identify through the course of our work. We strive to make our sessions accessible, embracing neurodiversity, and to embed a culture of inclusion in all of our work that is reflected in the actions of everyone involved.
- We foster a culture where imperfection is embraced; we learn through our mistakes more than our successes. We encourage the bravery in trying, and promote a non judgemental culture of supportiveness. We embrace a culture of learning and sharing the grey areas in order to make the experience more valuable for everyone and for no one to fear a consequence of a perceived 'failure'.
- We are responsible and rigorous; acknowledging that whilst the participating children's experience is rooted in freedom, the activities we run are underpinned by procedures that reflect the high level of responsibility in which we are placed. We are rigorous in the application of the procedures that we have carefully developed to facilitate this.
- We are action-orientated, and research backed. We embrace innovation through trial and refinement, but place this continually within the wider academic and research context; learning through the complementary work of other organisations too, and aiming to embed best practice of children's play and freedom.

These values are embedded in our organisation and we are committed to promoting these values to all stakeholders; be they participants, parents/ carers, Board members, session leaders and volunteers.

Theory of Change

In January 2020, ROAM developed a Theory of Change to outline how we will deliver and measure the success of our intended social outcomes/ impact.



03 Activities

ROAM Sessions

Over the year, we have been delivering four of our session types across five sites in Birmingham.

Sites:
5

Children:
498

Sessions:
128

Hours of Outdoor Play:
188

ROAM Free

Our original sessions where children under 11 play freely in public parks with minimal adult supervision.

We delivered 28 funded sessions in Cotteridge Park reaching 43 children. We also ran a pilot of six sessions in Spark Green Park, reaching 26 children.

Rocking ROAM

Running at the same time as ROAM Free, these are supervised sessions for children not yet ready to access ROAM Free. It's a first step to developing independent decision-making and collaborative play in nature. Children are encouraged to explore freely, growing confidence in their own judgements. W

We delivered 15 sessions over the year, reaching 76 children.

ROAM-IN

These sessions are aimed at children with SEND and their families, they provide access to self-directed free play in nature for children for whom ROAM Free may be considered too risky or inaccessible due to their play preferences, for example.

These sessions were previously running at the gardens of Kingswood Meeting House in Hollywood. In autumn 2024 we piloted them at a new site - Martineau Gardens, and made the shift over to run regular sessions at Martineau Gardens from January 2025 onwards.

We delivered 25 sessions over the year, reaching 68 children and their families.

ROAM Outdoor Playgroup

Originally launched during the pandemic to support both preschoolers and parents experiencing isolation, these playgroups quickly became a vital space for connection and have continued regularly since 2021. They continue to foster a strong, supportive community, bringing families together and creating lasting friendships.

This year, playgroups have been running across two sites, Cotteridge Park and Manor Farm Park, Northfield, reaching a total of 285 children and their families across 54 sessions.

Contribution from Volunteers

None of our work would be possible without volunteers.

This year, both experienced volunteers and enthusiastic newcomers supported our ROAM Free sessions week after week, in all weathers.

Our Board of Trustees stewarded the organisation through leadership transition and funding challenges with skill and dedication.

To everyone who contributed their time, expertise and energy—thank you.

04 Our Achievements

This year brought both challenges and significant milestones. Against a backdrop of funding pressures and governance transition, we continued to deliver our core sessions, expanded into new sites, and strengthened our voice in campaigning for children's freedoms.

In December 2024, the Government launched an inquiry on children, young people and the built environment. Our submission drew on seven years of delivery and insights from over 500 participating children, highlighting how children's independence has declined dramatically, the age at which children are allowed to play without adult supervision has increased by three years in just one generation. The inquiry gave us an important platform to share observations from our sessions: how children develop confidence, risk-assessment skills, and a sense of custodianship when given the opportunity to play freely in their local parks.

Twenty-six children in Sparkbrook explored their local park in new ways through our pilot sessions. Hundreds of families and community members connected with our mission at community festivals and events across Birmingham.

Throughout the year, children attending our sessions gained vital opportunities to play freely in nature, particularly important as funding cuts affected local children's services. Funding from multiple trusts sustained and expanded this work, our social media reach grew to nearly 1,000 Facebook followers, and a successful Board leadership transition positioned the organisation for its next phase.

None of this would have been possible without our dedicated volunteers, supportive partners, generous funders, and the families who join us rain or shine!

ROAMing in Spark Green Park

In June 2024, we partnered with the Friends of Spark Green Park to pilot ROAM Free sessions in Sparkbrook. The headteacher of a nearby primary school had expressed concern that many local children rarely ventured beyond the playground in this small urban park, despite living within walking distance. Working closely with the Friends group, we set out to encourage more children and families to engage with this green space.

Twenty-six children participated in the six-week after-school programme. Sessions enabled self-directed exploration throughout the session, combined with a program of optional structured activities that used the whole park such as treasure hunts, park bingo, parachute games, and water play. We encouraged children to venture beyond the familiar playground equipment, creating their own games and exploring the park.

Growing Confidence and Community
The change was visible from week to week. Children who initially stayed close to the playground were, by the final session, confidently exploring the park, creating elaborate games across the whole space.

The sessions drew interest from across the community. Grandparents, refugee families new to the area, and even city council members stopped to watch, ask questions and get involved.

Partnership and Learning
This pilot was made possible through funding from the John Feeney Charitable Trust. The project demonstrated that even small, urban parks can become vibrant hubs for children's play. We are committed to continuing this work and applying these learnings to activate other underused green spaces across the city.

Campaigning & Events

Community Events

Over the period, ROAM took part in a range of community events that helped us connect with families, professionals, and partners across Birmingham.

In April 2024, ROAM took part in Martineau Gardens' Spring Day, running nature challenges and sharing our mission with visitors.

On 8th June 2024, we had a stand running nature-based activities at Lark in the Park at Manor Farm Park in Northfield. Later in the month we gave a short presentation at Highbury Park's Growing Up Green Festival in Kings Heath.

In February 2025, ROAM was invited to the Fit for Feb Roadshow at the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), hosted by the BCHC Charity's DAWS Team.

Levelling Up Play

In December 2024 the Government launched an inquiry entitled: Children, young people and the built environment. This inquiry is investigating how improving planning, building and urban design could improve the health and wellbeing of children, and also benefit the whole population.

ROAM submitted evidence to the inquiry:

Since ROAM first started with its first project pilot in late 2017, we have immersed ourselves in the research regarding children's declining independence and occupation of the public realm. We have also carried out our own research with families whose children come to our sessions to determine what barriers prevent them giving their children independence. Over 500 children have attended our sessions. Below, we summarise our key findings and observations:

Children's occupation of and independence in the public realm has changed significantly in the last fifty years. The age at which a child is allowed to walk or play without adult supervision increased by 3 years in just one generation; people who grew up in the 1980s were typically allowed to play or go on short trips without adults from the age of 7.5 years old. For today's children this age is 10.5. This shift has taken place over the same time period across North America, Ireland, the UK and Australia. In the same time period, modes of travel to primary school in these countries have also shifted considerably, with the number of children walking and cycling to school dropping significantly and many more children being driven to school. Conversely, in many northern European countries, both active travel to school and the age of independence in the public realm has seen much less change.

As children's independence in the public realm has become less common, it is perceived as more risky and has become less normalised. Parents also tell us that they fear how their parenting is judged by others who may consider them irresponsible.

A significant proportion of parents reported to us that the only time their children have had freedom to play without adult supervision in the public realm has been at campsites and at festivals. The two factors that are common in these situations are no car dominance and the normalisation of children's independent play.

With the majority of our sessions taking place in a public park, one of the key benefits we have observed has been the positive impact this has on the children and the community. Children feel a greater sense of custodianship of their local spaces, and other adults using the park have remarked that they feel safer due to the presence of children. We do not discourage interaction between children and other adults (dog walkers, runners) as long as they are following the rules of being in groups and never alone in a hidden place with an adult.

Because children build a vocabulary of what typical adult behaviour looks like in the park, they are much more likely to identify concerning or dangerous behaviour by an individual. These are skills that they can develop in the relatively safe setting of our sessions that they will invariably need to rely on as they approach their teenage years and are given much greater freedom. Local community leaders have commented that our sessions are invaluable in this way, as there is an issue that many children in our community have not experienced any unsupervised time in their local neighbourhood before secondary school age and can find themselves in quite vulnerable situations, as they are not equipped with the tools to judge risks, whether they be physical risks or concerning other adults or children who may be seeking to harm them.

Many children have never experienced unsupervised play before attending our sessions; some with very little experience of playing in nature. We have seen the most stark progress in children who have joined our sessions as part of a partnership with a local primary school—children whose parents would be highly unlikely to bring their children to one of our sessions. At first, many of these children had very little idea how to explore green space independently. Some of the children had underdeveloped gross motor skills, which affected their balance (e.g., easily falling over when walking on logs or on a grassy slope) or ability to judge their body's capacity to engage in healthy risks (e.g., climbing a tree, jumping across a stream). Over the course of the weekly sessions, children's confidence in nature and in their own ability improved dramatically and they began to feel a much stronger sense of ownership and custodianship of their local park. They also worked collaboratively to help each other, with adults being absent.

It is through first-hand observation of our sessions that we have become even more convinced of the benefits of children's play, independence, and occupation of public spaces.

Naomi Fisher, January 2025

Impact on Children and Families

Over the past year, children at ROAM sessions experienced the freedom to play, explore, and make their own decisions in outdoor spaces. Parents reported striking changes: 100% of those attending our ROAM Free and Rocking ROAM sessions noticed improvements in their child's behaviour, confidence, or social skills, while 83% saw positive impact on their child's connection with nature and outdoor play. Children grew more comfortable with open-ended play, developed independence, and built friendships through self-directed exploration.

Parents told us their children now ask to go outdoors, put on their "adventure clothes" with excitement, and feel empowered to get muddy, wet, and fully immersed in nature. Many families reported shifts in their own perspectives too, feeling more confident about giving their children freedom to play and recognising capabilities they had not seen before.

Our ongoing research into barriers to independent play revealed a significant shift: while fear of abduction dominated parents' concerns in 2020, road traffic is now overwhelmingly cited as the greatest barrier.

This finding is shaping how we approach our work and advocacy, recognising that children's freedom and independence is as much about urban design and transport policy as it is about changing cultural attitudes to risk.

'My children are both more comfortable in open ended play in nature as a result of attending ROAM'

'This is a fantastic initiative for children and parents, to both feel empowered in free play. What a joy it has been to watch our son make friends and feel great in himself.'

'My boys now love being outdoors exploring nature. They really love how they can get muddy and wet in the park. Every weekend my youngest son always asks "is it Sunday yet".'

'He is getting much better at playing with new children, responding to conversation openers and general social interaction... Better emotional regulation.'

Organisational Development

Governance
At the beginning of year, we set out to strengthen and grow our Board, and following the resignation of founding trustee Gaynor Zargar, early in the year, this was an immediate priority.

For the first time, we managed to recruit Board members from outside of our existing community of parents, friends and supporters. Following a public advert, Mark Guest and Sarah Binks were voted onto the Board. Both work full time in leadership roles in the charity sector in the West Midlands, bringing a wealth of experience, skills and expertise to their trustee roles. Very shortly after their recruitment, our Chair, Laura Smiley, announced her intention to step down from the Board and we were very grateful to accept the nomination of Mark Guest as the replacement Chair. We ended the year with a strong board of four skilled trustees, but with the recognition that we still needed to grow in numbers in 2025/2026.

Project Development
The success of the pilot ROAM Free Sessions at Spark Green Park was an important milestone in the organisation's development. As well as the benefits to the participating children, this process gave us the opportunity to partner with a new organisation in a different community. The park itself presented some challenges as well as opportunities, that gave us the experience of developing a site-specific model, tailored to both the new setting and socio-cultural differences in Sparkbrook. The format of the session, the timing, the number of participants and the way it was advertised were all tailored in close collaboration with the Friends of Spark Green. We can bring much of this learning forward to ROAM's future expansion into new parks. themselves.

Funding Challenges

Finding sustainable, reliable and consistent funding streams continues to be a challenge to the organisation. Whilst we never had to stop sessions entirely, session funding has been hand-to-mouth for most of the year, and at times, we have not been able to give session leaders nor participants assurance of continuation of sessions until very close to the end of a particulqr funding cycle. Core and unrestricted funding has also been difficult to secure, albeit our overheads are very low so this has not directly impacted the charity's work; but gives insecurity of income/ employment to the core team. The challenges of funding are typical of the charity sector at the moment, with an increase in need without any noticeable increase in funding available. Therefore, grants have become more competitive to secure, as recognised by the funders themselves.

Marketing & Communications

- Our social media engagement continued to grow - on Facebook our followers increased to 979.
- Having previously been active on X, the decision was made to transition over to BlueSky and stop sharing our activities on X.
- We sent out nine e-newsletters promoting our mission and activities by the end of the year our distribution list totalled 430 contacts.

Grants

During this period we were fortunate to have submitted and secured several grant applications, primarily for project funding:

- John Feeney Charitable Trust - Spark Green Park ROAM Free Sessions
- Inclusive Communities - Funding towards our Playgroup sessions on two sites, ROAM-in and Core Costs.
- Boshier Hinton, Grimmitt Trust & Grantham Yorke Charitable Foundation - Funding towards continuing our ROAM-IN Sessions.
- William A Cadbury & Edward & Dorothy Cadbury Trusts - Funding towards Playgroup sessions.

05 Structure, Governance & Management

ROAM is a registered charity (CIO), charity number 1190230 (July 2020).

The Board

The Board comprises the Leadership Team, six Non-Executive Directors and one Co-opted Board Member. The five Non-Executive Directors are all registered with the Charity Commission as trustees. All other Board members are non-voting. Four Board Meetings are held per year.

Laura Smiley	Chair - Resigned January 2025
Geraldine Cole	Treasurer - Resigned January 2026
Sana Duncan	Trustee - Resigned October 2025
Gaynor Zargar	Safeguarding Lead - Resigned May 2024
Mark Guest	Trustee - Appointed June 2024, Interim Chair from January 2025
Sarah Binks	Trustee - Appointed November 2024
Andrew Hopkins	Treasurer - Appointed January 2026
Gemma Weston	Trustee - Appointed January 2026
Maria Richards	Trustee - Appointed January 2026
Caroline Davis	Trustee - Appointed January 2026
Lisa Walke	Co-opted Board Member
Naomi Fisher	Strategic Lead & Executive Officer

At any time there must be at least three charity trustees, If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining charity trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. Every charity trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance, taking this into account when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Officers

ROAM's Executive officer during this period was Naomi Fisher, Strategic Lead.

Naomi's key responsibilities include:

- Strategic oversight of the charity's activities
- Business Planning
- Financial oversight and management
- Income and Fundraising
- Systems and data oversight
- Marketing and External Communications
- Campaigning and Events
- Partnerships: Corporate and emerging partnerships

06 Financial Review

Review Statement

ROAM started the period with funding carried over from five grants received the previous year - including restricted funding from The Eveson Charitable Trust, The National Lottery Community Fund, Cotteridge Quaker Community Fund and Sir John Middlemore Charitable Trust and the John Feeney Charitable Trust.

Income for the period covered by this report totalled £27,657 of which £17,136 was restricted coming from seven grants. Session delivery relating to a portion of these grants will be completed in 2025/26.

Expenditure in the period totalled £28,624.

Income

To date, ROAM's income has primarily come from grants awarded by trusts and other funding bodies, most of which have been allocated to specific project delivery. This year, however, the charity received £10k in donations, providing a significant boost to project development and core funding plans.

Looking ahead, ROAM aims to develop a more sustainable, mixed-income model. This will recognise that certain activities could be charged to some users, such as schools, other organisations, or individual families, without compromising the charity's mission, vision, or values.

ROAM also recognises that some pioneering projects, particularly those supporting children who may benefit the most, will continue to rely heavily on external grant funding. Nonetheless, opportunities to subsidise this work through alternative income streams will be actively promoted. These include voluntary donations for sessions, with clear examples of what donations can support, as well as income generated through merchandising.

Grants

- John Feeney Charitable Trust
- Inclusive Communities (through Heart of England Community Foundation)
- Edward & Dorothy Cadbury Trust
- Boshier Hinton Foundation
- William A Cadbury Charitable Trust
- The Grimmitt Trust
- The Grantham YorkeTrust

Donations

- We received £10,333.00 in donations, which was a huge boost to our core/project development funds.

Other Income: payments, merchandise

- We continue to offer 'Pay as you feel' tickets, giving the option for families to make a donation towards the sessions - this raised £187.96.

Reserves Policy

Once a year the Board will consider the level of reserves that it is prudent for the organisation to hold. Consideration will be given to redundancy liabilities, lease agreements and any other significant factors that should be taken into account if the organisation were to close.

Our aim was to build up reserves representing a minimum of 3 months turnover by the end of Year 5 (April 2025), which we have now achieved.

Until we have built up adequate reserves, we have taken a low risk approach to taking on any liabilities including employment, leases, subscriptions or other regular commitments.

Report of the Independent Examiner

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of ROAM

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2025 which are set out on pages 24 to 25.

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 charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:
1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

Mark McLean

Mark McLean FCA
On behalf of Thomas & Young Limited, Chartered Accountants

Carleton House
266-268 Stratford Rd
Shirley
B90 3AD

Date: 23 January 2026

07a Accounts: Receipts & Payments Year End 31 March 2025

	Un-restricted funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	**Total this year**	**Last year**
A1 Receipts				
Booking receipts	188	-	**188**	150
Donations	10,333	-	**10,333**	2,528
Grant funding	-	17,136	**17,136**	21,884
Merchandise sales	-	-	**-**	84
Commissioned Work	-	-	**-**	250
Subtotal (Gross income for AR)	**10,521**	**17,136**	**27,657**	24,896
A2 Asset and investment sales (see table)	-	-	**-**	-
Total Receipts	**10,521**	**17,136**	**27,657**	24,896
A3 Total Payments				
Salaries - Freelancers	1,198	23,031	**24,229**	16,494
Session equipment	-	945	**945**	285
Session consumables	5	791	**796**	539
IT costs	38	493	**531**	263
Professional services	635	-	**635**	995
Merchandise costs	-	-	**-**	97
Training	9	717	**726**	-
Insurance	-	461	**461**	538
Travel	-	114	**114**	-
Subsistence	-	4	**4**	6
DBS checks	-	47	**47**	46
Printing, postage and stationery	36	-	**36**	10
Online Payment Charges	-	-	**-**	65
Site Costs	-	100	**100**	-
Subtotal	**1,921**	**26,703**	**28,624**	19,338
A4 Asset and investment purchases (see table)				
Total Payments	**1,921**	**26,703**	**28,624**	19,338
Net of receipts/(payments)	**8,600**	**(9,567)**	**(967)**	5,558
A5 Transfers between funds	**-**	**-**	**-**	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	**6,028**	**12,519**	**18,547**	12,989
Cash Funds this year end	**14,628**	**2,952**	**17,580**	18,547

07b Accounts: Statement of Assets & Liabilities for the period

	Details	Un-restricted funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)
B1 Cash Funds	Bank Current Account	14,628	2,952
Total Cash Funds		**14,628**	**2,952**
B2 Other Monetary Assets		-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment Assets	-	-	-	-
B4 Assets Retained for the Charity's own use	Equipment	Unrestricted	3,163	1,200
		Restricted	140	120

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Accrued Expenses	Unrestricted	2,702	-
		Restricted	1,045	

Signed by two trustees on behalf of all the trustees:

Signature		
Full Name	Mark Guest	Sarah Binks
Date	7th January 2026	7th January 2026

08 Reference & Administrative details

Charity Details

Charity name: ROAM

Registered charity number: 1190230

Charity's principal address:
10 Ashmore Road
BIRMINGHAM
B30 2HA

09 Declarations

This Annual Report, covering the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 was approved by trustees of ROAM on 7th January 2026.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature		
Full Name	Mark Guest	Sarah Binks
Position	Chair	Trustee
Date	7th January 2026	7th January 2026

ROAM

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Trustees' Annual Report 2023-24

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01 Foreword

Welcome to our 4th annual report. The phrase “time flies whilst you’re having fun” could not be more apt for the entire ROAM community—whether it’s the joy of seeing our children thrive in nature or the pride felt by our dedicated volunteers watching their development. These moments of connection, growth, and play are at the heart of everything we do.

Over the past year, ROAM has continued to deliver a wide range of engaging sessions, creating opportunities for children to explore, play, and grow. We are especially excited about the significant progress made in piloting new sites for both ROAM Free and our Outdoor Playgroups. These developments mark an important step in our mission to reach even more families and engage with new communities, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to experience the joy and benefits of outdoor play.

Beyond our sessions, we remain steadfast advocates for children’s rights to access green spaces, particularly in urban areas where such opportunities can be limited. It’s a cause that’s not only close to our hearts but vital for the well-being of the next generation.

Finally, on behalf of the board, I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Joanne Burrill, whose invaluable expertise and unwavering support have been instrumental, not only in guiding us through the formalities of establishing ROAM as a charity but also in sharing her wise counsel based on her wealth of experience. In addition, I would also like to acknowledge the support given by Sumeer Aggarwal for his time as treasurer during ROAM's formative years and then continuing as a co-opted board member whilst our new trustees transitioned to the board. We wish you both well and we know you will continue to proudly follow ROAM's future endeavours.

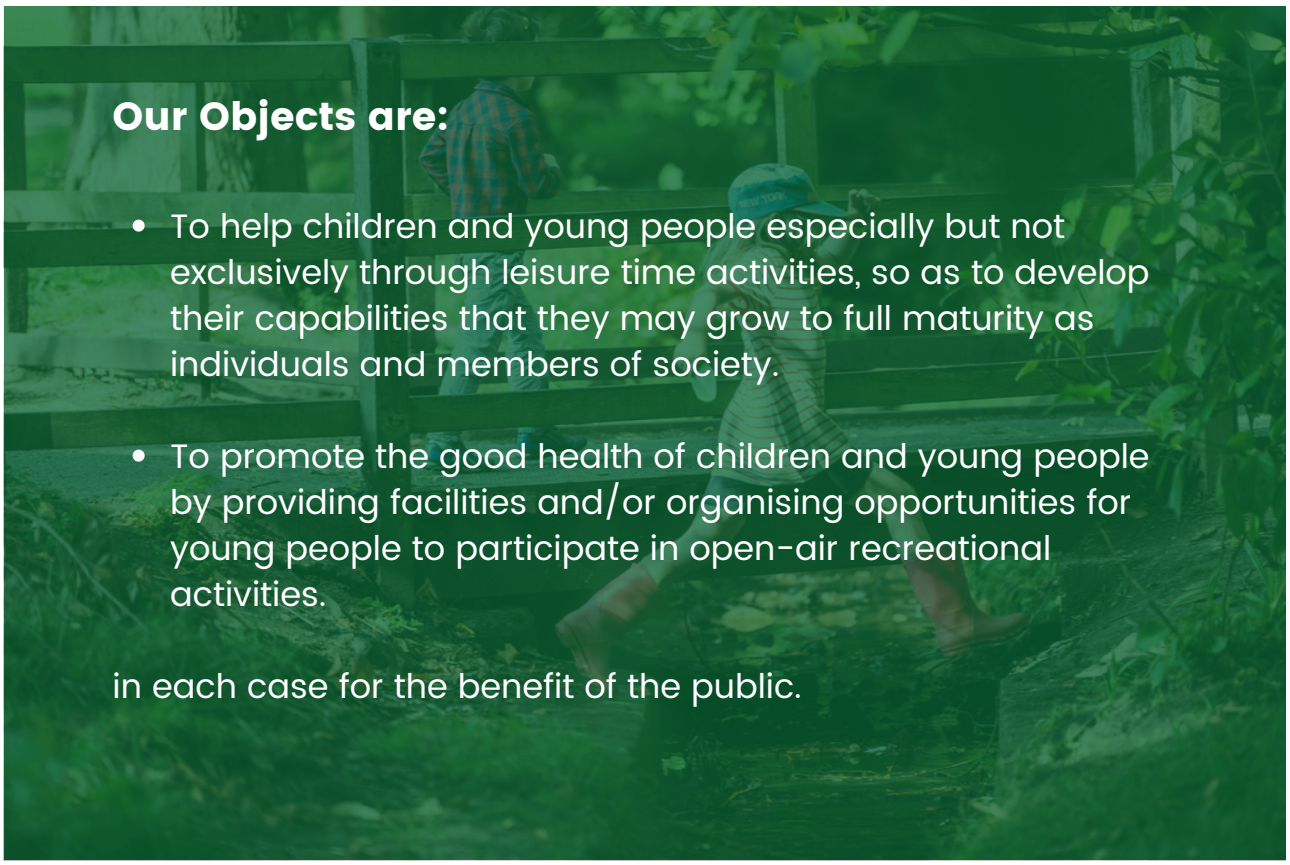
As we reflect on another remarkable year, we are filled with gratitude for our children, families, volunteers, and supporters who make ROAM possible. We would also like to extend a special thank you to our funders, whose generosity enables us to continue creating opportunities for outdoor play and exploration. Together, we are building the confidence and resilience of the next generation who will be the future custodians of our natural environment.

Laura Smiley, Chair of Trustees

02 Objectives

Our Objects

ROAM was set up with the aim of facilitating children's freedom to explore nature unsupervised; something that was normal for primary school aged children until about 30 years ago yet has since almost disappeared in the UK.



Our Objects are:

- To help children and young people especially but not exclusively through leisure time activities, so as to develop their capabilities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society.
- To promote the good health of children and young people by providing facilities and/or organising opportunities for young people to participate in open-air recreational activities.

in each case for the benefit of the public.

Our Mission, Vision & Values

Our Mission

Our mission is to facilitate children's free play in nature with minimal supervision, to support others to do so, and to campaign for every child's right to independent play.

Our Vision

Our vision is to facilitate a culture where it is considered healthy and normal for children to play unsupervised in their natural environment.

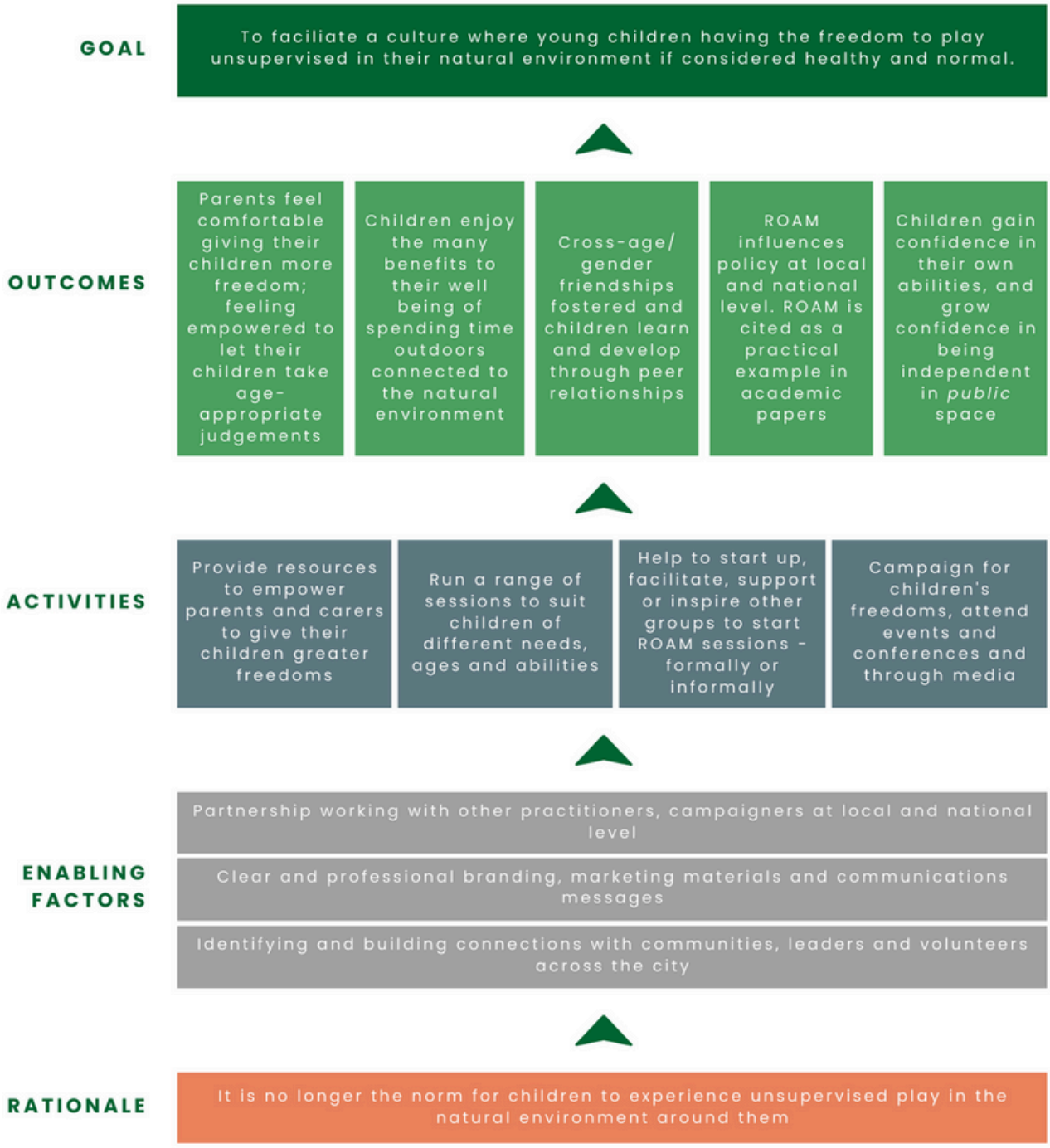
Our Values

- We are proactively inclusive; seeking ways to meet children's rights to independently play outside irrespective of their physical ability or any disability, social or economic barriers, gender, ethnicity, access to appropriate clothing, and any other barriers that we identify through the course of our work. We strive to make our sessions accessible, embracing neurodiversity, and to embed a culture of inclusion in all of our work that is reflected in the actions of everyone involved.
- We foster a culture where imperfection is embraced; we learn through our mistakes more than our successes. We encourage the bravery in trying, and promote a non judgemental culture of supportiveness. We embrace a culture of learning and sharing the grey areas in order to make the experience more valuable for everyone and for no one to fear a consequence of a perceived 'failure'.
- We are responsible and rigorous; acknowledging that whilst the participating children's experience is rooted in freedom, the activities we run are underpinned by procedures that reflect the high level of responsibility in which we are placed. We are rigorous in the application of the procedures that we have carefully developed to facilitate this.
- We are action-orientated, and research backed. We embrace innovation through trial and refinement, but place this continually within the wider academic and research context; learning through the complementary work of other organisations too, and aiming to embed best practice of children's play and freedom.

These values are embedded in our organisation and we are committed to promoting these values to all stakeholders; be they participants, parents/ carers, Board members, session leaders and volunteers.

Theory of Change

In January 2020, ROAM developed a Theory of Change to outline how we will deliver and measure the success of our intended social outcomes/ impact.



03 Activities

ROAM Sessions

Over the past year, we have continued to deliver a range of sessions not just in our local community, but also at two new sites in Birmingham. In total, we welcomed 293 children and their families to our sessions, most of them many times.

Our Year in Numbers

4
Sites

106
Sessions

293
Children & Their Families

153
Hours of Outdoor Play

ROAM Free

Our first model that enables children under 11 to play entirely self-directed with minimal supervision in a public park. We delivered 25 funded sessions reaching 46 children. We also piloted our ROAM Free Sessions in Swanshurst Park, testing the model in a new location.

Rocking ROAM

A supervised session with (mostly younger) children not yet ready to access ROAM Free. It includes self-directed play in nature, assessing own capabilities to run, jump and climb in the natural environment. We delivered 27 sessions over the year, reaching 78 children.

ROAM-IN

These sessions provide access to self-directed free play in nature for children with additional needs and their siblings, for whom ROAM Free may be considered too risky or inaccessible due to their play preferences, for example. Sessions take place in secure, private grounds. We delivered 15 sessions over the year, reaching 56 children and their families. .

ROAM Outdoor Playgroup

Initially started during the pandemic to address both preschooler and parent isolation, these sessions remained very popular and have continued regularly since 2021. Our sessions in Cotteridge Park ran weekly throughout term time, and, we delivered 33 sessions over the year with 113 children and their families attending.

This year we also piloted our Playgroup at a new site - Manor Farm Park, Northfield. These six sessions reached 33 new families.

Contribution from Volunteers

In Autumn 2023, through a connection with Bishop Challoner College, we were able to engage and train a cohort of student volunteers, preparing them to support our ROAM-IN sessions.

In ROAM Free, both existing and new volunteers assisted leaders in the successful delivery of these sessions.

Finally, our Board of Trustees generously contributed their expertise, dedication and commitment throughout this busy year.

Overall, the contribution of our volunteers has been invaluable to the organisation; we are incredibly grateful for their support.

04 Our Achievements

This year has been a journey of growth, resilience, and community. From piloting new projects to advocating for children's independence, we've faced challenges head-on and celebrated meaningful successes.

Through initiatives like our Playgroup and ROAM Free pilots at new sites, we've not only refined our approach but deepened our understanding of how best to connect with new communities. Alongside our pilot projects, community events, and advocacy efforts, we've continued to champion the transformative power of unstructured outdoor play for children and families alike. The impact of our work is clear in the joy of a child discovering the thrill of freedom in nature or the sense of connection parents find in shared green spaces.

One moment that truly captured the spirit of this year was our Crowdfunder campaign in Autumn 2023. When funding for our Outdoor Playgroup sessions ran out, leaving us unable to continue, we turned to the community for support. We hoped to raise enough to see us through a few more sessions, but the overwhelming response went beyond our wildest dreams. Our Community rallied behind us, demonstrating just how much this work means to them. It was a humbling reminder of the value these sessions hold for so many.

At the heart of every achievement are the voices of children and families who've experienced the joy, growth, and connection that come from our sessions. Their feedback reminds us why this work is so vital.

Pilot Projects

This year, we successfully piloted both our ROAM Free and Playgroup models at new sites, allowing us to trial our approach in different settings and gather valuable insights to guide future developments.

Playgroup Pilot

We ran six pilot sessions of our outdoor playgroup at Manor Farm Park in Northfield, with 33 children participating. Each session offered a wide range of activities designed to encourage free play and foster a connection with nature. Children enjoyed crafting, obstacle courses, mud kitchens, and potion making, while parents appreciated the opportunity for their children to engage in outdoor play. As the sessions progressed, both children and parents grew in confidence, with many families returning week after week.

Feedback from the sessions was overwhelmingly positive. All respondents agreed that their children enjoyed the sessions, and many reported increased interest in outdoor activities. Parents also noted benefits to their children's motor skills, confidence, and connection with nature. The sessions also strengthened community ties, with two-thirds of participants feeling more engaged with their local area.

As part of this project we were also awarded funding to develop a Playgroup Manual that outlines the steps for setting up similar groups. This manual is intended to be a resource for other community groups who are inspired by our model and wish to replicate it in their own local green spaces. By offering this resource, we aim to empower others to promote outdoor play and connection to nature, without the need for us to manage new sites.

ROAM Free Pilot

Our ROAM Free pilot sessions ran at Swanshurst Park, Billesley in November 2023.

Despite lower than anticipated attendance, those who participated offered positive feedback. The children found Swanshurst Park's more wild and varied landscapes exciting, with its sense of adventure sparking their imaginations in new ways.

The pilot reaffirmed the importance of working closely with local communities and ensuring we engage families in advance to build interest, especially when entering new areas. Despite the challenges, the success of the sessions highlights Swanshurst Park as a potential future location for ROAM Free activities. Both pilots have been instrumental in refining our approach, and the lessons learned will shape our future work.

We continue to receive enquiries from families eager for more sessions, and we are excited to explore future collaborations with local groups and share our learnings widely to inspire others to bring ROAM's ethos to their communities.

Commissioned Work

On 15th August, ROAM was commissioned by the Cadbury Barn Trust to deliver a ROAM Free session as part of their summer activity programme at Manor Farm Park.

Campaigning & Events

Growing Up Green Festival

On 14th June 2023, ROAM participated in the city-wide Growing Up Green Festival. Represented by Naomi and Jasmine, we participated in the 'Raising Green People' evening event, which brought together adults to discuss the challenges of raising children in the context of the climate crisis. This event allowed us to engage with a wider audience and contribute to important conversations around sustainability and parenting.

Cocomad Festival

On 1st July 2023, ROAM was invited once again to host a stand at Cocomad, a local community festival. We were based in Millennium Wood where we organised nature-based challenges and activities to encourage families to connect with nature. This event enabled us to engage directly with the public and promote outdoor play.

The MAC Big Green Weekender

On 15th September 2023, ROAM participated in The MAC Big Green Weekender, a free family festival aimed at encouraging community engagement and environmental action. Led by Naomi, with support from Jasmine and Sarah Green, we used this opportunity to connect with local families and raise awareness of our mission. The festival was a fantastic platform for inspiring action and promoting community involvement.

Sunday Times Feature

In August 2023, Naomi was interviewed by The Sunday Times for an article exploring the topic of children's independence. The piece highlights how modern parenting trends, marked by over-supervision, may inadvertently hinder children's resilience and mental health. By contrast, ROAM's approach—providing children with the freedom to explore, climb, and engage in minimally supervised play—demonstrates the value of encouraging independence and calculated risk-taking.

The article references ROAM's play sessions in Birmingham as a model for fostering confidence and joy in children. It echoes the perspectives of experts who argue that declining opportunities for unstructured play contribute to rising rates of anxiety and depression in young people.

Following the feature, we received enquiries from across the UK, reflecting a growing interest in our work.

Get up that tree, kids — it's time for a game of risk

Obsessive parenting has been the default for decades. But evidence now suggests it did more harm than good, writes *Rosie Kinchen*

Six years ago, Naomi Fisher decided to try something that felt radical. The community architect and mother of three was tired of forcing her eight-year-old son to stay in the playground with her and his toddler sister, when all he really wanted was to roam around. "I knew I'd done that at his age," says Fisher. "But I was really struggling with the whole concept. I thought, 'I can't just let him go off'."

She discussed the conundrum with some like-minded parents and together they decided to try. They gave their five children basic rules: "We said, 'Stay in the park boundaries, stay in a group and look after each other'," Fisher says. Then they let them get on with it. The children came back an hour and a half later, muddy, wet and grinning. "They thought it was the best thing ever."

Fisher built a charity based on that experiment. ROAM hosts play sessions in parks around Birmingham five times a week, allowing children to run, climb and jump in streams with minimal supervision. They have fun, but crucially they get a taste of something that is increasingly hard to come by: risk.

Exposing young children to risk may be critical if they are to flourish later in life. The news agenda is full of stories of adolescent mental health crises, and the NHS has warned of a "national emergency", suggesting a quarter of 17 to 19-year-olds are likely to be suffering from a mental health condition. There are months-long waiting lists for talking therapies, and schools are trying everything from mindfulness classes to therapy dogs to support anxious teenagers.

There are many theories as to why this is the case, from the onward march of technology to pandemic isolation, but a number of academics and experts argue that the root of the problem may be closer to home.

In a paper to be published in the Journal of Pediatrics this month, Peter Gray, a professor at Boston College in the US, argues the primary cause of the rise in mental disorders is a "decline over decades in opportunities for children and teens to play, roam and engage in other activities independent of direct oversight and control by adults". In other words, helicopter parenting may be harming children's mental health. "It's almost like we are training our young people to be helpless," says Gray.

My youngest son is starting school this week. On the first day of term tomorrow, he will take his first small steps towards independence. But his journey will be

WMCA Roundtable

On 27th September 2023, Naomi represented ROAM at a roundtable event hosted by Arcadis on behalf of Birmingham City Council. The event, which focused on the Council's 'Our Future City Framework' vision for 2040, brought together city leaders from both the private and public sectors. ROAM's involvement ensured the voice of the community was heard, with Naomi highlighting the disparities in access to green space and the impact on children's outcomes. This event also provided us with an invaluable opportunity to raise ROAM's profile and advocate for children's independence, transport, and safety in urban planning discussions. Follow-up conversations are planned, which may offer further opportunities for us to contribute to future dialogues on these critical issues.

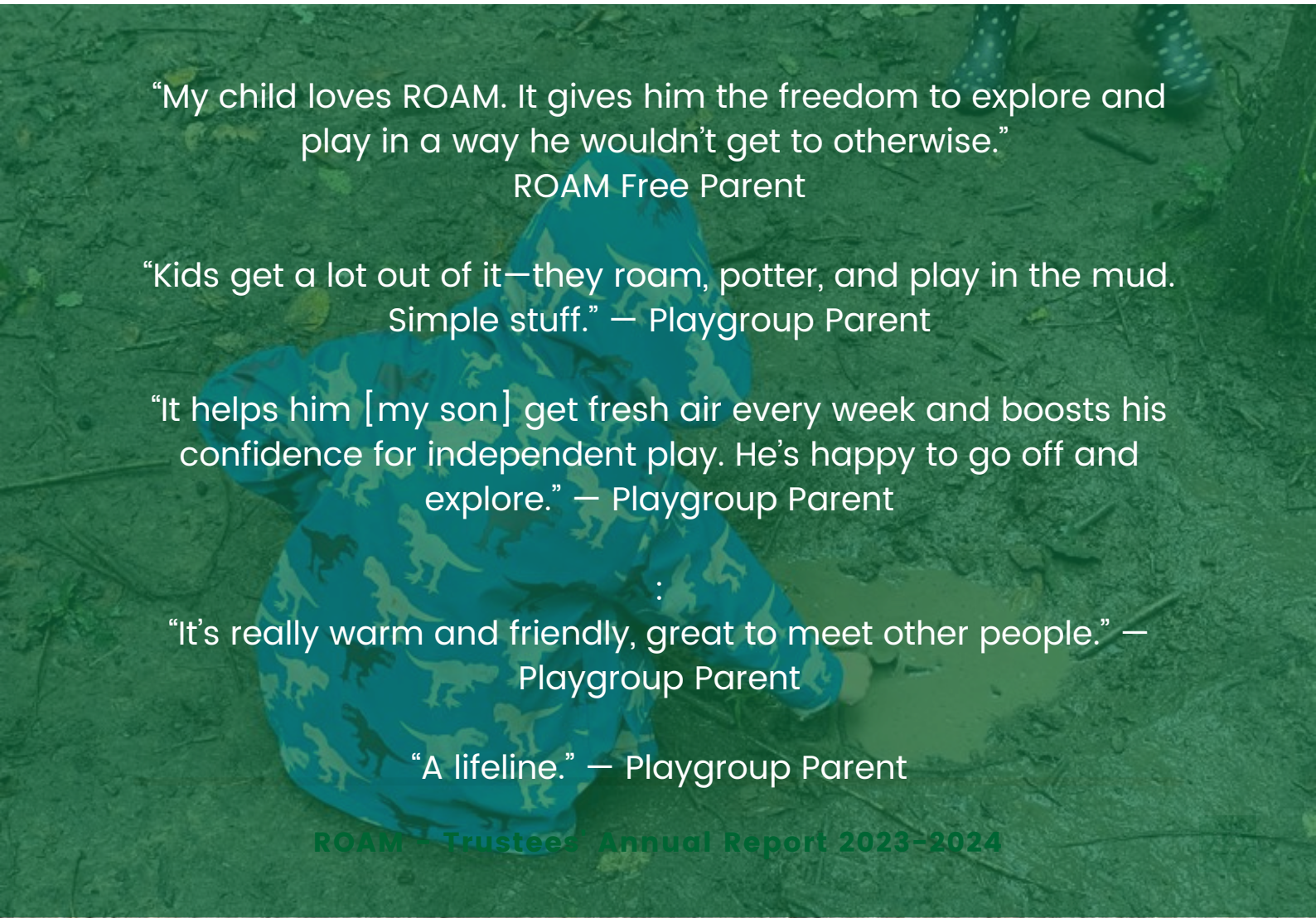
Impact on Children and Families

ROAM continues to provide children with the freedom to explore and engage in self-directed play in nature, which remains central to our mission.

However our sessions have become more than just opportunities for play; they provide safe spaces for social interaction for both children and their families. Through play, we help children build confidence, resilience, and independence, while creating peer networks and fostering a sense of community for parents and carers.

The feedback we've received from families during the year underscores the positive impact our sessions have had. Parents describe how these sessions have been essential in helping their children grow and develop, while also providing much-needed support to families.

The importance of our sessions extends beyond just the children. Parents have shared how these activities have created a sense of belonging and connection to their local community



"My child loves ROAM. It gives him the freedom to explore and play in a way he wouldn't get to otherwise."
ROAM Free Parent

"Kids get a lot out of it—they roam, potter, and play in the mud. Simple stuff." — Playgroup Parent

"It helps him [my son] get fresh air every week and boosts his confidence for independent play. He's happy to go off and explore." — Playgroup Parent

:
"It's really warm and friendly, great to meet other people." — Playgroup Parent

"A lifeline." — Playgroup Parent

Organisational Development

During the year, ROAM made positive progress in implementing some of the organisation's business objectives. This included piloting a new ROAM Free site and piloting our playgroup in a new setting as part of our Neighbourhood ROAM development strand. We also promoted our mission at new events for the first time. This was in spite of facing challenges from a funding perspective as well as changes in governance.

July 2023 marked three years since the charity was founded, and the end of the first term for our founding trustees. During the year, one trustee and one board member stepped down, and two more expressed their intention to step down from the Board, whilst we sought new recruits. As a small charity, the recruitment of new trustees is disproportionately time consuming and this did impact on the time and focus we had available for organisational development. In addition, with upcoming changes in the Board make up, it was appropriate to wait for new trustees to be on board before instigating any significant organisational development.

As the year also involved a particularly challenging funding landscape, bringing in sufficient funds to run sessions was the priority over organisational development. These challenging conditions did, however, focus the Board's attention on developing and maintaining a robust organisational risk register; now a standing item on the Board's quarterly meetings.

Marketing & Communications

- Our social media engagement continued to grow throughout the year with 107 new followers on Facebook and increasing our following to 851 on Twitter.
- We sent out nine e-newsletters promoting our mission and activities by the end of the year our distribution list totalled 430 contacts.

Grants

We were fortunate to have submitted and won several grant applications over the course of the year, primarily for project funding:

- John Feeney Charitable Trust - Funding to pilot our playgroup sessions and create a manual of resources for other groups.
- The Eveson Trust - Funding for ROAM-IN Sessions.
- The Sir John Middlemore Charitable Trust- Additional funding for ROAM-IN Sessions in 2024.
- Awards for All - Funding for ROAM Free, Rocking ROAM and Playgroup sessions.
- We also received grants to support our core funding and general project development from The Fitton Trust, The W E Dunn Trust, The Edgar E Lawley Foundation, The Roughley Trust and The Grantham Yorke Trust.

05 Structure, Governance & Management

ROAM is a registered charity (CIO), charity number 1190230 (July 2020).

The Board

The Board comprises the Leadership Team, five Non-Executive Directors and two Co-opted Board Members. The five Non-Executive Directors are all registered with the Charity Commission as trustees. All other Board members are non-voting. Four Board Meetings are held per year.

Laura Smiley	Chair	
Joanne Burrill	Trustee	Appointed July 2020 - Resigned June 2023
Geraldine Cole	Treasurer	
Sana Duncan	Trustee	
Gaynor Zargar	Safeguarding Lead	
Sumeer Aggarwal	Co-opted Board Member	Co-opted April 2022 - Resigned June 2023
Lisa Walke	Co-opted Board Member	
Naomi Fisher	Strategic Lead & Executive Officer	

At any time there must be at least three charity trustees, If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining charity trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. Every charity trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance, taking this into account when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

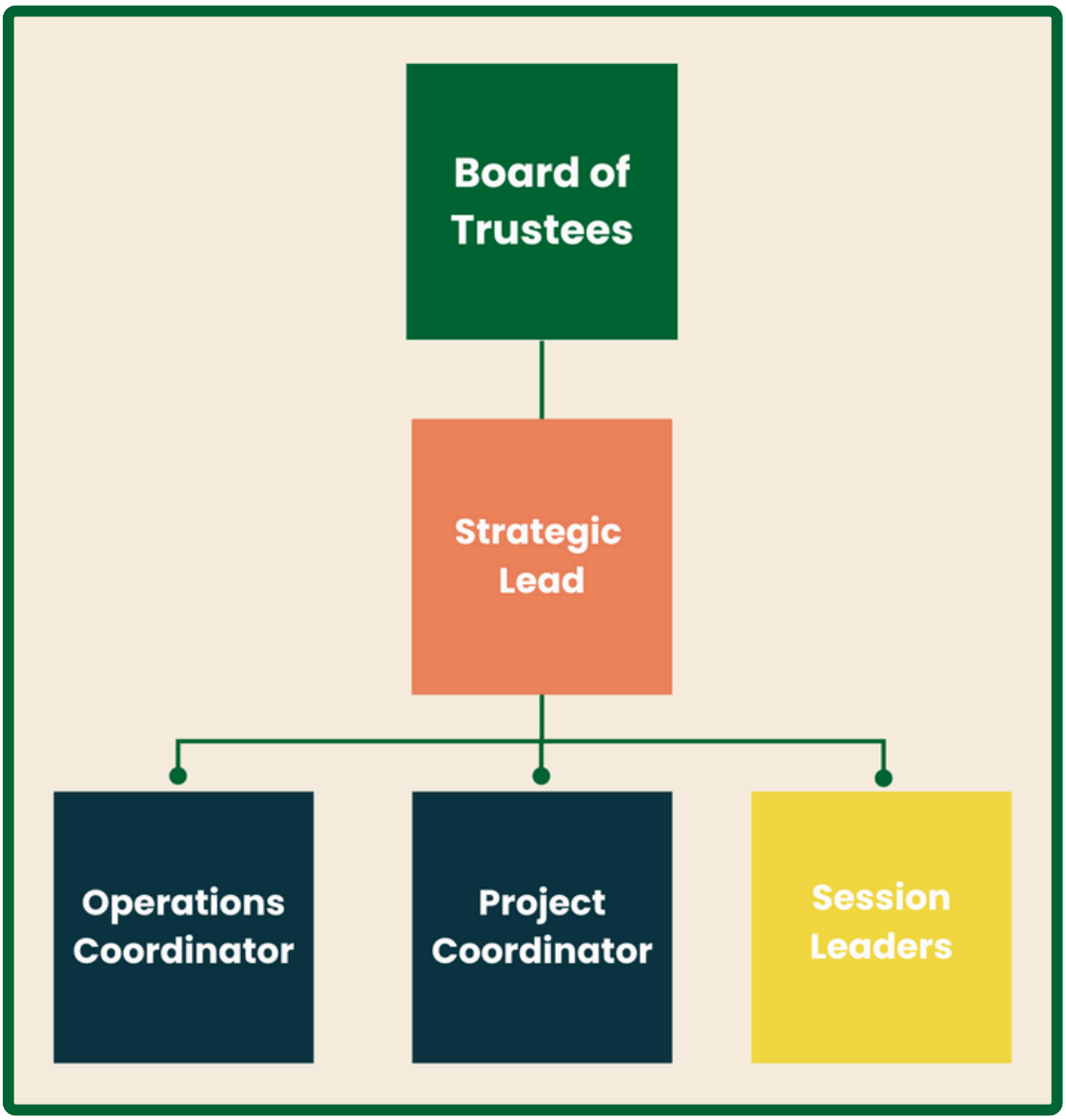
Officers

ROAM's Executive officer during this period was Naomi Fisher, Strategic Lead.

Naomi's key responsibilities include:

- Strategic oversight of the charity's activities
- Business Planning
- Financial oversight and management
- Income and Fundraising
- Systems and data oversight
- Marketing and External Communications
- Campaigning and Events
- Partnerships: Corporate and emerging partnerships
- Designated Safeguarding Lead

Organisational Structure



06 Financial Review

Review Statement

ROAM started the period with funding carried over from four grants received the previous year - including restricted funding from The Eveson Charitable Trust, The National Lottery Community Fund, Cotteridge Quaker Community Fund and the Heart of England Charitable Foundation.

Income for the period covered by this report totalled £24,896 of which £15,434 was restricted coming from four grants. Session delivery relating to these grants will be completed in 2024/25.

Expenditure in the period totalled £19,338.

Income

ROAM's income has largely been in the form of grants from trusts other funding bodies - during the period the majority of this funding was for specific project delivery.

Moving forward, a more sustainable mixed model of income is to be developed, recognising that some activities the charity delivers could be charged to some consumers without detriment to the mission, vision or values. This includes schools or other organisations as well as individual families.

ROAM recognises that some of its pioneering work or projects with children who may stand to benefit most, may still be largely dependent upon external grant funders. That said, the opportunity for subsidising this through other work will be promoted in the form of voluntary donations for sessions (with tangible examples of what donations can help pay for), and profit on merchandising.

Grants

- John Feeney Charitable Trust
- The Eveson Trust
- The Sir John Middlemore Charitable Trust
- Awards for All
- The Fitton Trust
- The W E Dunn Trust
- The Edgar E Lawley Foundation
- The Roughley Trust
- The Grantham Yorke Trust

Donations

- During the period we ran a successful Crowdfunder campaign to continue running our Outdoor Playgroup in Cotteridge Park. This raised donations of £1,108.
- We also received £1,420 in individual donations.

Commissions and Consultancy

In August 2023 we were commissioned to run ROAM Free in Manor Farm Park, raising an income of £250.

Other Income: payments, merchandise

- To support our ROAM-IN Sessions we introduced 'Pay as you Feel' tickets, giving the option for families to make a donation towards the sessions - this raised £150.
- We received £84 for merchandise sales.

Reserves Policy

Once a year the Board will consider the level of reserves that it is prudent for the organisation to hold. Consideration will be given to redundancy liabilities, lease agreements and any other significant factors that should be taken into account if the organisation were to close.

We will aim to build up reserves representing a minimum of 3 months of typical turnover by the end of Year 5 (April 2025).

Until we have built up adequate reserves, we have taken a low risk approach to taking on any liabilities including employment, leases, subscriptions or other regular commitments.

07a Accounts: Receipts & Payments Year End 31 March 2024

	Un-restricted funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	**Total this year**	**Last year**
A1 Receipts				
Booking receipts	150	-	**150**	-
Donations	2,528	-	**2,528**	941
Grant funding	6,450	15,434	**21,884**	25,897
Merchandise sales	84	-	**84**	177
Commissioned Work	250	-	**250**	400
Subtotal (Gross income for AR)	**9,462**	**15,434**	**24,896**	27,415
A2 Asset and investment sales (see table)	-	-	**-**	-
Total Receipts	**9 ,462**	**15,434**	**24,896**	27,415
A3 Total Payments				
Salaries - Freelancers	3,211	13,283	**16,494**	21,610
Session equipment	29	256	**285**	1,676
Session consumables	45	494	**539**	483
Computer costs	-	263	**263**	205
Professional services	275	720	**995**	573
Merchandise costs	97	-	**97**	-
Training	-	-	**-**	77
Insurance	-	538	**538**	324
Travel	-	-	**-**	33
Subsistence	6	-	**6**	22
DBS checks	-	46	**46**	222
Printing, postage and stationery	10	-	**10**	-
Online Payment Charges	65	-	**65**	-
Donations	-	-	**-**	100
Subtotal	**3,738**	**15,600**	**19,338**	25,325
A4 Asset and investment purchases (see table)				
Total Payments	**3,738**	**15,600**	**19,338**	25,325
Net of receipts/(payments)	**5,724**	**(166)**	**5,558**	2,090
A5 Transfers between funds	**-**	**-**	**-**	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	**304**	**12,685**	**12,989**	10,898
Cash Funds this year end	**6,028**	**12,519**	**18,547**	12,988

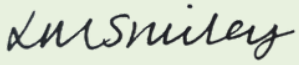
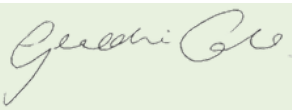
07b Accounts: Statement of Assets & Liabilities for the period

	Details	Un-restricted funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)
B1 Cash Funds	Bank Current Account	6,028	12,519
Total Cash Funds		**6,028**	**12,519**
B2 Other Monetary Assets	Stock of Merchandise	400	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment Assets	-	-	-	-
B4 Assets Retained for the Charity's own use	Equipment	Unrestricted	3,163	1,200
		Restricted	140	120

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Accrued Expenses	Unrestricted	1,510	-
		Restricted	1,330	

Signed by two trustees on behalf of all the trustees:

Signature		
Full Name	Laura Smiley	Geraldine Cole
Date	30th January 2025	30th January 2025

08 Reference & Administrative details

Charity Details

Charity name: ROAM

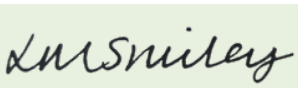
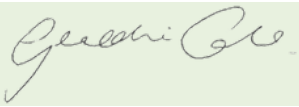
Registered charity number: 1190230

Charity's principal address:
10 Ashmore Road
BIRMINGHAM
B30 2HA

09 Declarations

This Annual Report, covering the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 was approved by trustees of ROAM on 28th November 2024.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature		
Full Name	Laura Smiley	Geraldine Cole
Position	Chair	Treasurer
Date	30th January 2025	30th January 2025

ROAM

England & Wales - Charity number 1190230

Accounts

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ROAM

Trustees' Annual Report 2022-23

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01 Foreword

This year, I believe our greatest achievement has been the expansion of the ROAM community and the elevation of ROAM's profile. Community has always been at the heart of what ROAM strives to achieve. As an organisation: we seek to engage with communities; enable children to build independence and confidence to engage with their local community; develop sessions that are inclusive and accessible to all children; and recruit a diverse pool of volunteers, demonstrating our commitment to accessibility for all members of the community.

The year has brought us numerous success stories that underscore our commitment to the community:

- Collaborating with a local school to provide tailor-made ROAM in School sessions for children facing specific challenges within the school environment. These sessions have nurtured resilience, improved social skills, and deepened the connection with nature.
- Winning community support for our ROAM Around The World Commonwealth Challenge, securing funding from Birmingham City Council's Celebrating Communities Fund. This challenge attracted participants spanning generations, from newborns to individuals in their eighties.
- Sustaining our delivery of a diverse range of sessions, enabling younger children to connect with nature even during the colder months and providing a safe environment for children with additional needs via ROAM-IN to do the same.
- Recognition from the Birmingham Playcare Network, leading to the commissioning of two ROAM Free sessions as part of their Play in Parks campaign during the summer holidays. This allowed ROAM to introduce its ethos to a new community and access a previously untapped part of Birmingham.
- The privilege of being invited to speak as experts on Independent Play, represented by talks delivered by our Strategic Lead, Naomi Fisher. City planners have recognised that ROAM has an important voice to consider when designing green spaces in inner city developments

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While our geographical reach may not have seen a substantial expansion, we have undoubtedly deepened and broadened our reach within the communities we serve. Another example, would be the families that are typically attracted by ROAM Free are already on board with our children's freedom to play mission. Given the expansion of sessions, the families that access ROAM's outdoor playgroup or ROAM-IN could be anyone just trying to find something fun to occupy their pre-schoolers. Through these activities for earlier age groups, we have opened gateways for families to hear about our broader philosophy and prepare children for independent outdoor play in the future.

Through the year we have welcomed two new members to the board: Sana with her legal expertise and Geraldine as our Treasurer, both bring invaluable skills and experience. We are hugely grateful for the years of dedication that Lisa Walke has put into ROAM as co-founder and crucially as Operations Lead. However, we are privileged to report that she will continue to be involved strategically as a Co-opted Board Member. As ROAM grows, we seek to expand our board to ensure it is reflective of all the communities we serve new trustees bring more breadth in skills and experience. .

Whilst delivering all these exciting activities, we should mention hard at work in our back office, our Project Administrator, Faye Cutler who has worked tirelessly implementing new systems. These systems will provide a solid platform for our ambitious plans for the future.

Whilst our vision is to "facilitate a culture where it is considered healthy and normal for children to play unsupervised in their natural environment." success can only be achieved if this is supported and accepted as the norm by the local community and society as a whole. We look forward to continuing with our mission.

Laura Smiley, Chair of Trustees

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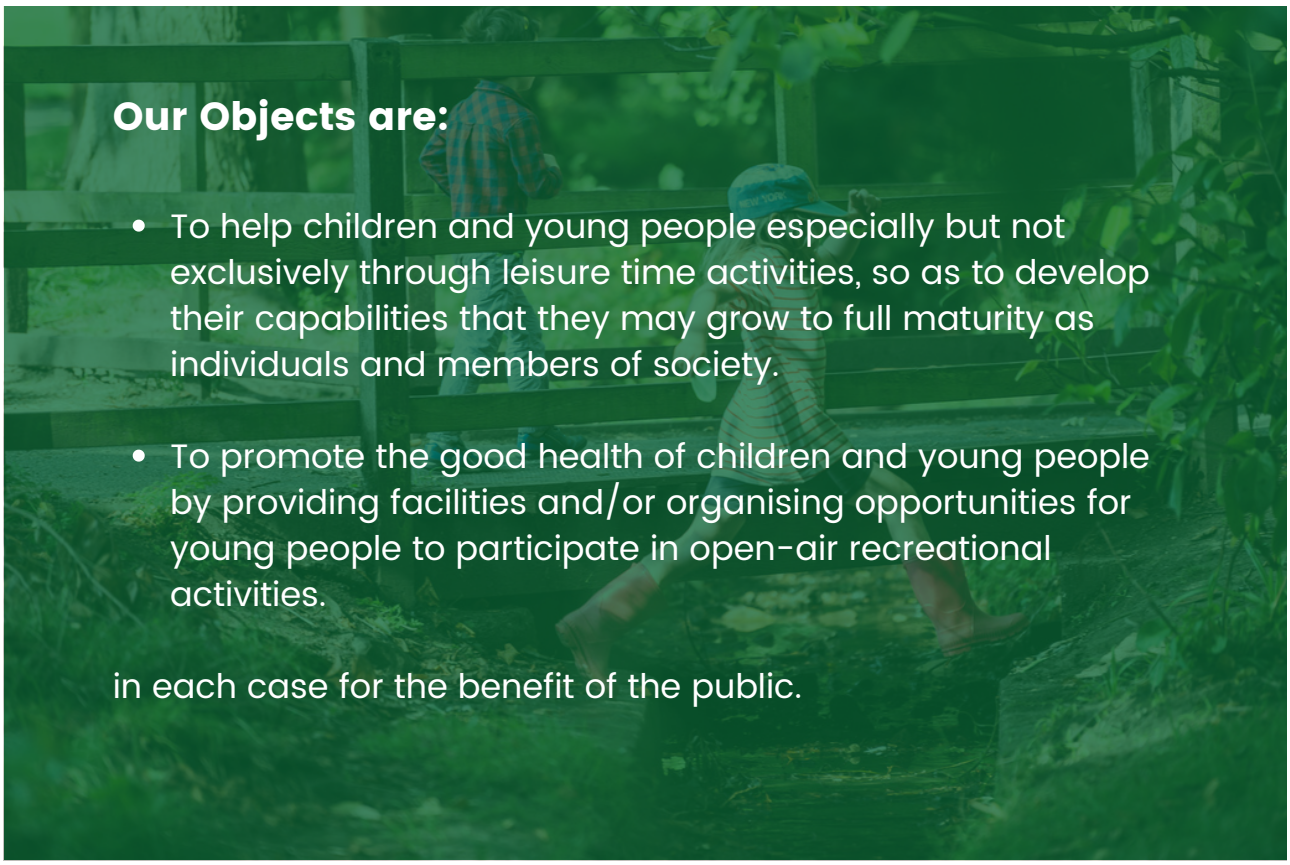
02 Objectives

Our Objects

ROAM was set up with the aim of facilitating children's freedom to explore nature unsupervised; something that was normal for primary school aged children until about 30 years ago yet has since almost disappeared in the UK.



Our Objects are:

- To help children and young people especially but not exclusively through leisure time activities, so as to develop their capabilities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society.
- To promote the good health of children and young people by providing facilities and/or organising opportunities for young people to participate in open-air recreational activities.

in each case for the benefit of the public.

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Our Mission, Vision & Values

Our Mission

Our mission is to facilitate children's free play in nature with minimal supervision, to support others to do so, and to campaign for every child's right to independent play.

Our Vision

Our vision is to facilitate a culture where it is considered healthy and normal for children to play unsupervised in their natural environment.

Our Values

- We are proactively inclusive; seeking ways to meet children's rights to independently play outside irrespective of their physical ability or any disability, social or economic barriers, gender, ethnicity, access to appropriate clothing, and any other barriers that we identify through the course of our work. We strive to make our sessions accessible, embracing neurodiversity, and to embed a culture of inclusion in all of our work that is reflected in the actions of everyone involved.
- We foster a culture where imperfection is embraced; we learn through our mistakes more than our successes. We encourage the bravery in trying, and promote a non judgemental culture of supportiveness. We embrace a culture of learning and sharing the grey areas in order to make the experience more valuable for everyone and for no one to fear a consequence of a perceived 'failure'.
- We are responsible and rigorous; acknowledging that whilst the participating children's experience is rooted in freedom, the activities we run are underpinned by procedures that reflect the high level of responsibility in which we are placed. We are rigorous in the application of the procedures that we have carefully developed to facilitate this.
- We are action-orientated, and research backed. We embrace innovation through trial and refinement, but place this continually within the wider academic and research context; learning through the complementary work of other organisations too, and aiming to embed best practice of children's play and freedom.

These values are embedded in our organisation and we are committed to promoting these values to all stakeholders; be they participants, parents/ carers, Board members, session leaders and volunteers.

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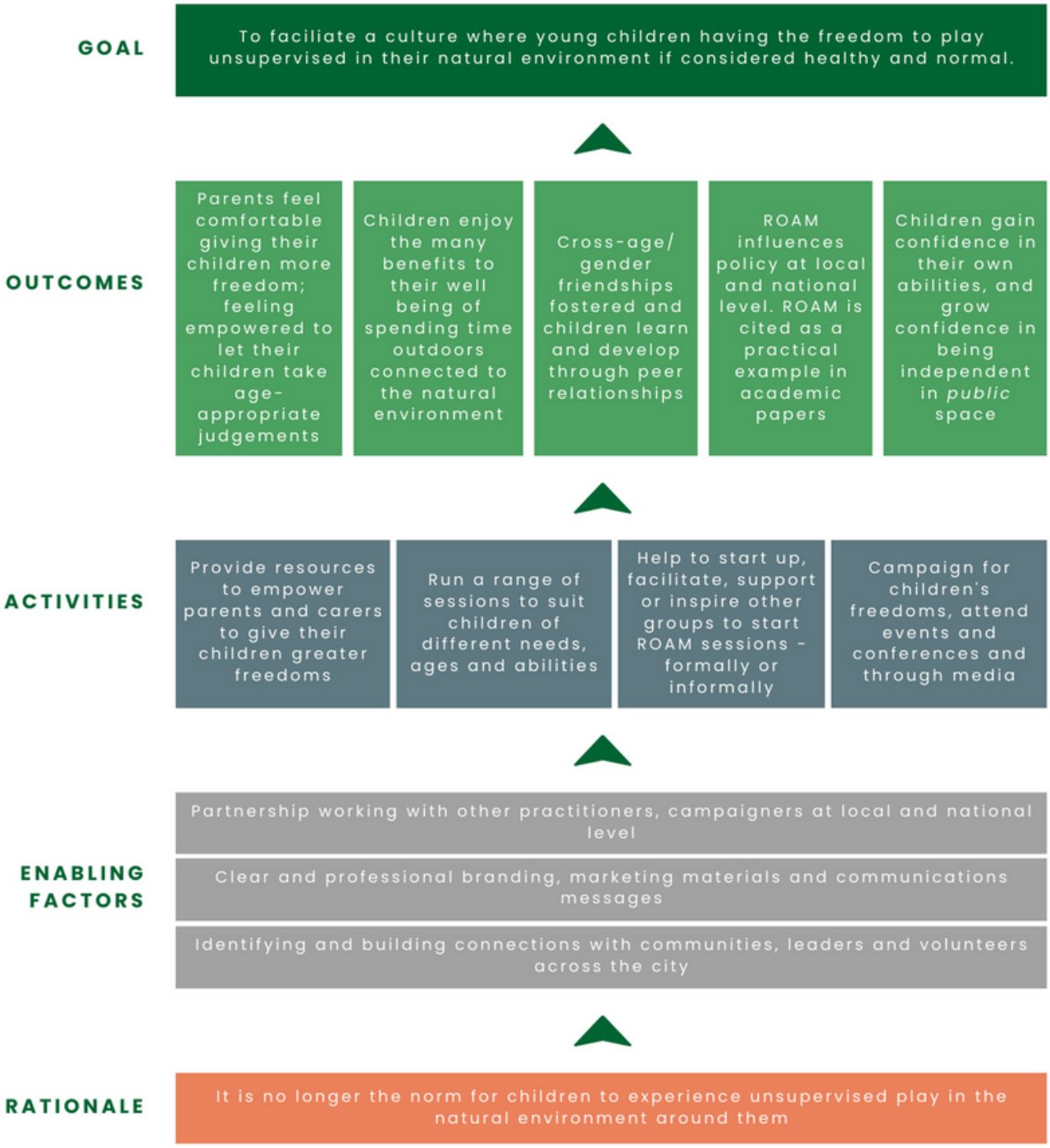
Theory of Change

In January 2020, ROAM developed a Theory of Change to outline how we will deliver and measure the success of our intended social outcomes/ impact.



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03 Activities

ROAM Sessions

Over the past year, we have continued to deliver a range of valuable sessions for our community. Our ROAM-IN and Playgroup Sessions ran throughout the year, and in November 2022 we were able to restart regular ROAM Free and Rocking ROAM sessions.

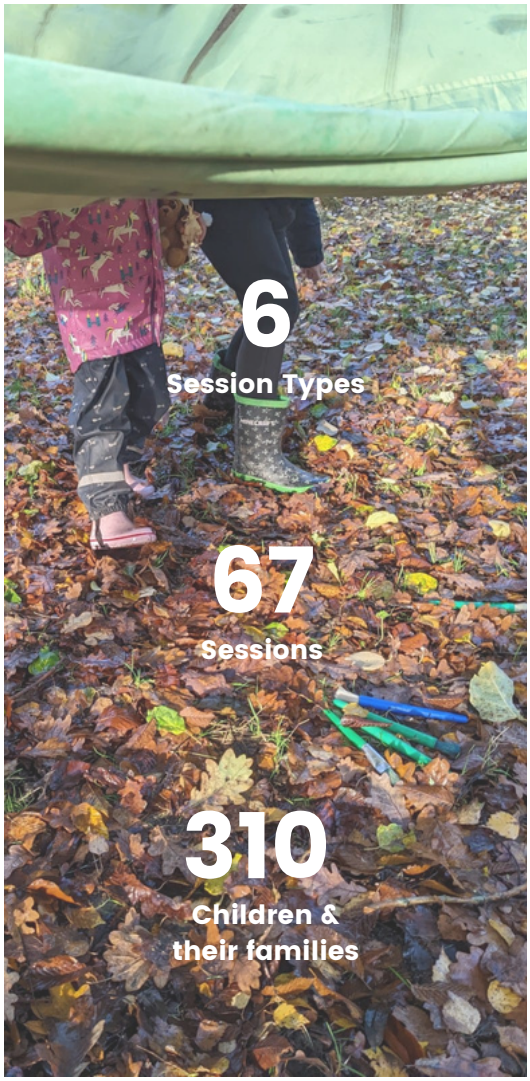
In total, we welcomed 310 children and their families to our sessions - most of them many times.

ROAM Free

ROAM Free - Our first model that enables children under 11 to play entirely self-directed with minimal supervision in a public park. We delivered 10 funded sessions between November 2022 and March 2023 reaching 32 children.

Rocking ROAM

Supervised session with (mostly younger) children not yet ready to access ROAM Free. It includes self-directed play in nature, assessing own capabilities to run, jump, climb in the natural environment. We delivered 11 funded sessions between November 2022 and March 2023, reaching 56 children.



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ROAM-IN

Provides access to self-directed free play in nature for children with additional needs and their siblings, for whom ROAM Free may be considered too risky or inaccessible due to their play preferences, for example. Sessions take place in secure, private grounds. We delivered 11 sessions over the year, reaching 69 children and their families.

ROAM Outdoor Playgroup

Initially started during the pandemic to address both preschooler and parent isolation, these sessions remained very popular and have continued regularly since 2021. Running weekly in Cotteridge Park, we delivered 22 sessions over the period with over 100 families attending.

ROAM in Schools

Seven sessions were delivered with a local school. This was the second time we had worked with the school, delivering free play sessions for a cohort of nine children, who needed help in developing resilience, social skills, and a stronger connection with nature.

ROAM Adventurers

A second set of our ROAM Adventurers sessions was run Jan-March 2023. Aimed at pre-schoolers and their families/carers. 44 children and their families attended over the block of six sessions. Each session used a storybook as the inspiration to introduce activities that are encouraged in our ROAM Free sessions, incorporating more physical movement around the park to keep participants warm while spending time in nature.

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Contribution from Volunteers

Throughout the period, we were fortunate to receive vital support from dedicated volunteers who contributed to a wide range of aspects of ROAM; including sessions, events, and governance.

Our core cohort of ROAM-IN volunteers played an important role in creating a welcoming atmosphere for families, fostering a sense of ease during our sessions. In ROAM Free, a blend of both existing and new volunteers worked with our leaders, ensuring the successful execution of these sessions. The continuous operation of our Playgroup was sustained by the ongoing commitment of regular volunteers from the local community.

For our Commonwealth Challenge event (run in July), we were able to engage 16 volunteers, not only from our existing group of volunteers but also from the wider community. This included a graphic designer volunteer, two volunteers who contributed creative ideas for the challenges in a planning workshop, as well as volunteers ranging in age from 14 to 79 assisting on the day.

Finally, our Board of Trustees generously contributed their expertise, dedication and commitment throughout this busy year.

Overall, the contribution of our volunteers has been invaluable to the organisation; we are incredibly grateful for their support.

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04 Our Achievements

The year 2022 was a big one for Birmingham; hosting the Commonwealth Games for the first time brought a huge sense of energy to the city, and also opened up opportunities for local community groups to be a part of this. In a competitive selection process, we had to submit and then pitch our idea at a local Ward meeting to secure funding. We were delighted to receive the most number of votes for our proposed ROAM Commonwealth Challenge: around the world in one park.

Whilst this was just a one off event, its success epitomises the journey we have taken this year in both connecting with and embedding ourselves in the community we serve. We intentionally designed an event where team challenges were suitable for a wide age range; and teams with a diverse age and skill range had an advantage. Many of the participants encountered ROAM for the first time at this event which included establishing connections with our local business community too; we approached local shops and eateries for donations of prizes, in person. We advertised our event through local schools and other facilities in the area, again raising our profile locally.

Of high significance too, our playgroup continued to grow from strength to strength and by September 2022, the playgroup had been running almost continuously for two years, meaning children who had started attending the playgroup were now starting to engage in other sessions such as Rocking Roam and ROAM-IN, 'weaving ROAM into the fabric of our family life' as one parent put it.

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Our biggest achievement this year has been to really embed the culture of community in our sessions, and for a wide range of people to experience the connections and benefits to well being that feeling part of a community can bring. Our range of activities this year have intentionally and successfully addressed social isolation amongst families and individuals.

This is primarily focussed on geographical community, but also includes communities of carers of children with special needs and carers of very young children. By partnering with local agencies we specifically reached out to families who are new to the area or didn't know anyone, and without being explicit in our marketing, we were targeting parents and carers who were feeling isolated. We advertised our sessions through channels that may most effectively do so. Recruiting volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds has provided benefits to individuals and to ROAM. We have had many more volunteers this year who were not from our core beneficiaries' demographic of families with children under 12.

Some further details of our achievements are detailed below, picking out some particular highlights of the year in more detail.

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ROAM in Schools

During the summer term of 2022 we ran a series of seven weekly ROAM sessions with a local school. Working in partnership with the school's learning mentors, a cohort of nine children aged 6 to 11 were identified, all of whom required assistance in developing resilience, social skills, and a stronger connection with nature. Our sessions aimed to facilitate free play, exploration, and adventure in Cotteridge Park for this specific group. We emphasised a culture of care within the group, reinforcing the three golden rules:

- Stay in groups of 3 or more.
- Stay within the boundaries of the park.
- Look after yourselves, each other, and nature.

These children, often facing challenges within the school environment such as friendship dynamics, anxiety, and focus in a bustling classroom, thrived in the natural setting. Immersed in nature, they invented games, collaborated, took calculated risks, and assumed leadership roles.

The learning mentor who closely supports these children on a weekly, and in some cases daily, basis within the school setting, expressed her awe at witnessing how they flourished. Notably, she mentioned Child A, who initially struggled to engage with others. Through our sessions, this child formed a close bond with Child B, an older child grappling with anxiety. In nature, they discovered common ground, through activities such as climbing trees, building dens, and engaging in creative play. The learning mentor noted a remarkable improvement in their confidence and relaxation levels during these sessions.

Our objective was to measure the following aspects related to building resilience:

- Connection to nature.
- Increase in social interactions.
- Custodianship of the local community park.

At the end of each session, we held a reflection period where we asked open and closed questions to assess their experiences, exploring various aspects of the session and their interactions. During these discussions the children expressed their love for attending the sessions - they enthusiastically showcased the new areas they had explored, from climbing steep slopes to sliding down muddy banks, identifying trees, creating nature art, and exploring the stream bank.

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The sessions fostered a harmonious mix of children across age groups. The older children looked out for the younger ones, assisting them in climbing and waiting for them. In return, the younger children gained confidence and formed new friendships beyond their usual year groups. The older children relished their roles as leaders, a position they might not have assumed within their immediate peer groups. This intergenerational interaction led to the transfer of physical, emotional, and creative skills from the older to the younger children.

Nature provided an ideal backdrop for these relationships to flourish - they engaged in activities such as hide and seek, races, role-playing, and creating art with natural materials, capitalising on the possibilities presented by the natural environment.

The children demonstrated a strong sense of ownership over their local park and cherished the autonomy to choose their activities. Self-direction and real-life problem-solving, foundational for lifelong learning, were encouraged and developed throughout the sessions. The children conveyed their excitement, joy, and moments of fear (such as when climbing a bank) during the activities, which we perceived as positive signs of building resilience, overcoming challenges, and taking healthy, appropriate risks.

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Commonwealth Challenge - July 2022

On Saturday 16th July 2022, we held our ROAM Commonwealth Challenge in Cotteridge Park which was funded as part of Birmingham City Council's Celebrating Communities Fund.

The intention was that this would be an inclusive event for the whole community and that challenges would involve adults as well as children in playful, nature-based fun. We also wanted to raise our profile in the community and in connection with the BeBold campaign.

Participants took part in 11 events, including the Bangladeshi Bop, the Tonga Conga, the Great British Mud Challenge and Singapore Sling, and we were able to secure prizes from a range of local businesses to offer the winning teams. A total of 16 volunteers were recruited in the planning of the event as well as on the day.

The event was free of charge to enter and prizes were used as an incentive to encourage participation. Seven businesses and one individual donated prizes and we also received a donation of £200 towards prizes as well as a donation to the charity of £500. We recognised these donations in the passports and on the back of the maps.

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A total of 29 teams took part, with over 120 people participating, ranging in age from newborns to 80+. Sign ups were encouraged beforehand, however, we also had nine teams sign-up on the day and were delighted to have been able to engage not only with existing ROAMers and their families, but also with the wider community.

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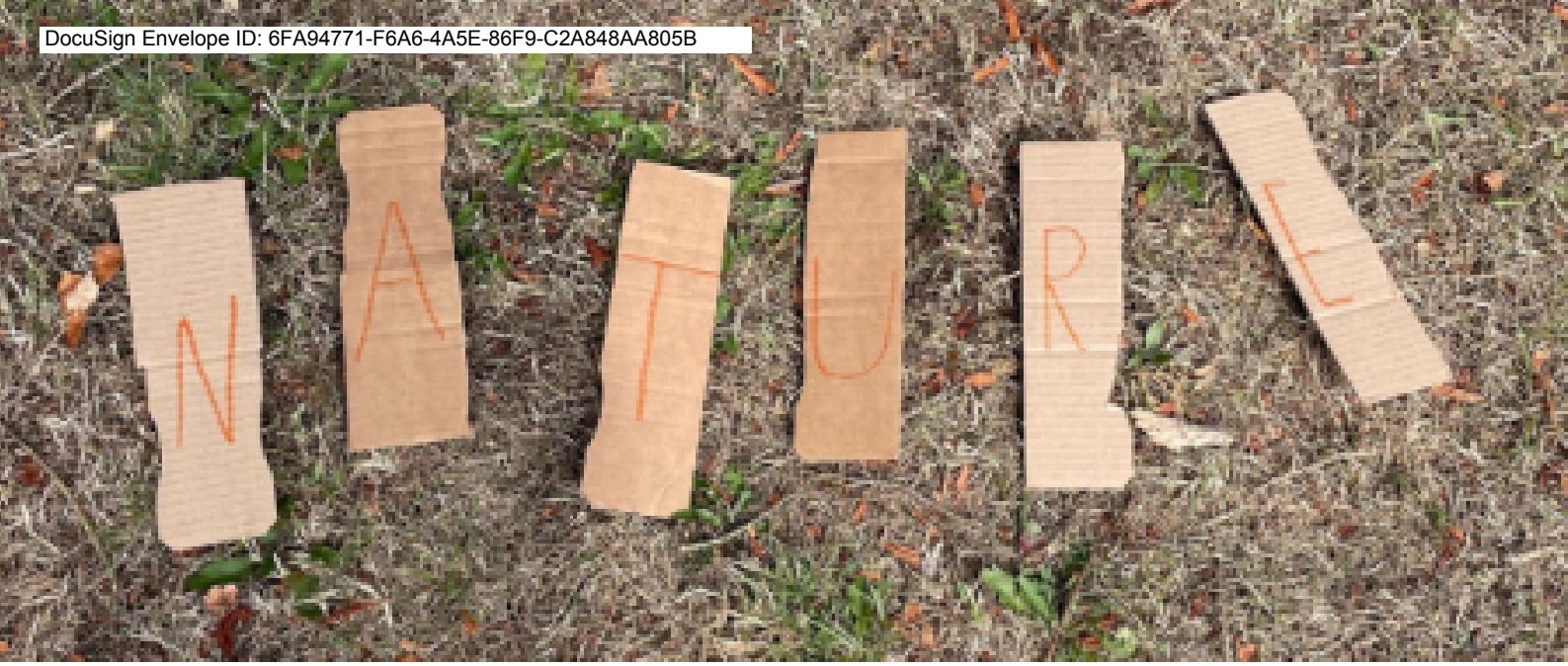

Commissioned Work

ROAM was commissioned by Birmingham Playcare Network to run two ROAM Free sessions in Hollymoor Park on 17th and 18th August 2022. These were part of Birmingham Playcare Network's Play in Parks project that runs over the summer holidays.

This was the first time our ROAM Free Sessions have been commissioned and it was a valuable opportunity to try out a new park and reach a new area of the city. The site falls within the Frankley Great Park ward of Birmingham and in an LSOA neighbourhood within the bottom 10% of neighbourhoods nationally, with regards to Indices of Multiple Deprivation (by comparison, the LSOA that Cotteridge Park is in the bottom 40%).

Each session was led by one experienced leader plus two additional team members. There were around six to nine participants on each day from four or five families (some children stayed for the whole session). We found that initially, the children needed a little more structure than we would have normally planned in our ROAM Free sessions, so we introduced some activities that would encourage them to explore the park independently - including a game of hide and seek and working together as a team to complete a 'scavenger hunt' for letters to form a word.

The feedback on the sessions was very positive, the children were immediately asking us when we were back and were disappointed on the second day that no more sessions were planned. The parents too really appreciated the opportunity to relax whilst their children were having fun. They were really pleased to see their children enjoying the outdoors and nature, and noted their daily struggle to get their children to come to or stay for very long in the park; preferring to stay at home doing sedentary activities indoors.

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Campaigning & Events

- ROAM was invited to have a stand at Cocomad on 2nd July 2022. The team ran activities in Millennium Wood, including a mud kitchen, clay modelling, foraging challenges and slack lines. Pledges were collected from parents/carers on how they can give their children more freedom and adventure. There was a high level of engagement on the day and it was an opportunity to connect with our existing ROAM families, and also the wider community who may not have heard of ROAM and our mission.
- Over the course of the year, ROAM actively participated in broader discussions on various topics, including children's freedom and the deficiency of green spaces. This involvement extended to attending an event hosted by the University of Birmingham,, 'Who is Public Space for?' and the Birmingham Architectural Association, exploring the theme of 'Greening the City.'

Organisational Development

- To enable more effective monitoring and reporting of our grant expenditure a new financial recording system was put in place.
- In September 2022 Lisa Walke stepped down as Operations Lead, however, we were fortunate to recruit Sarah Marlow to take on our operations roles in the new position of Operations Coordinator.
- During the period the ROAM Team grew with the addition of six regular Session Leaders: Naomi Baylis and Juliet Fry leading Rocking ROAM, Sarah Marlow and Sarah Green leading ROAM-IN and Jasmine (previously co-lead of Playgroup and ROAM in Schools) leading ROAM Free. Emma Watson, who had been an integral part of our Playgroup as the Music Leader, took over as Leader in September 2022.
- This recruitment of new leaders and development of existing session workers into leaders was an important part of ROAM's succession strategy as it had previously been recognised that much of the delivery of sessions had relied on Lisa Walke and Naomi Fisher. Lisa's departure was a catalyst for addressing this, and we are now in a position where we have an agile pool of leaders who can run sessions.

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Marketing & Communications

- Our social media engagement continued to grow through the period, with over 1400 followers on Facebook and Twitter.
- Six editions of our ROAM newsletter were produced promoting our mission and activities, each to an audience of 340 recipients.

Grants

During this period we were fortunate to have submitted and won several grant applications, primarily for project funding:

- The National Lottery Awards for All - Community Fund - this grant contributed towards the majority of our sessions, including ROAM Free, Rocking ROAM and our Community Playgroup.
- Heart of England Community Foundation - Graham Griffiths - this grant contributed towards ROAM Free, Rocking ROAM and running a pilot of our ROAM Free Sessions in a new park (to take place in 2023).
- The Eveson Charitable Trust - funding to deliver a set of 20 ROAM-IN Sessions.
- Birmingham City Council - Celebrating Communities Fund - Funding to run a special event to mark the Commonwealth Games 2022.
- Birmingham City Council's Be Bold Pilot - Funding to run a programme of ROAM Adventurers sessions.
- Cotteridge Quaker Community Fund - Funding to deliver another set of ROAM in Schools sessions with a local school.
- We also received grants to support our core funding and general project development from The Grimmitt Trust and Baron Davenport's Charity.

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05 Structure, Governance & Management

ROAM is a registered charity (CIO), charity number 1190230 (July 2020).

The Board of Trustees

The Board comprises the Leadership Team, five Non-Executive Directors and two Co-opted Board Members. The five Non-Executive Directors are all registered with the Charity Commission as trustees. All other Board members are non-voting. Four Board Meetings are held per year.

NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS		
Laura Smiley	Chair	Appointed as Non-Executive Director July 2020, Chair from September 2020
Jo Burrill	Trustee	Appointed July 2020
Geraldine Cole	Treasurer	Appointed September 2022
Sana Duncan	Trustee	Appointed June 2022
Gaynor Zargar	Safeguarding Lead	Appointed July 2020
Sumeer Aggarwal	Co-opted Board Member	Co-opted April 2022
Lisa Walke	Co-opted Board Member	Co-opted December 2022

At any time there must be at least three charity trustees, If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining charity trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. Every charity trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

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Public Benefit

The Trustees have regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance, taking this into account when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Officers

ROAM's officers during this period were Naomi Fisher, Strategic Lead and Lisa Walke, Operations Lead (until September 2022).

Naomi's key responsibilities include:

- Strategic oversight of the charity's activities
- Business Planning
- Financial oversight and management
- Income and Fundraising
- Systems and data oversight
- Marketing and External Communications
- Campaigning and Events
- Partnerships: Corporate and emerging partnerships
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (from September 2022 onwards)

Lisa's key responsibilities include:

- Organisation and Planning of Sessions
- Management and Coordination of Session Leaders and Volunteers
- Customer Relations
- Safeguarding
- Training
- Policies and Procedures; Implementation and Review
- Impact Measurement

From September 2022 onwards, Sarah Marlow took up the role of Operations Coordinator, this role's key responsibilities include:

- Session Oversight including planning, communications with families, bookings
- Volunteer Management
- Site Specific Tasks including risk assessments, updates to methodologies
- Equipment & Input on Budgets

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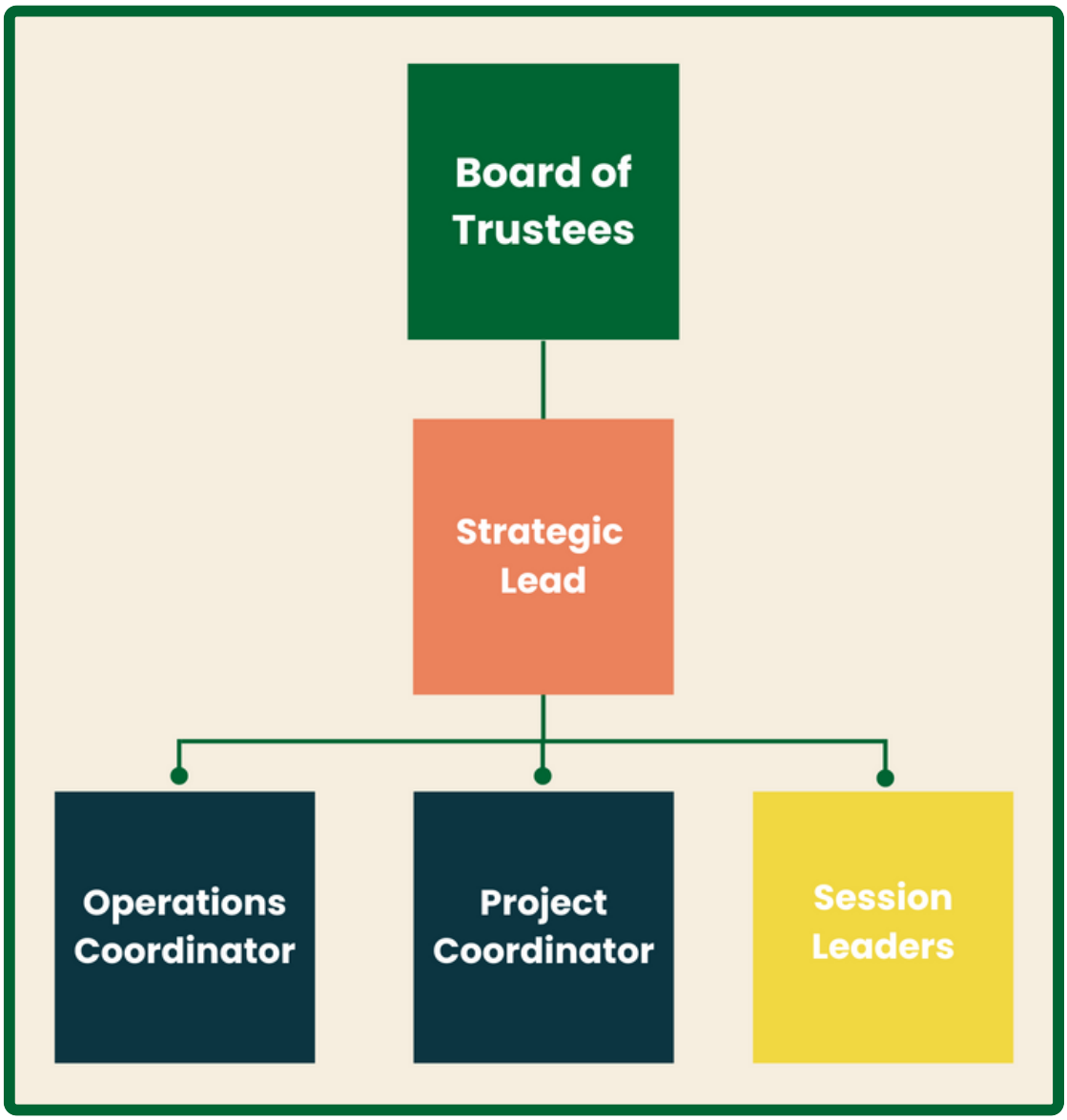
Organisational Structure



> When I'm older I want to work here so that everyone can find their bit of happiness
>
> Quote from ROAM-IN Attendee

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06 Financial Review

Review Statement

ROAM started the period with funding carried over from four grants received the previous year - including restricted funding from The Eveson Charitable Trust (for 2021-2022 sessions), TNL/Ikea Places Called Home Fund, the Cotteridge Quaker Community Fund and Birmingham City Council's Neighbourhood Development Support Unit (NDSU).

Income for the period covered by this report totalled £27,415 of which £25,097 was restricted coming from six grants. Two of these grants have been completed, and session delivery relating to the remaining four will be completed in 2023/24.

Expenditure in the period totalled £25,325.

Income

ROAM's income has largely been in the form of grants from trusts other funding bodies - during the period the majority of this funding was for specific project delivery.

Moving forwards, a more sustainable mixed model of income is to be developed, recognising that some activities the charity delivers could be charged to some consumers without detriment to the mission, vision or values. This includes schools or other organisations as well as individual families.

ROAM recognises that some of its pioneering work or projects with children who may stand to benefit most, may still be largely dependent upon external grant funders. That said, opportunity for subsidising this through other work will be promoted in the form of voluntary donations for sessions (with tangible examples of what donations can help pay for), and profit on merchandising.

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Grants

- TNL Community Fund - Awards for All
- Heart of England Community Foundation - Graham Griffiths Fund
- Birmingham City Council's Be Bold Pilot
- Birmingham City Councils - Celebrating Communities Fund
- Eveson Charitable Trust
- Cotteridge Quakers Community Fund
- Baron Davenport's Charity
- The Grimmitt Trust

Donations

- During the period we received two private donations in relation to our Commonwealth Challenge Project.
- £241 of donations via our PayPal Donate Now button/QR Codes.

Commissions and Consultancy

Commissioned work - Birmingham Playcare Network - Delivery of two ROAM Free Sessions at The Hollymoor Centre.

Other Income: payments, merchandise

We received £177 in merchandise payments from a merchandise drive in December 2021.

Reserves Policy

Once a year the Board will consider the level of reserves that it is prudent for the organisation to hold. Consideration will be given to redundancy liabilities, lease agreements and any other significant factors that should be taken into account if the organisation were to close.

We will aim to build up reserves that represent a minimum of 3 months of typical turnover, by the end of Year 5 (April 2025).

Until we have built up adequate reserves, we have taken a low risk approach to taking on any liabilities including employment, leases, subscriptions or other regular commitments.

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07a Accounts: Receipts & Payments Year End 31 March 2023

	Un-restricted funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Endowment Funds (£)	**Total this year**	**Last year**
A1 Receipts					
Booking receipts	-	-	-	**-**	1,913
Donations	241	700	-	**941**	2,300
Grant funding	1,500	24,397	-	**25,897**	7,403
Merchandise sales	177	-	-	**177**	-
Consultancy Fees	-	-	-	**-**	50
Commissioned Work	400	-		**400**	740
Subtotal (Gross income for AR)	**2,318**	**25,097**	-	**27,415**	12,406
A2 Asset and investment sales (see table)	-	-	-	**-**	-
Total Receipts	**2,318**	**25,097**	-	**27,415**	12,406
A3 Total Payments					
Session personnel	6,384	15,226	-	**21,610**	24,039
Session equipment	(7)	1,683	-	**1,676**	1,358
Session consumables		483	-	**483**	513
Computer costs	78	127	-	**205**	3,299
Professional services	236	338	-	**573**	1,108
Merchandise costs	-	-	-	**-**	389
Training	77	-	-	**77**	25
Insurance	24	300	-	**324**	300
Travel	-	33	-	**33**	-
Subsistence	14	8	-	**22**	-
DBS checks	77	145	-	**222**	249
Printing, postage and stationery	-	-	-	**-**	78
Donations	100	-	-	**100**	111
Subtotal	**6,982**	**18,342**	-	**25,325**	31,469
A4 Asset and investment purchases (see table)					
Total Payments	**6,982**	**18,342**	-	**25,325**	31,469
Net of receipts/(payments)	**(4,664)**	**6,755**	-	**2,090**	(19,063)
A5 Transfers between funds	**(97)**	**97**	-	**-**	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	**5,065**	**5,833**	-	**10,898**	29,961
Cash Funds this year end	**304**	**12,685**	-	**12,988**	10,898

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07b Accounts: Statement of Assets & Liabilities for the period

	Details	Un-restricted funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Endowment Funds (£)
B1 Cash Funds	Bank Current Account	304	12,685	-
Total Cash Funds		**304**	**12,685**	-
B2 Other Monetary Assets	Stock of Merchandise	149	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment Assets	-	-	-	-
B4 Assets Retained for the Charity's own use	Equipment	Unrestricted	3,163	1,985
		Restricted	140	120

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Accrued Expenses	Unrestricted	990	-
		Restricted	1,891	

Signed by two trustees on behalf of all the trustees:

Signature	DocuSigned by: Laura Smiley A819140B5DF242D...	DocuSigned by: Geraldine Cole 4E8386791EEC4DC...
Full Name	Laura Smiley	Geraldine Cole
Date	18/12/2023	01/01/2024

DocuSign Envelope ID: 6FA94771-F6A6-4A5E-86F9-C2A848AA805B

07c Report of the Independent Examiner

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of ROAM

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2023 which are set out on pages 24 to 25.

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 charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

DocuSigned by:
Mark McLean
5D0E75D5D6DA484...

Mark McLean FCA
On behalf of Thomas & Young Limited, Chartered Accountants

Carleton House
266-268 Stratford Rd
Shirley
B90 3AD

Date: 1/8/2024

DocuSign Envelope ID: 6FA94771-F6A6-4A5E-86F9-C2A848AA805B

08 Reference & Administrative details

Charity Details

Charity name: ROAM

Registered charity number: 1190230

Charity's principal address:
10 Ashmore Road
BIRMINGHAM
B30 2HA

Trustees

NAME	OFFICE	DATES ACTED IF NOT FULL YEAR
Laura Smiley	Chair	
Geraldine Cole	Treasurer	Appointed September 2022
Gaynor Zargar	Trustee	
Jo Burrill	Trustee	
Sana Duncan	Trustee	Appointed June 2022

DocuSign Envelope ID: 6FA94771-F6A6-4A5E-86F9-C2A848AA805B

09 Declarations

This Annual Report, covering the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 was approved by trustees of ROAM on 5th December 2023.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature	DocuSigned by: Laura Smiley A819140B5DF242D...	DocuSigned by: Geraldine Cole 4E8386791EEC4DC...
Full Name	Laura Smiley	Geraldine Cole
Position	Trustee	Trustee
Date	18/12/2023	01/01/2024

ROAM

England & Wales - Charity number 1190230

Accounts

ROAM

Trustees' Annual Report
April 2021 - March 2022

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01 Foreword

We started the year, like all organisations, with a level of apprehension as to what challenges lay ahead in a time of uncertainty. I am therefore pleased to report that with the generous support of our donors we were well-funded, flexible in our approach and able to react fast to meet post-pandemic demand particularly for those families that had been significantly impacted by lockdowns.

The feedback from attendees was that sessions were "a life-line" for parents and provided them with the confidence to enable them to let "... my children explore with freedom...". This inevitably benefitted their mental well-being as well as the physical benefits of playing freely outdoors. As we now reflect on the year, we can see that there was a turning point in the organisation during this time, brought about by the pandemic; the realisation of the importance of our work for the whole family, including extended family carers and other caregivers - not just the children we provide activities for.

Whilst our income may have been significantly lower year-on-year, the team were busy delivering the projects that our generous funders backed in 2021. An unprecedented number of ROAM sessions were run enabling over 250 children to access outdoor play (more details of these sessions can be found on page 8).

Examples of how sessions have developed through the year include:

- Our inclusive ROAM-IN offering for children with additional needs has been refined and become a core regular session that is well attended. Achieving our goal of breaking down barriers to make ROAM accessible to all. We continue to identify new groups of potential participants that can be introduced to ROAM; this year we trialled sessions with home-educated children.
- To overcome the perception of it's "too cold outside", we launched ROAM Adventurers encouraging pre-schoolers and their families to interact with nature in a journeying story-based session incorporating more physical movement to keep young (and not so young) ones warm whilst exploring the green spaces available; developing skills and ideas that can be used as they graduate to ROAM Free sessions.

With an unprecedented number of sessions to deliver, volunteer recruitment was a priority. We are pleased to report that our recruitment drive was successful and enabled us to grow in diversity as well as healthy numbers. It is evident that our mission appeals to the wider community as we saw significant growth in non-parent volunteers of all ages.

To respond to the operational growth this year it was quickly apparent that our Strategic and Operational Leads required additional support with specific skills that would enable us to launch our central management system. We were pleased to receive an array of applications from high-calibre candidates and even more delighted to appoint Faye Cutler as our Project Administrator. Her positive enthusiasm for ROAM and what we stand for, along with her wide-ranging skills have been a match made in heaven; looking back we don't know how ROAM would have grown without her.

From a national perspective we have continued to be vocal and appeared in the national press on children's rights to roam and speak at events as experts in our field of Recovery in Play. Whilst our sessions have only operated locally this year, our influence is starting to impact communities much further afield, and we have contributed to growing conversations in academia and practice about the benefits of this type of play. The exposure in the mainstream press is enabling us to promote our vision and demonstrates this message is getting across to families and communities.

As we look ahead we hope to build upon this year's solid performance by continuing to offer a comprehensive range of sessions and growing geographically by inspiring others to endorse independent play outdoors in the UK and across the globe.

Laura Smiley, Chair of Trustees

02 Objectives

Our Objects

ROAM was set up with the aim of facilitating children's freedom to explore nature unsupervised; something that was normal for primary school aged children until about 30 years ago yet has since almost disappeared in the UK.

Our Objects are:

- To help children and young people especially but not exclusively through leisure time activities, so as to develop their capabilities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society.

- To promote the good health of children and young people by providing facilities and/or organising opportunities for young people to participate in open-air recreational activities.

in each case for the benefit of the public.

Our Mission, Vision & Values

Our Mission

Our mission is to facilitate children's free play in nature with minimal supervision, to support others to do so, and to campaign for every child's right to independent play.

Our Vision

Our vision is to facilitate a culture where it is considered healthy and normal for children to play unsupervised in their natural environment.

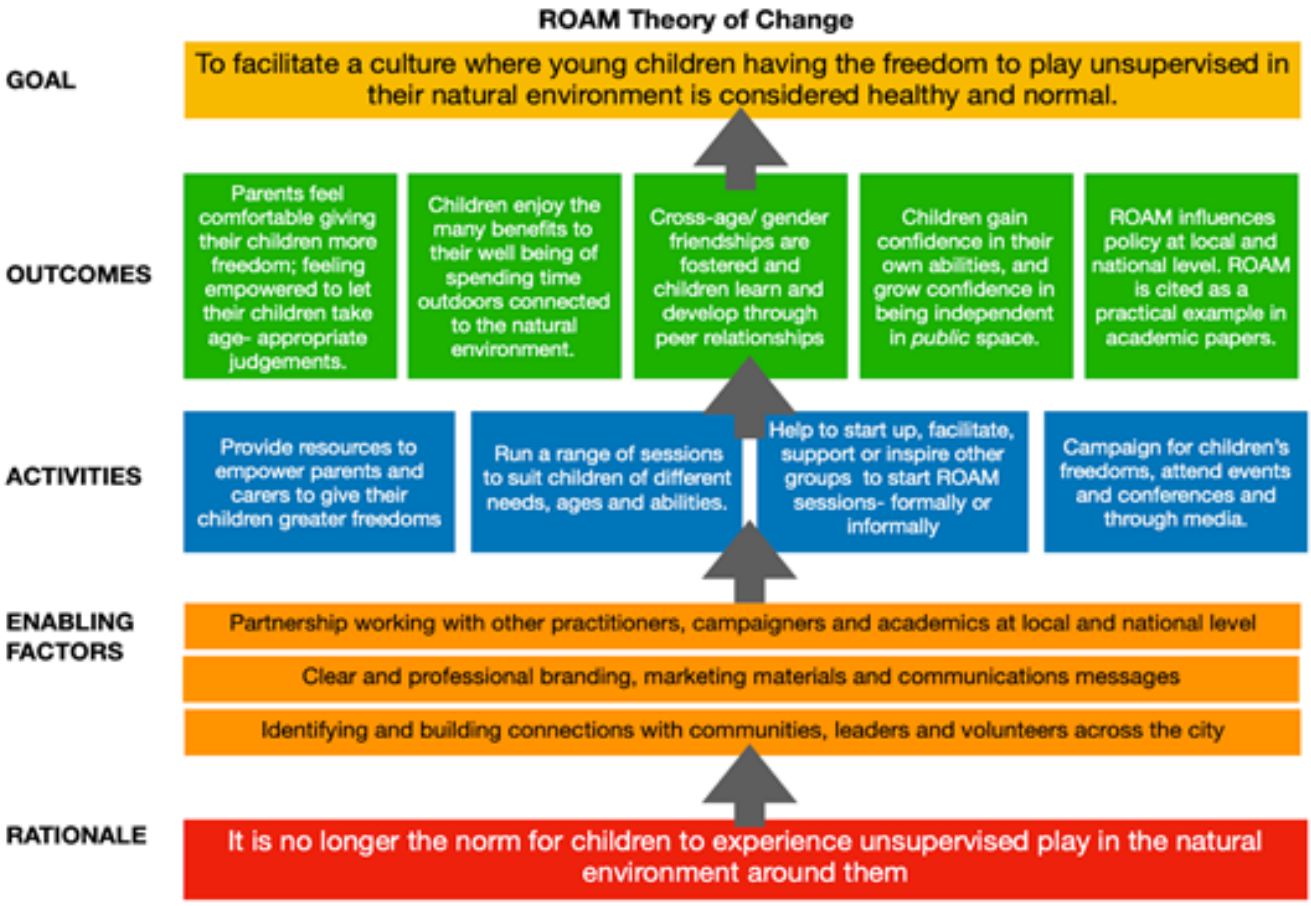
Our Values

- We are proactively inclusive; seeking ways to meet children's rights to independently play outside irrespective of their physical ability or any disability, social or economic barriers, gender, ethnicity, access to appropriate clothing, and any other barriers that we identify through the course of our work. We strive to make our sessions accessible, embracing neurodiversity, and to embed a culture of inclusion in all of our work that is reflected in the actions of everyone involved.
- We foster a culture where imperfection is embraced; we learn through our mistakes more than our successes. We encourage the bravery in trying, and promote a non judgemental culture of supportiveness. We embrace a culture of learning and sharing the grey areas in order to make the experience more valuable for everyone and for no one to fear a consequence of a perceived 'failure'.
- We are responsible and rigorous; acknowledging that whilst the participating children's experience is rooted in freedom, the activities we run are underpinned by procedures that reflect the high level of responsibility in which we are placed. We are rigorous in the application of the procedures that we have carefully developed to facilitate this.
- We are action-orientated, and research backed. We embrace innovation through trial and refinement, but place this continually within the wider academic and research context; learning through the complementary work of other organisations too, and aiming to embed best practice of children's play and freedom.

These values are embedded in our organisation and we are committed to promoting these values to all stakeholders; be they participants, parents/ carers, Board members, session leaders and volunteers.

Theory of Change

In January 2020, ROAM developed a Theory of Change to outline how we will deliver and measure the success of our intended social outcomes/ impact.



03 Activities

April 2021 was a time of relative optimism following a very difficult few months with the country having been plummeted back into lockdown between January and March. Interest in our sessions rocketed with spaces booking up within minutes. We managed to launch four of our session models within a week in mid-April, with nearly 60 children accessing our sessions in those seven days. We continued to publish our weekly 'DIY Forest School' activity leaflets which were being distributed online via Birmingham Open Spaces Forum and reaching schools and park groups across the West Midlands.

Another peak time was the autumn term 2021 when five different sessions were restarted over four days (two outdoor playgroups, Rocking ROAM, ROAM Free and ROAM-IN) with regular sessions for each type. This year also saw the launch of ROAM Adventurers between January and April 2022, as well as two pilots of ROAM Free with home-educated children.

Aside from sessions, campaigning continued through attendance at events, social media and the press (see Achievements section). Furthermore, we ran an online event on "How to start ROAM-inspired Sessions', attended by people from England, Scotland and the U.S.

In June 2021, the photographer who we had commissioned to take the photographs for our website offered to film and produce a promotional video for us for free. He filmed ROAM Free, Rocking ROAM and ROAM-IN sessions and interviewed a range of people. The resulting film was very well received.

ROAM Sessions

During this period demand for ROAM sessions remained high and delivery was maintained throughout the year. We ran 84 sessions across six different session models, including a new model (ROAM Adventurers) and a pilot (Home Ed) reaching 275 children over the year.

ROAM Free

Our first model that enables children under 11 to play entirely self-directed with minimal supervision in a public park. Between April 2021 and December 2021 we were able to run 12 sessions.

Rocking ROAM

Supervised session with (mostly younger) children not yet ready to access ROAM Free. It includes self-directed play in nature, assessing own capabilities to run, jump, climb in the natural environment. 12 Rocking ROAM Sessions were delivered between April 2021 and December 2021, running at the same time as ROAM Free.

ROAM-IN

Provides access to self-directed free play in nature for children with additional needs and their siblings, for whom ROAM Free may be considered too risky or inaccessible due to their play preferences, for example. Takes place in secure, private grounds. Over the period we ran 13 sessions.

ROAM Outdoor Playgroups

Initially started during the pandemic to address both preschooler and parent isolation, these sessions remained very popular and were continued during the year. Sessions initially ran at Rowheath Pavilion as a Stay and Play, and in September 2021 a weekly Community Playgroup session also started in Cotteridge Park. Therefore, in the autumn term of 2021, two playgroups were running.

Going on a bear hunt on a crisp morning in Cotteridge Park

ROAM Adventurers

Following feedback from families attending the playgroup, this session was developed specifically for the colder months. Aimed at preschoolers and their families/carers. Each session uses a storybook as the inspiration for the session, introducing activities that are encouraged in our ROAM Free sessions, incorporating more physical movement around the park to keep participants warm while spending time in nature.

Home Education

Our Home Education pilot ran in November 2021 with three families from the home education community. The children ranged in age from 5 to 10 and all lived in South East and East Birmingham - between five and eight miles from our Cotteridge Park base. However, as these sessions were pilots and had not been specifically funded, we did not have the resources to run them in a new setting. Two sessions took place on a weekday morning, two weeks apart.

Contribution from volunteers

Over the year we maintained a team of around 30 volunteers who supported our sessions. Some of these were from our parent community, but we also increased our numbers of non-parent volunteers.

For our ROAM-IN Sessions, we recognised there was a need to recruit more volunteers with specific skill sets to provide more 1-1 support for children. We placed an advert with a local university, and also advertised via Facebook. As a result were able to recruit five new volunteers with experience of working with children who have additional needs, including backgrounds in occupational therapy and education.

We have also been focused on engaging volunteers from the wider community, to help build connections and links not just amongst families with young children. We have proactively recruited volunteers outside of the main demographic, including teenagers and over 65s, ensuring that our sessions felt like something the whole community could get involved in; especially as the majority take place in a public park.

"I love seeing the kids' happy faces when they play about running in the woods instead of on computers or in front of your TV. It's lovely."

Mary, Volunteer - 79

04 Our Achievements

Children's play deprivation was a subject getting significant media attention during the spring and summer of 2021, as the most severe impacts of the pandemic started to ease, yet evidence on the 'fallout' was emerging. Following the publication of a highly publicised piece of research, ROAM was approached by a journalist from The Guardian who wanted to write a feature about us. Further media coverage ensued and dozens of enquiries from all over the world followed. It was clear that our project resonated with lots of people and was contributing to wider conversations about children's freedoms, and we were cited again in a subsequent article in August 2021. It was a year when our charity entered the radar of the likes of Tim Gill,[1] Professor Helen Dodd[2] and (in the States) Lenore Skenazy. [3]

Whilst some charities or community activities were slow to get going again after lockdown three, our small size and agility meant that we could respond very quickly to the emerging needs for free play, and especially for sessions targeted to children who had been particularly disadvantaged. Coupled with our success at gaining national (and international) coverage of our message, we considered our achievements at local level with individual families equally as important.

Some further details of our achievements are detailed below.

ROAM-IN

After an initial successful pilot of three sessions in Autumn 2020, regular ROAM-IN sessions have been running since April 2021, made possible through funding from The Eveson Charitable Trust.

The sessions were designed alongside families of children with additional needs, and they provide a little more support and structure. As the public nature of a park may be considered too risky for some children, the sessions take place in private grounds, giving the children the opportunity to roam, but in a safe, secure environment.

We ran a successful volunteer recruitment campaign; the majority of volunteers being new to our organisation rather than being parents of participants or previous volunteers. Many of these were recruited following us approaching Birmingham PHAB Camps- a local charity who arrange holiday camps for children with additional needs. They had not been able to run since the pandemic and were very happy to advertise our recruitment campaign to their regular volunteers.

We held induction and training sessions over two weekends, on site, with the new volunteers and produced a volunteer handbook.

"I think all the volunteers are fantastic - they have a real understanding of sort of when to approach children or when to take that step back."
Parent, March 2022

Initially we stationed volunteers on different activities to facilitate/ supervise children's play. However, we found that some children and/or their parents did not feel secure enough in the environment for children to navigate activities independently. It became clear that to enable such freedom, it was more appropriate to offer 1-1 volunteer support to these children, sometimes alongside a parent/carer to begin with, meaning they had a consistent person to accompany them and help them during the session. Parents also felt safer knowing that someone was specifically keeping an eye out for their child rather than being dependent on volunteers positioned to watch an exit, for example. This change in approach was very well-received by children and parents alike, and wherever possible, we let children decide who their volunteer would be. Parents noted that for the first time (ever in some cases), they felt comfortable letting their child play without them, knowing they were safe and weren't getting anxious.

"What we find great is because our daughter comes on a regular basis she feels very comfortable here. So it's giving us a sense of freedom that we wouldn't get anywhere else."

Parent, March 2022

The calming, friendly atmosphere of our sessions and the child/ family-centred approach has been fed back to us as what makes our sessions so unique and popular.

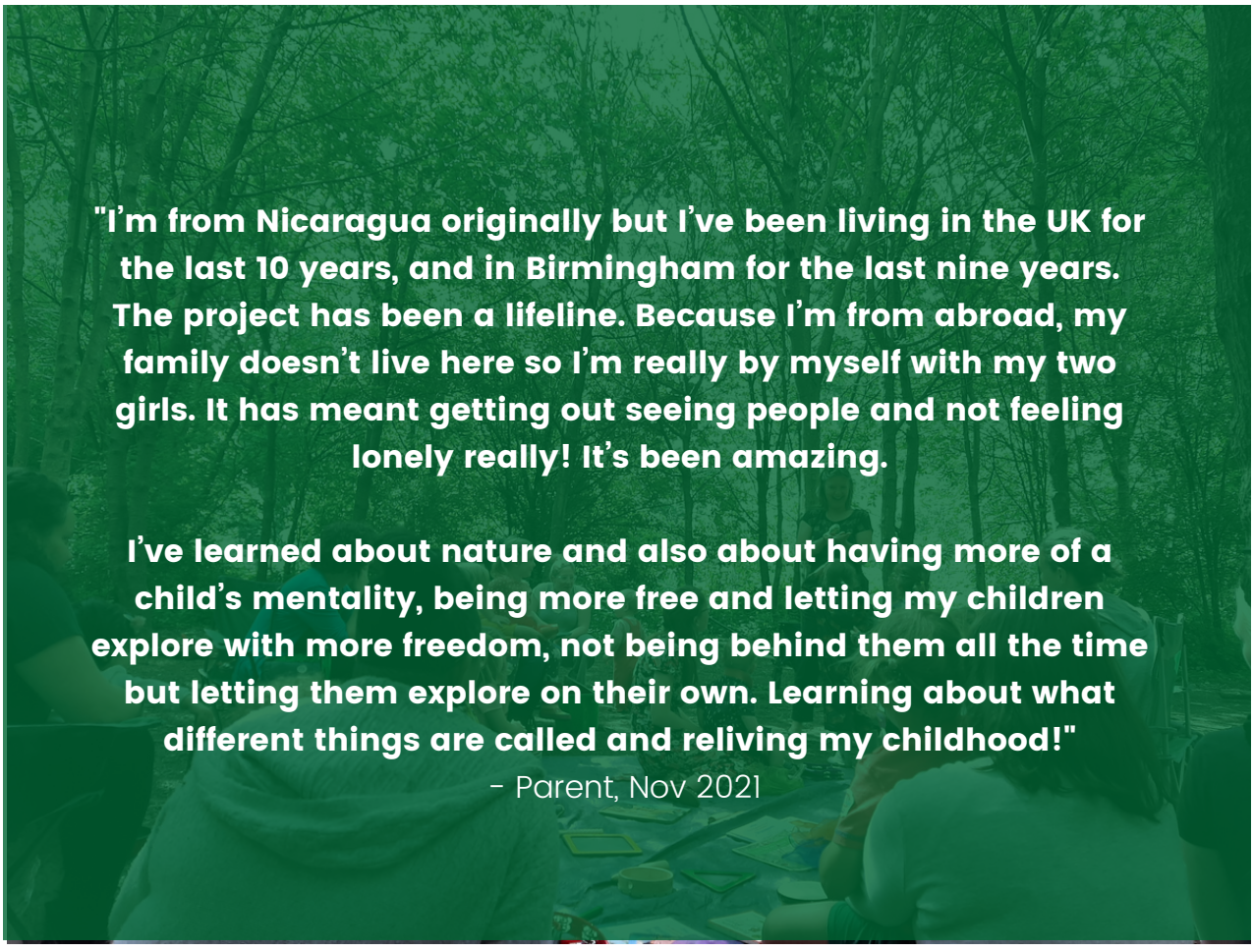
"The sessions have meant a tremendous amount to the family, the best thing is the opportunity to speak to other children, other adults, play with other children, talk to adults and interact with volunteers - this gives them a tremendous opportunity to do that. They also get lots of amazing activities - they get to build, dig, play in the mud, hear stories, go in the hammocks. It's unique, and something that they really need, and something they really enjoy and benefit from."

- Parent, March 2022

Community Connections Playgroup

In September 2021 we started running our Community Connections playgroup in Cotteridge Park. During the pandemic, many groups of the community have struggled with feelings of isolation, particularly those with young families and their support networks, and we wanted to introduce a session to try and address this. With funding from the National Lottery Community Fund's 'Local Connections Fund' we were able to run 12 weeks of our outdoor playgroup sessions, welcoming over 40 children and their families.

Through this project we were also able to create a wider community connection, recruiting a fantastic volunteer, who helped bring an intergenerational aspect to the group, and strengthened these relationships in the community.



Campaigning & Events

- Press Coverage - In April 2021, following the publication of some research by the University of Reading regarding the sharp decrease in children's independence over a generation, The Guardian newspaper contacted us with the desire to feature us in an article. On 25th April 2021, an article '<u>How one UK charity is reclaiming children's right to roam</u>'[1] was published online, and in print on 26th April:

- Another article in The Guardian (<u>Let Them Be Kids! Is free range parenting the key to happier and healthier children?</u>)[2] cited ROAM as a practical example of research into action and featured one of our photos. The article included interviews with key academic figures in the risky/ free play sector.

Monday 26 April 2021 The Guardian

National

15

Rewilding Children learn joy of play like it used to be

Jessica Murray

When Naomi Fisher took her eight-year-old son to the country park in Birmingham where she had spent much of her childhood exploring with her friends, he asked why he was not allowed to go off by himself.

"I couldn't even give a good reason why not. It just isn't done any more, nobody lets their kids do that," said Fisher, a community architect. "I had some conversations and it seemed my generation had all experienced that kind of play from seven or eight years old and yet it had virtually disappeared now."

Fisher's experience is not uncommon. The British Children's Play Survey, published last week, found that children typically are not allowed to play outside on their own until two years older than their parents' generation were.

"Some people think it's a rural and urban thing, but I grew up in south-east Birmingham and had that experience," said Fisher. "It just got me thinking, is there any way of enabling this again?"

Soon after, with the help of her friend and former primary school teacher, Lisa Walke, they set up Roam, a first-of-its-kind charity, running sessions to help support parents and children with safe, unsupervised play outside.

At each session, families come together at a park in Birmingham and up to 15 children, all under-12s, are given some ground rules - they must stay in groups of at least three at all times, for instance - before being allowed to roam alone for up to two hours.

Volunteers keep tabs on them and count numbers regularly, but do not interfere. Roam also runs sessions with more supervision for younger children and those with additional needs. "A lot of our families have said they are much more comfortable [with unsupervised play] now and they've seen that their children's capabilities are much better than they thought," said Fisher.

They also found that when the adults step back, the older children take more responsibility, helping to form strong bonds between children of different ages.

"The older children learn to foster that role of protector and the younger children learn off them in a very natural way," said Notzarina Howell-Jones, who has been bringing eight-year-old Skyla and six-year-old Ioan to Roam sessions for a couple of years. "They have both just absolutely loved the roaming, and my daughter in particular relishes the independence.

"It was a unique opportunity for them to get away from me, and my reminders about being careful, all of the things I think a lot of modern parents fall into the habit of doing."

When Roam surveyed parents, it found that although road danger and safety fears were a key reason behind why many did not let their children play alone, so too was fear of judgment.

"The overriding reason was that not many children do it, and parents felt their child would stand out and their parenting would be judged," said Fisher. But she has noticed a growing public consciousness around the need for independent play. Demand for the charity's services is skyrocketing - its last set of sessions was fully booked in eight minutes.

"I definitely found their first sessions hard," said Howell-Jones. "But the more normal it becomes for children to play like this, the safer communities become, because children learn to look out for one another in a way that they don't if parents are helicoptering around them."

▲ *Children play unsupervised amid the trees in a Birmingham park at a session run by the charity Roam*

PHOTOGRAPH: NICK ROBINSON

'My generation had all experienced that kind of play but now it had disappeared'

Naomi Fisher
Co-founder of Roam

- Radio Coverage - As a follow on from the Guardian Coverage, Strategic Lead, Naomi Fisher also took part in an interview on a local radio station, Radio WM, as well as an interview on Newstalk; a national Irish radio station.

- Growing Up Green - During September 2021 ROAM were invited to join the Growing up Green Festival which took place across Birmingham & the Black Country, part of the wider national Great Big Green Week. We met families from the Kings Heath area in Highbury Park to talk about how children's connection to nature and independence in their local area helps promote sustainability.

- We were signatories of the Summer of Play campaign by Play First UK, a mental health initiative borne out of the negative impacts of the lockdowns on children's mental health. This initiative was supported by most major, high profile children's play organisations. It promoted and facilitated opportunities for children's play and raisied awareness of its essential role in childhood.

- Power of Play Conference speaker (16.4.21) - ROAM were booked to do a presentation at one of the optional talks as part of this virtual conference, organised by University of Birmingham's Children and Childhood Network. The conference was attended by some high profile researchers and academics in the sector (play, risky play, child development), some of whom attended our presentation. ROAM presented the work of its Recovery In Play initiative (detailed in 2020/21 Annual Report). Feedback was very positive and led to some follow-up correspondence and telephone conversations.

ROAM Advocacy/Support

Over the year, we have provided informal support to other organisations. ROAM was increasingly recommended as an organisation to speak to, for those interested in running similar sessions, including our ROAM Free and Outdoor Playgroup sessions in particular. We were able to share our experiences with these groups to help them get started, as well as with a wider audience in our 'How to start ROAM-inspired Sessions' online workshop.

Organisational Development

- Following development of the business strategy facilitated by ROAM's business mentor Michael Freer, a Business Plan was presented in draft form to the Board, and then approved and adopted.

- In November 2021, Faye Cutler, joined the team as freelance project administrator to help with the implementation of the CRM and general back office administration (see below 'Growing Our Team)

- In December 2021 we set up a ROAM PayPal account to allow us to receive donations from our supporters via our website and newsletter.

Marketing & Communications

- Production of a promotional video which was shared on social media, and also added to our website.

- Our social media engagement continued to grow through the period, with 144 new followers on Facebook and over 700 followers on Twitter.

- Two editions of our ROAM newsletter were produced promoting our mission and activities, each to an audience of just under 300 recipients.

Grants

During this period we were fortunate to have submitted and won several grant applications, primarily for project funding:

- The National Lottery Community Fund - this grant contributed towards the majority of our sessions, including ROAM Free, Rocking ROAM, Community Playgroup and our Home Education Pilot.

- TNL / Ikea Places Called Home - funding to run our ROAM Adventurers sessions in January/February 2022.

- Cotteridge Quaker Fund - awarded for delivery of our ROAM in Schools sessions which will run in the summer term of 2022.

- Birmingham City Council NDSU Fund - awarded in March 2022, this will enable us to continue running our Community Playgroup sessions in the 22/23.

Growing Our Team

Using allocated funding received from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Emergency Fund, we ran a very successful recruitment campaign for a part time temporary Project Administrator. We launched the job advert in August 2021 accepting applications until mid September. We received ten very high quality applicants. Four candidates were interviewed and Faye Cutler was appointed to the role. The addition of Faye to our team has been hugely beneficial. The skills she has brought to the role complemented those of Naomi and Lisa incredibly well and she quickly picked up the tasks assigned to her as well as proving highly competent across a wide range of areas; some of which were new to her such as fundraising, writing copy and graphics. Faye's contribution has been invaluable, and by the end of the financial year, further funding was being sought to retain her beyond the initial contract period.

Several other new freelancers joined the ROAM team during the year, including some who were recruited from our regular volunteers: Jasmine Norris and Jess Cape, as well as Theatre in Education practitioner Malcolm Jennings who co-led about 50% of the ROAM Adventurers sessions. Emma Watson of Music Shakers continued to provide half hour music activities as part of the outdoor playgroup sessions. Session leader Kaleigh Atkinson devised and wrote the content for the majority of the DIY Forest School leaflets.

As the year progressed the need for a volunteer coordinator has emerged, and this will be something that we will look to take forward in 2022-23.

1 https://rethinkingchildhood.com/

2 https://uk.linkedin.com/in/helen-dodd-31799128

3 https://www.freerangekids.com/

4 https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/apr/25/how-one-uk-charity-is-reclaiming-childrens-right-to-roam

5 https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/aug/16/let-them-be-kids-is-free-range-parenting-the-key-to-healthier-happier-children

05 Structure, Governance & Management

ROAM is a registered charity (CIO), charity number 1190230

The Board of Trustees

The Board comprises the Leadership Team and four Non-Executive Directors. The four Non-Executive Directors are all registered with the Charity Commission as trustees. All other Board members are non-voting. Board Meetings are held four times a year.

NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS:		
Laura Smiley	Chair	Appointed as Non-Executive Director July 2020, Chair from September 2020
Sumeer Aggarwal	Treasurer	Appointed November 2020
Gayna Zargar	Safeguarding Lead	Appointed July 2020
Jo Burrill		Appointed July 2020
Trina Jones	Co-opted Board Member	Co-Opted July 2020 Resigned March 2022

At any time there must be at least three charity trustees, If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining charity trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. Every charity trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance, taking this into account when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Officers

ROAM's officers are Naomi Fisher, Strategic Lead and Lisa Walke, Operations Lead. Lisa Walke is also ROAM's Designated Safeguarding Lead. Naomi Fisher is Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Naomi's key responsibilities include:

- Strategic oversight of the charity's activities
- Business Planning
- Financial oversight and management
- Income and Fundraising
- Systems and data oversight
- Marketing and External Communications
- Campaigning and Events
- Partnerships: Corporate and emerging partnerships

Lisa's key responsibilities include:

- Organisation and Planning of Sessions
- Management and Coordination of Session Leaders and Volunteers
- Customer Relations
- Safeguarding
- Training
- Policies and Procedures; Implementation and Review
- Impact Measurement

06 Financial Review

Review Statement

ROAM started the period with funding carried over from grants received the previous year - including restricted funding from The Eveson Charitable Trust, funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. While the latter was classed as unrestricted, they were allocated to use for project development and so was used to fund sessions during the early part of the period, and to cover the resourcing of a Project Administrator to support the team.

Income for the period covered by this report totalled £12,406 of which £7,403 was restricted, which included £2473 from The National Lottery's Community Fund and £2930 from The National Lottery Ikea's Places called Home Programme. Towards the end of the period two grants were awarded for sessions planned for later in the year - £1000 from Cotteridge Quakers Community Fund for ROAM in Schools sessions and £1000 from Birmingham City Council's NDSU fund for Community Playgroup.

Expenditure in the period totalled £31,469.

Income

ROAM's income to date has largely been in the form of grants from trusts, either for ongoing growth and development, or for the delivery of specific programmes of sessions.

Moving forwards, a more sustainable mixed model of income is to be developed, recognising that some activities the charity delivers could be charged to some consumers without detriment to the mission, vision or values. This includes schools or other organisations as well as individual families.

ROAM recognises that some of its pioneering work or projects with children who may stand to benefit most, may still be largely dependent upon external grant funders. That said, opportunity for subsidising this through other work will be promoted in the form of voluntary donations for sessions (with tangible examples of what donations can help pay for), and profit on merchandising.

Grants

- TNL Community Fund - £2,473
- TNL / Ikea Places Called Home - £2,930
- Cotteridge Quaker Fund - £1,000
- BCC NDSU Fund - £1,000

Donations

During the period we received donations from multiple sources:

- Stephen Lowe Charitable Trust
- Donations via PayPal link
- Individual Donations
- Anonymous Donation from Charities Aid Foundation

Commissions and Consultancy

- DIY Forest School - We had intended to finish this campaign at the end of March 2021 to coincide with organised outdoor activities being able to start again, however the Friends of Cotteridge Park asked us to continue these to complete a full calendar year on a commissioned basis.
- SEND Socials - Two ROAM-IN sessions commissioned in summer of 2021.
- WOW Foundation - consultancy fee for speaking engagement.

Other Income: payments, merchandise

- Late in 2021 we ran a small merchandising drive, while this only raised modest unrestricted funds, it is invaluable in raising the profile of ROAM.

- For the Stay & Play sessions which ran during this period we continued to ask for voluntary session payments to cover costs - as these sessions were not funded this was an important additional source of income to keep the sessions running.

Reserves Policy

Once a year the Board will consider the level of reserves that it is prudent for the organisation to hold. Consideration will be given to redundancy liabilities, lease agreements and any other significant factors that should be taken into account if the organisation were to close.

We will aim to build up reserves that represent a minimum of 3 months of typical turnover (£1500), by the end of Year 3 (April 2023) and 6 months of reserves by the end of Year 5 (April 2025).

Until we have built up adequate reserves, we have taken a low risk approach to taking on any liabilities including employment, leases, subscriptions or other regular commitments.

07a Accounts: Receipts & Payments Year End 31 March 2022

	Un-restricted funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Endowment Funds (£)	**Total Funds**	**Last year**
A1 Receipts					
Booking receipts	1913	-	-	**1,913**	174
Donations	2,300	-	-	**2,300**	210
Grant funding	-	7,403	-	**7,403**	48,170
Merchandise sales	-	-	-	**-**	121
Refunds	-	-	-	**-**	41
Consultancy Fees	50			**50**	-
Commissioned Work	740			**740**	-
Subtotal (Gross income for AR)	**5,003**	**7,403**	-	**12,406**	48,716
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).	-	-	-	**-**	-
Total Receipts	**5 ,003**	**7,403**	-	**12,406**	48,716
A3 Total Payments					
Session personnel	19,347	4,692	_	**24,039**	17,826
Session equipment	263	1,095	_	**1,358**	1,769
Session consumables	195	318	_	**513**	350
Computer costs	3,299	-	_	**3,299**	156
Professional services	1,073	35	_	**1,108**	648
Marketing & fundraising	-	-	_	**-**	2,677
Merchandise costs	389	-	_	**389**	792
Training	25	-	_	**25**	819
Insurance	300	-	_	**300**	293
DBS checks	81	168	_	**249**	237
Subscriptions and publications	-	-	_	**-**	51
Printing, postage and stationery	78	-	_	**78**	159
Donations	111	-	_	**111**	-
Subtotal	**25,161**	**6,308**	-	**31,469**	25,777
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table).	-	-	-	-	-
Total Payments	**25,161**	**6,308**	-	**31,469**	25,777
Net of receipts/(payments)	**(20,158)**	**1,095**	-	**(19,063)**	22,939
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	25,223	4,738	-	29,961	7,022
Cash Funds this year end	**5,065**	**5,833**	-	**10,898**	29,961

07b Accounts: Statement of Assets & Liabilities for the period

	Details	Un-restricted funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Endowment Funds (£)
B1 Cash Funds	Bank Current Account	5,065	5,833	-
Total Cash Funds		**5,065**	**5,833**	-
B2 Other Monetary Assets	Stock of Merchandise	149	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment Assets	-	-	-	-
B4 Assets Retained for the Charity's own use	Equipment	Unrestricted	3,163	2,109

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Accrued Expenses	Unrestricted	2,913	-

Signed by two trustees on behalf of all the trustees:

Signature	LMSmiley	Gzager.
Full Name	LAURA SMILEY	GAYNOR ZARGAR
Date	26/01/23	26/01/23

08 Reference & Administrative details

Charity Details

Charity name: ROAM

Registered charity number: 1190230

Charity's principal address:
10 Ashmore Road
BIRMINGHAM
B30 2HA

Trustees

NAME	OFFICE
Laura Smiley	Chair
Sumeer Aggarwal	Treasurer
Gayna Zargar	Secretary
Jo Burrill	Trustee

09 Declarations

This Annual Report, covering the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022, was approved by trustees of ROAM on 25th January 2023.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature	LMSmiley	Gzarger.
Full Name	LAURA SMILEY	GAYNOR ZARGAR
Position	CHAIR OF TRUSTEES	TRUSTEE
Date	26/01/23	26/1/23

ROAM

England & Wales - Charity number 1190230

Accounts

ROAM

Trustees' Annual Report
April 2020 – March 2021

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01 Foreword

Welcome, it is a privilege to invite you to share in all the success of ROAM in our inaugural year of being a registered charity, building on the two and a half years as a community group delivering fantastic opportunities for children in South West Birmingham. It has been a pleasure to support the Leadership Team in delivering our vision of creating a culture where all children can access their local green space to play independently.

When you were a child, it is likely that you were encouraged to roam-free. Sadly that is no longer the case for the majority of children today. Hence we made it our Mission "to facilitate children's free play in nature with minimal supervision, to support others to do so, and to campaign for every child's right to independent play".

Before I begin, I would like to thank my predecessor Emma Woolf for all her hard work and in supporting the Executive Team as they transitioned ROAM towards charity status, which has been an important part of our evolution.

It is clear that these have been unprecedented times since Covid-19 first came to prevalence in 2020. This placed unique pressures on us all, but especially families and children, many of whom have struggled to adapt to the social changes that lock-down and restrictions on social interactions have enforced.

The Leadership Team have successfully adapted to these challenges by identifying those parts of the community most in need of their support. This has provided a critical outlet for children and parents/carers alike to cope with the physical and emotional impact.

Some key successes to support those most in need included:

- The introduction of ROAM outdoor Stay & Play groups, which were in high demand and a vital support network for parents experiencing isolation at home, and for pre-school children who had very limited opportunities for social interaction.
- ROAM-IN was successfully piloted offering inclusive sessions for children with additional needs and their siblings.
- Working in partnership with a local school to help children that were struggling to return to their classroom environment due to social isolation during lockdown.

These opportunities have increased our connections to the local community and enabled us to engage with a more diverse audience, including those sections of society that are particularly vulnerable and had suffered the most from the impact of the pandemic. We were able to refine how we measure our impact on children, parents and volunteers in these new sessions and examples of these are shared on page 15.

None of this would have been possible without the tireless dedication of our outstanding Leadership Team, our enthusiastic session leaders and volunteers (in all weathers!), my fellow Trustees and finally, the generous support of our funders. A big personal thank you for your support this year and we hope you will continue to work with us to deliver on our shared vision.

As we look ahead, we look forward to building on our successes to date, by informally mentoring others to commence ROAM-inspired sessions in their local green spaces, refining the ROAM-IN model to breakdown any barriers to ensure ROAM is open to all (albeit adjusted to suit specific needs and to ensure safety of participants) and by continuing to build on our community connections.

Laura Smiley, Chair of Trustees

02 Objectives

Our Objects

ROAM was set up with the aim of facilitating children's freedom to explore nature unsupervised; something that was normal for primary school aged children until about 30 years ago yet has since almost disappeared in the UK.

Our Objects are:

- To help children and young people especially but not exclusively through leisure time activities, so as to develop their capabilities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society.

- To promote the good health of children and young people by providing facilities and/or organising opportunities for young people to participate in open-air recreational activities.

in each case for the benefit of the public.

Our Mission, Vision & Values

Our Mission

Our mission is to facilitate children's free play in nature with minimal supervision, to support others to do so, and to campaign for every child's right to independent play.

Our Vision

Our vision is to facilitate a culture where it is considered healthy and normal for children to play unsupervised in their natural environment.

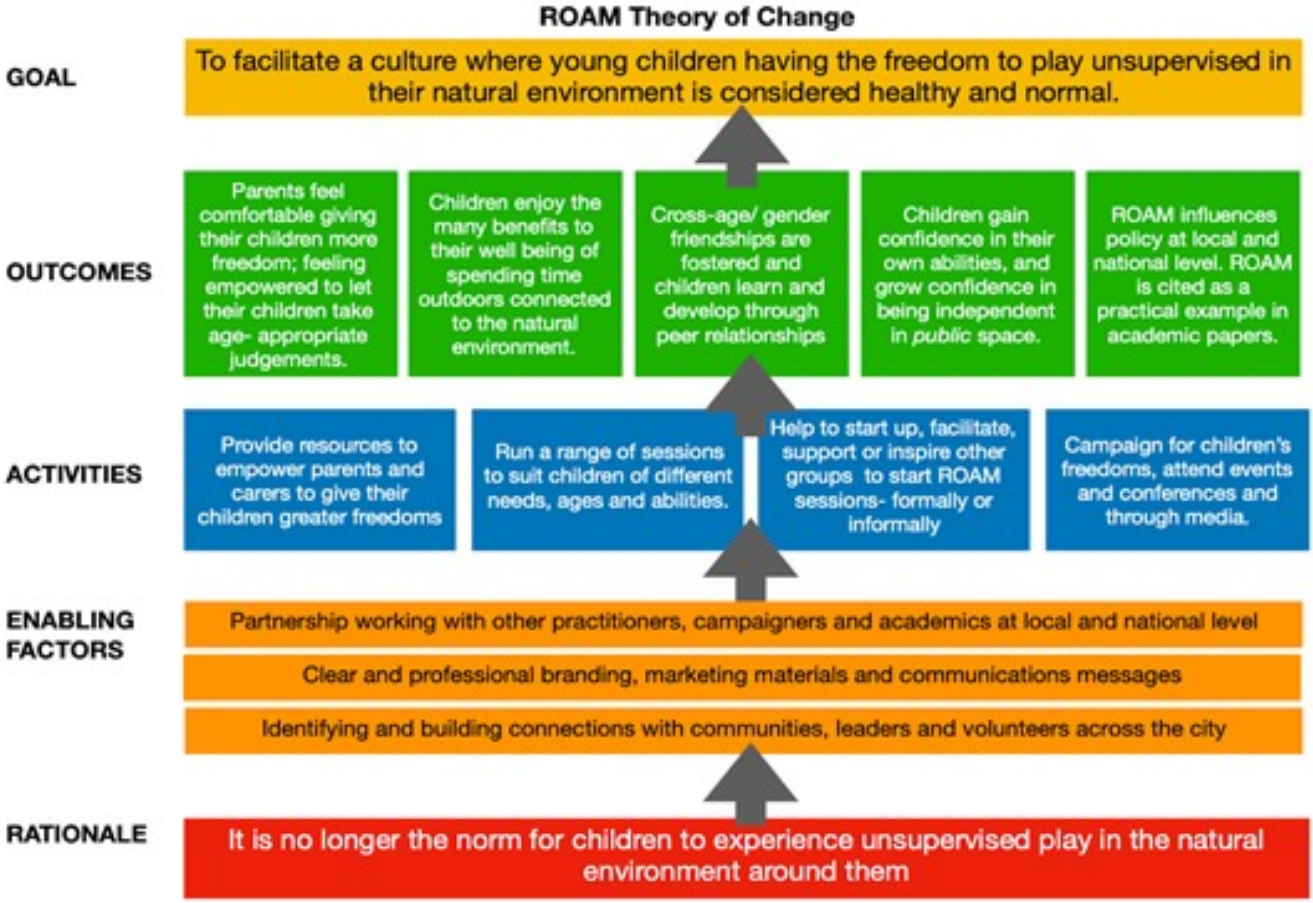
Our Values

- We are proactively inclusive; seeking ways to meet children's rights to independently play outside irrespective of their physical ability or any disability, social or economic barriers, gender, ethnicity, access to appropriate clothing, and any other barriers that we identify through the course of our work. We strive to make our sessions accessible, embracing neurodiversity, and to embed a culture of inclusion in all of our work that is reflected in the actions of everyone involved.
- We foster a culture where imperfection is embraced; we learn through our mistakes more than our successes. We encourage the bravery in trying, and promote a non judgemental culture of supportiveness. We embrace a culture of learning and sharing the grey areas in order to make the experience more valuable for everyone and for no one to fear a consequence of a perceived 'failure'.
- We are responsible and rigorous; acknowledging that whilst the participating children's experience is rooted in freedom, the activities we run are underpinned by procedures that reflect the high level of responsibility in which we are placed. We are rigorous in the application of the procedures that we have carefully developed to facilitate this.
- We are action-orientated, and research backed. We embrace innovation through trial and refinement, but place this continually within the wider academic and research context; learning through the complementary work of other organisations too, and aiming to embed best practice of children's play and freedom.

These values are embedded in our organisation and we are committed to promoting these values to all stakeholders; be they participants, parents/ carers, Board members, session leaders and volunteers.

Theory of Change

In January 2020, ROAM developed a Theory of Change to outline how we will deliver and measure the success of our intended social outcomes/ impact.



03 Activities

ROAM Sessions

The delivery of ROAM sessions was significantly impacted by the pandemic during the period. There were six months (in two periods of three months) when no sessions could take place at all. Of the remaining six months, during one month (November 2020), only one session model was able to operate due to lockdown 2, but in the other five months, the frequency and number of sessions was exceptionally high due to a surge in demand.

ROAM ran five different session models during the period.

ROAM Free

The classic model that enables children under 11 to play entirely self-directed with minimal supervision in a public park.

Rocking ROAM

Supervised session with (mostly younger) children not yet ready to access ROAM Free. It includes self-directed play in nature, assessing own capabilities to run, jump, climb in the natural environment.

ROAM-IN

Provides access to self-directed free play in nature for children with additional needs and their siblings, for whom ROAM Free may be considered too risky or inaccessible due to their play preferences, for example. Takes place in secure, private grounds.

ROAM in Schools

These sessions were delivered within the school day and in partnership with schools. The school chose a cohort of children that stood to benefit the most from our sessions. These sessions reached children who would not ordinarily be brought to our sessions out of school hours. They are similar to ROAM Free sessions but required higher levels of supervision depending on the specific needs of the children.

ROAM Stay and Play

Outdoor playgroups started during the pandemic to address both pre-schooler and parent isolation set against the context of very few facilities opening at all after March in 2020 nor in the first 4 months of 2021. Whilst targeting the same age group, these sessions reach families who would not ordinarily come to Rocking ROAMers (or similar groups such as Forest School/ Nature Play sessions) as the 'Playgroup' environment is much more familiar to some. These sessions run on weekdays.

ROAM Reflecting, Analysing and Learning, Project Development

In accordance with our values, we are continually reflecting on our practice; looking to refine and improve our sessions, measuring the impact we are having, and finding new ways to enable a broader range of children to access our sessions where we notice gaps to be filled.

We also engage proactively cross-discipline in many forums and circles including child development, child psychology, the play sector, additional needs provision, nature conservation, urban design and sustainable travel, and occupational therapy.

We set our practice in these wider contexts and always strive to be pioneering new ways of realising social impact that is responsive to these contexts.

Promoting, Campaigning and Supporting

Promoting our mission and vision is at the heart of many of our activities, and spreading this message through the promotion of ROAM's philosophy, campaigning for children's freedoms and supporting others to enable ROAMing to happen in their communities is a critical component of our work.

This may include indirect and subtle ways of engaging people, such as DIY Forest School leaflets which raised our profile amongst Parks groups, Schools and Forest Educators, attracting them to our website to find out more. And also includes much more direct promotion of our mission by presenting at conferences and events.

We have informally started to support other groups who are wanting to start ROAM in their areas nationwide. This will be a great opportunity for learning for us too.

Contribution from volunteers

ROAM has always had a healthy supply of parent volunteers. As we have grown, we have also become much more dependent upon volunteers who are not parents of participating children (though some do have children participating in other sessions).

In the period, we put policies and procedures into place to ensure that we have a robust system for the recruitment, registration, training and support for our volunteers. This included ensuring that we have an inclusive recruitment policy, that all volunteers are DBS checked (we offer this at no cost to them), that they receive consistent Volunteer Information relating to key policies, codes of conduct and job descriptions etc.

By the end of the period, we had around 30 registered volunteers. When we embarked on our most recent ROAM-IN programme, which involved recruiting 11 volunteers, we used the process to ensure that the systems we had in place were strictly followed from the outset. We recruited openly and with an application form, we followed up references for all accepted candidates and produced a manual specific to the ROAM-IN sessions and conducted face to face training in small groups.

We invite volunteers to feedback to us regularly, informally as well as formally. We also have young volunteers, under the age of 18. Some of these are former ROAM participants who still want to engage in the project and feel a great benefit from joining in, whereas others have joined us as teenagers. This is an area that we are keen to expand, especially as there is a lot of evidence surrounding the dip in levels of activity and engagement in nature amongst teenage girls in particular.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance, taking this into account when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

04 Our Achievements

Delivery of Recovery in Play Project

ROAM launched its 'Recovery In Play' project in September 2020. The project, funded by the Government's Covid-19 Emergency Fund (channelled through The National Lottery Community Fund) was aimed at specifically supporting people disproportionately affected by lockdown. Whilst we recognised that most children had been disproportionately affected, we set about identifying and targeting specific groups of children who we felt may benefit most from our sessions. These included primary school-aged children who had experienced particular disadvantage or impact, and pre school children who had experienced little or no peer interaction or interaction with anyone outside of their families. We also recognised that the latter group would also reach parents who had been deprived of the usual support networks for parents with young children e.g. playgroups, and pre school activity groups.

The project had to be delivered to a tight program, so in order to reach our target audiences, we formed partnerships with a local primary school and a local playgroup.

The project was a huge success, and we delivered 40 sessions in Autumn 2020, approximately 30% more sessions than we had funding for, such was the demand. We just about achieved this within the budget by making some adjustments and thanks to the generosity of volunteers.

ROAM in School

Prior to the pandemic, we had already engaged with the local primary school's headteacher who had been very warm to the principle of running sessions during the school day in the local park. When approached again, in September 2020, the headteacher immediately identified a cohort of 8 children that he had recognised as needing additional support following their return to school.

They were from three different year groups and were already being taught away from their classes each morning in a 'Nurture Group'. In the words of the headteacher 'These children don't need maths and English right now, they just need to play outside'. In close collaboration with the school, our ROAM in School model was launched.

One additional participant joined the group after three sessions. A total of ten sessions ran between October 2020 and December 2020. This set of sessions was also the first time that we undertook impact measurement from start to finish using a defined methodology.

'These children don't need maths and English right now, they just need to play outside'

We had always considered that partnering with a school would give us the potential to reach children who would otherwise be highly unlikely to attend a session, when dependant upon their parent/carer(s) bringing them. Based on the information the headteacher provided to us, this was almost certainly the case for all of the children. Only one child seemed familiar with the park at the outset, even though they all lived locally.

ROAM Stay & Play

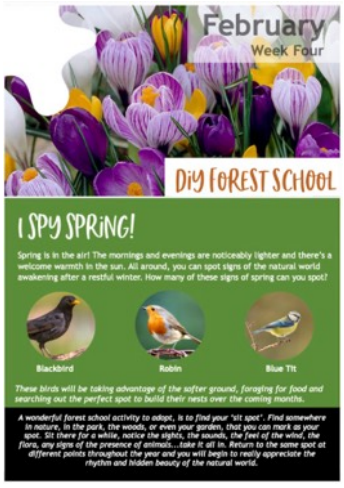
A partnership was also formed with a local playgroup Noah's Ark, who were unable to reopen in September 2020 due to the restrictions of making their building 'Covid-safe'. When approached, they immediately accepted the opportunity of transferring the playgroup to an outdoor setting in partnership with us, and could quickly advertise it to contacts they already had, particularly to those they felt would benefit most. ROAM Stay and Play launched in September 2020. It comprised 1 hour of play, followed by a half hour music slot, run by a local freelance children's music practitioner who had had to cease all her sessions. Two session leaders ran the sessions, supported by 3 volunteers (2 from Noah's Ark).

Places were limited to 15 children and their parents/carers and it immediately filled up. Interest grew as it spread by word of mouth, generating many enquiries. It was decided that an additional session would be run 'back-to-back' to the first with a half hour gap for sterilising all equipment/ toys. The new session was advertised and was booked up within a few hours.

When lockdown 2 was announced (November 2020), ROAM informed all parents that the Outdoor Stay and Play sessions would be suspended due to the restrictions on the gathering of groups. Birmingham City Council had given notice to all its parks that any organised outdoor activities would have to stop. There was huge disappointment amongst the families attending our sessions. Parents were pleading with us to continue and some exemptions were coming to light that it appeared could apply. The potential exemption was due to the support it was providing to parents and carers with very young children. Parents were writing to their local councillors, who in turn approached us and the Head of Parks for the City to enquire whether the exemption could apply. The Head of Parks was resistant at first but after spending some time putting together a justification document referring back to the actual Act of Parliament, our application was accepted, and sessions started back after missing only one week

DIY Forest School Project

In September 2020, the Friends of Cotteridge Park (FoCP) approached us about partnering with them on their proposed DIY Forest School Project. They had made the decision not to restart their Forest School sessions due to concerns over the coronavirus restrictions, but instead wanted to encourage families to come down to the park on a Wednesday morning and do self-directed Forest School activities. The intention was that they could collect an activity sheet or access it digitally, to maintain the family's connection with the park and nature based activities (ie not just to use the playground). We agreed to write and print 100 leaflets each week for 2 months to begin with. Any surplus activity sheets were given to local schools to distribute.



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After a month, lockdown two was announced so printing the activity sheets ceased, and a publicly accessible folder on our Google Workspace cloud was set up, and every Wednesday, along with Friends of Cotteridge Park and Birmingham Open Spaces Forum, we would promote the week's activity on social media.

Without the additional time and cost of printing, we agreed to extend our input in producing the activity sheets until Easter 2021. As the date drew close, FoCP secured some funding to commission us to continue until the end of September, so that we would have a full year's worth of activity sheets.

We have had a number of people and organisations reporting back to us that they have been using the sheets including schools and other 'Friends of...' park groups. This activity has also generated interest in our brand, having had several enquiries through the website from people who first came across us via the leaflets.

Measuring Impact

ROAM measured impact across all of our sessions in different ways. Our three areas of focus were:

Custodianship of local green space

Connection to Nature

Resilience

Project Example

The ROAM in Schools project that took place in Autumn 2020 was the first time that we implemented a structured and designed methodology for measuring impact. Prior to this, our methods had been rather ad hoc; using parental questionnaires, interactive visual ways with the children, and by asking questions to the children whilst recording their answers.

The methods were planned and session leaders and volunteers contributed to the process.

Below are some of the findings from the Schools project, we have just included a few examples.

Custodianship of Local Green Space

In the first session, children stayed within 100m of base, chasing squirrels and wanting to go into the playground, fast forward to the final session when they proudly showed their Head Teacher all the different parts of the 23 acre park which they had explored independently over the weeks and demonstrated their feeling of custodianship by naming different areas using their own terms which meant something special to them – such as 'William's Mount' - the steep bank where William conquered his fear and got down with the support of his friend after getting stuck.

Connection to Nature

Child A crying on his first session because he got a speck of mud on his hands to session 5/6 being in the stream, splashing, throwing sticks, in the cold and full of joy!

Resilience

One child was significantly smaller and slower than the others. She was extremely shy and quiet and held hands with an older boy throughout the first 2-3 sessions. By the end of the sessions, she was laughing, giving her opinions to other children about how they should play, making her voice heard and definitely not being led anymore by the hand!

Parents & Volunteers

We are also interested to measure how the ROAM sessions have impacted the adults involved. We also ask how we could improve the sessions. We ensure that the opportunity to give feedback is accessible to all by providing a variety of mediums such as online questionnaires, informal chats, engagement events (such as picnic), and notes in an anonymous feedback box.

Findings: The results were conclusive that there was a huge benefit to the adults involved as well as the children from parents in the Stay and Play to volunteers and teachers involved in the school's project everyone, without exception, reported a significant positive difference to their wellbeing after spending time outside in nature.

Long Term

In the future we would love to follow up with the children who attended ROAM sessions for 6 months or more to ask them about the criteria set out above and see if the feeling of custodianship, connection and resilience has stayed with them after their time at ROAM. Ideally, we would revisit the children after five years to measure the long-term impact.

Wider Impact of ROAM

We wanted to also report on the ripple effect of ROAM, benefits that we would not have thought to measure or been intentional about but that have been reported to us and, we feel are significant.

For Stay and Play we aimed to make playgroups accessible during the pandemic by essentially taking an indoor playgroup outside. We were pleasantly surprised about how important and invaluable some parents found this. Having a baby in lockdown for some, has been incredibly isolating and frightening. One lady with a toddler and baby wrote to the council during lockdown 2 to implore them to allow us continue in the capacity of a support group which is how she and many other parents saw us. She used the word 'lifeline'.

The word 'community' crops up time and time again when people talk about ROAM, the sessions have been described as 'anchoring' and has made us value the importance of the 'whole family' approach. In ROAM, all of your children can attend sessions, often run at the same time, regardless of ability and the adults can volunteer or grab a coffee - is it a cohesive whole family approach and a holistic experience for all.

We have also had many parents tell us that they feel much more empowered to allow their children to ROAM and are proactively looking for opportunities to do this. ROAM was always intended to be a philosophy not just a session so this reporting delights us. However what has surprised us is that many parents whose children have never attended a session have reported deliberately giving their children more freedom, including walking to school alone and credit this shift in mindset to ROAM.

Finally, four teenage girls are included in our volunteer numbers. Research indicates that when girls reach their teenage years their interest and time spent in nature declines sharply. As the benefits of spending time in nature are so evident to mental health we are very happy to welcome these girls at what can be a difficult stage in life. They support and assist the younger children and those with additional needs, often very skillfully by taking into account their communication and sensory preferences. We hope that the duality of spending time in nature while providing a very useful service will increase feelings of well being and confidence. We will see how teenage mentoring organically develops but we are aware of the huge benefits and we feel it is something we would like to be more intentional about in the future.

Case Study

Through our sessions we have forged close connections with two sisters who are both registered blind. One lady, Sana always attends ROAM Free with her four and nine year olds and loved that she could feel so comfortable letting them ROAM within the session.

She introduced us to her sister Eeshma who had a baby and moved to the local area in lockdown. Eeshma was new to the area, visually impaired and a new mum. She reported feeling extremely isolated and in her words 'incredibly guilty that Sofia hasn't been getting enough sunlight or outdoor fun' and so began to attend our Stay and Play.

We collected her and walked her home and after many sessions she messaged us to say that this was 'an hour and a half that both Sofia and I look forward to all week round, the fresh air, The Buzz, the chatter of busy children and the lovely volunteers who made us feel welcomed and nurtured'.

Campaigning & Events

- Birmingham Emergency Transport Plan- May 2020 Prior to this policy document being launched, we were invited to review it in its draft form and attend a small group seminar. Our comments on the importance of play and children's autonomy in travel were incorporated into the final policy document.
- Our Future City Conversations, March 2021, Community representative on promotional video for discussion on City of Centres theme as part of a policy consultation from Birmingham City Council Planning and Regeneration: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3SjWXkrPN0&t=558s
- ROAM was invited to be a guest interviewee at the WOW Global event in March 2021 (virtually held) for which we were paid.

Organisational Development

- Completed Mentorship Programme with Paul Hamlyn Foundation, covering a wide range of issues relating to our organisational development and business planning. This process of learning was invaluable at a time when we couldn't run sessions and were uncertain what impact the pandemic would have on our future.
- Creation and Board sign off of our Vision, Mission and Values.
- Creating and Board sign off of comprehensive set of policies and procedures.

Marketing & Communications

- Commission and development of new website.
- Production of ROAM e-newsletter.
- The period saw a large increase in social media engagement. During the period, we established ourselves on three Social Media Platforms; Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIN. As of March 2021, we had 600 followers on Twitter, 422 on Facebook and 56 on LinkedIN.

Systems

- ROAM registered for a free Google Workspace account in Spring 2020 (at the time called Google Suite) and have transferred all documentation onto G Drive; a cloud server. No fees are payable to registered charities to use Google Workspace.
- Commissioned new CRM System. (Macanta) to be ready by Summer 2021
- Implementation of new Booking System (Bookwhen).

Grants

Since March 2020, three grants have been secured by application, totalling £31,900. In addition, £5000 was committed to this programme by PHF/SSE along with the time extension we were awarded. Two of the three grants secured were from funders new to us; DCMS's Coronavirus Recovery Fund (£6950) and the Eveson Trust (£5000).

05 Structure, Governance & Management

ROAM is a registered charity (CIO), charity number 1190230 (July 2020).

The Board of Trustees

The Board comprises the Leadership Team, four Non-Executive Directors and one Co-opted Board Member. The four Non-Executive Directors are all registered with the Charity Commission as trustees. All other Board members are non-voting. Board Meetings are held 'termly' (ie in alignment with academic terms; three times per year).

NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS:		
Emma Woolf	Chair	Appointed July 2020, resigned September 2020
Laura Smiley	Chair	Appointed as Non-Executive Director July 2020, Chair from September 2020
Sumeer Aggarwal	Treasurer	Appointed 3rd November 2020
Gayna Zargar	Secretary & Safeguarding Lead	Appointed July 2020
Jo Burrill		Appointed July 2020
Co-opted Board Member Trina Jones		Co-opted July 2020

At any time there must be at least three charity trustees, If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining charity trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. Every charity trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

Officers

ROAM's officers are Naomi Fisher, Strategic Lead and Lisa Walke, Operations Lead. Lisa Walke is also ROAM's Designated Safeguarding Lead. Naomi Fisher is Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Naomi's key responsibilities include:

- Strategic oversight of the charity's activities
- Business Planning
- Financial oversight and management
- Income and Fundraising
- Systems and data oversight
- Marketing and External Communications
- Campaigning and Events
- Partnerships: Corporate and emerging partnerships

Lisa's key responsibilities include:

- Organisation and Planning of Sessions
- Management and Coordination of Session Leaders and Volunteers
- Customer Relations
- Safeguarding
- Training
- Policies and Procedures; Implementation and Review
- Impact Measurement

06 Financial Review

Review Statement

Income for the period covered by this report totalled £48,716, of which £11,775 was restricted, which included £5000 from the Eveson Charitable Trust, £6,575 from the Department of Media Culture and Sport's Coronavirus Emergency Fund and a private donation of £200. A total of two grants were received (in three instalments) from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation as unrestricted income in addition to a small donation and income from merchandising and bookings (unrestricted income).

Expenditure in the same period totalled £25,776 which included spending of restricted grants carried over in part from the previous financial year; £733.34 from Veolia Trust and £4792.21 from The National Lottery Community Fund's Awards for All grant. Both of those grants were fully spent during the period, as well as the DCMS grant. At 31/3/21, £4682.89 remained of the Eveson Trust grant that has been carried over to the next financial year.

Income

ROAM's income has largely been in the form of grants from trusts, either for ongoing growth and development, or for the delivery of specific programmes of sessions.

Moving forwards, a more sustainable mixed model of income is to be developed, recognising that some activities the charity delivers could be charged to some consumers without detriment to the mission, vision or values. This includes schools or other organisations as well as individual families.

ROAM recognises that some of its pioneering work or projects with children who may stand to benefit most, may still be largely dependent upon external grant funders. That said, opportunity for subsidising this through other work will be promoted in the form of voluntary donations for sessions (with tangible examples of what donations can help pay for), and profit on merchandising.

Grants

Grants will continue to be a significant part of ROAM's income, including for the organisation's core costs and project development work. Given the re-emergence of non-covid funding, a revised funding strategy will be put together, informed by researching new opportunities and trends that may be particularly relevant to particular areas of practice.

Donations

As ROAM's profile increases through press attention or in local circles in new areas of the country, voluntary donations should be actively encouraged and resources produced to illustrate the impact donations can have.

Commissions and Consultancy

As ROAM's expertise grows, it is intended that generating an income through consultancy to organisations including nature charities, local authorities or even nursery chains is likely to be a key opportunity for a small but important part of its revenue.

Other Income: payments, merchandise

Voluntary session payments were put in place in early 2021. This is considered to be a key component of ROAM's sustainability, particularly to avoid the constant pressure of securing external funding to keep sessions running. Ensuring that finances are not a barrier to anyone's participation must also be finely balanced with any 'voluntary' payments.
Merchandising provides a limited opportunity for raising some modest unrestricted funds for the business as well as using the logo to spread the message and attract interest in the charity.

Reserves Policy

Once a year the Board will consider the level of reserves that it is prudent for the organisation to hold. Consideration will be given to redundancy liabilities, lease agreements and any other significant factors that should be taken into account if the organisation were to close.

We will aim to build up reserves that represent a minimum of 3 months of typical turnover, by the end of Year 3 (April 2023) and 6 months of reserves by the end of Year 5 (April 2025).

Until we have built up adequate reserves, we have taken a low risk approach to taking on any liabilities including employment, leases, subscriptions or other regular commitments.

07a Accounts: Receipts & Payments Year End 31 March 2021

	Un-restricted funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Endowment Funds (£)	Total 2021	Last year
A1 Receipts					
Booking receipts	174	-	-	**174**	-
Donations	10	200	-	**210**	-
Grant funding	36,595	11,575	-	**48,170**	-
Merchandise sales	121	-	-	**121**	-
Refunds	41	-	-	**41**	-
Subtotal (Gross income for AR)	**36,941**	**11,775**	-	**48,716**	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).	-	-	-	**-**	-
Total Receipts	**36,941**	**11,775**	-	**48,716**	-
A3 Total Payments					
Session personnel	8,561	9,265	-	**17,826**	-
Session equipment	-	1,769	-	**1,769**	-
Session consumables	41	309	-	**350**	-
Computer costs	151	5	-	**156**	-
Professional services	648	-	-	**648**	-
Marketing & fundraising	2,354	323	-	**2,677**	-
Merchandise costs	646	146	-	**792**	-
Training	650	168	-	**818**	-
Insurance	-	292	-	**292**	-
DBS checks	24	213	-	**237**	-
Subscriptions and publications	40	11	-	**51**	-
Printing, postage and stationery	97	62	-	**159**	-
Subtotal	**13,213**	**12,563**	-	**25,776**	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table).	-	-	-	-	-
Total Payments	**13,213**	**12,563**	-	**25,776**	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	**23,727**	**788**	-	**22,939**	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	1,496	5,526	-	7,022	-
Cash Funds this year end	**25,223**	**4,738**	-	**29,961**	-

Accounts were not prepared for the previous period, and no comparative figures are shown.
The opening bank balance has been split between the various funds.

07b Accounts: Statement of Assets & Liabilities for the period

	Details	Un-restricted funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Endowment Funds (£)
B1 Cash Funds	Bank Current Account	25,223	4,738	-
Total Cash Funds		**25,223**	**4,738**	-
B2 Other Monetary Assets	Stock of Merchandise	462	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment Assets	-	-	-	-
B4 Assets Retained for the Charity's own use	-	-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Accrued Expenses	unrestricted	3800	-

Signed by two trustees on behalf of all the trustees:

Signature		
Full Name	LAURA SMILEY	Gaynor Zargar
Date	21/01/22	21/01/22

Report of the Independent Examiner

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of ROAM

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2021 which are set out on pages 24 to 25.

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 charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:
1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

Mark McLean FCA
On behalf of Thomas & Young Limited, Chartered Accountants

Carleton House
266-268 Stratford Rd
Shirley
B90 3AD

Date: 25th January 2022

08 Reference & Administrative details

Charity Details

Charity name: ROAM

Registered charity number: 1190230

Charity's principal address:
10 Ashmore Road
BIRMINGHAM
B30 2HA

Trustees

NAME	OFFICE	DATES ACTED IF NOT FULL YEAR
Laura Smiley	Chair	26 July 2020
Sumeer Aggarwal	Treasurer	3rd November 2020
Gayna Zargar	Secretary	July 2020
Jo Burrill	Trustee	July 2020

09 Declarations

This Annual Report, covering the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, was approved by trustees of ROAM at their Board meeting, held on Monday 17th January 2021.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature	LMSmiley	Grogar.
Full Name	LAURA SMILEY	Gaynor Zargar
Position	CHAIR OF TRUSTEES	TRUSTEE Secretary
Date	21/01/22	21/01/22