



Purple Elephant Family Support CIO - Trustees' Annual Report for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

Charity registration number: 1200243

Objectives and Activities

Our charitable objectives are:

To relieve the needs of children and their families in Frome and the surrounding rural area arising from their additional needs, disability or social and economic disadvantage primarily through providing:

- a) early intervention and family support services;
- b) signposting to other organisations for more complex support when required;
- c) recreational and leisure time activities provided in the interest of social welfare, designed to improve their conditions of life.

Main Activities

Purple Elephant runs services for families local to Frome who need support, through activities, events, weekly support groups, 1:1 work, befriending and signposting. Our main services are early years - Small Steps and the Toy Library (lending service and stay and play), family activities during school holidays, child befriending service, the Key Club (youth work) and the Children's Festival project. The families we support face challenges including low income, additional needs and disabilities, poor mental and physical health, substance and domestic abuse, and may be displaced, have behavioural challenges or need parenting support.

The trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit when planning and delivering our services.

Contribution made by volunteers

We are lucky to be supported by a number of loyal volunteers, notably in the befriending service, holiday activities and the Toy Library. The Children's Festival is supported by several helpers. We couldn't run our services without them and we are grateful for their contribution.

Achievements and Performance

One major achievement over the period was starting a youth club for 8 to 13 year olds, which launched in October 2024. We carried out extensive consultation work with young people and liaised with other organisations who have relevant experience. We partnered with Young Somerset to get the youth club off the ground and it has been very successful, supporting a number of local young people to develop their skills and confidence.

We also delivered our 10th Children's Festival and had a record number of people attend, with lots of joyful activities for families to mark our special event. We included activities from the first ever Children's Festival and supported families with additional needs to attend the event.

We continued to build our support for vulnerable families before and on the day with support workers available to enable families to access the event.

We have also continued to deliver our core services together with ad hoc projects as appropriate. At the end of the period we:

- We're supporting 8 children through our befriending service and had 6 on our waiting list. The service has continued to support children with their mental health, with many coming to us with low self-esteem, anxiety and difficulty socialising. Our support is long term, upwards of a year, and we have seen improvements for the children we support, gaining confidence and improving their wellbeing.
- Continued our partnership with Fair Frome to run activities with meals in each school holiday. Our format is well established now and really appreciated by families, who feel supported and safe, having something positive to do together and having access to free meals. We see around 16 children attend each session and run at least 3 sessions each holiday week. We have over 140 families on our database. We ran special sessions at Christmas which included Santa and presents and a silent disco.
- Moved the Small Steps drop-in weekly support group to the Key Centre on Wednesdays and continued outreach work at Tiny Hearts. At the end of the period we were supporting 20 children with 3 on the waiting list. Families present with parenting challenges but also issues around relationships, bereavement, accessing childcare, household budgeting and many with additional needs. Many describe the service as a lifeline.
- Continued the Toy Library stay and play sessions which were very well attended with sessions regularly being full (6 – 8 families) both at Vallis and the Library. Families from varying backgrounds come along and benefit from parenting support, socialising and spending quality time with their children. We were hopeful that the lending service would pick up following a move to Frome Library but, following changes at the Library this was put on the back burner until more appropriate arrangements can be found to reinvigorate it.
- Continued planning year-round on the Children's Festival and for 2024's event we worked together with young people to design and deliver it, celebrating our 10th birthday. The Children's Festival was joyful and impactful for the many families that attended.
- Enhanced our partnership with Fair Frome and started running a supervised play area at some of their services (community pantry and Food @ 5) where children can play in a safe place while their adults access food and advice from both Fair Frome and Purple Elephant, allowing more families to access these services.
- Ran various projects as and when funding was available including Welcome Packs for displaced families and theatre tickets at Christmas. Our Welcome Packs have been very well received and refugee families gave their thanks for the support we have given them, helping them to settle in the country – we also add them to our referred families list and invite them to our holiday activities. We received an increased number of general enquiries from families who aren't referring to a specific service but just asking for our help. This shows that we are well known in the local area and that families are comfortable approaching us directly when they need support.

Trustees and staff met in January 2025 to set our Service Plan for the next 3 years which included the following 4 priorities:

1. Fundraising - with a focus on community fundraising events and collections, securing monthly donations, increasing corporate support and sponsorship, and developing partnerships with local businesses.
2. Consolidation - embedding our services and structural changes to ensure resilience and sustainability.
3. Fair Frome - continue and embed our partnership with Fair Frome including use of their premises.
4. Toy Library lending service - reach more families within the limitations of existing capacity.

Financial Review

While our focus over the period was on consolidation, we also secured a good level of income and had a healthy balance at the end of the reporting period of £136,269.

Our principal source of funds was from grants from various sources including several from Government or local authority sources and a large grant from the National Lottery Community Fund under their Reaching Communities program and a smaller grant from Awards For All. We also received grants from Somerset Community Foundation, Fairfield Charitable Trust, Albert Hunt Foundation and Joyce Fletcher Charitable Trust. We also received an increased amount from community fundraising and local donations. Trustees agreed a Fundraising Strategy which focusses on diversifying our income streams.

Our unrestricted income during the period was £35,014 and restricted/designated funds were £122,567. We opened a fixed term bond of £11,000 to help build our reserves and comply with our reserves policy.

Structure, Governance and Management

Purple Elephant Family Support is a CIO governed by a Foundation Model Constitution.

During the period we had 5 trustees (increased to 6 in February 2025) who met 6 times. The Service Manager and the Office and Finance Coordinator attend the meetings.

Purple Elephant runs some of its services in partnership with other organisations, notably the family activities during school holidays, which are run together with Fair Frome, and the youth club, which is run together with Young Somerset.

We adopted a new Business Continuity Plan and Risk Register, and started work on our Impact Assessment Framework.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Purple Elephant Family Support CIO
Registered charity number	1200243
Charity's principal address	Cheese and Grain, Justice Lane, Frome, Somerset BA11 2HU

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity during the period:

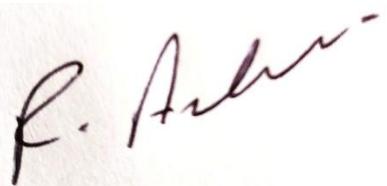
Rachel Griffin (chair), Helen Fielden, Robert Ashford, Karen Stewart, Cath Puddick (Secretary), John Clarke, Jonathan Amis.

There were no corporate trustees and no trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity.

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Rachel Griffin	Robert Ashford
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair	Trustee

Date