

1st April 2023
to 31st March 2024

to 31st March 2024



Email: info@charltontoylibrary.org.uk

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.

WHO WE ARE

Charlton Toy Library is a registered charity offering an inter-linked support service for the under 5s 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 and an Outreach Worker) 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.

“CTL is a fantastic facility, congratulations on running such a great resource for children and parents.”

“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!”

Our running costs continued to rise during 2023-4. However, during this period trustees were successful in drawing in a number of new and repeat funding streams. These included £500 from Magic Little Grants, £2,500 from the Leathersellers, £10,000 from Awards for All and £20,000 from National Lottery Cost of Living fund. We are delighted also that BBC Children in Need have renewed the funding agreement for our Outreach programme (see below), which will bring in around £18,000 per year until 2026. We are also delighted to be part of a new partnership with other local charities MumsAid and The Bridge, on the Mighty Acorns Project (see below for more information) which will bring in £17,340 by December 2025. Despite all this fundraising success, securing funding to remain viable throughout 2024-25 still remains an absolute priority.

We were very pleased to be able earlier this year to utilise some of the above funds to redecorate the stay-and-play area at Charlton House, and to replace our ageing computers with new equipment, which is part of our ongoing plan to modernise our IT operation to become cloud-based.

Overall, in 2023-24 we supported 354 children within 240 families. Of these 26% of families accessed our services at no charge and around 16% paid a concessionary rate, 18% are lone parent families. Support for less-well-off families is particularly important given the current cost-of-living crisis and we will continue to prioritise this demographic. Around 28% of families are from the global majority. Another ongoing priority is to ensure that our membership is genuinely inclusive of the local community, and fully represents the rich ethnic and cultural diversity present in the Borough of Greenwich.

The Outreach service supports families who are experiencing disadvantage and who face barriers to attending CTL in person. During the last year, 124 children within 62 families received direct support via home visits. This support includes not just loan of toys, sensory equipment, books, safety equipment, clothes, shoes, cots, beds prams and buggies, but also a friendly and supportive visit from our Outreach worker Sharon Jay.

The new Mighty Acorns Project (MAP) enable us to extend outreach to a group of families in Greenwich Borough whose infant children have significant medical challenges, sometimes including profound disability and in a very few cases, life limiting conditions. Since January 2024 we have been supporting around 10 families on this project. This work is very challenging, and I would like again to express sincere thanks on behalf of all trustees and members to our Outreach worker Sharon Jay for all her hard work and resilience delivering the outreach and MAP projects, especially in the light of the tragic bereavement her family experienced in 2022.

During 2023-24 our face-to-face offer at Charlton House has continued to be highly popular. This offer comprises toy and equipment loans, and interactive stay-and-play sessions for CTL members taking place on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and once-a-month Saturday sessions. The Friday music sessions continue to be very popular, as do our Thursday sensory play sessions introduced last autumn.

This brings me to the vital role played by our volunteers, without whom our play activities simply could not take place. I would like to express sincere thanks on behalf of all CTL trustees to our volunteers for all you do. Our current group of volunteers include:

June Shand	Tuesdays (singing session & stay-and-play)
Julie Pepperrell	Thursdays (sensory session & stay-and-play)
Julie Cullen	Thursdays (sensory session & stay-and-play)
Susan Wainwright	Fridays (singing session)
Sophie Durcan	Fridays (stay-and-play) & Events
Emma Foord-Divers	Saturdays & Events

John Stephens
CTL Chair of Trustees

CHAIR'S REPORT BY JOHN STEPHENS (cont.)

As well as the regular weekly offer CTL has organised or participated in a range of community events across the year (details of which can be found elsewhere in this report). These events are important for many reasons. They provide a way of promoting CTL activity to the wider community, they allow us to interact with similar local organisations and potential partners, and probably most important they are a way of raising much needed funds. We are always grateful when CTL members come and support us at local events.

All of the activity at Charlton House, all of the community events, and much of the administration related to running a charity is organised, managed and supervised by our indefatigable CTL Co-ordinator Vicky Thomas. On behalf of all the trustees I would like to say a massive thank you to Vicky for all her incredible work and for always being prepared to go the extra mile!!

Finally, I would like to thank the trustee group for all their hard work during a year which has again presented some difficult and unforeseen challenges. Sadly we are saying goodbye to Patricia Santone, who is leaving the trustee group after 10 years. Thank you so much for all your work and support Patricia, we are most grateful, and wish you the very best! We are also saying goodbye to Bridget Gourlay. Bridget recently travelled with her family to her home country New Zealand to give birth to her second child, and following a change in family circumstances there has decided to stay permanently. We wish her the very best and thank her for her work for CTL over the last year and a half.

Since March, we have recruited two new trustees, Sheetal Zundel and Emily Wallace. Both Sheetal and Emily have financial and communications sector backgrounds respectively, and I know they are going to be tremendous assets to the group!

Expanding the trustee group remains a priority, please get in touch with Vicky if you are interested!

Finally, on behalf of trustees, staff, and volunteers at CTL we wish all members a safe, enjoyable and relaxing summer and look forward to seeing you again in September!

John Stephens
Chair of Trustees
1st July 2024

Membership Statistics 1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024

Families using our main services & outreach service combined: 240 families
Total number of children helped: 354 children and 270 adults

Outreach families supported (free of charge): 62 families
Outreach children helped: 124 children

Families supported free of charge: 62 families (26%)
Families paying concessionary rate: 38 families (16%)

Families from global majority backgrounds: 67 families (28%)
New families: 149 families
Lone parent families: 44 families
Grandparent members: 20
Childminders: 2

Families in the SE7 area: 95 families
Families in the SE18 area: 50 families



POST-AGM UPDATE

Two weeks after this report was presented at our AGM we were informed by Royal Greenwich Heritage Fund that, due to financial difficulties of their own, our premises were required for other purposes that would generate much-needed income for them. We therefore had to find a new location. Charlton Triangle Homes very kindly offered us a new home which we moved to in the autumn.

Our Outreach service is in its 11th year of funding from BBC Children in Need and we have successfully secured a grant to keep this much-needed support for struggling local families going until September 2026. In 2023-24 I worked with 62 families and their 124 children. This accounts for 26% of our entire membership.

Referral for our services continue to come from many local organisations such as HomeStart, Family Engagement Support Workers from Children's Centres, Health Visitors, Social Workers, The Pre-birth Assessment Team, Best Beginnings Midwives Team, MumsAid, Early Years Quaggy Development Trust, and others too. Some families hear about our services and refer themselves directly to us.

I continued to support families in their home. The children supported had many and varied struggles to deal with, such as family with low income, disabilities, families experiencing domestic abuse and families with no recourse to public funds of any kind. Our aim was to give these children some sense of a "normal" childhood... to just be kids... playing and having fun.

On my first visit to homes, I assessed what help was needed. I began by helping to improve the physical wellbeing of children by providing, completely free of charge, essential clothing, beds, prams, baby equipment, child home safety equipment and much more.

Once the safety and physical comfort of the children had improved, I then supplied the toys, books and games that families could not afford. These items kept the children constructively occupied. They learnt to play happily within the home, with their parents and with their siblings, improving behaviour and family dynamics. The books and play equipment stimulated their curiosity and improved their learning & development.

I worked with parents and carers, helping them to understand the importance of play in their children's development. These measures together helped children develop and learn, making them better ready for school when the time comes.

OUTREACH PROJECT REPORT by Sharon Jay

In January 2024, we started a new collaboration with The Bridge and MumsAid, supporting families with children with complex medical conditions or disabilities. The Might Acorns Plus Project has weekly group sessions at The Bridge and I provided the families with new sensory toys, baby safety equipment and any other support they needed either during the sessions or with home visits.

So that you can appreciate all the work carried out please consider the following achievements. The figures are slightly lower than usual, as I was off work on a short period of sick leave:

- 160 visits to families in their own homes.
- 95 support phone calls to families between visits providing much needed help and advice.
- 124 children were supported between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.
- 352 toys/books and 161 items of child safety equipment were delivered to families.
- 62 large bags of clothing for children and nappies were given out to Outreach families.
- 35 Christmas presents were given to children and 20 families received a £50 supermarket voucher each to buy food over the festive season. 14 families received extra food vouchers during the year.
- We also helped families with whatever was needed to relieve some of the struggles and disadvantage in their lives such as housing problems and emotional and practical support.
- When needed we linked with other organisations to extend the range of help.

I am very pleased to see that some outreach families have visited our stay-and-play sessions and enjoyed the singing and sensory activities. They have socialised with others families and reduced their sense of isolation. I hope to see more and more coming in to play in the near future.

Sharon Jay
Outreach worker

TOY LIBRARY CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT by Vicky Thomas

This has been a very busy and successful year again. I have enjoyed working with our lovely members, our wonderful team of dedicated volunteers, our Trustees and our amazing Outreach Worker Sharon.

From 1st April 2023 until 31st March 2024, we organised several successful events:

- In April we took part at the Charlton House **Easter Event** in Charlton Park, offering children's crafts and nearly new toys for sale.
- In May we took part in a **Community Day**, organised by CABAHS in Charlton park and organised crafts and activities for the children.
- In June we had a stall in the community tent at the **TOGETHER 23** festival in Charlton park.
- In July we organised a very successful **fundraising concert** with the local children's group C7 at the Pelton Arms pub in Greenwich.
- In October we had a stall at the **Hornfair festival** at Charlton House.
- In December we organised two **Christmas parties** for our members. Father Christmas visited the children, the families had photos taken with him and were each given a free book as a Christmas present.

Other work I have been focusing on this year:

- I continued to support our Outreach service by procuring toys, clothes and safety equipment for our vulnerable families via advertising in local groups. I helped our Outreach worker Sharon organise the Christmas Toy and Food voucher appeal and I am always truly humbled by the generosity of our community. I have helped cataloguing all the Outreach purchases and donations and got involved in the Might Acorns Project, our new collaboration with MumsAid and The Bridge.
- I have continued to help with fundraising, both by organising fundraising events and second-hand sales and by finding suitable grants that CTL can apply for.
- I updated our website and posted regularly on our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts.
- I managed the membership accounts and toy database and produced annual reports.

I would like to say a massive thank you to our wonderful volunteers Susan, Sophie, Julie P, Julie C, June and Emma, 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!

Vicky Thomas
CTL Coordinator

We finished the financial year 2023-2024 with a net income for the year of £1,374, represented by £2,249 in restricted funding and -£874 in unrestricted funds.

Together with the cash funds brought forward our unrestricted cash reserves as at 31st March 2024 were just over £25,000 which is in line with our cash reserves policy. In view of the current cost of living crisis, we have kept our very-low membership and toy loan fees unchanged for the 6th year running. In light of future financial challenges these will be reviewed in 2024-2025. Our Outreach Service continues to be provided completely free of charge for disadvantaged local families experiencing a wide range of struggles.

The Toy Library is therefore reliant on outside funding and this year we were very grateful for the support we received. We are in our 11th year of funding from BBC Children in Need towards our Outreach Project. We also received a large grant from the National Lottery Community Fund Cost of Living Crisis Fund which allowed us to renew all our computer equipment, redecorate our play areas and purchase £2,113 worth of sensory toys for children experiencing complex medical needs on the Mighty Acorns Project. We also received a generous grant from Awards For All and other grants from the Leatherseller's Foundation and Magic Little Grants. A huge thank you to all these grant making organisations without whose help we could not offer the range of services that we do. They enable us to support so many local families across our community.

Our continued thanks go to Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust for their 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 during the year, as do Fire Action Ltd.

We have a good management committee who are working hard on building up our finances and on securing the long-term prospects of our services. We need more trustees though so please consider joining us.

The funds that we raise are never enough to run the entire Toy Library and for this reason we would also like to thank all those who help keep us going. Thank you to all our volunteers who help at sessions and events. Thank you to the local community for your continued support with both physical and financial donations. And thank you to all those organisations who help us too. Added together, your support and time helps to improve the lives of so many children and families across the borough. We could not do it without you.

These accounts have been successfully examined and accepted by our Independent Examiner, Caroline Sharp (FCA, DChA).

Janine Khoshnevisan
CTL Treasurer and Trustee



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 £9,400).

INCOME-EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2023-2024

CHARLTON TOY LIBRARY Income & Expenditure Account 2023-2024

INCOME	Restricted	Unrestricted		Previous year
BBC Children in Need	9,573.30		BBC Children in Need	25,643.00
Nat Lottery Community Organisations Cost	15,198.28		Greenwich supports	5,130.00
Nat Lottery COCLF retrospective funding		5468.44	Woodward Ch Trust	1,014.00
Awards for All	10,000.00			
Leatherseller's	2,500.00			
Magic Little Grants	500.00			
Greenwich Supports	570.00			
Fundraising		1,292.10		1,677.33
Membership fees		2,328.65		2,567.24
Toy loan fees		1,207.75		1,161.00
Safety equipment loan fees		98.36		124.25
Session sales		1095.93		1,788.05
Special events/parties				183.25
Donations		1,648.78		4564.16
Bank interest		292.57		112.21
Gift Aid		148.19		271.58
TOTAL	38,341.58	13,580.77	51,922.35	44,236.07

EXPENDITURE	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Previous year
Advertising/promotional	547.00	380.00	927.00	497.50
Child Safety Equipment	1,195.00	0.00	1,195.00	702.28
Equipment	302.00		302.00	0.00
Fundraising expenses		52.00	52.00	418.85
General running costs	11,168.00	3,244.00	14,412.00	4779.87
Insurance		1,561.00	1,561.00	1594.92
Management costs		35.00	35.00	30.78
Staffing costs	20,297.00	8,137.00	28,434.00	32228.43
Outreach welfare	21.00	954.00	975.00	7,590.05
Toys books videos etc	2,242.00		2,242.00	0.00
Training				389.96
Travel	289.00		289.00	78.55
Volunteer expenses	33.00	92.00	125.00	75.11
Workshops & crafts				34.05
TOTAL	36,094.00	14,455.00	50,549.00	48420.35

Net receipts for the year	2,248.00	-874.00	1,374.00	
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BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

CURRENT ASSETS	Restricted	Unrestricted	Totals
Current Account	13,542.52	5,595.50	19,138.02
Business Reserve		20,083.30	20,083.30
Cash in hand		100.00	100.00
4 unrepresented items	-2,057.22	-241.92	-2,299.14
	11,485.30	25,536.88	37,022.18

REPRESENTED BY:

Balance b/fwd 2022-2023	9,236.84	26,411.10	35,647.94
Profit/loss for 2023-2024	2,248.00	-874.00	1374.00
	11,484.84	25,537.10	37,021.94



We have:

- Obtained funding to continue offering our wide range of services: stay-and-play sessions, toy loaning, Outreach service
- Supported 124 children through our Outreach Service, working across the Royal Borough of Greenwich
- Provided 35 children with Christmas presents and 18 families with Christmas food vouchers through our Outreach Programme
- Provided 81 bags of essential clothing for children and nappies
- Continued our Child Safety Equipment Loan Scheme by lending families stairgates, cots, baby baths, highchairs, sterilizers, prams, baby bouncers and many more for 6-12 months at a time.
- Established and/or maintained strong links with organisations across the borough including HomeStart, the Midwife Team, Social workers, Family Engagement Support workers, Greenwich Children's Disability Team, Health Visitors, Best Beginnings, Quaggy Development Trust, Mama2Mama and many more.
- Began a collaboration with MumsAid and the Bridge. The new project is called Mighty Acorns Plus and our Outreach worker supports families with children (0-2 yrs old) with medical and other special needs.

ACHIEVEMENTS (continued) 2023-2024

- We updated our stock with a over £2,000 worth of sensory toys
- Updated our computers and printers
- Had the Reception and Play areas decorated
- 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.
- Publicised the Toy Library to local groups and around the borough. Maintained our website, Facebook and Twitter accounts and created a CTL account on Instagram to reach more families.
- Worked with and supported 6 volunteers throughout the year.
- Introduced a singing session on Tuesday mornings and a sensory session on Thursday mornings.
- Developed and ran a survey to evaluate our services.
- We applied and successfully received a number of grants:
 - £500 from Magic Little Grants
 - £2,500 from the Leathersellers
 - £10,000 from Awards for All
 - £20,666 from National Lottery Cost of Living fund
 - £18,000 per year for 3 years from BBC Children in Need for our Outreach programme





Our plans for 2024-2025 are:

- 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
- 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, Instagram and Twitter pages and our presence on relevant apps and website listings
- 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
- Secure more outside grants and funding to secure the long-term security of our services

The Management Committee

John Stephens, Chair

Janine Khoshnevisan, Treasurer

Jo Rollings, Committee Member

Kate Hall, Committee Member

Bridget Gourlay, Committee Member

Patricia Santome, Committee Member

Daniela Kaltenbach, Committee Member (until June 2023)

Nahid Kausar, Committee Member (until August 2023)

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

Volunteers & Fundraisers

Susan Wainwright, Jack Wheeler, Sophie Durcan, Julie Pepperrell, Julie Cullen, June Shand, Emma Foord-Divers, John Stephens, Janine Khoshnevisan, Patricia Santome-Courtney, Nahid Kausar, Jo Rollings, Kate Hall, Bridge Gourlay.

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
National Lottery Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund
Awards For All
The Leatherseller's
Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust
Charlton House
The Royal Borough of Greenwich
Greenwich Supports Team
Home-Start Greenwich
The Co-operative
The Woodward Charitable Trust
Fire Action Ltd
Headstart IT
Atlas Business Group
Greenwich Midwifery Team
Greenwich Social Workers
Mama2Mama
Waitrose in Sidcup
Tacagni Consultancy
Four Keen Inns Greenwich
Colin Foord-Divers and the C7 group

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!



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