

Trustees Annual Report - Year Ended 30 June 2013

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 2013

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

Trustees

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

L Ashe (elected 13/11/2010 & 18/02/12) *
B Cameron-Young (elected 13/11/2010 & 18/02/12) *
S Deuchars (elected 13/11/2010 & 18/02/12) *
T Foyster (elected 26/03/2011) (resigned 12/09/12)
A Kennell (elected 18/02/12) (resigned 02/11/12)
B McDonagh (elected 01/12/12) *
C McDonagh (elected 23/02/08 , 26/03/11 & 01/12/12) *
F Mukwamba-Sendall (elected 01/12/12) *
H Newton (elected 26/03/2011) *
A Rix (elected 13/11/2010 & 18/02/12) *
C Stone (elected 01/12/12) *
A Theunissen (elected 13/11/2010 & 01/12/12) *
E Theunissen (elected 13/11/2010 & 18/02/12) *
K Thompson (elected 01/12/12) *
M Wells (elected 18/02/12)*
J Wilkinson (elected 26/03/2011; retired 01/12/12)

* Trustee continuing in post after 30 June 2013

Secretary: Anne Rix

Address of Principal: Education Otherwise, PO Box 3761, Swindon, SN2 9GT

Bankers

Unity Trust Bank
Nine Brindley place
Birmingham
B1 2HB

Triodos Bank
Brunel House
11 The Promenade
Bristol
BS8 3NN

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 who have been involved 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 will stand down at the AGM in November 2013. Most are willing to stand for re-election.

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 committee and a team of volunteers. Until 1st December 2012 the management committee was comprised of between 14 and 19 trustees, but this was reduced to between 8 and 15 trustees by a Special Resolution passed at the 2012 Annual General meeting.

Membership

Education Otherwise started the year with a membership base of approximately 3662 families and ended the year with 3885 families. On average, 73 new member families joined every month through the website.

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.

Achievements and Performance

The increased workload on trustees and other volunteers following closure of the Sheffield office in February 2011 still continues. This has made it difficult to maintain administration at optimal level. Charitable outreach services such as Helpline have, however, continued normally.

Members had expressed interest in reinstating weekend gatherings (which had been suspended for a few years) and a gathering over a long weekend was organised around the AGM (for y/e 30-06-11) in February 2012. However, this was poorly attended.

Accounts and reports were again prepared in good time and filed prior to the deadline of March 2013, ensuring that Education Otherwise remained in compliance with financial authorities. EO's Accountants continued to pursue the issue of missing PAYE returns for 2008-9 with HMRC.

Membership numbers continue to increase, with the majority of new members joining, and existing members renewing, via the website

Only a small proportion of members elected to pay the additional cost for paper copies of the quarterly newsletter, introduced during the last financial year. Also, it appeared that the online version (accessed via the private 'member home' area of the website) was not viewed as frequently as had been expected. Therefore it was decided to send a paper copy of the newsletter to all members, starting in June 2013. Trustees hope this will stimulate further volunteer assistance and improve communication generally. Members who had paid the additional charge for paper copies are being recompensed by an extension of their subscription expiry date.

The Public Liability Insurance for Local Home Education groups run by EO members, reinstated during 2012 at £10 per year or part year, has been well received. However, uptake so far has been lower than anticipated, and it may be necessary in future to set a higher figure for contribution from groups so that the subsidy from EO members' subscriptions is minimised. This should still represent good value for the groups concerned.

Trustees consulted with and supported home educators in Wales during the period of consultation on the proposed Welsh Assembly Government bill for compulsory registration and monitoring of home education, and submitted a response from Education Otherwise.

During the year EO has received numerous requests from both regional and national radio and television programme presenters of current affairs for interviews with home educators. There have also been requests for volunteers to take part in programmes being made about home education, most notably that made by ITV Wales which was screened to coincide with the beginning of the school year on 7th September 2013.

Difficulties

The volunteer network of EO members is still insufficient for smooth operation of the core functions and services of the charity, although volunteer numbers are slowly increasing. However, membership processing has been beset by a variety of problems and is still not running as smoothly as trustees would wish. Resolving these issues is a priority for trustees, but time and energy are limited and we would ask that members and enquirers make allowances for the very high workload on volunteers.

Financial Review

The charity generated a surplus of £5,874 for the year ended 30th June 2013 (£6,352 in 2012 and deficit of £18,583 in 2011). When combined with the opening reserves, this gives a total to carry forward of £40,408 (£34,534 in 2012 & £28,182 in 2011) thus continuing the trend of recovery.

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: 91 Lyndhurst Drive, Preston, PR2 1TB

Signed by order of the trustees *Anne Rix* (Chair)

..... 2nd December 2013 (date)