

Trustees Annual Report - Year Ended 30 June 2016
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 2016

Reference and Administrative Details

Registered Charity Name: Education Otherwise Association Limited

Company Registration Number: 01917107 Charity Registration Number: 1055120

Registered Office: Bridgend, Meadow Lane, North Pickenham, Swaffham, PE37 8LE

Trustees

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

Continuing in post after 30 June 2016

- J. Adams (elected 25/10/2014)
- T. Crellin (co-opted 04/04/2016)
- S. Deuchars (elected 13/11/2010 & 25/10/2014)
- F. Mukwamba-Sendall (elected 01/12/12 & 24/10/2015)
- A. Rix (elected 13/11/2010 & 25/10/2014)
- E. Theunissen (elected 13/11/2010 & 25/10/2014)
- K. Thompson (elected 01/12/12 & & 24/10/2015)

Retired during y/e 30 June 2016

- J. Arnold (elected 16/11/13, retired 06/05/2016)
- L. Ashe (last elected 16/11/2013, retired 24/10/2015)
- R. Griffiths (elected 22/10/2015, retired 20/02/2016)
- V. Hon (elected 25/10/2014, retired 20/03/2016)
- J. Ingle (elected 25/10/2014, retired 24/03/2016)
- H. Newton (last elected 16/11/2013, retired 24/10/2015)

Secretary: Anne Rix to May 2016, replaced by Tom Crellin thereafter.

Address of Principal: Education Otherwise, PO Box 63, Swaffham, PE37 8LE

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.

Organisational Structure

The management of the organisation consists of a Council comprised of between 8 and 15 trustees (Chairperson, General Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Publications Secretary, Enquiries Secretary and between two and nine other members). Administration is assisted by a team of volunteers recruited from members of the organisation.

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.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

Trustees are recruited from signed-up members (Guarantors) who have usually 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 for 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.

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 review 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.

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 the public Helpline, internet support lists and a FaceBook group. 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 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 2016, 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 1885 families and ended the year with 2304 families. Regularisation of former anomalies in the membership database continued during the year.

An average of 53 family members per month joined or renewed through the website (average 50/month in previous year). It is interesting that this figure has been maintained despite the increase in alternative sources of information and support available to new home educators. Members joining by post number less than 10 per year; there are about 200 subscriptions paid annually by standing order.

As at the AGM in October 2016, there were 61 Signed Up Members (Guarantors) with voting rights. (66 in previous year)

Membership services

The AGM in October 2015 was again organised within an informal one-day meeting. We had hoped to hold this at Snibston Museum, as this had proved a popular venue in the previous two years., However, this venue was unavailable (having closed during the year) and the Herbert Museum in Coventry was used as an alternative. Unfortunately the meeting was again inquorate, so was adjourned for one week as provided by our governing documents. However, a full and productive discussion of all agenda items took place, which was taken into account at the adjourned meeting. Those present also had the opportunity to meet and chat with one of the Founder Members of Education Otherwise.

Quarterly paper copies of the newsletter have continued to be sent to all family members and this contributes to recruitment of additional volunteers.

Public Liability Insurance for Local Home Education groups run by EO members has continued to be well supported. This is a significant benefit for EO members, and has again drawn in additional members.

Political activity

A Conference on Children Missing Education was organised by Capita in November 2015. As the agenda included several items that involved home education – including 'tracking and monitoring of home educated children', a trustee of EO attended the conference to ensure that the nature of home education was explained to the delegates and that some misconceptions (e.g. that Kyhra Ishak was home educated) could be refuted.

The NSPCC Report on Home education: learning from case reviews (2014) received further publicity during the year, and a petition calling for its withdrawal was publicised on the EO website. An EO trustee also attended the NSPCC meeting in January 2016, in response to an invitation. Representations from EO trustees and from other home educators resulted in the report being withdrawn.

A response to the DFE open consultation on "Out-of-school education settings: registration and inspection" was submitted by the Trustees of Education Otherwise in January 2016; this was also posted on the EO website and referenced on the EO-HE-Support Yahoo! list. A similar consultation was launched by the Welsh Assembly Government, closing in April 2016; EO trustees responded to this also.

Trustees considered the possibility of sending a delegate to the Global Home Education Conference in March 2016 (with the theme, "Home Education: It's A Right."). However, as this was located in Rio de Janeiro, it was felt that the cost could not be justified.

The Welsh Assembly Government followed up their consultation on Elective Home Education from February 2015 with a further consultation on draft non-statutory guidance for home education in Wales, closing in July 2015. Again, EO trustees responded to this, as reported on the EO website.

Trustees have also been working on an information leaflet for Local Authorities, focussing on the correct implementation of the Elective Home Education Guidelines to LAs, emphasising that home education should not be used as a 'cover up' for failure by professionals from other services to take appropriate action, and that welfare and educational issues should be clearly separated. It is hoped that this will shortly be finalised and that it will be of value to local home educators in 'educating' their own Local Authorities.

Outreach Services, Publications and Media

The Helpline, email enquiries service, and open Yahoo! Email discussion lists continue to provide a vital first point of contact for many new home educators. The EO FaceBook group has continued to provide an alternative source of information and support.

Use of the EO public and member forums continued to fall, to the level where it was no longer feasible to maintain these. Trustees consider that the Yahoo! Lists and FaceBook Group provide sufficiently for this purpose.

Website upgrade was again beset with complications, and is still well behind schedule. Trustees hope to complete this during the coming year.

As in the previous year, there have been frequent requests for comments from home educators, from both local and national radio and TV news programmes. We continue to receive enquiries from students undertaking higher degrees, seeking information from home educators as a subject for or as participants in 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.

The new PO Box in Swaffham has been working efficiently and providing prompt responses to postal communications.

Difficulties

Continued pressure of work and lack of sufficient voluntary assistance has contributed to the high turnover of trustees during the year, resulting in some lack of continuity and delays in implementation of decisions. Trustees are actively seeking additional members with appropriate skills and experience, but it has proved difficult to recruit sufficient numbers to alleviate the workloads significantly

The complications involved in upgrading the EO website and membership system have hampered efforts to communicate with Members with regard to both political and administrative activity. Delays in processing of membership subscriptions have resulted in some potential members not proceeding with their applications.

Arranging Trustee and Members meetings has become increasingly problematic due to other commitments; trustees are seeking ways to encourage higher attendance at General Meetings, to enable better accountability to Members.

Financial Review

The charity's funds for the year ended 30th June 2016 show a small deficit of £79 (a considerable improvement on the deficit of £2,559 in y/e 30th June 2015). This was again partly due to newsletter expenditure. Falling membership numbers combined with normal ongoing service costs account for a

further tranche. However, the total to carry forward was £37,044 (£37,123 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 an interest-bearing 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.

Signed by order of the trustees (Chair) on

Education Otherwise Association Ltd. Registered office: Bridgend, Meadow Lane, Swaffham, PE37 8LE