



Registered operating name:

# First Opportunities

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

## Annual Report 2020 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.

Registered charity name:

**Joan Turnbull Opportunity Group for Children with Special needs  
(Founded 1974)**

**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  
Ruth Herrod

Officers at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020:

Catherine Bowell  
(Chairman)  
Fiona Morgan (Vice-Chairman  
and Treasurer from October)

Christine Woolley  
(Secretary)  
Jenifer Gurd (Treasurer till  
October)

**Address**

**Bank**

**Independent  
Examiner**

c/o  
7 Forest Gardens  
Lyndhurst  
Hampshire  
SO437AF

HSBC  
87 Station Road  
New Milton  
Hampshire  
BH25 6JE

M J Cook Esq ACIB  
Fair Acre  
Chilworth Ring  
Chilworth  
Southampton

## Management Committee:

The Management Committee comprises the Trustees, Centre Manager, Jacqui

Roberts (resigned from post August 2020) and Tiffany Pritchard, Office Manager

(resigned from post October 2020)



### 3. First Opportunities Trustees' Report for the year ended: 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

#### 3.1 Difficult Decisions

It was with great regret that the Trustees announced that First Opportunities will no longer operate in its current form and that it will cease to run as a registered pre-school from September 2020. The charity remains open and the Trustees continue to explore ways of supporting local young children with additional needs, with particular emphasis on pre-school aged children, together with their families.

The reasons for the Trustees' decision included:

- Educational policy and practice that does not support a non-inclusive (i.e. purely for children with additional needs) early years' setting, resulting in fewer referrals and late referrals
- Pressures on government nursery funding
- The recent resignation of key staff who will be difficult to replace in the current climate
- Covid-19 statutory guidelines, restricting the ability of children to attend more than one setting and also increased regulation and costs associated with Covid-19

Unfortunately, our remaining staff were made redundant however we are really pleased to have kept in touch with the staff and know that they are working locally sharing their expertise within local pre-schools and specialist schools. We informed Ashley Junior School that we will no longer be using the playroom which we have used for the past 40 plus years. The school has made good use of the sensory room and the sensory garden by modernising the room and space as a specialist unit for children with additional needs. We have kept a small number of toys, books, musical instruments and equipment for future use. All remaining resources were offered to parents, pre-schools and nurseries

in the area thus ensuring they would continue to benefit local pre-school children.

### **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.

Last year we were fortunate enough to be chosen as one of the Co-Op's local designated charity beneficiaries and we were particularly grateful for Co-Op members' support during a year that included unexpected challenges. The Co-Op were advised of the Covid-enforced closure of the pre-school (and of the Trustees' subsequent decision) but they kindly continued to make a final instalment to enable remote support to be offered to the children and their families during lockdown.

### **3.3 Future Plans**

We very much hope that you will continue to support the charity to enable the Trustees to find other ways of supporting babies and young children with special needs in the local area. We are exploring options such as a weekly 'stay and play' group, holiday play sessions, small grants to purchase equipment etc. depending on what we hear from the community.

Our intention, once Government Guidelines allow, is to work with the local community, parents and professionals to assess the needs of for local families and then to collectively progress with the ideas.

## **4. THE ACCOUNTS**

The Trustees are currently consulting with local stakeholders, including supporters, families and professionals, on future plans for the Charity and will be announcing next steps as soon as possible.

## First Opportunities 2020 Year End Summary

Year	Year	Year	Expenditure
Income	2020	2019	Expenditure
Monthly Donations	6,452	7,944	Staff First Steps
One-off Donations	1,930	7,582	Staff Second Steps
Other Donations	1,991	-	Other Staff Costs
Fees	17,270	27,273	Insurance & Subscriptions
Milk & Reg Stat receipts.	-	-	Rent
Grants	510	8,425	Office Expenses
Investment Interest	48	105	External Bureaux Expenses
Income Tax Refunds	2,806	1,752	Playroom consumables
Fundraising	3,220	-	Playroom Equipment
Miscellaneous	-	47	Parties & Outings
			Parents' Room
			Fundraising
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>34,227</b>	<b>53,128</b>	Miscellaneous
			Playroom Repairs &
	-		Office Repairs &
	-		
<b>Annual Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(7,186)</b>	<b>(4,620)</b>	
Legacy/Windfall Funds			<b>Total Expenditure</b>
Held for payment to others			
<b>Account Balances</b>			
Cash in Hand	0	151	
Cash in Bank	55,583	62,618	

**Total**

**55,583**

**62,769**

## Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of First Opportunities

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the First Opportunities for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 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 all 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 in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed:



Name:

M. E. COOK

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any): ACIB

Address:

PAIR ACRE, CHILWORTH RING  
CHILWORTH, SOUTHAMPTON SO16 7HW.

Date:

21/4/21