

# Charlton Toy Library

## AGM report

1<sup>st</sup> April 2020  
to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021



Registered Charity Number: 285099  
Charlton House, Horn Fair Road, Charlton SE7 8RE  
Telephone: 020 8319 0055 • Website: [www.charltontoylibrary.co.uk](http://www.charltontoylibrary.co.uk)  
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## WHO WE ARE

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Charlton Toy Library is a registered charity offering an inter-linked support service for the under-fives community in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. We operate a toy, book and safety equipment loan scheme and a stay and play service in our main base along with a much-needed outreach service to support disadvantaged families and children in desperate need.

Charlton Toy Library is a registered charity, governed by a constitution adopted 10th February 1982. It is run by members of a voluntary Management Committee (who are also the charity trustees), staff (a Toy Library Co-ordinator and an Outreach Worker) and volunteers, all helping to run play & borrowing sessions and giving help, support and advice to families.

All the money received from membership, loan fees and fundraising events is spent on toys and Toy Library running costs. We have an Equal Opportunities policy and aim to provide a good selection of multi-cultural and non-sexist toys and books along with impartial advice and support.

“Your are doing an amazing job for kids' present AND future lives, mums and families and the environment! Keep up the amazing work.”

“The Christmas treasure hunt was such a lovely event. My daughter really enjoyed it! Thank you again for organising!!”

“We love the safe haven and all the support from everyone here”.

“The music session was so wonderful – thank you so much, and especially to Susan. She is just the best! 😊😊”

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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### **AIMS:**

To promote the principle that play does matter for the developing child.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To make play available and lend appropriate toys to extend the opportunity for shared play into the home.
- To provide play areas where children and adults can use a wide range of toys and creative activities.
- To offer an opportunity to socialise and exchange experiences.
- To offer a befriending and supportive service to parents and carers.

We aim to improve the current quality of life and future life chances of local children by providing a much-needed child-centred support service to families in our main premises at Charlton House and through our outreach service HomeStart and other child-centred groups as well as other hard-to-reach families referred by Health Visitors and other health professionals. We also offer a low-cost toy/book/games and child safety equipment loan scheme.

Many of the children we support through our Outreach Service live in families experiencing poverty and disadvantage, some have suffered domestic violence and many feel isolated. This has a huge negative impact on the children's well-being and development. Our intervention at an early formative stage in their development aims to break the cycle of deprivation by improving their literacy, numeracy, creative & social skills, thus improving their school careers and their future life chances and contributing to stronger, more cohesive communities.

## CHAIR'S REPORT BY JO CURTIS

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It has been a difficult year, with much uncertainty, not least for the families we support through our work.

Throughout this time, I have been humbled by the incredible community spirit and support shown to us. From making donations, to giving Christmas gifts and donating clothing and equipment, you have been amazing.

We started the year feeling concerned for our future. With a large proportion of our operating costs covered by our member fees and borrowing costs, the need to close put extreme pressure on our finances. Thanks to funding received from Greenwich Charitable Trust and the wider community, we have been able to make it through the difficult times and provide additional support to households under pressure.

Unfortunately, Covid restrictions have meant we have not been able to run our regular stay and play sessions, although we have been able to offer borrowing services periodically, as well as outdoor events and online singing sessions.

Whilst our stay and play services have been closed I'm proud to say our outreach support has continued. During all three lockdowns our outreach worker, Sharon provided phone support and continued to deliver essential equipment, toys and vouchers for food. Our coordinator, Vicky, provided additional support to our outreach service to help with the increased demand.

A big thank you to both Sharon and Vicky whose dedication and resilience in this difficult year has made the world of difference.

Unfortunately, some of our volunteers have not been needed this year due to our sessions being closed and others have been unable to help due to shielding. A big thank you to Ann for your craft videos, Sharon for your support wrapping gifts and with our borrowing service, as well as Susan for your wonderful online singing sessions.

## CHAIR'S REPORT BY JO CURTIS

Charlton Toy Library does not receive any public funding and relies on our membership and loan charges, as well as the fundraising endeavours of a small team of volunteers. We are always looking for additional help to raise funds and support our work. If you would like to get involved, please do get in touch.

As we look ahead, we our 40th birthday is approaching. We hope to be able to celebrate this milestone with our members and supporters. It is too soon to say when we will be able to reopen fully and establish our stay and play sessions. Rest assured we will be back fully as soon as we are able.

This is my last year as Chair of the Toy Library and I would like to end by thanking my fellow committee members Janine, Patricia and Dani and Daniela for all their support. It's been a pleasure to work alongside you all, particularly in this difficult year.

### **Membership Statistics** 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

Families using our main services & outreach service combined: 160 families  
Total number of children helped: 260 children and 174 adults

Outreach families supported (free of charge): 81 families  
Outreach children helped: 151 children

Families supported free of charge: 81 families (51%)  
Families paying concessionary rate: 7 families

Families from BAME backgrounds: 61 families (38%)  
New families: 62 families (39%)  
Lone parents families: 36 families  
Grandparent members: 11  
Childminders: 6

Families in the SE7 area: 48 families  
Families in the SE18 area: 50 families





We are proud to report that at no point during the Covid-19 pandemic was our Outreach project interrupted. It continued regardless. Our Outreach Worker, Sharon, simply altered the way she worked to keep herself and the families safe. Most of the interaction with families switched to over the phone. Sharon assessed what they needed and then delivered, at a safe distance, the toys, books, games and clothing and prams, and also educational materials for children not able to attend school. One family were made homeless and when re-housed, had no fridge, washing machine or cooker. We reached out to our local community who responded with a brand new cooker and a washing machine. We are immensely grateful and proud of the community that we live in as they always provide what these desperate families need.

Many families had no access to internet connections for their children to access sessions provided by schools online. Fortunately, we were nominated by BBC Children in Need to distribute free tablets from The Good Things Foundation. We organised for ten children were given free tablet devices, with 6 months free unlimited internet access via Vodaphone.

Sharon continued to work alongside the many organisations that she regularly works with such as HomeStart, Family Engagement Support Workers from Children's Centres, Health Visitors, Social Workers, the Pre-birth Assessment Team, the Best Beginnings Midwife Team and MammaKind, to name a few. Together we were better placed to help out families that were struggling before the pandemic began. The pandemic made their lives even more difficult. When Sharon heard of one mother who was begging for tins of spaghetti to be able to feed her daughter the trustees sprang into action. They opened a campaign to raise funds from the general public and made applications for grants. In all last year, we were able to supply over £8,000 of food vouchers to families who could not afford to buy sufficient food.

A few stats: During the year Sharon supplied 38 children with 76 bags of clothing. She delivered cots, beds, prams, pushchairs, high chairs, baby equipment and much more. Sharon made over 205 phone calls and carried out 102 Covid-safe 10-minute doorstep visits to deliver 726 items of play equipment and 223 items of child safety equipment. The toy library sourced, and Sharon delivered, Christmas presents to 55 children and a £50 Christmas food voucher to 40 families, reaching 81 children.

All in all, the toy library Management Committee are extremely proud of everything that Sharon and the Outreach Service has achieved in such a tough year for all concerned.

## TOY LIBRARY CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT BY VICKY THOMAS

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2020-2021 has been a rather strange and difficult year for everyone. In March 2020 the whole country went into the first lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic and we had to close our doors. In July we were allowed to open again, but we could not offer our very popular stay-and-play sessions due to social distancing restrictions. After a thorough Risk Assessment we opened for a 'Click and Collect' toy borrowing service. We created an online catalogue with our most popular toys, and our members could reserve them by email and collect them on an agreed date. We also extended all memberships for the amount of time we were closed due to lockdown. We remained open throughout the summer school holidays, enabling our members to borrow toys and books. At the end of October the country went into the second lockdown and we were forced to close again until early December when we opened for toy borrowing again until Christmas. After the Christmas holidays the country went into another lockdown until April 2021.

During the time we were open we organised two very successful treasure hunts in Charlton park, ensuring social distancing and people staying in their family bubble. We had a Halloween pumpkin hunt on 31<sup>st</sup> October and a Christmas treasure hunt on 12<sup>th</sup> December with Father Christmas giving out presents to the children. Over 100 children attended each event and it really brought the community together during difficult times. In January 2021 we started offering our popular singing session with Susan on zoom every Friday morning. Throughout the pandemic, we posted arts & crafts ideas on our Facebook page for families to try at home.

During the times we were closed, I supported our Outreach worker Sharon by procuring toys, clothes and safety equipment for our vulnerable families via advertising in local groups and I am truly humbled by the generosity of our community. I helped to find and apply for funding, which enabled us to get through the period we did not have any other means of income coming in. I have also attended a lot of online training, which will be very useful for my work at the Toy Library in the coming years.

I would like to say a massive thank you to our wonderful volunteers Sharon, Susan, Vanessa and Ann, as well as our Trustees who stayed with us throughout the pandemic and offered their free time.

I have really missed seeing our families and hope we can open our stay-and-play sessions again soon.

Thank you, Vicky



At the start of the year the Trustees were looking at a very stark situation. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that we had had to close the services at our main base and could not run our usual fundraising events. We had no income potential and yet the need for our normal and our outreach services increased vastly. BBC Children in Need continued to fund our outreach services and in June we were fortunately able to apply for emergency funding to cover core running costs and food vouchers for struggling families. We are incredibly grateful to the City Bridge Trust and to the Greenwich Charitable Trust for their support for our work across the borough. We were also eligible to apply for the Government's Coronavirus Business Grants and had funding from the Masonic Charitable Trust, Lloyds Bank Foundation and the Emmanuel Church. Combined together, this funding meant that we did not have to close and we were able to continue supporting local families in need.

We finished the year with a profit of £24,007. This means that we can go into the financial year 2021-2022 with confidence in covering our running costs should there be further restrictions that limit our ability to raise funds. Just over £2,480 of this profit was restricted funding from BBC Children in Need and the Masonic Trust, to be spent in the next following financial year.

**Income:** Over and above the grants mentioned above, our self-generated unrestricted funds this year totalled an all-time low of £676. This was due to the lockdown closures and to our decision to offer our click-and-collect toy borrowing services free of charge to help out all struggling families at this difficult time, not just those on the outreach service for whom it is always free of charge. We also received an amazing £8,123 in donations. Thank you everybody.

**Expenditure:** The major part of CTL expenditure was, as always, spent on our two part-time employees, our greatest asset. BBC Children in Need funded the Outreach Worker post for the eighth year running and our Toy Library Co-ordinator was funded the City Bridge Trust, the Greenwich Charitable Trust and the Masonic Charitable Trust.



Our thanks go to Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust for their continued help-in-kind through the peppercorn rent of our premises and to the Atlas Business Group who continue to provide our internet services for free, as do Fire Action Ltd.

A huge thank you also goes to the local community and organisations for their donations of books and play equipment, without which we would struggle to keep up our stocks. Another huge 'thank you' goes to ALL our helpers and volunteers whose contributions have helped to improve the lives of so many children and their families across the borough. CTL would not be able to achieve as much as it does without them!

These accounts have been successfully examined and accepted by our Independent Examiner, Caroline Sharp (ACA, DChA)  
Janine



### CHARLTON TOY LIBRARY INCOME RESERVES POLICY

Unrestricted funds are needed:

- 1) to provide funds which can be designated to specific projects to enable these projects to be undertaken at short notice and
- 2) to cover administration, fund-raising and support costs without which the charity could not function.

The trustees consider it prudent that unrestricted reserves should be sufficient:

- a) to avoid the necessity of releasing fixed assets held for the charity's use;
- b) to cover 6 month's administration, fund-raising and support costs (currently approximately £13,000)
- c) to provide a pool equal to 10% of the average charitable expenditure over the preceding 2 years from which funds can be designated to specific projects (currently approximately £2,700).

# INCOME-EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2020-2021

CHARLTON TOY LIBRARY Income & Expenditure Account 2020-2021				
				Previous year
<b>INCOME</b>	Restricted	Unrestricted		
BBC Children in Need	15,464.15	BBC Children in Need		14,288.85
Masonic Charitable Trust	2,200.00	Masonic Charitable Tr		2,200.00
City Bridge Trust	7,392.00			
Greenwich Charitable Trust	7,952.00			
Government Covid support grants		19431.00		
Fundraising		337.81		2,634.85
Membership fees		158.07		1,737.57
Toy loan fees		52.23		1,025.96
Safety equipment loan fees		4.92		116.13
Session sales		115.34		821.45
Special events/parties		0.00		205.73
Donations		8,123.21		5361.40
Bank interest		7.60		14.41
Gift Aid		1,467.50		935
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33,008.15</b>	<b>29,697.68</b>	<b>62,705.83</b>	<b>29,341.35</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	Restricted	Unrestricted	<b>Total</b>	Previous year
Advertising/promotional	169.88	2.50	172.38	219.45
Child Safety Equipment	240.85		240.85	902.89
Equipment	813.55		813.55	18.99
Fundraising expenses				208.44
General running costs	1630.29	1458.63	3088.92	3812.95
Insurance	1214.03		1214.03	1206.06
Management costs		70.00	70.00	70.00
Staffing costs	21340.01	2218.02	23558.03	19985.40
Outreach welfare	5804.68	3179.82	8984.50	730
Toys books videos etc				322.17
Training				120.00
Travel	352.3		352.30	315.10
Volunteer expenses		33.00	33.00	0.00
Workshops & crafts	159.9	11.48	171.38	30.09
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31725.49</b>	<b>6,973.45</b>	<b>38,698.94</b>	<b>27,941.54</b>
<b>PROFIT/LOSS</b>	<b>1282.86</b>	<b>22,724.23</b>	<b>24,007.09</b>	<b>1399.81</b>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2021			
CURRENT ASSETS	Restricted	Unrestricted	Totals
Current Account	2,555.43	19,046.89	21,602.32
Business Reserve		19,675.05	19,675.05
Cash in hand		100.00	100.00
7 unrepresented items	-261.02	-397.94	-658.96
	<b>2,294.41</b>	<b>38,424.00</b>	<b>40,718.41</b>
<b>REPRESENTED BY:</b>			
Balance b/fwd 2019-2020	1,011.75	15,699.77	16,711.52
Profit/loss for 2020-2021	1,282.66	22,724.23	24006.89
	<b>2,294.41</b>	<b>38,424.00</b>	<b>40,718.41</b>
<b>BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2020</b>			
CURRENT ASSETS	Restricted	Unrestricted	Totals
Current Account	1,183.11	6,029.90	7,213.01
Business Reserve		9,667.45	9,667.45
Cash in hand		100.00	100.00
5 unrepresented items	-171.36	-97.58	-268.94
	<b>1,011.75</b>	<b>15,699.77</b>	<b>16,711.52</b>
<b>REPRESENTED BY:</b>			
Balance b/fwd 2018-2019	365.77	14,945.94	15,311.71
Profit/loss for 2019-2020	1,011.75	388.06	1399.81
Reconciliation	-365.77	365.77	
	<b>1,011.75</b>	<b>15,699.77</b>	<b>16,711.52</b>



We have:

- Re-organised our services and found funding to continue our services during the most difficult period in the 39-year history of the toy library
- Introduced a 'Click and Collect' Toy borrowing service for the periods of time we were allowed to be open between lockdowns.
- Organised two outdoor treasure hunt events in Charlton Park for Halloween and Christmas.
- Ran 10 online singing sessions on zoom on Friday mornings.
- Applied for funding for core costs and emergency food vouchers for our Outreach Service. We gave out over £8,000 of food vouchers
- Supported 151 children through our Outreach Service, working across Charlton, Thamesmead, Woolwich, Eltham, Plumstead and Abbey Wood
- Provided 55 children with Christmas presents and 40 families (reaching 81 children) with Christmas food vouchers through our Outreach Programme
- Offered food and essentials vouchers to 32 Outreach families affected by Covid-19 pandemic to a value of over £8,000
- Provided 76 bags of essential clothing for 38 children.
- Continued our Child Safety Equipment Loan Scheme

## ACHIEVEMENTS (continued) 2020-2021

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- Established and maintained strong links with organisations across the borough including Home Start, the Midwife Team, Social workers, Family Engagement Support workers, Greenwich Children's Disability Team, Health Visitors, Best Beginnings, MammaKind and many more.
- Promoted awareness and membership of our service among target groups, including black and minority ethnic and low-income families, asylum seekers and families suffering domestic abuse
- Held regular management committee meetings via Zoom
- Publicised the Toy Library to local groups and around the borough. Maintained our Facebook and website
- Worked with and supported 8 volunteers throughout the year.
- To help families during the pandemic we opened our services at Charlton House for two toy borrowing sessions per week in the school summer holidays
- Posted art & craft ideas and videos online throughout lockdown
- Extended memberships for free for the periods that we were not able to open due to national lockdowns, offering free loans of toys and books too
- Undertook a 2020 Members Survey to see what services, activities, opening days are popular with our members





Our plans for 2021-2022 are subject to change due to the pandemic restrictions, but we still aim to:

- Resume our normal stay and play services and borrowing services as soon it is safe to do so and restrictions allow
- Review our offering and update we can best support our community throughout the pandemic
- Widen the support we offer to our Outreach families
- Reach more families in the Borough that would benefit from our Outreach services
- Re-establish support for women and children in Women's Refuges
- Maintain and improve links with relevant organisations across the borough
- Continue to increase awareness and use of our services particularly amongst black and minority ethnic and disadvantaged families
- Continue to maintain our Facebook and Twitter pages and our presence on relevant apps and website listings
- Finish designing and launch a new website
- Increase the number of trustees on our Management Committee
- Hold regular committee meetings and AGM (online and/or in person)
- Continue to encourage good management committee representation
- Review regularly all Toy Library policies and procedures

### **The Management Committee**

Jo Curtis, Chair

Janine Khoshnevisan, Treasurer

Patricia Santome, Committee Member

Daniela Kaltenbach, Committee Member

Daniela De Nicolo, Committee Member (29<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020)

Trustees and Officers are elected and appointed at the AGM by nomination method, or co-opted by the Management Committee at a monthly meeting.

### **Staff**

Sharon Jay, Outreach Worker

Vicky Thomas, Toy Library Co-ordinator

### **Volunteers & Fundraisers**

Sharon Mason, Susan Wainwright, Ann Frances Barlow, Vanessa Browne, Janine Khoshnevisan, Jo Curtis, Patricia Santome-Courtney, Daniela Kaltenbach, Daniela De Nicolo, Ben Khoshnevisan, David Hall, Ben Jay

**And to everyone else who has helped on a more informal basis... thank you!**

As always there are a huge number of people and organisations to thank for their support.

Thank you to all our funders and supporters:

BBC Children in Need  
The Masonic Charitable Trust  
City Bridge Trust  
Greenwich Charitable Trust  
Lloyds Bank Foundation  
The Royal Borough of Greenwich  
Home-Start Greenwich  
Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust  
Charlton House  
Fire Action Ltd  
Headstart IT  
Councillor Gary Parker  
Atlas Business Group  
Councillor Gary Dillon  
Councillor Linda Perks  
Greenwich Midwifery Team  
Greenwich Social Workers  
St Luke's and St Thomas'  
Emmanuel Church  
Mammakind  
The Good Things Foundation

Thanks also to our Independent Examiner, Ms Caroline Sharp (FCA, DChA)

Finally, our thanks (and apologies!) to anyone else who has helped us this year and who we may have momentarily forgotten to mention!





## Signature

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I declare, in my capacity as Chair of the Management Committee, that:

- the Management Committee has approved the report above; and
- have authorised me to sign it on their behalf.

Signature

Full name

Position

Date