

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The trustees are pleased to present their report together with the financial statements for the year ended 30th June 2022.

Reference and Administrative Details:

Charity Name: Little Rascals Community Playgroup

Address: 9 Kilhoyle Road, Drumsum, Limavady, BT49 OPU

Trustees who served during the period:

Ursula Hamill

Maeve McAteer

Denise Rafferty

Stephen McAteer (resigned December 2021)

Shauneen Mullan (resigned December 2021)

Martina Stephens (resigned December 2021)

Niamh Devlin (resigned December 2021)

Claire Mackey (resigned December 2021)

Kerry Ann McGurk (resigned December 2021)

Sue Ellen O'Kane (resigned October 2022)

Shauna Fisher (appointed December 2021) (resigned October 2022)

Jenna Gardiner (appointed December 2021) (resigned October 2022)

Lauren O' Kane (appointed December 2021) (resigned October 2022)

Tanika Quigg (resigned October 2022)

Gemma Anderson (resigned October 2022)

Katrina Burke (appointed December 2021) (resigned October 2022)

Dale Bunting Jones (appointed December 2021) (Appointed as Chairman)

Ciara Moore (appointed December 2021) (Appointed as Secretary)

Bronagh Donnelly (appointed as Vice Treasurer October 2022)

Ailisa Devlin (appointed as Treasurer October 2022)

Terri Kingsland (appointed October 2022)

Lottie Devlin (appointed October 2022)

Seana McCutcheon

Charity Commission Number: NIC102434

Independent Examiner: Paul McKillop, EM Accountants, 2nd floor, Gortalowry House, 94 Church Street, Cookstown, Co Tyrone BT80 8HX.

Bank: Danske Bank 46 Catherine Street, Limavady, BT49 9DB

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES:

The group is established to:

1. Promote play and learning for pre-school children aged 2yrs 10months-4yrs along with advancing education and recreation. Little Rascals Community Playgroup provides purposeful play for 2yrs10months-4yr olds through a broad based curriculum, taking into account all aspects of child development and considering the needs of individual children. The pre-school curriculum is set up under 6 headings –Personal, Social &Emotional Development, Language, Maths, Physical, World around Us, and Arts. We are committed to providing a quality learning environment with safe, secure and supportive surroundings. Staff plan activities based on daily observations of the children’s learning potential. These are evaluated regularly so that staff can add more challenging activities to their daily progress.
2. To promote other leisure time activities for young people, men, women, older people, people with disabilities, unemployed and the rurally isolated, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants in the surrounding environs of County Londonderry(hereinafter called the ‘area of benefit’) without distinction of age, gender, race, political, religious or other opinion. Activities/Courses that we have had in the past have included an Xmas Tea Party for the over 50’s, Coffee & Chats for parents/carers.
3. To continue to develop our Nurturing Families Centre (hereinafter called the centre) to provide playschool provision, educational, environmental and recreational facilities and activities in the furtherance of the above objects. As we are a thriving community with new houses being built and new families moving in, our new building will mean an increase in playgroup numbers so we will be able to run an extra pre-preschool session provided funding is available. We continue to build our links with our local school and other organisations within the community.

Charity Structure and Management

Little Rascals Community Playgroup is a registered charity with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under charity Number 102434. The playgroup was set up on 01/09/1988 with a formally adopted constitution outlining the objects and powers of the playgroup.

Our Board of Management consists of 10 Trustees who administer the Playgroup (the structure of which is as follows: 4 executive members (chairperson, treasurer, vice treasurer and secretary) with an additional 6 non-executive members. We hold our Annual General meeting every year in October/November where some members may step down from their positions and some new members will be nominated and elected. The Trustees meet monthly to discuss the finances and any other issues relating to the day to day management of the playgroup.

The playgroup is affiliated to the Early Years Organisation with an Early Years Specialist meeting regularly with the staff to ensure policies and practices are up to date within the sector. Staff and committee also undertake regular training.

Due to the Health Pandemic which we found ourselves in, our last inspection took place in two parts, online via Zoom and then a face to face visit. We were inspected by the Western Health and Social Care Trust on the 27th April 2022 and 11th May 2022. The area inspected was “Quality of Staffing, Management & Leadership”. The leader and staff demonstrated through discussion and observation that children are safeguarded. The leader and staff had a clear understanding of how children are safeguarded in their care by following daily routines and adhering to organisational policies and procedures. The leader and staff demonstrated through discussion and observation that children are safeguarded through systems and practices that are consistent with the Regional Child Protection Practices and Procedures. The inspector observed that children’s wellbeing is being promoted and their care, developmental and play needs are being met.

Our latest ETI inspection was in April 2015. It was reported that Little Rascals Community Playgroup is performing to a very good level. It was noted that the children’s educational programme was considered to be well balanced with very good opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum, and the quality of the arrangements for pastoral care within the pre-school were considered by the Inspectorate to be outstanding. The Inspectorate also noted that the leader had a clear vision for the continued development of the pre-school and its role in the community.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the Trustees and Committee have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland’s public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity’s purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries (the children, parents, families and the local community and surrounding areas).

The playgroup received funding from the Education Authority (PSEP Programme) for 20 preschool children. The playgroup receives the remainder of their monies through voluntary donations from parents, fundraising events throughout the year such as our Annual BBQ and sponsored walk and raffles at Easter and Christmas and successful grants applied for, including Pathway Funding to provide pre preschool sessions. The main achievement for the playgroup was the completion in June 2017 of our new brick building (Little Rascals “Nurturing Families” Centre) funded by a grant awarded by Space and Place (Big Lottery) for £340,466.40. We officially opened our doors to our new preschool children in September 2017 being now registered with Social Services for 26 children in a session. We have an additional room where we hold committee meetings and any other activities/courses for the local community.

The playgroup was again successful in securing Pathway Funding from April 2021 – March 2022 to deliver a pre-preschool service which is of immense benefit to the children who attend and their families. We have again applied for this grant for the year 2022 – 2023. This is a very beneficial service in our rural community as there are no other early year’s providers within an eight mile radius and we are in an area where public transport services are low.

Our Junior Club (pre pre school funded by The Pathway Grant) continues to thrive and to provide an invaluable service in the community especially at the present time when there continues to be a lack of services available to parents for this age group in our community.

Following on from the Corona Virus Pandemic we have been reinstating our in person fundraising events.

The National Lottery Grant which we were awarded in February 2020 to provide a Family Fun Day for our playschool children, families and the wider playschool community had to be postponed due to the government restrictions in place at the time. We were delighted to be able to go ahead with this event in July 2021.

Our annual sponsored walk and barbecue which is open to the whole community took place in June 22 whereby we provided food and entertainment for all who attended. This event also helped to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Other fundraising events in this period included our Christmas Hamper Raffle and an Easter Raffle.

Unfortunately the continuing impact Covid and other world factors have had and continue to have on the economy has led to reduced disposable incomes which means people have had less to give to charity. We continue to seek funding from grant bodies to help with our financial position.

The management committee and staff continue to strive to enhance and build on the valuable service which they provide to our local community. The Corona Virus Pandemic created many challenges, however staff faced all challenges and adapted to the circumstances with their main focus being the education and well being of all children who attend Little Rascals. To this end we were delighted to be able to offer weekly sessions of Mindfulness, Yoga and Well Being to our pre school children. These sessions were funded by the Engage II Programme Funding provided by the Department of Education.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial review for the 12 month period from 1st July 2021 to 30th June 2022.

Total income generated in the period to 30th June 2022 was £69,066, of which £22,568 was restricted funds and £46,498 was unrestricted funds.

Total expenditure in the period to 30th June 2022 was £65,029 of which £15,219 was restricted funds and £49,810 was unrestricted funds.

The bank and cash balance at 30th June 2022 was £30,753.

The playgroup continues to seek other funding sources to help us to continue to be sustainable.

RESERVES POLICY

In line with recommended practice from The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland the playgroup has a reserves policy to ensure the stability of the playgroup, employment and the day to day operational overheads. The target reserves level was set at £51,500 sufficient to cover approximately 6 months running costs and redundancy for staff of £20,500

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

The charity trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. The examiner having satisfied himself that the charity is eligible for independent examination has responsibility to:

- * examine the accounts under Section 65 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008,
- * follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9) (b) of the Charities Act and
- * state whether particular matters have come to his attention

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS STATEMENT

The independent examiner (Paul McKillop of EM Accountants) has completed his examination of the accounts and has no concerns on the matters on which he is required to report and in connection with following the directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, he has found no matters that require drawing to the charity's attention. (Report dated 27 April 2023)

This report was approved by the trustees on 27th April 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Dale Bunting-Jones
Trustee