

Charlton Toy Library

AGM report

1st April 2021
to 31st March 2022



Registered Charity Number: 285099
Charlton House, Horn Fair Road, Charlton SE7 8RE
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WHO WE ARE

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, an Outreach Worker and an Outreach and Toy Library Assistant) 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.

“Thank you for being here when I needed you. My daughter is now 18 years old and off to university!”

“I love this place SO much! Coming now with my third child, so it feels like a second home. A favourite place for all my girls. Thank you so much for everything. I was so pleased once you opened again after lockdown. Also, LOVE the singing sessions. Thank you!”

“I can’t thank the Toy Library for everything you have given my daughter, she has everything she needs! I pray for all of you daily.”

“The Toy Library has become part of our weekly routine and I hope it stays that way. We are grateful for all the help we receive and love all the amazing toys!”

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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 JOHN STEPHENS

I joined the Toy Library in October 2021 as Chair of Trustees. At that time face-to-face activities were just about getting going again after the COVID restrictions of the previous two years. It was very encouraging at that time to see stay-and-play sessions starting up and to know that the vulnerable families we support through our outreach service were again able to benefit from in-person visits at their homes.

The Toy Library community suffered a great loss earlier this year with the passing of Ben Jay from cancer at the age of seventeen. Ben is the son of Sharon Jay, who runs our outreach programme, and is a former Toy Library volunteer. The thoughts of everyone at Charlton Toy Library are with Sharon and Garry and their family, and with Ben's many friends. We will soon be dedicating a bench in The Peace Garden at Charlton House in the memory of Ben.

Like most small charities we operate with very little financial headroom and the past year has presented many challenges to our budget. We are pleased that BBC Children in Need have continued to support us over the last year, and will continue to do so for the time being. We trustees have identified the development of new sources of funding as our key activity over the coming months. However, one piece of financial news really cheered us earlier this year. As well as being the new political editor at the BBC, Chris Mason is a local resident and Toy Library supporter. Chris took part in BBC Celebrity Mastermind in February and chose us for his nominated charity to receive his £3000 prize! Thank you Chris!!!

As always we are very grateful to our staff team over the last year. Sharon, Vanessa and Vicky have had to deal with different and difficult challenges over the last 12 months and they have all gone the extra mile to ensure that we remain a sustainable organisation and that Toy Library beneficiaries get maximum impact. I would like to thank Sharon, Vanessa and Vicky on behalf of the trustees for all their hard work and resilience over the last twelve months.

I would also like to thank our group of volunteers who perform a vital role and without whom we would find it very difficult to operate. Jack Wheeler gives us two whole days a week of his time across a range of tasks, Susan Wainwright runs our ever-popular Friday music sessions, Tess Wainwright helps in many ways not least running storytelling sessions. Other volunteers include Ann Barlow, Bhubinder Kaler and not least Vicky's husband David Hall - our regular Father Christmas! We are most grateful to all of you for the contribution you make.

As we come to the end of our year we look forward to celebrating the Charlton Toy Library's Fortieth Birthday with a party on Sunday July 17th, 10.30-1.00pm at Charlton Assembly Rooms. Please come and help us celebrate this milestone and enjoy a morning of fun, food and more!

Finally I would like to thank the trustee group for all their hard during a year which has presented some difficult and unforeseen challenges. As well as myself, both Nahid Kausar and Liz Grace have also joined the group during the last 12 months. We welcome them and the specialist expertise they bring. I feel confident and optimistic that they and our longer serving trustees Dani Kaltenbach, Janine Khoshnevisan, and Patricia Santome form an able and committed trustee group that can build a bright future for Charlton Toy Library!

Membership Statistics 1st April 2021 - 31st March 2022

Families using our main services & outreach service combined: 220 families
Total number of children helped: 368 children and 238 adults

Outreach families supported (free of charge): 101 families
Outreach children helped: 203 children

Families supported free of charge: 148 families (55%)
Families paying concessionary rate: 13 families

Families from BAME backgrounds: 93 families (35%)
New families: 111 families (41%)
Lone parents families: 58 families
Grandparent members: 9
Childminders: 5

Families in the SE7 area: 64 families
Families in the SE18 area: 66 families



When Sharon was initially off, Vicky and I were able to provide a number of baby bundles to expectant mums during the summer. We provided equipment such as Moses baskets, sterilisers, bottles and buggies, as well as clothes bundles and nappies.

Those Home Start volunteers already supporting families continued to come to us for toy loans for their families and we had wonderful feedback about the positive impact this was having for one family in particular, where the child's development had really come along since this input started. The volunteer reported that this had also helped the parents understand their child's disability in a new way, which was also supporting his development.

During the past year we were able to find sufficient funds to help 23 families (with 56 children) with supermarket food vouchers.

In October 2021 I started to cover Sharon's families, reaching out to update them. Some engaged immediately but others took a little longer. My work has mainly been practical support, while building relationships with the families that Sharon had been supporting on an ongoing basis.

We had a referral through Mums Aid, a new link made this year. I have tried to update as many professionals who worked closely with Sharon as I can. I have not yet been able to re-establish attending the groups in children's centres, but have made links to two new organisations. One of these is St John's Church which is the location for one of Greenwich's foodbanks and they are signposting families to us now. We have also made a link to Grace, a fantastic resource for those fleeing Domestic Abuse and for refugee families. Those referred are able to shop within the charity shop for free, choosing what they need for their families. One of their volunteers is local to the Toy Library and has offered to help take donations when we have too many.

We have provided beds for two families, reaching out to the community for one of these for an older child. Another family requested a toddler size table and chair which the community also supported us with. We are very grateful for the donations that we have been given.

OUTREACH PROJECT REPORT written by Vanessa Covington (cont.)

Here are a few more examples of the outreach work that we do:

We have given out 67 bundles of clothes, 9 baby bags of toys for newborns, 30 packs of nappies and wipes, toiletries for babies and Mums that had been donated to us by MamaKind. A total of 34 toys were given to families to keep as well as 67 items of safety equipment.

We have provided two double buggies, enabling two single mums to get out and about with their two small children under the age of three, thus reducing their isolation.

Some families are borrowing toys on a very regular basis, and others are borrowing every few months. From October to March a total of 30 families have borrowed 103 toys, 20 books, and 33 items of safety equipment. We have one family that is regularly borrowing lots of books as the children adore stories, often requesting mum read them over and over.

We were able to provide practical support and advice to a family while they were isolating, including a food voucher for online shopping and toys for the children.

We had a slight increase in the number of children that we supported this Christmas, providing toys for 74 children from 31 families. Each family also received a £50 food voucher, a book and a toy.

We received a request from a family who could not afford a Christmas tree. After putting a request on Facebook, we were contacted by half a dozen people offering trees. We were able to get the family a tree and have an extra one in storage should another family need one next year.

I have provided numerous telephone support calls to a number of families who have needed emotional support between visits. Some families have been in crisis due to loss or isolation. Three families have finally received permanent accommodation after a long wait and numerous moves. One of these families was directly supported in this by Sharon and this child now has her own room for the first time in her life. This is having an immense impact on her development and emotional well-being, giving her the space to play and grow. We were gifted a beautiful dolls house which we were able to give to another of our families.

Thank you,
Vanessa

TOY LIBRARY CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT by Vicky Thomas

In April 2021 the country was still under the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to support the community, we offered free membership to 47 families until the end of the summer, where families could borrow up to 5 toys at a time free of charge. We wanted to continue offering our very popular singing session every Friday morning (during term time), so we decided to hold it outdoors on the front lawn in Charlton park, which proved extremely successful with more than 20 families attending each time. Due to distance restrictions we were not able to open our stay-and-play sessions until September 2021, so we rearranged the play area and displayed our borrowing toys, allowing one family at a time to come in and choose 5 toys for 2 weeks.

In September 2021 we were thrilled to opened our stay-and-play sessions again on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and the first Saturday of each month. Due to the small space, and in order to keep everyone safe, we introduced one-hour slots (booked online in advance on Eventbrite), for up to 8 children and their accompanying adult. The singing session every Friday morning was moved indoors when the weather got colder and wet and we introduced a second session on the same day, in order to allow more families to join in. In February 2022 the number of children allowed indoors was increased to 10 at each session and in March 2022, when all Covid restrictions were lifted, our members didn't have to pre-book in order to attend our sessions.

In 2021 we organised 2 very successful Nearly New Sale events at the Toy Library (25th September and 20th November), and we continued to sell items during our sessions and via Facebook. All of the many donations of good quality toys, books and children's equipment and clothes we receive are invaluable for restocking and helping us raise vital funds.

At the end of May 2021, we took part in a community event organised by CABAHS in Charlton Park and we offered free crafts for children. We also took part in the Together22 in Charlton Park this year. It was a great community event and we met lots of new people.

Our very popular Christmas Treasure Hunt took place on 18th December 2021. Over 100 children took part in the hunt and met Father Christmas, who gave them a little present. A big thank you to Daryl from the Swan Pub in West Malling for providing delicious cakes!

TOY LIBRARY CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT by Vicky Thomas (cont.)

During that period, I supported our Outreach workers Sharon and Vanessa 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 also helped delivering toys and safety equipment to our Outreach families within the Royal Borough of Greenwich whilst Sharon was away.

I would like to say a massive thank you to our wonderful volunteers Susan, Jack, Tess, Bhupinder and Ann, as well as our Trustees who always offer their help and support. I am really looking forward to welcoming our members in the next few months!

Thank you,
Vicky



TREASURER'S REPORT BY JANINE KHOSHNEVISAN

We finished the financial year 2021-2022 with a very slight loss of £886. This is simply because we had left over restricted funding from the previous year that had to be spent in this financial year. BBC Children in Need continued to fund most of the costs of our outreach service and we would like to thank them again. We were also eligible to apply for Business Support Grants from the Government and this helped us survive lockdowns and also get the full range of our services operational again in September. We are pleased to report that the toy library is full of children and is thriving again.

We were very grateful to receive several donations this year: Chris Mason (BBC Political Editor - nominated us for his appearance fee from Celebrity Mastermind), The British Legion Jesmond Branch Male Voice Choir, Deansfield Primary School, Thorntree Primary School and the Emmanuel Church, to name a few. We would also like to thank all those who gave funds to our campaign to give disadvantaged families food and presents over the Christmas period. And we are now able to plan fundraising events again. Our outdoor treasure hunts and our “pre-loved” sales have been very successful.

Expenditure has seen increases in two areas this year. Staffing costs have increased due to taking on a new part-time employee, Vanessa, to support both Vicky and Sharon with their expanding workloads. Vanessa has also been key in the continuation of the outreach service while Sharon was taking care of her son, Ben. We now have an incredible team of three part-time employees. The other spending increase was due to several computer problems during the year which pushed up running costs.

Going forward we must secure further outside funding. Currently we are applying for funding so that we can make more general family memberships free, not just for outreach families as is currently the case. We also need to secure more outside funding for salaries and core costs. The management committee is working hard on this.

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 £20,000)
- 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 £3,400).

INCOME-EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2021-2022

CHARLTON TOY LIBRARY Income & Expenditure Account 2021-2022				
				Previous year
INCOME	Restricted	Unrestricted		
BBC Children in Need	16,597.00		BBC Children in Need	15,464.15
			Masonic Charitable Tr	2,200.00
			City Bridge Trust	7,392.00
			Greenwich Ch Trust	7,952.00
Government Covid support grants		10667.00		19,431.00
Fundraising		1,257.48		337.81
Membership fees		1,436.78		158.07
Toy loan fees		525.16		52.23
Safety equipment loan fees		9.83		4.92
Session sales		334.36		115.34
Special events/parties		0.00		0.00
Donations		7,158.92		8123.21
Bank interest		3.47		7.6
Gift Aid		295.50		1467.5
TOTAL	16,597.00	21,688.50	38,285.50	62,705.83
EXPENDITURE	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Previous year
Advertising/promotional	5.38	28.89	34.27	172.38
Child Safety Equipment	834.22		834.22	240.85
Equipment		54.99	54.99	813.55
Fundraising expenses		120.00	120.00	
General running costs	1265.54	4387.72	5653.26	3088.92
Insurance		1299.57	1299.57	1214.03
Management costs		61.74	61.74	70.00
Staffing costs	15465.78	13187.42	28653.20	23558.03
Outreach welfare	604.8	1728	2332.80	8,985
Toys books videos etc	24.54		24.54	0.00
Training				0.00
Travel	103.1		103.10	352.30
Volunteer expenses			0.00	33.00
Workshops & crafts			0.00	171.38
TOTAL	18303.36	20,868.33	39,171.69	38,698.94
PROFIT/LOSS	-1706.36	820.17	-886.19	1399.81
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2022				
CURRENT ASSETS	Restricted	Unrestricted	Totals	
Current Account	874.49	9,836.45	10,710.94	
Business Reserve		29,678.52	29,678.52	
Cash in hand		100.00	100.00	
6 unrepresented items	-286.44	-370.80	-657.24	
	588.05	39,244.17	39,832.22	
REPRESENTED BY:				
Balance b/fwd 2020-2021	2,294.41	38,424.00	40,718.41	
Profit/loss for 2021-2022	-1,706.36	820.17	-886.19	
	588.05	39,244.17	39,832.22	
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	
	2,294.41	38,424.00	40,718.41	
REPRESENTED BY:				
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	24,006.89	
	2,294.41	38,424.00	40,718.41	



We have:

- Re-opened our full range of services and found funding to continue operating during the most difficult period in the 39-year history of the toy library
- Gave away 47 Free memberships in addition to the free Outreach ones
- Introduced an online booking system for the stay-and-play sessions to manage visitor numbers and keep everyone safe during the pandemic
- Organised an outdoor treasure hunt event in Charlton Park before Christmas
- Held two successful Nearly New Sales raising funds for our charity
- Ran outdoor singing sessions in Charlton Park on Friday mornings.
- Supported 203 children through our Outreach Service, working across Charlton, Thamesmead, Woolwich, Eltham, Plumstead and Abbey Wood
- Provided 74 children with Christmas presents and 31 families (reaching 74 children) with Christmas food vouchers through our Outreach Programme
- Offered 79 food and essentials vouchers to 23 Outreach families affected by Covid-19 pandemic to a value of over ££1,870
- Provided 73 bags of essential clothing for 66 children

- Continued our Child Safety Equipment Loan Scheme
- Established and/or 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, Mama2Mama 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 and CTL meetings in person
- Publicised the Toy Library to local groups and around the borough. Maintained our Facebook and website
- Worked with and supported 6 volunteers throughout the year.
- Opened our services at Charlton House for two toy borrowing sessions per week in the school summer holidays





Our plans for 2022-2023 are:

- Carry out a members survey to see what services, activities, opening days are popular with our members
- 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
- Offer support to Ukrainian refugee families who live in the borough
- 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

John Stephens, Chair

Janine Khoshnevisan, Treasurer

Patricia Santome, Committee Member

Daniela Kaltenbach, Committee Member

Nahid Kusar, Committee Member

Liz Grace, Committee Member (joined March 2022)

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

Vanessa Covington, CTL & Outreach Assistant

Volunteers & Fundraisers

Susan Wainwright, Jack Wheeler, Tess Wainwright, Ann Barlow, Jarmila Kubinova, Janine Khoshnevisan, Patricia Santome-Courtney, Daniela Kaltenbach, Nahid Kausar, Bhupinder Kaler, Vicky Pisarski, David Hall.

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
Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust
Charlton House
City Bridge Trust
Greenwich Charitable Trust
The Royal Borough of Greenwich
Home-Start Greenwich
Fire Action Ltd
Headstart IT
Atlas Business Group
Greenwich Midwifery Team
Greenwich Social Workers
The British Legion Jesmond Branch Male Voice Choir
St Luke's and St Thomas'
Emmanuel Church
Mammakind
Mama2Mama
The Swan Pub, West Malling
Deansfield Primary School, Eltham
Thorntree Primary School, Charlton
Chris Mason, Political Editor BBC News
Hat Trick Productions

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

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