

2023

LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT

WHERE IMAGINATION
THRIVES

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Objectives and Activities

Our aims

Our aim, as set out in our charitable objects, is to support and provide for the play and education of children within the London Borough of Lewisham by providing stimulating toys and play equipment. We cater for children from 0 up to around the age of 8. Our range of toys is vast and our toys represent the diverse community we operate in. We have toys for visually impaired children, children on the autistic spectrum and other special needs.

Our objectives

Our objectives are set to reflect the aims of the toy library and to build on and develop the work we have done in previous years. In setting our objectives and planning our activities our trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance. Our objectives for this period were:

- Making use of our additional librarian role – we would ideally like to be able to keep 2 librarians in post so we need to look at how we fund this longer term and how we can develop and grow as a service with 2 librarians at the helm.
- Continuing to work towards a move to new premises. This is still in our sight however there is some work to be done on how we do this and how we fund it. '

Achievements and Performance

Chair's Report

Trustees & Volunteers

The board of trustees have worked hard this year to support the toy library, giving focus, together with the librarians, on how we can improve and innovate the toy library's offering to the community. Sadly, we soon say goodbye to Emma, our treasurer, as she and her family embark on a sabbatical. Bon Voyage! We look forward to confirming Joanne as our new treasurer at the AGM. Joanne is a toy library member so she really understands the impact of the toy library – welcome Joanne!

Our trusted team of volunteers continue to support the day-to-day running of the toy library, and we couldn't operate without them. Our volunteers are often the first people you'll meet when you come into the toy library and they're on hand, rain or shine, to help when we need them most. Thank you, volunteers, for everything you help us to achieve, and the hours you selflessly donate of your time!

We are always on the lookout for new trustees and volunteers. If you're interested in getting involved, please do get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

Memberships

Membership continues to grow at the toy library. We have grown our membership by 26% and now have 770 members who regularly borrow toys from the library. It's lovely to continue to work with our members and support play at home – and to see their children grow!

Fundraising

We led our first fundraising campaign in December 2022 which saw our members generously donating £1,000 to 'pay back' enough memberships to give 167 families free membership for a year. Thank you to everyone who supported the campaign! These memberships have been distributed to families in need via local food banks and refugee charities.

We were also thrilled to see our members kindly nominate us to their employees for donations- a big thanks to our anonymous member who nominated us to Rothesay Pensions, raising £2,500 to help us continue our work. We were also incredibly thankful for CM Construction who were in the area building a new office block, they wanted to support a community charity close to their project, so we were delighted they chose to support the toy library with a donation of £2,500. Both donations were gratefully received in June 2023 and July 2023 respectively.

Diversifying income

Our librarians, Magdalena and Jemma, recognised there had been an increased demand for party hire from our members and wider community. Keeping an eagle eye on second hand sales of large toys, like giant Connect-4, slides and Pickler climbing frames, Magdalena and Jemma have driven all over London to pick up the best second hand deals, giving these toys a new lease of life once again. Members can now rent out a wide range of party hire toys. We look forward to expanding our collection so more children can enjoy them!

Librarians

As ever, Magdalena remains the cornerstone of the Toy Library and continues to do an outstanding job as our Toy Librarian. Her dedication and passion support the toy library to go from strength to strength. As with every organisation, there are sometimes challenges, but Magdalena approaches these with open-mindedly and is quick to find a resolution.

Sadly, in August, we said goodbye to our librarian Jemma as she went to find new challenges in the community. We were delighted to welcome Olivia on board, as recommended by Jemma. Olivia started out as a volunteer and was keen to get even more involved with the toy library. Welcome aboard, Olivia! Her contribution so far to the toy library has been fantastic, and we look forward to renewing her contract in the New Year.

IT & Marketing

We continue to use Lend Engine to keep track of our stock and memberships and create reports to analyse any trends. With our stock continuing to grow, we are keen to focus next year on improving the experience for members when taking out or renewing the toys so please do get in touch if you can help!

We are currently averaging 1000 users to the website per month and our latest page added, [party hire](#), is now the third most visited. We are now ranking on Google for “soft play Lewisham”, “Lewisham soft play” and “party toy hire” which is great news for finding new customers.

Thanks to our wonderful trustee, Sara, our social media presence continues to grow. This year, our Instagram followers increased by 36% to 680 and one reel created by a member generated 849 likes and was viewed over 2000 likes so please do keep spreading the word about us.

Premises

Space remains a challenge for the toy library, and we have continued to investigate alternative sites with other community partners. A further challenge for the toy library is the looming demolition of Lewisham Shopping Centre. Although we have yet to be given a date for when this phase of Lewisham’s redevelopment will happen, the need for a new home is becoming increasingly urgent. In the meantime, we continue to hold toy sales to free up space and shift toys that aren’t suitable for the toy library but might enjoy a new home elsewhere.

Future Projects

For the year ahead we are focussing on: -

- Continuing to work towards a move to new premises. This is still in our sight however we need to find the right space that suits the practical needs of the library and also our members, while ensuring it is financially sustainable move
- Exploring options of providing outreach to more families that need our services the most. We are looking to partner with other key Lewisham organisations that work closely with families.
- Improving the user experience for members when borrowing, renewing or returning toys to make it an even smoother process for them, our volunteers and librarians
- Focusing on building our pool of invaluable volunteers and improving our systems to support for them

We reach this AGM feeling more hopeful about the future and remain committed to running the service as best as we can for our members, our community and our team.

Toy Library Manager's Report

We've been very lucky to have a huge amount of toy donations that allow us to refresh our stock regularly and remove tired looking items.

Members

The 2022/2023 financial year started off strong and carried on with an average of approximately 40/50 new members every month.

We saw a big increase in new subscribers in Autumn 2023 as well as very steady numbers of membership renewals.

We currently have 775 active subscribers and over 2000 contacts.

We decided to keep the appointment system in place due to the space being very limited and the library getting busier every year.

We have opened a 4th slot to make sure we can see as many members as possible and make sure their safety is not compromised by overcrowding.

Volunteers

We have a steady number of volunteers, with Martin being our longest standing volunteer and Lisa being our newest addition.

We have seen a lot of young volunteers come and go over this year and it was a pleasure to work with them.

We've noticed an increase in the number of members using their corporate volunteering days to come and help run the library – thank you!

As well as our lovely members lending a hand in store and online – with a special mention to Lucie for a huge effort put into sorting out a huge donation of Playmobil and adding it to our stock for our older clientele to enjoy.

Stock

We are currently nearing the 5200 toys mark and keeping a close eye on our stock levels as we are starting to struggle with the space.

This year, we also decided to create a separate stock for party hire only. Which has been extremely popular and we hope to keep expanding our offering.

Overview

This has been yet another busy year for the library where we had our ups and downs.

Unfortunately, there's been a few situations where our staff and volunteers have been treated poorly and we felt that needed addressing.

The response to the email was overwhelmingly positive, with words of thanks, appreciation and encouragement.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers and members for the respect, love and support (and countless cups of coffees and hot chocolates) that you have shown us every day - it keeps us going:)

Financial Review

Treasurer's Report

This financial year has been a turning point for the Lewisham Toy Library. COVID-19 grants were the toy library's main source of income in the preceding two financial years; however such grants were no longer available in the year to 31 March 2023. The toy library was therefore faced with the challenge of replacing one-off grant income with sustainable membership income.

I am pleased to report that the toy library's membership income is now higher than it was before the pandemic. This was driven by the return of prior members whose subscriptions had lapsed during the pandemic, as well as new members joining us for the first time. This is an outstanding achievement and testament to the support of our members and dedication of our wonderful toy librarians and volunteers.

During the next financial year, the Lewisham Toy Library must continue to focus on building sustainable sources of income to cover increased running costs, in particular the cost of hiring a second toy librarian (on a fixed term basis).

Income

In the year to 31 March 2023, the toy library returned to full capacity for the first time since the pandemic. This saw membership income increase to £26k from £19k in the previous financial year. This is also an increase on the year to 31 March 2020 which was the last period largely untouched by the pandemic. In addition, the toy library benefited from £5k of unrestricted grant income.

Income from Party Hire and Toy Sale income streams also grew to £4k from £2k, driven by the return of toy sale events as well as increased uptake by the community of our party hire offering.

Costs

Staff costs (toy librarian salaries) continue to be the toy library's largest expense, accounting for 70% of total running costs. In the year to 31 March 2023, staff costs were £24k, representing a £9k increase on prior year driven by the hire of a second toy librarian (on a fixed term basis). Remaining running costs were broadly in line with prior years.

Reserves

Reserves continue to be healthy at the end of the year at just over £78k. This is more than sufficient to cover 3 months running costs as per our reserves policy. As such, the toy library has taken the decision to renew the contract of the second librarian for another fixed term. However, it should be noted that the position continues to be unsustainable by current income levels and the toy library must therefore consider how it can use the position to generate additional income or find other funding for the position through grants and donations. There is also the potential to use some of the reserves for the logistical costs that would be incurred if we were to move the toy library to a bigger premises.

Structure, Governance & Management

The Trustees of the Toy Library are responsible for the overall management and control of the charity and meet monthly to guide, plan and review the work of the charity.

The Toy Library is an unincorporated association and all trustees and staff adhere to the governing documents (Constitution and Code of Governance) to ensure that the charity is delivering its objectives and is managed effectively.

The Chair of the board of trustees is responsible for the personnel management of employed library staff and the employed librarians are responsible for the management and guidance for the Toy Library's volunteers.

The Treasurer is responsible for overseeing the financial management of the Library and to assist with this, the charity employs a bookkeeper to prepare accounts and reports for monthly review by the Treasurer and Trustee committee

Trustee selection

The board of Trustees seek to ensure that there is a good breadth and depth of skills and experience on the board to effectively carry out its duties. When recruiting new trustees we look for individuals who:

- Align to the aims of the Toy Library and have an interest in the work we do.
- Represent our local community and member base
- Bring skills or experience which will enhance the board of trustees and ultimately benefit the library and its members.

We advertise for trustees locally in the Toy Library, in local forums (e.g. Lewisham Local) and via our social media channels. Potential Trustees are invited to meet with the current board at a monthly Trustee meeting and from there are officially voted to the board by our library members at the next AGM.

All trustees give of their time freely and no remuneration or expenses were paid in the year. No Trustee or person connected with a Trustee received any benefit in relation to the Toy Library and their work as a member of the board.

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Details

Lewisham Toy Library

Registered Charity Number: 271496

Address: Unit 46 Molesworth Street, London SE13 7EP

Trustee Details

The following Trustees acted for the charity within the financial year covered by this report.

Trustee Name	Position held on board	Date appointed	Date of resignation	Appointed by
Jennifer Luk	Co-Chair	October 2019	N/a	AGM member vote 2019
Elizabeth Stevenson	Co-Chair	September 2022	N/a	AGM member vote 2022
Elisabeth Poirer	Secretary	January 2014	N/a	AGM member vote 2014
Joanne Harrison	Treasurer	May 2023	N/a	Board of trustees 2023
Justine Vella	Trustee	July 2019	N/a	AGM member vote 2019
Sara Hill	Trustee	November 2020	N/a	Board of trustees 2020
Emma Pello	Trustee	September 2021	N/a - sabbatical leave	Board of trustees 2021
Jill Hamilton	Trustee	February 2022	N/a	Board of Trustees 2021

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature: <i>Jennifer Luk</i> Full name: Jennifer Luk Position: Co-Chair of the board of trustees Date: 11.01.24	Signature: <i>Elizabeth Stevenson</i> Full name: Elizabeth Stevenson Position: Co-Chair of the board of trustees Date: 10.01.2024
Signature: <i>Elisabeth Poirel</i> Full name: Elisabeth Poirel Position: Secretary Date: 10.01.24	Signature: <i>Joanne Harrison</i> Full name: Joanne Harrison Position: Treasurer Date: 10.01.24
Signature: <i>Justine Vella</i> Full name: Justine Vella Position: Trustee Date: 11.1.24	Signature: <i>Sara Hill</i> Full name: Sara Hill Position: Trustee Date: 10.01.2024
Signature: <i>Jill Hamilton</i> Full name: Jill Hamilton Position: Trustee Date: 10.01.2024	

Independent examiner's report

To the trustees of

Lewisham Toy Library

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Lewisham Toy Library for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of the report

As the charity trustees of Lewisham Toy Library 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 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination that give 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.

Caroline Sharp

FCA, DChA
55 Canberra Road
LONDON
SE7 8PF

Date: **12 January 2024**



Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01-Apr-22	To	31-Mar-23
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A. Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
London Borough Lewisham - Retail Covid grant	-	-	-	-	14,390
Grant from Betty Messenger Charitable Trust	5,000	-	-	5,000	-
Other donations and gifts	2,695	-	-	2,695	1,961
Toy Library membership subs and fines	26,271	-	-	26,271	19,014
Toy sales	2,593	-	-	2,593	1,563
Party hire	1,233	-	-	1,233	421
Lewisham Lottery	436	-	-	436	84
Shopmobility	335	-	-	335	175
Bank interest	330	-	-	330	118
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	38,892	-	-	38,892	37,726
Total receipts	38,892	-	-	38,892	37,726
A3 Payments					
Staff costs	23,973	-	-	23,973	15,356
Staff expenses	-	-	-	-	100
Volunteer expenses	145	-	-	145	120
Business rates	-	-	-	-	4,177
Insurance	1,254	-	-	1,254	1,142
Electricity	772	-	-	772	798
Cleaning	127	-	-	127	48
Library expenses	2,066	-	-	2,066	618
Toys	504	-	-	504	168
Telecom Expense	371	-	-	371	600
Computer and IT	290	-	-	290	706
Independent examiner (2 years)	2,500	-	-	2,500	-
Bookkeeping and accountancy	600	-	-	600	600
Subscriptions	137	-	-	137	137
Bank fees	522	-	-	522	409
Relocation costs	980	-	-	980	-
Sub total	34,242	-	-	34,242	24,979
Total payments	34,242	-	-	34,242	24,979
Net of receipts/(payments)	4,651	-	-	4,651	12,747
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	74,142	-	-	74,142	61,395
Cash funds this year end	78,793	-	-	78,793	74,142



Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01-Apr-22	To	31-Mar-23
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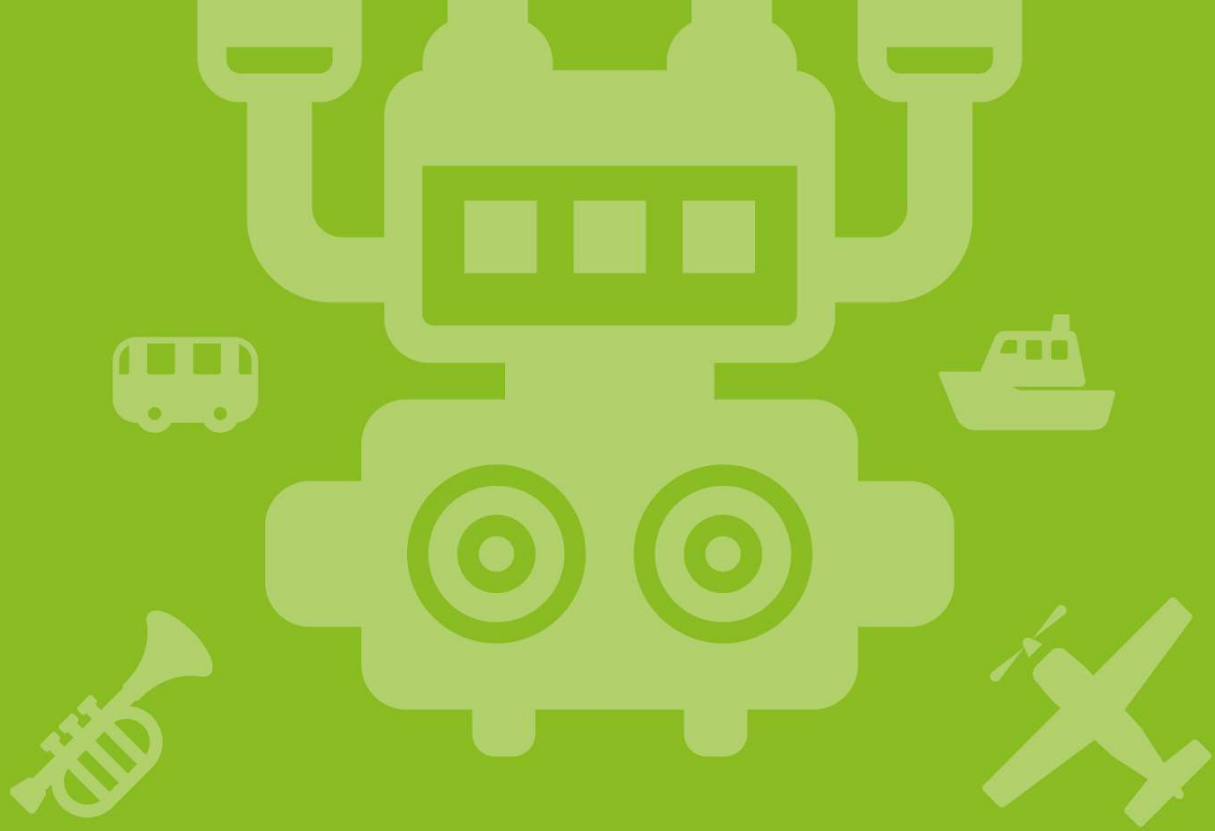
B. Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	CAF Bank	77,298	-	-
	PayPal	580	-	-
	Zettle	509	-	-
	Petty Cash	406	-	-
	Total cash funds	78,793	-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Trade creditors	Unrestricted		
	Accrued costs	Unrestricted	2,695	

Signed on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
<i>J. Luk</i>	Jennifer Luk	12-Jan-24
<i>J.L Harrison</i>	Joanne Harrison	12-Jan-24



WHERE IMAGINATION THRIVES



Lewisham Shopping Centre



Tues, Wed, Friday, Saturday



10am to 3pm



0208 297 2735



lewishamtoylibrary.org.uk



librarian@lewishamtoylibrary.org.uk



www.facebook.com/lewishamtoylibrary/



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