SQUARE PEG Activities + Where square pegs fit in

Annual Report 2021-2022

Prepared By Lauren Baker & Sharon Needham

Profile Of Company



The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the financial statement for the year ended 31st August 2022.

The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the statement of recommended practice.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNMENT & MANAGEMENT Governing Document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

(SORP) Accounting and Reporting by Charities issued in 2005 in preparing the annual report and financial statement of the charity.

Vision & Mission

In order to help to address the social isolation felt by families affected by disability, we need to offer fun enjoyable appropriate leisure activities which they can participate in as a family. For this to happen we liaise with a variety of organisations including schools, statutory organisations such as The Children's Trust, CAT, (Communication and Autism Team) Family Support Workers and Social Workers. Our purpose is to provide appropriate leisure activities for disabled children of all ages by offering a range of activities, both in-house and trips out into the wider community to increase social interaction, giving children and parents the opportunity to make friends, increase confidence and ultimately give children opportunities that they may not get otherwise.

As well as supporting the disabled child, we actively invite siblings as they are automatically disadvantaged, and we support parents and carers with our signposting service. Our thriving WhatsApp group has become a place where parents can chat about their issues with others who have been there, and it provides a peer-to-peer networking space.

Play is a major part of child development, for those with disabilities play in public spaces isn't always easy or accessible or a range of issues.

All children deserve to have fun, but adjustments need to be made for some to allow then to be able to fully participate. Families are more likely to access services where activities have been tailored to their child's disability than trying to make mainstream activities fit. Our message to families who haven't yet tried us, is to come and have a go. The families who access our services have given us fantastic feedback which is why we do what we do.

Highlights In 2021/22



Highlight On December 2021

Sensory Santa. Our Polar Express theme was a big hit. It's really important for Santa visits to be accessible for all.

Highlight On August 2022

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Pauline, a parent who has attended with her children for many years literally went above and beyond completing a parachute jump to raise funds for us.





Parent Views

Gemma -We have been using Square Peg for a number of years now. When we first came Sam, who has autism and ADHD was an anxious and timid little boy who hated to leave the house.

At first Sam would sit by my side or hide under a table and refuse to interact even when the staff encouraged him to participate. Every school holiday we would attend and little by little with the staff's encouragement Sam started to join in with the fabulous activities Square Peg put on for the children.



We are now at a point where Sam is excited to go to "club" as he calls it and he now talks and plays with the other children attending. Recently we started coming to Lego club and gaming club which is Sams's favourite. We have also been lucky enough to attend outside activities such as panto, zoo and trampolining which Sam absolutely loved.

Square Peg has been a lifeline to Sam and me giving us both a chance to make new friends and be in a safe space with other families who understand what it's like to care for a child with additional needs

Becky - Square Peg has been our lifeline. My son has PDA and this is his only consistent place other than our home. His unconventional ways are met with respect and support, and we have never been in an environment that is as accepting as Square Peg.

The staff and volunteers have been amazing with both my children, but they have been exceptional with my son and he has a brilliant bond and trust with them (which is a rare occurrence).

This shows in not just his willingness but his want and excitement to go to the groups. As an anxious neurodiverse parent I, as does my son, find social environments really difficult. So to have the comfort that we do at Square Peg is absolutely invaluable.

I am extremely grateful for the wonderful days we get to take part in alongside the home ed session we attend weekly.

Volunteer Voice

 Cat - I've been working as a volunteer play worker at Square Peg for around 18 months now. I mainly help with the home ed group, for children who are not currently attending a school setting and their families.

The facilities at Square Peg have developed hugely over the time I've been with the team. The garden and outside facilities are flourishing, and it's a real joy to see the children using the space for their imaginative and creative play time.

Square Peg provides a really welcoming environment for all. It's so rewarding to see families return week after week and to see the children develop in confidence over their time with us. Sometimes from very quiet initial visits, to running around with other children playing games as they feel more settled and comfortable.

The variety of sessions run at Square Peg always ensure there's something for everyone, regardless of likes, dislikes, abilities and social skills.

Key to Square Peg's success is that parents and carers can have freedom, time to relax and talk to other adults about their experiences and parenting challenges while the children are engaged by the play workers in a safe and nurturing environment.



CEO Report



Lauren Baker

We started the 2021-22 period with a bang in the form of a party for two children who have attended Square Peg Activities for a number of years since it was a little pop up in church halls. The party was held in our newly refurbished building and was its first time many of our families had seen it.

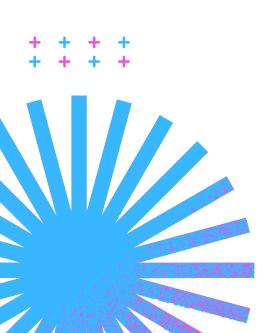
We had so many people volunteer time to get the building work and decoration finished in time and it was really worth it. The new space means that we have tripled our indoor space adding a large play area, gaming room and changing area with bed and hoist. We also doubled our outdoor space with the addition of the now bedded in Forest Garden.

We were able to hold our first onsite, indoor Halloween parties this year which were fantastic. Some children were unable to attend due to COVID restrictions but we still managed to hand deliver them home Halloween packs. Our Christmas events were bigger and better thanks to the new space and we chose the theme of The Polar Express which was lovely as families came in pyjamas and enjoyed hot chocolates. We created a festive journey through our two buildings and gardens underneath decorated marquees ending in our very own toy shop.

The summer schedule was our most ambitious yet, with a different activity every day and we incorporated an "Around The World" theme which meant we brought India, Australia, Jamaica, France, Italy and Mexico to life in theme, music and food thanks to the HAF funding we received. We also hired in a mobile farm, science workshops, circus skills, bubbles and more. On top of this we took our families on a trip to a science centre in Wales, to Twycross Zoo and Strawberry Picking.

This year we've seen our regulars return again and again for after-school clubs, home ed group, gaming club and holiday sessions. We've also met lots of new families many of which are already firm regulars.

2021/22 wasn't without its difficulties but we've grown so much we're almost unrecognisable to a year ago.







Chair of Trustees

After the past couple of turbulent years this year has finally felt like we are getting back to some semblance of normal life. Covid hasn't left us, but it is more of a distant memory that we will never forget and have learned to live with.

It has felt such a relief to be planning "normal" delivery again rather than having to second guess what is coming. However, "normal" also seems to be a thing of the past for us at Square Peg but in a good way.

The interruption has in a way given us an opportunity to take stock and decide what direction to take the charity in the future. What has become apparent is that we need to expand. We are fully aware of the need for our service and that we are only touching the sides of the issue with numbers and to be able to offer more children the opportunity to attend then growth is needed.

In order to grow we first need to consolidate what we have and plan well so the three year plan is to move into new, bigger premises which will incorporate lots of new services and opportunities. We are pleased to report that we had an increase in income of 59.77% from the last financial year. Income is made up from £88,685 from grant funding which is an increase of 83% and £14,865 year from donations which is a whopping increase of 132% on last year!

Because we are now operating on a more "normal" service we have found that we are at the point of reaching capacity and as noted above this means we are looking into moving into bigger, more appropriate premises in the future as we don't want to be in the position of having a wait list for activities as some other facilities have had to adopt. This is imperative as we are referral points for many statutory services and word of mouth is still just as prominent.

Recruitment continues to grow. We have filled the play leader position and this employee has also taken on another role to increase her hours. We now have two more roles to fill, both will help us to grow and move the charity forward toward its goals.

Since our last report we have had two new installations. The new large sensory room within the sensory garden appeals to many and houses our legendary Sensory Santa grotto. The room was funded by a variety of funders and is a work in progress. The other is the gaming room. We are conscious that gaming is part and parcel of many children's lives so we wanted to bring this in so they have a social aspect to it rather than the solitary activity it can be. The gaming club is a popular addition to the Square Peg schedule.



Strategic Priorites



Our strategic priorities continue to be determined by our Purpose, Ethos and Core Values.

Purpose: To provide appropriate leisure activities for disabled children of all ages.

Ethos: A happy child makes a happy family

Core Values: Belong, support, enjoy and learn

Our return to normality has increased attendance and workload and we now start to make plans for the future

Purpose

Stay & Play

Aims and objectives

Our objective was to get back to normality as soon as we could safely do so. We adopted new regimes of cleaning and sanitising to give us all confidence. Our activities resumed and grew with numbers and funding to bigger and better provision.

What we achieved

We have changed our booking procedure and systems to a more user friendly and more streamlined one which is easier for families to book and saves us much needed admin time along with providing us with a more professional service.

- Funding has enabled us to offer new and exciting opportunities and visiting entertainment that has been the reason for the increase in participants.
- It has also given us the opportunity to have dedicated play staff which has meant the children have a point of contact while on-site and gives the admin staff more time to work on growing the charity.

- The new sensory room has given children with sensory needs a space where they can play safely with equipment that is appropriate to need as well as providing a place where teens congregate and sometimes parents who want to sit in peace.
- Summer 2022 was our best yet, funding allowed us to really push the boat out and try out new concepts. Our weekly "country" theme was popular. India gave us a dhol drummer experience, a henna tattooist, Indian food and music. Jamaica brought steel drum lessons, Caribbean food and music and Australia was all bbq and mock beach. Fun for all.
- We saw an increase of 23% of children attending our summer activities with many attending several times during the summer and some several times per week.

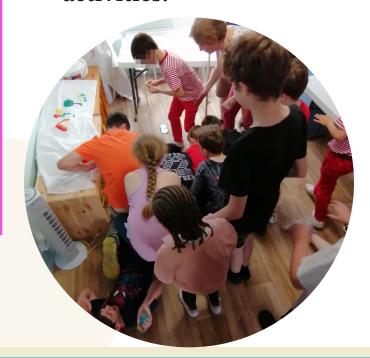
After School Club

Aims and objectives

To continue to grow club and to design and deliver an additional after school club. What we achieved

By 2022 after school "Club" was back in full swing. We had new volunteers – 6th formers from local schools who were a huge hit with the children. Lego (Club used to be called Lego Club) was still a large part of the activity but two gardens were such a draw for the children that many played outside, even in the dark and in the rain. The fact it was locked with no way out allowed parents to relax and let them play out, some never have this opportunity at home.

 Funding allowed us to furnish and equip the new gaming room and gaming club was set up. It is a monthly club and is well attended, so much so that we also incorporate it into our school holiday activities.



Sensory Garden

Aims and objectives The Sensory Garden will remain an outdoor space for children to play in a safe environment with other children to socialise and have fun. It will grow with the maturing of plants and additional trees to improve its sensory feel and attractiveness.

What we achieved

The plants and trees in the garden are maturing and beginning to look more established. The colours, smells and movement of the plants offer a lovely sensory experience for those who need sensory input. New additional plants have been purchased to increase the colour and sensory feel.

Because the space is fully secure, and families are now fully aware of that fact they are able to relax themselves and allow their children wander, explore and have fun while they themselves can sit with a cuppa and chat to other parents, many in the same position as themselves. This has led to many friendships forming as well as peer-to-peer support. The garden is used during the day by pre-school children with the Childminders Group as well as the now established Home Ed group who meet on Tuesdays. The club is delivered by volunteers, there is no education element to the club, more craft and social but the gardens provide the usual safe environment for the children to explore and play.

The gardens, indoor space and sensory rooms are all available for private hire. However this option hasn't yet been fully explored or promoted but it is an option for the future when staffing allows.



Ethos

Aim

Our ethos of a happy child making a happy family stand strong and feedback shows us that our services support this aim.

What we have achieved

Our service has increased in size which is testament to the referrals we receive from statutory services and from word of mouth of our existing families. Our reviews evidence that the idea behind the ethos is working, much of this is due to our concept of providing whole family activities.

Christmas has always been the best part of the year for us. Although now we are more established, and our summer programme is so successful, it is a close call! The Christmas events are booked many weeks in advance with great anticipation. We understand the importance of doing things differently for the children who attend our events and the Santa visit with grotto is no exception. People enjoy our event as it is entirely designed around the needs of the children and because of that there is no queuing, no crowds, no wrapped and then unwanted gifts (ours are laid out like a shop where the child can select their own) no 3 mins with Santa badgering the child if they "have been a good boy/girl," Santa is specially selected and trained to get onto the child's level and take their lead from them. Each year we use a familiar theme, 2021 was Polar Express.

Many children came dressed up in pyjamas (as did the staff) and were awed at the decoration. This all creates a magical experience which the adults enjoy just as much as the children. It truly is the most wonderful time of the year!

The regularity and familiarity of our services are so important to the children who attend. Now Covid is behind us they can rely on us to provide them with their social and leisure activity that is part and parcel of their lives. Over the years and our unwavering support of them, a community has developed, this community is vital for children, siblings, and parents alike and we all work hard to continue and improve it so our ethos of "Happy child equals a Happy Family" perpetuates.

Support

Aims

To provide ongoing support to children with additional needs by providing a range of accessible activities. In addition, to provide support to parent/carers on a range of issues.

What we achieved

Parents are now fully confident that our new approach post covid is safe and secure. This is evidenced by the increase in numbers and attendance. We have been told that outside space is massively important to them and giving children the opportunity to play with peers without parents following them round has made a huge difference to the child's ability to play independently as well as making and keeping friends.

Families tell us that the range of activities available is what makes us so special, that there is always something for everyone regardless of age or ability that makes everyone feel welcome and provided for.

Parents tell us that we provide a safe space for them to relax and enjoy adult company with others in similar situations which gives



them some respite and feeling like they are part of a community.

We strive to create new activities as well as keeping the old favourites to ensure children get new experiences and learn new skills, we continue with our craft and art corner for those who prefer quiet indoor activities while creating exciting new adventures outdoors.

Belong

People who use our services are pivotal to the development and delivery of our activities. We welcome suggestions to make sure they are getting what they want and need rather than us deciding what is good for them. This fosters a sense of being important to the group and belonging. The children have been central to decisions made regarding the new clubs and activities while parent's views are also sought to check they are in agreement.

What we achieved

Giving the children the lead on activities gives them a feeling of belonging and ownership. Our Play Leaders adopted this method during the summer holidays and it was great to see then children using their imagination, working together and some taking leadership roles.

We are forming a new idea where our child service users are welcomed to become young volunteers. We started this with one young man who enjoys gardening, so this is his new role. We are also encouraging others to become buddies for new children who attend as well as other roles.

Learn

Aim

Where we can we add an element of learning into fun activities.

What we have achieved

Learning can come in many different forms.

Working together to build a den or learning how to use science to make dry ice. It could be as simple as learning the process of making a pizza or decorating a cake, or even learning how to manage small animals or to hula hoop. We are keen that children are given the chance to try new things and to teach them how to do something for themselves. Our range of activities throughout the year has given many learning opportunities which the children see as fun.



Enjoy

Fun is our main aim, if the children are having fun the parents are happy, and this goes toward our overall purpose and ethos.

Aims

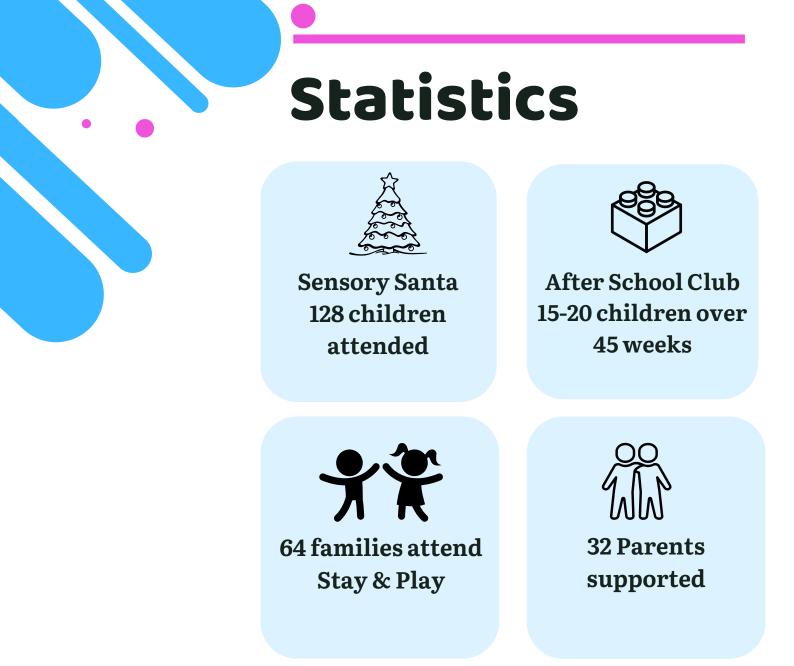
Enjoyment is the aim; enjoyment brings families back time after time and it is the basis of what we do.

What we achieved

With two gardens to explore, a new sensory room, two indoor play spaces and a gaming room, the children have a variety of areas and activities on offer to partake in and enjoy different types of fun. They know they can play in any or all or the areas to enjoy the spaces and feel free.

Parents are safe in the knowledge that there is no way for the children to get out of the premises, so they too can relax and enjoy the time. Our seasonal events, Easter, Summer, Halloween, and Christmas were booked up as soon as the schedules were promoted.

The level of fun and enjoyment that the children have is difficult to determine but we have many testimonials from both the children and the parents explaining just how much Square Peg means to them. These can be viewed on our website www.squarepegactivities.org



IMPACT From a recent survey:

100% of respondents stated our activities has a positive impact on family life. 100% of respondents stated that our activities reduced their children's social isolation.

80% of respondents stated that our activities reduced social isolation for parents.

80% of respondents stated they feel our activities creates a sense of Community.

90% of respondents stated that our activities created inclusive fun.

73.3% of respondents stated that our activities give their children a sense of increased self esteem.

FUTURE PLANS

We are delighted that our activities have now returned to not only how successful they were pre-covid but are now even better. Funding has increased allowing us to offer more exciting experiences and participant numbers and feedback have increased. We have more organisations referring to us than last year and existing families are telling more people about what we do which also increases our reach.

More funding has made a huge difference to our offer. While the gardens and other spaces speak for themselves, to be able to offer a variety of entertainment and activity has proved to be really beneficial to the children.

Many children who attend don't go anywhere else in school holidays so are completely reliant of us to provide a space where the children can be amongst friends and are engaged with activity. It is really important that we get it right not just for our growth as a charity, but we have a responsibility to the children and families.

Over the years we have had 3 members of staff leave us to become teaching assistants in special schools. We have realised that their experience with us is valid and relevant to schools so we know we are doing something right. Although we couldn't be prouder of their journeys and achievement, it often leaves us short staffed.

We now have made some changes to our staffing requirements which has given us better opportunities of hiring the right people for the job and the change in roles means that if one leaves, we don't experience the same level of inconvenience. We have hired external services for HR and bookkeeping which takes the strain off senior management and also means that the contractors expertise ensure we stay compliant.

The changes in staffing will allow us to add in more activities to our current range and will enable us to react to requests as and when they come in from families.

- We will continue to promote our services to statutory bodies to consolidate the knowledge they have in our services for better referrals.
- •We will uphold our policies, procedures and training of staff and volunteers to ensure we are best placed to offer the services to families.
- We will continue to canvas opinion from our service users both young and old to ensure we are providing what they want.
- We will continue with our efforts to secure corporate funding from local businesses and organisations to make Square Peg Activities Limited more financially secure rather than relying on reactive shortterm project fundraising. This will allow us to create more structure and stability and grow as an organisation.

On the last note, we have been approached by Moor Hall Hotel & Spa in Sutton Coldfield who have adopted us as their charity of the year. This high-profile hotel will mean access to other organisations which will be a great platform to promote us and the benefits of having a charity of the year.



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2021 Key Objectives

• 2021 KEY OBJECTIVES

- PURPOSE continue to provide fun activities for disabled children by encouraging them to make suggestions and taking ownership. This objective has been fulfilled and is evidenced by the increase of participation.
- ETHOS ensure that children who attend our services are happy by having great play and learning experiences while the parents feel supported. This objective has been fulfilled and is evidenced by the reviews and feedback we receive from children and parents/carers.
- CORE VALUES by practicing our purpose and ethos the core values will automatically be met. This objective has been fulfilled.Our purpose and ethos support our core values of belong, support, enjoy and learn which is evidenced by not only participation but also the amount of laughter that is around during our activities. This is difficult to determine but our records of new and returning families shows that what we do works.

Our Annual Report vows:

"Recruit at least one local business or organisation to become their charity of choice."

Moor Hall Hotel have adopted us as their charity of the year for 2022/, they have promised to support us practically with hands on work in the facility such as painting and decorating and some much needed repairs and renovations as well as hosting a charity ball which will bring in donations but more importantly give us the opportunity to network with other business in the local area to discuss further corporate funding. "To achieve a modest growth in income and funds"Our financial accounts show this has been achieved

"Introduce a system of client feedback for all our services and activities and use it to improve them "This is still a work in progress although we have adopted the use of Facebook Polls and Survey Monkey which gives us fast accurate results as and when needed.

"Begin a monthly giving subscription system so people can support us financially on a more structured and regular basis" With the uncertainty of how people were affected by COVID-19 we made the decision that this was not the right to time to ask people to make a financial contribution, this has now been shelved until next year.

"Make connections with external organisations to secure learning opportunities to offer in Stay and Play sessions." We have utilised the services of Play Leaders and engaged services for visiting entertainers which has made a huge difference to Stay and Play 2021





Money: Where it comes from & How we spent it



£106,926

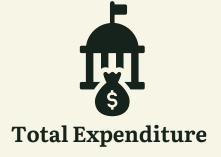


Donations

£22,524



Trust & Foundation Funding £84,402



£68,941

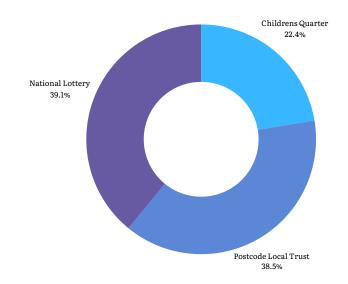
Reserves Policy

Trustees aim to secure a level of reserves to maintain sufficient unrestricted funds of at least six months running costs to ensure Square Peg Activities Limited remains solvent. This amounts to £34,470 based on 2022 output. The charity currently holds reserves of £68,291 unrestricted amounts of £39,333 which equates to 6.8 months running costs.

Charity and Trustees are currently investigating further ways to develop sustainable funding streams. It is the duty of the Trustees to monitor reserves available to be able to fund the activities of the charity and they regularly review the reserves required to meet known and estimated expenditure in furtherance of the charity's objectives and for its administration.

Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds which are received from Trust or Foundation funders can only be applied to defined activities. Restrictions can either arise because of a condition set by a donor/funder on how income may be applied or because an appeal raises funds for a defined area of concern/activity. Restricted Funds carried forward from 2021 are £12,227.





Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks that the charity is exposed to and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud or error. Key risks to Square Peg Activities have been identified and recorded on the Risk Register, alongside appropriate mitigation plans. The charity will report back to the trustees at all board meetings and keep them informed of any new risks identified. Based on the register, the top three principal risks to the charity have been identified as being:

Lack of skill in operating good Governance Lack of Staff /Volunteers Inability for charity service growth

The charity has considered these risks and has the following mitigating actions in place:

- Trustees will upskill their knowledge by accessing information from the charity's commission and being more involved in the charity
- More applications for core costs are being made to funders for salaries and more relationships with local schools are being forged for volunteer's.
- Recruit more staff to enable more services run and to allow management to focus on their own roles.

ADMINISTRATION and REFERENCE Statement of public benefit

Under the Charities Act 2011, charities are required to demonstrate that their aims are for the public benefit. The two key principles which must be met in this context are, first, that there must be an identifiable benefit or benefits; and, secondly, that the benefit must be to the public, or a section of the public. Charity trustees must ensure that they carry out their charity's aims for the public benefit, must have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance, and must report on public benefit in their Annual Report. Square Peg Activities Limited Board of Trustees regularly monitors and reviews the success of the organisation in meeting its key objective of providing appropriate leisure activities for children with disabilities and their families. The trustees confirm, in the light of the guidance, that these aims fully meet the public benefit test and that all the activities of the charity, described in the Trustees' annual report, are undertaken in pursuit of these aims

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of Square Peg Activities 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 judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent

• State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice 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 charity 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 Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. In so far as the trustees are aware:
There is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware

• The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies' subject to the small companies' regime

Registered England & Wales charity number: 1185040 Registered Office: 39 Gate Lane Sutton Coldfield B73 5TR Chief Executive Officer: Ms Lauren Baker Board of Trustees: Mrs Sharon Needham - Chair Ms Lauren Baker Miss Rhona Davis Ms Ramandeep Kaur Mrs Claire Greaves

Thank You

Individuals

Michelle Baker Frank Baker Laura Watts Michael Harrison Craig Winning Pauline Ariss Paul Steadman Berni Needham Cat Bancroft Iqra Waqas Megan Harrison Thomas Cartmell

Charities Children's Quarter Heart Of England Garfield Western True Colours Do It Youth UK National Lottery Community Fund Rotary Club Great Britain Sutton Coldfield Charitable Fund DCMS Youth Investment Fund Sir John Middlemore All Age Autism Awards Cooperative Central England

> Companies Pilotlight Tesco New Oscott Boldmere Hardware Pacific Nurseries

GET IN TOUCH Square Peg Activities Limited 37 Gate Lane Sutton Coldfield B73 5TR info@squarepegactivities.org 0121 824 0508 Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/squarepegcharity