



Registered operating name:

First Opportunities

An independent charity providing therapeutic play and education for babies and young children with special needs

Annual Report 2019 and year-end Accounts

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Charity Objects:

To advance the development of children below statutory school age who require special needs education by:

- (i) providing safe, and satisfying group play, which is tailored to the needs of the individual child, in which parents take part when appropriate;
- (ii) providing an environment in which appropriately qualified specialists may give guidance for the benefit of the individual child and their family;
- (iii) encouraging other charitable activities through which parents may help the children.

Joan Turnbull Opportunity Group for Children with Special Needs
Charity Registration Number 299671



1. WHO ARE WE?

First Opportunities was established in 1974 as: 'The Joan Turnbull Opportunity Group for Children with Special Needs' our registered operating name is: First Opportunities. Our children are between 'birth' and 5 years and come from the New Forest and East Dorset. They have wide ranging disabilities from complex to delayed early years' development. An individual therapy programme is developed for each child. We have two stages: First Steps, for the younger children and Second Steps for children preparing for school. The needs of the child are assessed at entry and a therapy programme devised to help each child's development. Respite and support is provided for the child's family. Input is gained from: parents; our staff; and, where appropriate, external children's specialists. It is reviewed regularly as the child progresses. The NHS Healthcare Providers and the Education Department provide valuable input in the form of: physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and educational psychology.

2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, TRUSTEES, BANKERS AND EXAMINER

The following trustees form the executive committee:

Catherine Bowell
Fiona Morgan
Christine Woolley

Jenifer Gurd
Melanie Alarcon

Officers at 31st December 2019:

Catherine Bowell	(Chairman)
Fiona Morgan	(Vice-Chairman)
Christine Woolley	(Secretary)
Jenifer Gurd	(Treasurer)

Address	Bank	Independent Examiner
c/o Ashley Junior School Normans Way New Milton BH25 5FN	HSBC 87 Station Road New Milton BH25 6JE	MJ Cook Esq ACIB Fair Acre Chilworth Ring SO16 7HW

Management Committee:

The Management Committee comprises of the Trustees, Centre Manager, Jacqui Roberts and Tiffany Pritchard, Office Manager.

3. TRUSTEES' REPORT



2019 has been a very busy year where we have seen our dedicated team offer local children and their families amazing support and care through play and fun ensuring each family receive the care they need in a safe and caring environment.

Our key challenge has been ensuring we have adequate funding to continue the vital work offered to local children. We were informed of changes in the statutory funding late 2018 which would result in a significant loss of income as from the beginning of 2019. After much discussion with Hampshire County Council we have been assured that our statutory funding will not be reduced to the level we were advised of initially. 2019 has brought the challenge of applying for grants and raising our fundraising profile. We have updated our website, leaflets and posters. If you know anyone; organisations, companies or individuals who are able to support us do let us know. Without your support and the community we are not able to continue the essential care and therapy offered to local preschool children with additional needs. Thank you for all your support.

3.1 Staffing

As Trustees, we do appreciate how fortunate we are to have such a dedicated team of staff, key workers and volunteers. The team continues to support and encourage the children as they make social and educational progress and grow in confidence. Our staff carry out invaluable work supporting the families of each child who attends First Opportunities. A huge thank you to each member of our team for all the dedication, support and hard work they give to First Opportunities.

3.2 Fundraising and Local Support

As ever, we are very grateful for the kind support we receive from many members of the local community. Some supporters donate regularly by way of a bank standing order and some individuals, organisations and companies support the charity by way of one-off donations.

This year, we have been fortunate enough to have been awarded a grant by the Beaulieu Beaufort Foundation and that has allowed us to fund direct sessions with a very experienced Educational Psychologist for some children as well as provide valuable training for the staff.

We appreciate the continuing support of our local councillors who not only visit the Group but also direct some of their allocated community grant monies our way.

The children, parents and staff at Busy Bees Preschool have again kindly donated money raised by their sponsored 'welly walk'.

We received magnificent support this year from the various New Forest Probus Clubs, as well as from the ladies associated with them, in particular the Tangent Club.

We must also mention the generosity of, amongst others, the Girls' Brigade (Burton), Barton Court Masonic Lodge, United Reformed Church (Lymington), St. Thomas' Church (Lymington), the New Milton Jubilee Fund, Tesco (who invite us to hold a collection at their store) and one of our parents who did a sponsored run for the Group's benefit.

We were saddened to find that some youths had vandalised our little sensory garden in the Summer but hugely cheered by the public response, not only from our lovely local councillors but also from people who wanted to help us repair the damage and even donate replacement toys. On the subject of the sensory garden, special thanks should go to one of our volunteer helpers, Cathy, and her husband, Pete, who regularly don their gardening gloves and keep the herb and flower beds tidy.

Finally, we would like to take the opportunity to remind our friends that they can also support us for free if they choose our charity when they shop online by using the appropriate easyfundraising or Amazon Smile link. And if anyone is a Co-op member, First Opportunities will receive 1p for every £1 the member spends in a Co-op store whilst we are a nominated charity this year. Please ask any committee member for details.

Thank you for your continuing support.

3.3 Publicity

We encourage all the families (including extended family) who use the Group to make a regular donation by standing order if they are able to do so.

We also encourage all our supporters to spread the word about First Opportunities and we offer talks about the charity and our work to local groups.

We actively engage with health professionals and other stakeholders.

We actively promote our fundraising efforts through social media via our Twitter account and we continue to engage with the early years and additional needs community on both a local and national level.

This year we have refreshed our website and renew all our publicity materials. Please do visit our website and do ask for leaflets and posters to share amongst the community.

3.4 Finance

Our financial remit for this year was to seek more clarity with regards to statutory funding from County. We have received 1.5% increase in funding for the year 2019. It is important to understand that this funding covers less than 50% of our expenditure.

Our statutory funding comes in 3 bands:

- EYE funding which is fixed and non-negotiable.
- SEN Inclusion funding which is capped.
- Disability Access funding which is the gift of the parent.

Put together, this leaves us with a significant uncertainty as to how much funding we will receive for the financial year.

We continue to be well supported by our community, without your support, the Opportunity Group could not run in its present form. Some of this money we have used for essential training (all staff training has to be paid for by the Group) such as whole group Safeguarding, some we have been able to use to purchase professional training from Educational Psychologists for staff working with children with autism and some for a wet-weather box to enable the children to play in the rain.

Whilst we are very aware of the financial and emotional pressures parents are under at this time in their child's life, we continue to encourage them to contribute both financially and practically.

As a final footnote, 2020 will continue to be financially quite difficult for the Opportunity Group, with costs rising and all funding frozen for the current fiscal year.

4. THE ACCOUNTS

2019		Year End Summary		First Opportunities		Balancing of Accounts	
	Year 2019	Year 2018	Expenditure	Year 2019	Year 2018		Year
Income							
Monthly Donations	7,944	8,422	Staff First Steps	20,759	24,123	Total assets from	2018 67388.88
One-off Donations	7,582	8,946	Staff Second Steps	25,554	27,501	Surplus/-Deficit on year	2019 -4620.23
Other Donations	0	0	Other Staff Costs	2,720	3,180	Legacy/windfall Income	2019 0.00
Fees	27,273	26,856	Insurance & Subscriptions	1,530	1,484	Held for payment	2019 0.00
Milk & irregular statutory receipts	0	14	Rent	2,370	2,283	Less held for payment	2018 0.00
Grants	8,425 *2	6,742	Office expenses	1,425	1,463	Spreadsheet balances	2019 62768.65
Investment Interest	105	63	External Bureau Services	1,706	1,113	Total assets at bank	2019 62768.65
Income Tax Refunds	1,752	1,818	Playroom Consumables	776	999		
Fundraising	0	16	Playroom Equipment	102	214		
Miscellaneous	47	7	Parties & Outings	67	281	Error	0.00
Total income	53,128	52,884	Parents' Room	0	0		
			Fundraising	0	30		
			Miscellaneous	669	408		
			Playroom Repairs & Renewals	64	754		
			Office Repairs and Renewals	7	0		
			Total Expenditure	57,748	63,832		
Annual Surplus (Deficit)	(4,620)	(10,948)				When the error is zero	
						the accounts balance	
Legacy/Windfall funds	0	0					
Held for payment to others	0	0					
Account Balances							
Cash in Hand	151	369					
Cash at Bank	62,618	67,020					
Total	62,769	67,389					
Restricted Funds	470	67,389					
Unrestricted Funds	62,299	67,389					
	62,769	67,389					

NB. 1 Each Value shown has been rounded to the nearest £1. This means that the totals may not exactly match the sum of the values above them.

2 Grants - unrestricted 7,955
Grants - restricted 470

5. INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Independent examiner's
report on the accounts**

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name Joan Turnbull Opportunity Group for Children with Special Needs – "First Opportunities"		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2019	Charity no (if any)	299671
Set out on pages	(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2019

Responsibilities and basis of report As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (~~other than that disclosed below~~ *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:  Date: 4/3/2020

Name: MELVYN JOHN COOK

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): A.I.B.

Address: FAIR ACRE, CHILWORTH RING
CHILWORTH
SOUTHAMPTON SO16 7HW