

Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground

Annual Report 2019



BLAP 2018 - 2019



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Supported by:
Blackbird Leys Parish Council, Johnson Buildbase, Sarah Nowell Educational Foundation



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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The trustees present their report for the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Charitable Status

Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground (generally known as BLAP) is a charity, registered in England, number 273172.

Trustees

The Trustees who have held office at any point during the year ended 31 March 2019 and to the date of this report are as follows:

Mr Rae Humberstone	(Chairman)
Mrs Sue Price	(Secretary)
Mrs Gail McLintock	(Treasurer)
Cllr Debbie McIlveen	

Miss Helen Shilton(resigned 16 July 2019)

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity is governed via a Constitution adopted 29 March 1976 and subsequent variations.

All new Trustees are recruited on the recommendation of organisations and people with whom the charity works, or by existing Trustees; they are given an induction pack and offered appropriate training in order to fulfil their role.

Objectives and activities

The objective of Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground is the provision of play and recreation facilities and other leisure time occupation for children resident in and around Oxford.

Achievements and performance

The charity continued its programme of play and project activities, with a part time staff team comprising one Play and Project Leader one assistant Play Leader and two play workers for the after school work. During play schemes it is sometimes necessary to appoint extra sessional workers. The charity also relies on a dedicated team of volunteers.

Public Benefit

The Trustees of the charity have had due regard both to the objectives of the charity, as set out above, and also to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission, in exercising their powers and duties. All activities are carried out in pursuance of the charity's objects.

Financial Review

The accounts for the year ended 31st March 2019 show a surplus for the year of £4,654 (2017/18 deficit £7,331), partly because staff costs have reduced, but also because funding raised in the previous year has been applied in 2018/19. £4,560 of 'I Will' funding has been carried forward to 2019/20.

It remains the trustees' intention to work towards a target reserve level of at least 3 months normal expenditure; no cash flow problems are envisaged in the short term, as cash at bank at year-end was £9,060.

None of the trustees was paid remuneration or expenses by the charity (2017/18 £NIL). As indicated above, the charity is supported through the voluntary assistance of a number of individual.

Future plans

In order to sustain and continue its planned level of activity, and build its reserves back to a long-term sustainable level, the charity has already raised substantial funding from Children in Need and other sources.

Reserves

The trustees believe that, taking into account the deferred income already raised, and its future fund-raising plans, the charity's assets are available and adequate to fulfil the obligations of the charity as a whole.

Risk management

The principal risks the charity may face are perceived to be inadequate future funding and the possibility of safeguarding issues arising in the children's activities. To mitigate these risks, sufficient future funding has been secured, and appropriate safeguarding measures have been put in place.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Charity 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 charity and of the receipts and payments of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently; make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent examination

The independent examination of the charity's accounts has been undertaken by Peter Stevenson, Chartered Accountant.

Approved by the Trustees on 16 July 2019

And signed by order of the board by



Mrs Sue Price

Secretary

Please see attached accounts for the year.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT .

Well folks, it's that time of year again!

It has been another successful year and the Christmas dinner was a real highlight when Sarah and family managed, on one small stove, to cook a full roast dinner for nearly 50 children and staff.



The room looked magnificent and everyone had fun.

We have tried to find out why numbers are not increasing as we would hope. Children have an amazing time at BLAP and parents are very appreciative. With fewer numbers we have been able to give more individual time to the children and we have been able to record many incidences of growth in confidence and ability to socialise.

The committee believes for some parents the fees, though not high, may be too much and we have secured funding to provide discounts for families unable to pay the full amount. However, some parents may be too shy to admit that they are finding it difficult to find the money to pay their children's fees. Our policy is never to turn a child away if they don't pay. We are looking at what BLAP is offering in the way of activities. Do we focus too much on the rough and tumble aspects of play? Should we do more to reach out to children who might find the more physical aspects of play intimidating? We need to look at all aspects of play 'in the round'. In the time honoured BLAP tradition, we will put on our thinking caps on and find the solution.

At the last committee meeting I volunteered to start shadowing Sue, with the aim of my taking on some of the responsibilities that she has shouldered over the years since BLAP's re-opening.



I would now like to say a few words of thanks to fellow members of the BLAP family, who make my job of chair such a joy and, it has to be said, far easier.

To **Gail**, whose hard work keeps us financially viable;

To **Sarah**, our excellent play organiser and general factotum;

To **Rowena**, who seems to be EVERYWHERE!

To **Debbie**, our tame County Councillor;

To **Chantel**, our very own force of nature,

To **Aimee**, our expert leader of the walking bus

To **Kayley**, such a valuable new part of the team

To **Sue**. Need I say more?

Now for a couple of goodbyes.

Earlier in the year **Maesun** left us to make his way in the world. His contribution as a play leader cannot be over-stated and his legacy is plain to see in the response he receives whenever he visits BLAP.

Sadly, we must also say goodbye to **Helen Shilton** our vice chair. Helen has a pretty full-on job at Modern Art Oxford and feels she can no longer devote as much time as she would like to BLAP. Thank you, Helen, for your enthusiasm and support as a member of the BLAP family.

Once again, thank you for all your efforts on behalf of the BLAP family.

Best wishes,

Rae

PLAY & PROJECT LEADER'S REPORT

THE AFTER SCHOOL CLUB meets each day : 3.15 – 5.30 p.m.



Most children walk to us, from Orchard Meadow Primary school adjacent to BLAP, or from Pegasus School via our walking bus service across the park. Older children at secondary school come under their own steam.

I feel the children have a fantastic time at BLAP. We have a great team of staff who are always thinking of fresh ideas to keep BLAP interesting.

We do lots of cooking, dancing, table tennis, football, rounders, board games, art, keep fit sessions and even gardening.



I know we have had a real change in behavior. It is much calmer; the RED, YELLOW and GOLD system really works to warn and importantly, to encourage. Additionally we are very consistent. The children know that we can be firm but we are also very fair. Our children gain much at BLAP: friendships, confidence and new skills. We also see a lot of our quieter children grow in confidence and attempt new things such as sport and joining in with others in group games.



Many are now becoming proficient cooks and one of our boys now cooks at home for his family. Some children are also becoming keen gardeners.



I believe the consistency we provide at BLAP is paramount to the wellbeing of many of our children.

One of my favourite days at BLAP has to be the Christmas dinner we provided for our children and staff. We managed to cook almost 50 dinners in our little oven. The atmosphere was amazing; I believe this will be a long lasting memory for lots of our children.



I would like to say a big thank you to my mum Joan for helping us deliver a beautiful Christmas dinner; we could not have done it without her. Also to the staff and volunteers who made the room so festive.

KITCHEN

Our old kitchen



I am so pleased to say that I delivered a presentation at The Oxford Funding Network to bid for the money for a new kitchen. I felt very nervous up on that stage but managed to stay focused so many of the guests responded generously. We plan to get the kitchen fitted in July.

APPRECIATING DIVERSITY



We have a map where children and young people can add a label and map pin indicating where their family originate. We have a really diverse group of young people.

We hosted an evening conference, run by Oxfordshire Youth, for youth workers on the theme of Diversity. We shared our focus and heard from others. Our staff and several of our young leaders attended and found the sessions fascinating.

We have had parents and other local adults in to introduce food from their home countries. Children have cooked plantain in 5 different ways with help from a local lady from Tanzania and others from Nigeria, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Hungary and Mexico came in to help cook food.

This has been a good project and will continue to influence our future work.



We are grateful to Tommy, one of our parents who helped the children mend the trampoline and would always welcome other parental help.

PLAYSCHEMES

We advertise our playschemes via flyers to local schools as well as promoting it locally and putting the programme on the web site. We run each half term and for two weeks at Easter and 4 weeks in the summer. We open at 8 a.m and close at 5.00 p.m. but most come 10 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.

The holidays allow us to do many more activities. We go swimming each week and visit the bowling alley or go ice skating at half term. In the summer we go on longer trips including a trip to Thorpe Park



Thanks to Iffley church who this summer have given us £1000 to subsidise our summer trips- a real help to many families.

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS



This year we have had over twenty young leaders who have been a real asset to BLAP's work. Nine gained the level 2 award

This picture appeared on the front page of Leys News and was taken by Cait, the editor, who came to interview them.

Young Leaders are recruited from local secondary schools and work with us throughout year 10.

The children love the Young Leaders. This year we bought hoodies for our young leaders and also had junior leader hoodies for any of our secondary school young people who are under 14 but who also want to help out. Additionally we have large badges to give to any junior school children to acknowledge their role in doing something especially helpful on any one day.

STAFF and VOLUNTEERS

Sadly we said goodbye to Maesun, he is truly missed at BLAP but has kept to his word and pops into see us from time to time. We all enjoy his visits.

Our newly appointed play worker Kayley who was a volunteer beforehand has settled in really well and is fantastic with the children, especially our more lively ones. Welcome to the team Kayley and thank you for all your hard work.



Thank you to Chantell who works very hard, she has many strengths and the children adore her. Congratulations Chantell on gaining your degree in Youth and Community work

A big thank you to our volunteers Kimberley, my mum, Rowena, Tayler Timmy, Juliet and Leanne. You really help us out. A special thank you to Sue who works tirelessly to keep BLAP a safe and great place to be. Thankyou Russell for all your maintenance work and of course to all the committee for their support.

Sarah Wain Play and Project Manager

SECRETARY TO MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE

During the year we held 10 meetings and covered a variety of topics. We have looked carefully at our policies and are delighted that Cllr Debbie McIlveen is now responsible for advising on the updating these. We do appreciate the important role the committee have and acknowledge their contributions. We are especially grateful for the efficient managing of our accounts and budgets by our treasurer Gail. In addition to the 5 trustees we have 3 ordinary committee members Rowena Smith, Kamara Lawrence and recently co-opted Maesun John. We have space for 2 more and will be looking for a new trustee

Rae, our chair person has been popping in on Mondays to see the children and is willing to help with the administration of the grant applications. Thankyou Rae.

We have been very grateful for the experience of Helen Shilton. Her willingness to advise on human resource issues has been much appreciated and we will miss her wise contributions to all our meetings. We are very sorry to be saying goodbye but we have been aware this year that her work commitments have increased and understand her need to re-assess her life work balance.

Staffing I too want to thank staff for their enthusiasm and care. A special thanks to Sarah for all her work to ensure BLAP is a safe and friendly space for the children and young people. Sarah brings with her many skills and will be working more with parents in the coming year.



Keeping BLAP clean is also very important. During the year we said goodbye to Holly and Annie and hello to Laura. We appreciate their hard work and flexibility.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO OUR FINANCES THIS YEAR.

We are grateful to Children in Need and Comic Relief who understand the importance of paying salaries. We appreciate, as always, the support of the Blackbird Leys Parish Council. The Oxford City Council support our after school and holiday playschemes and this year also gave a bursary for families unable to pay. Sarah secured funding for a refurbishment of the kitchen from the Oxford Funding Network. The Good Exchange was used for several applications this year including applications for help with fees for families who cannot afford the small fees we charge. They also helped with our request for funding to encourage volunteering via the “Iwill” fund. We are grateful to this fund and to The Oxford University Community Fund who sponsored one of the Young Leader’s training with Oxfordshire Youth. We are very grateful to the St Michael at the Northgate church for support each year and to Iffley Church who have subsidised our outings. Also to the Doris Field Trust who help us to provide a safe environment. Our Big Lottery grant given at the end of last financial year but to be used in this one, helped finance our work on Appreciating Diversity. We have had support from their funds by our city and county councillors.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



We are always on the lookout for more volunteers to work with the children. Volunteers receive training and need DBS checking and references. They become part of the BLAP family.

I really enjoy my days helping at BLAP.

Rae, our chairman, has already offered his help on the administration of our grant applications and I would welcome offers from anyone else willing to help. A team working together on securing the finances would make a real difference to BLAP’s future. Please contact me.

Sue Price Secretary to Management Committee

