

**Trustees Annual Report - Year Ended 30 June 2015**  
**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 2015

**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  
*[N.B. from 14-08-2014 to 06-06-2015 the R.O. was 61 Roseacre, Blackpool, FY4 2PL]*

**Trustees**

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

Continuing in post after 30 June 2015

J Arnold (elected 16/11/2013)  
L Ashe (elected 13/11/2010 & 16/11/2013)  
S Deuchars (elected 13/11/2010 & 25/10/2014)  
F Mukwamba-Sendall (elected 01/12/12 & 16/11/2013)  
H Newton (first elected 26/03/2011 & 16/11/2013)  
A Rix (elected 13/11/2010 & 25/10/2014)  
E Theunissen (elected 13/11/2010 & 25/10/2014)  
K Thompson (elected 01/12/12 & 16/11/2013)

Retired during y/e 30 June 2015

J Palmer (Elected 16/11/2013, retired 13/08/2014)

Secretary: Anne Rix

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.

### 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 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 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 (Chairperson, General Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Publications Secretary, Enquiries Secretary and between two and nine other members) 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 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 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 3684 families and ended the year with 1885 families. A considerable number of historical anomalies in the membership database were regularised during the year, contributing to the apparent drop in numbers.

An average of 50 family members per month joined or renewed through the website (average 60/month in previous year). Trustees consider that the drop is probably due to the increase in alternative sources of information and support available to new home educators.

As at the AGM in October 2015, there were 66 Signed Up Members (Guarantors) with voting rights. (109 in previous year)

### Membership services

The AGM in October 2014 was again organised within an informal one-day meeting at Snibston Museum, as this had proved a popular venue the previous year, with suitable conference facilities, excellent catering and a range of attractions for children, including many hands-on exhibits. Unfortunately the meeting was just 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.

Quarterly paper copies of the newsletter have continued to be sent to all family members, which has again resulted in 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 drawn in additional members.

### Political activity

Two EO trustees attended a meeting arranged by the Association of Elective Home Education Professionals, which is a new organisation set up by Local Authorities. Reports of this meeting were prepared and circulated.

EO continued to support home educators in Northern Ireland in relation to further developments following the Home Education Review, providing further publicity via our website. Trustees also responded fully to the Welsh Assembly Government's consultation on Elective Home Education in February 2015.

### 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 which was started just before the end of the previous financial year, has also proved popular and has a growing membership.

Use of the EO public and member forums has been reducing steadily, and trustees are considering whether these should be maintained or if their functions can be provided by other means.

The proposed upgrade of the EO website and subscription process raised some additional issues that have resulted in further delay. Trustees are still committed to completion of this project.

There have been regular requests from BBC local radio in various parts of the country for comments from home educators, and also 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

Trustees continue to experience high workloads, and although some new volunteers have come forward the administration and servicing of core functions of the charity continue to suffer from lack of available time.

The Blackpool PO box continued to be the source of significant delays, and has been replaced by a new PO Box in Swaffham. This has resulted in quicker responses to postal communications.

### Financial Review

The charity's funds for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015 show a deficit of £2,559 (following a deficit of £726 in y/e 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014). This was again partly due to newsletter expenditure, in that although it is published quarterly, five invoices were paid within the year 2014-5 while only three had been paid in the previous year. Falling membership numbers combined with normal ongoing service costs account for a further tranche. However, the total to carry forward was £37,123 (£39,682 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. Education Otherwise Association Ltd. Registered office: Bridgend, Meadow Lane, Swaffham, PE37 8LE

Signed by order of the trustees ..... *Anne Rix* ..... (Chair) on ..... *9th April 2016* ....