

Trustees Annual Report - Year Ended 30 June 2014
Education Otherwise Association Limited
Company Limited by Guarantee

The trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 June 2014

Reference and Administrative Details

Registered Charity Name: Education Otherwise Association Limited

Company Registration Number: 01917107 Charity Registration Number: 1055120

Registered Office: 91 Lyndhurst Drive, Preston, PR2 1TB

[changed to 61 Roseacre, Blackpool, FY4 2PL following end of accounting period]

Trustees

The trustees who served the charity during the period were as follows:

Continuing in post after 30 June 2014

J Arnold (elected 16/11/2013)

L Ashe (elected 13/11/2010 & 16/11/2013)

S Deuchars (elected 13/11/2010 & 16/11/2013)

F Mukwamba-Sendall (elected 01/12/12 & 16/11/2013)

H Newton (first elected 26/03/2011 & 16/11/2013)

J Palmer (elected 16/11/2013)

A Rix (elected 13/11/2010 & 16/11/2013)

E Theunissen (elected 13/11/2010 & 16/11/2013)

K Thompson (elected 01/12/12 & 16/11/2013)

Retired during y/e 30 June 2014

B Cameron-Young (retired 01/12/2013)

B McDonagh (retired 16/11/2013)

C McDonagh (retired 21/07/2013)

C Stone (retired 16/11/2013)

A Theunissen (retired 16/11/2013)

M Wells (retired 16/11/2013)

Secretary: Anne Rix

Address of Principal: Education Otherwise, PO Box 1309, Blackpool, FY1 9HN *(from 7 April 2014)*

[PO Box 3761, Swindon, SN2 9GT (to 6 April 2014)]

Bankers

Unity Trust Bank
Nine Brindley place
Birmingham
B1 2HB

Triodos Bank
Deanery Road
Bristol
BS1 5AS

Solicitors

Everyman Legal
1G Network Point
Range Road
Windrush Park
Witney
Oxfordshire
OX29 OYN

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Documents

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 28 May 1985 and registered as a charity on 2 May 1996. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

Trustees are recruited from signed-up members (Guarantors) who have been involved as volunteers at a local or national level. Potential trustees are proposed to the AGM for membership of Council. Trustees are appointed for a term of three years (normally a maximum of two consecutive terms). Trustees can be co-opted between AGMs if numbers on the management committee or council fall below the required level but must either stand down or stand for election at the next AGM. A third of elected trustees are required to stand down by rotation at each AGM.

Exceptionally, because of changes made by Special Resolution at the AGM on 1st December 2012 (to reduce the number of trustees) all trustees stood down at the AGM on 16th November 2013.

Trustee Induction and Training

New trustees are provided with information about their role and responsibilities as Trustees and Company Directors via the Trustee forum and electronic documentation from Companies House and the Charity Commission

Risk Management

The trustees conduct an ongoing review of the major tasks in which the charity is involved and reviews the systems in place to mitigate any risks involved. Internal risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and external risks by secure investment.

Organisational Structure

The organisation consists of a management comprised of between 8 and 15 trustees, and a team of volunteers.

Membership

Membership is by annual subscription, and is open to persons and organisations who are involved or have an interest in home education. Family members are eligible to sign up as Guarantors of the Company, with voting rights, and are recorded in the Register of Members.

Objectives and Activities

Education Otherwise is a membership organisation for the public benefit, which provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school, and for those who wish to uphold the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their children.

Our principal aims are:

- To encourage learning outside the school system.
- To re-affirm that parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school.
- To establish the primary right of children to have full consideration given to their wishes and feelings about their education.
- To promote knowledge, understanding and acceptance of education otherwise than at school in the world at large.

These aims are met via our extensive network of volunteers and our informative public website and through internet support lists and the public helpline. Support and information is provided to members, home educators, the media, local and national government and other interested parties including voluntary agencies. We also signpost to other services. In addition, members receive a quarterly newsletter and have access to specialist contacts, the members' only forum and member home area of website, internet support, get-togethers and workshops. Local Home Education Groups organised by EO members may take advantage of reduced premiums for Public Liability Insurance through EO's Policy. In organising these activities, trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Achievements and Performance

Compliance

Accounts and reports were again prepared in good time and filed prior to the deadline of March 2014, ensuring that Education Otherwise remained in compliance with financial authorities. Charitable outreach services have been operating normally, although trustees and other volunteers still have heavy workloads, particularly with regard to administrative tasks.

Membership numbers

Education Otherwise started the year with a membership base of approximately 3885 families and ended the year with 3684 families. An average of 60 family members per month joined or renewed through the website. Trustees consider that the drop is likely to be due to the increase in other sources of information and support available to new home educators through social media. Trustees are endeavouring to ensure that some historical anomalies in the membership database are regularised.

As at the AGM in November 2013, there were 109 Signed Up Members (Guarantors) with voting rights.

Membership services

The trial weekend gatherings in February and November 2012, not having generated sufficient attendance to justify the cost, were discontinued. Instead, the AGM in November 2013 was organised within an informal one-day meeting at a venue providing conference facilities and a range of attractions for children. This proved a popular venue.

The decision to send paper copies of the newsletter to all members from June 2013 has been generally welcomed and has resulted in some additional volunteers coming forward.

Uptake of Public Liability Insurance for Local Home Education groups run by EO members has further increased, as this benefit has become more widely known via the newsletter and social media.

Political activity

Trustees collaborated with EO members and volunteers in Northern Ireland, and with HEdNI (the Home Education organisation for Northern Ireland) with regard to the Northern Ireland Home Education Review by Education and Library Boards. EO facilitated publicity and debate, and also submitted a response to the consultation.

Outreach Services, Publications and Media

The Helpline, email enquiries service, and open Yahoo! Email discussion lists continue to be well used and supported.

During the year, an upgrade of the EO website was approved, and work on this is ongoing. Trustees are paying particular attention to improvements in the online subscription process.

EO continues to receive requests for interviews with home educators from presenters of both regional and national radio and television current affairs programmes, and for volunteers to take part in programmes being made about home education. Some of these result in increased enquiries from the public regarding home education. In particular, the programme made by ITV Wales which was screened on 7th September 2013 caused considerable interest.

EO also receives enquiries from students undertaking higher degrees, seeking information about home education as a subject for research. These requests are publicised via the Yahoo! Email group, for home educators to participate if they so choose; with the proviso that EO can give no recommendation in that respect.

Difficulties

Demands upon EO trustees and other volunteers are becoming heavier, due to the proliferation of social media and increasing expectation of immediate and widely promulgated responses to queries and comments. This further complicates the smooth operation of the core functions and administration of the charity, as attention of potential new volunteers is diverted elsewhere.

The change of bank signatories associated with the change of treasurer at the AGM in November 2013, was beset by sets of paperwork going missing in the post, and was not finally completed until shortly before the

end of the financial year. This caused much frustration, and delay in preparation of accounts. There were also initial problems with the new Post Office Box number, as Royal Mail Blackpool misdirected some early post. However, this has since settled down.

There has also been some misunderstanding with HMRC regarding corporation tax (for which EO is not in fact liable) and our Accountants have been in contact with HMRC to remedy the situation.

Financial Review

The charity's funds for the year ended 30th June 2014 show a deficit of £726 (following a surplus of ££5,874 in y/e 30th June 2013). This was mainly due to the additional costs for printing and distribution of paper newsletters to all members. However, the total to carry forward was £39,682 (£40,408 in the previous year) and the charity's financial position therefore remains secure.

Investment and Reserve Policy

The charity's reserves are currently held in a high-interest charity reserve account. The reserves are kept to enable the trustees to continue the activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding. Trustees continue to work hard to increase reserves and re-establish a secure financial footing for the charity.

Future plans

The charity is continuing its activities as outlined above under aims and activities.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

The trustees (who are also the directors of Education Otherwise Association Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these 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;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent Examiner

The trustees again appointed Barry Darlington of Darlington & Co as independent examiner. Registered office: 61 Roseacre, Blackpool, FY4 2PL

Signed by order of the trustees (Chair) 30th March 2015

Anne Rix