

A.B.B.E.Y. SURE START
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

The Trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, have pleasure in presenting their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act 2006 purposes. The Trustees confirm that the financial statements comply with the requirements of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice which applies to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).

Reference & Administrative Details

Reference and administrative details are shown in the schedule of members and professional advisers on page 1 of the financial statements.

Directors and Trustees

The directors of the charitable company are its trustees for the purpose of charity law. The Directors and trustees who served the charity during the period were as follows:

Colette Gray
Councillor James Goodman
Joyce Rainey
Councillor William Webb

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Structure, Governance & Management

Governing Document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a Memorandum and Articles of Association, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006. Each member has agreed to contribute £1 in the event of a compulsory winding up. It is registered as a charity with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. It is a company incorporated under the Companies Act. The charity is managed under the control of the management committee. The day to day running of the charity is carried out by the chairperson, Cathy Todd.

Appointment of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance of the charity. Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting by the members present and the total number of Trustees shall not be less than 3.

Trustees shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting following his/her appointment. A retiring Trustee shall be eligible for re-election.

The Trustees shall have the power at any time and from time to time to appoint any person to be a Trustee, either to fill a casual vacancy or as an addition to the existing Trustees. Any Trustee so appointed shall hold office until the next following Annual General Meeting and shall then be eligible for election.

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Trustee Induction and training

New Trustees undergo an induction to brief them on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the Charities Commission guidance on public benefit, content of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the board of trustees and decision-making processes, policies and procedures, the business plan and recent financial performance of the charity. Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

Organisation

The Board of Trustees meet monthly, and delegates certain responsibilities to the Project Manager. The Project Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of the affairs of the charity and for implementing the policies and operational plans as agreed by the Board of Trustees. Between meetings of the Board of Trustees, the Project Manager reports to the Chairperson. The Project Manager is assisted by a full time Administrator.

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Related parties

None of the Trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the Charity. Any connection between a trustee or senior manager of the charity to related parties must be disclosed to the full Board of Trustees in the same way as any other contractual relationship with a third party. There were no such disclosures in the current year.

Risk Management

The Trustees have a risk management strategy which comprises:

- An annual review of the risks the charity may face.
- The establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risk identified and
- The implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise

This work has identified that financial sustainability is a major financial risk for the charity. A key element in the management of financial risk is via the reserves policy. Attention has also been focused on non-financial risks arising from fire, health and safety of employees, volunteers and scheme users. In providing access and opportunities to people and children, the Charity recognises that there are potential risks to children and vulnerable adults. A key element in the management of non-financial risk is the establishment and implementation of a robust chart of policies and procedures including Access NI Disclosure Check, Child Protection Policy and the renewal and training of staff in this area.

The Trustees are satisfied that the necessary policies and procedures are in place to safeguard participants, and ensure that the benefits provided outweigh any potential harm.

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Objectives and Activities

The charity's objectives are to enhance the development and education of children below the statutory school age and to advance education, relieve poverty, sickness and distress among those in the necessitous circumstances in Newtownabbey and its environs and to provide recreational and leisure facilities in the interests of social welfare for those inhabitants of the area of benefit without distinction of age, sex, special need, race or political, religious or other opinions, who are in necessitous circumstances.

Future and principal funding sources

Sure Start is solely government funded and funding is allocated by the Department of Education. Projects are jointly managed by the Department of Education and the Childcare Partnerships (HSCB) who oversee allocations and monitor expenditure.

Charitable Purposes

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- To promote the benefit of the parents and children of Newtownabbey without distinction of race or political, religious or other opinions by associating together with the said parents/children and local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education, improve health and well-being and to provide facilities in the interests of social and emotional welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said parents/children.
- To relieve the suffering and distress of parents/children who by reason of health, social or economic circumstances, have need of such facilities.
- To help parents/children in the area to reach their full potential thereby offering something back to their community.

Public Benefit Statement

A.B.B.E.Y Sure Start is a government funded initiative, targeting children under 4 years old. It is aimed at giving everyone a good start in life and is about a long-term investment. Research has indicated that where children have access to early intervention and play opportunities it will help their development through school and adult life. The overall aim of the organisation is to improve the well being and life opportunities of young children under four, through better health, childcare and educational opportunities so that children can flourish when they enter school. The project operates within the defined boundaries of Abbey, Cloughfern, Coole, Dunanney, Monkstown, Whitehouse and Valley electoral wards.

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Achievements and Performance

A.B.B.E.Y. Sure Start's new main office is located at 440 Shore Road and the Project continues to deliver programmes and services from 6 other outreach sites located at Merville Garden Village, the Dunanney Centre, Rathcoole Primary School, St. James' Primary School, Monkstown Village Centre and Abbeytown Square. All programmes and services are designed to meet local need and improve outcomes for children and families. Outcomes are related to health, social well-being and education and also to have an impact on strengthening communities. We are on target to deliver most of the programmes detailed in the business plan. The fact that we had to relocate at the end of March 2017 had an impact on service delivery as at that point we only had use of the site in Merville to deliver both the DP2YO and core services which had previously been delivered in the Community Education Centre. This site became dual purpose until the end of June and it wasn't physically possible to fit all planned programmes in. Negotiation for 2 rooms in Rathcoole Primary School was successful and we have the use of 2 rooms there to facilitate programmes, however, we are working towards carrying out some renovations and have applied for a licence with the Education Authority. We have provided a range of different programmes for Dads and have exceeded targets with the percentage of Dads accessing services increasing significantly.

Any targets that were not met were due to justifiable factors such as genuine reasons for not attending programmes due to sickness, appointments etc. Premises and staffing issues resulted in slight changes to programme delivery but an alternative would have been offered, e.g., in the absence of a Health Development Officer an external facilitator provided Monkeynastix to contribute to achieving physical activity target. Uptake of services has been positive with increased numbers for children, mums and dads. Uptake of services by children has increased by 20.05% since 16/17 stats, mums by 5.14% and dads by 7.11%.

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One of our areas of development at present is to strengthen partnership working in the early years sector and set up an Early Years Forum. Initial meetings have taken place to map early services, identify gaps and devise an action plan to contribute to developing an more cohesive early years support structure. It would appear that some Parent and Toddler groups are struggling to attract new volunteers who would have the skills and capacity to develop provision. Our aim would be to strengthen partnerships that will support this development. We are considering new approaches to partnership working with the local libraries to promote their services and actively support parents to engage to foster a love of books and reading. Some of our parents only have supervised contact with their children and we have been working closely with social services in the provision of safe and stimulating environments for contact visits and a Family Support Worker will be present to role model play and actively support and encourage parents to have meaningful and productive interactions. A partnership has been developed with Barnardos improving outcomes and aspirations group and introductory meetings have taken place with a number of Early Years providers resulting in an early Years forum being established. Currently they are reviewing transitions process and linking with ABBEY Sure Start regarding our message of the month to establish and reinforce key messages across all early years settings. We have implemented some new initiatives to encourage parents to join local libraries and avail of all services and programmes offered by the libraries. We have co-facilitated some events in partnership with the libraries to raise awareness and allow parents and children to experience the many benefits associated with fostering a love and enjoyment in books and story time.

This has all been made possible due to very dedicated and committed staff team and with the support of A.B.B.E.Y. Sure Start Management Committee.

We have also used external facilitators to address gaps in service provision, eg to set up a breast feeding group in the absence of a health visitor.

We continue to link in with social services facilitating contact sessions with looked after children to support parental engagement and develop their skills and knowledge of how to promote children's development.

Plans for the Future

This is a small synopsis of the activity we have provided from April 2022 to March 2023, and, we look forward to progressing and developing relationships with the children and families in the area to ensure they can easily access our services.

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Financial Review

The charity achieved a net income deficit of £1,427 from a total income of £923,263.

(For 2022: Net income deficit was £5,871 from a total income of £893,849). The principal funding sources were grants from the Health & Social Care Board (Department of Education). The support of our funders continues to be essential to maintaining our programme of activities.

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ABBEY Sure Start was given formal notice to vacate the premises in the Community Education Centre, which resulted in the Project incurring considerable additional costs to relocate, refurbish and set up in new premises. The Project also had some major IT issues with the website needing to be closed down and a new web designer was commissioned to create a new website. Approval was sought from the Board to redeploy underspends from salaries to meet these costs.

The underspends in salaries were due to vacancies for the Health Visitor, Family Support Workers and long term sickness absence.

Reserves Policy

In line with the requirement from our key funder, the organisation is unable to allocate any unused funding to reserves. All unspent monies must be returned to the funder. The funder has also assumed the responsibility for meeting any dissolution costs should the organisation cease to operate.

Auditors

A resolution to re-appoint the auditors, O'Hara Shearer, Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

Small company exemption

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

The charity trustees (who are also the directors of A.B.B.E.Y Sure Start for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. The Trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2022. The Trustees confirm that they comply with the requirements of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice which applies to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1st January 2015). In addition, these financial statements comply with The Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

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Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the surplus or deficit of the company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008;
- comply with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

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The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

By order of the Trustees:

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COLETTE GRAY
DIRECTOR

Date: 14th September 2023