



Summary Report 2019-2020

A great place to grow



Our second full year

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate to our local community, our supporters and funders that we have made good progress during the year, managing our affairs efficiently and for the benefit of local children and families. At the end of our second full financial year, the number of families using the centre has continued to grow and their feedback has been overwhelmingly positive as the three short examples below illustrate.

- *'Do not underestimate the value your centre has on those who come.'*
- *'We absolutely love coming to the Maple Tree. My little one has learned to be more confident around other children and adults. He has tried out painting, loads of sand and water play and tried his hand at crafts too. He has developed a love of music and singing and learned about taking turns in a group.'*
- *'The Maple Tree Centre is a fantastic facility much needed by all families with babies and young children. It has been a 'life-saver' for me! Communication and empathy for what can be a stressful time looking after children, it is extremely important. Without this place, I might not have got through some dark times.'*

This year, when describing what The Maple Tree experience means to people, we coined the phrase 'a great place to grow'. The Maple Tree is a growing team, made up of children, parents, volunteers, staff, trustees, supporters and partner colleagues. Beyond the team itself, we have many local parish councils, businesses and organisations who have been most generous in their financial support. To everyone who has helped The Maple Tree team to grow this year, I would like to say a big 'thank you'.

As I write this introduction, I reflect with sadness on how in March this year, our programme was abruptly halted by the Coronavirus pandemic. We quickly created online activities and support that was a great effort and well-received by our families. But the pandemic has caused major financial losses as our income generation stopped while our running costs continued. We must hope that the strength and resilience that has helped us to survive and grow as a team since 2017 will enable us to recover and grow again as we re-open our doors.

We have a particular need at the moment for people to help in running and developing the centre. If you can help as a volunteer, adviser or trustee, please do let us know.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to Anne Purse, our founder member who stood down as Chair during the year. She led our team from the early days of campaigning through to the opening of the centre and the continuing challenge of finding effective ways of funding and meeting the needs of local families. As her successor, I have a hard act to follow, but am grateful that she remains a trustee and loyal supporter of The Maple Tree. Thank you Anne.

Chris Sewell, Chair.

Who we are

The Maple Tree is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed according to its Constitution dated 3 August 2017. It is an independent charity registered with the Charity Commission, number 1174117.

Our trustees

We have a board of trustees that provide governance and manage the centre. The trustees do not receive any remuneration or benefits nor have they had any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the charity during the year. During 2019-20 our trustees were:

Liz Elsom, appointed September 2018

Jane Lightfoot (Vice-chair and secretary) appointed July 2019

Ros Macleod-Timms, appointed December 2019

Charlie Payne, appointed November 2017, resigned November 2019

Anne Purse, appointed August 2017

Chris Sewell (Chair) appointed August 2017

Amanda Smith (Treasurer) appointed September 2018

Our staff

During 2019-20 we fulfilled one of our aims to increase our staffing complement working directly with families. By the end of the year we employed three part-time staff to deliver the core programme for a total of 40 hours a week and a part-time administrator for 16 hours a week. Additionally, we used the services of three self-employed individuals to cover weekend activities, cleaning and garden maintenance. One member of staff was on maternity leave for part of the year and her sessions were covered by a team of volunteers. We also used professional financial services to help us fulfill our responsibilities for pay and pensions.

Our volunteers

In 2019-20 we increased our volunteers by two. Volunteers helped at play sessions and with fundraising. All our volunteers who help at sessions have undertaken checks with the disclosure and barring service (DBS) and have received first aid and food hygiene training.

For the future

- We want to strengthen our governance and management through recruiting more trustees
- We want to continue to increase the range of our programme so we reach more families and support differing needs.

What we did

Our aim is to give every child and family in our area the best start in life, especially families with children aged under 5. In 2019-20 we delivered at least one session every weekday at the centre, provided outdoor summer activities in two locations, delivered story sessions in Wheatley library and supported a stay and play session at Forest Hill from October 2019. We also provided sessions for dads and grandads on the third Saturday of every month.

We also offered a number of extra activities according to identified need, such as first aid for families, holiday activities for school-age children and baby massage. In addition, other professionals used our centre to provide services for families. These included health visitors who ran a well baby clinic every Wednesday and Oxford Sling Library who promoted use of slings for babies every alternate Wednesday. Although we had to shut the centre in March 2020 due to coronavirus restrictions we continued to offer activities and services online.

We promoted community use and activities through the year by hiring out the facilities to local groups such as yoga, keep fit and for children's parties. The centre was also used by the local nursery school over lunch times and by Oxfordshire children's services team to provide supervised contact visits.

We have a core catchment area of Wheatley and surrounding villages but encourage any families with children under 5 to attend the centre. During 2019-20 we increased the number of families we supported from 276 families to 434. Families attended from a wider area than our catchment from 50 separate villages, towns and from Oxford. Over a third of families came from Wheatley.

We also started a forum to meet with other providers of services for under fives, initially those on the same site as the centre. This was one of our aims for 2019-2020.

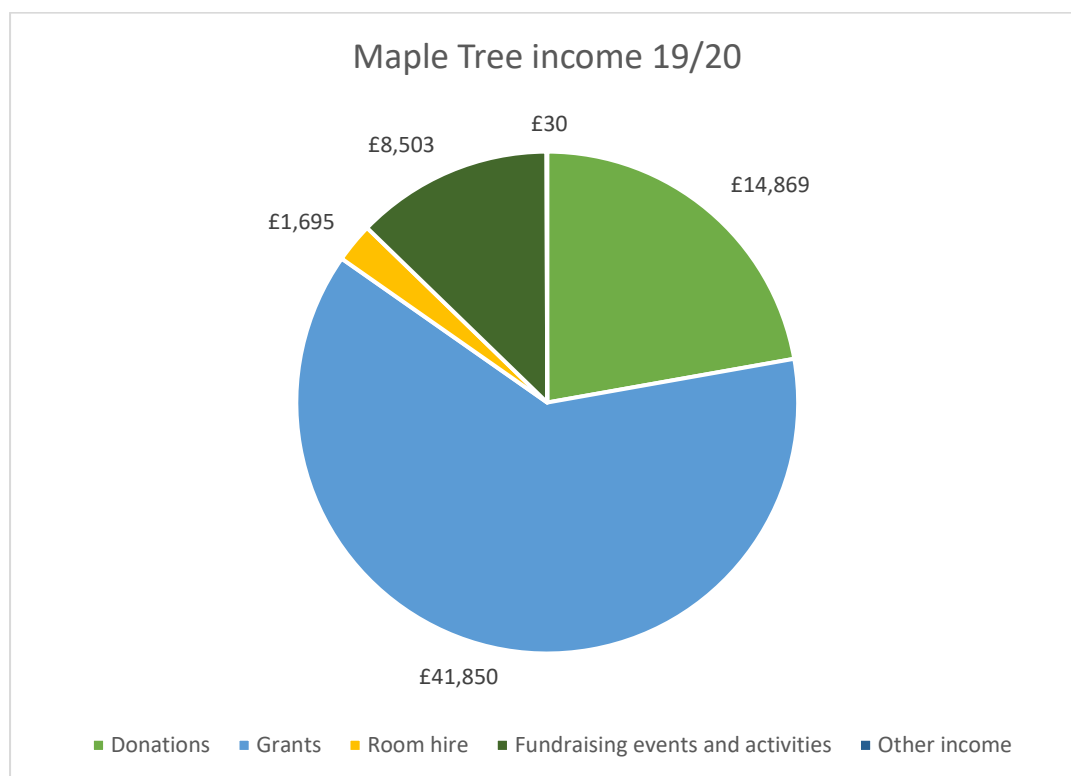
For the future:

- We intend to continue to focus on those families within our catchment area who do not participate, so that we can develop new strategies and services to meet their needs.
- We hope to expand the range of services and activities we provide as we begin to reopen our centre.
- We intend to continue to develop closer links with other providers of services for under fives in our catchment area to help provide more holistic and complementary services for families.

Our finances

Income

Our income for the year was £66,948, with grants providing the largest share of funding.



Our principal sources of grant funding were from Oxfordshire County Council (£15,000 County Councillor's Priority Fund, £7,500 final transition grant¹ funding), and a total of £12,350 from local Parish Councils. We also received grants from a number of trust funds and charitable organisations including the Pye Trust (£5,000).

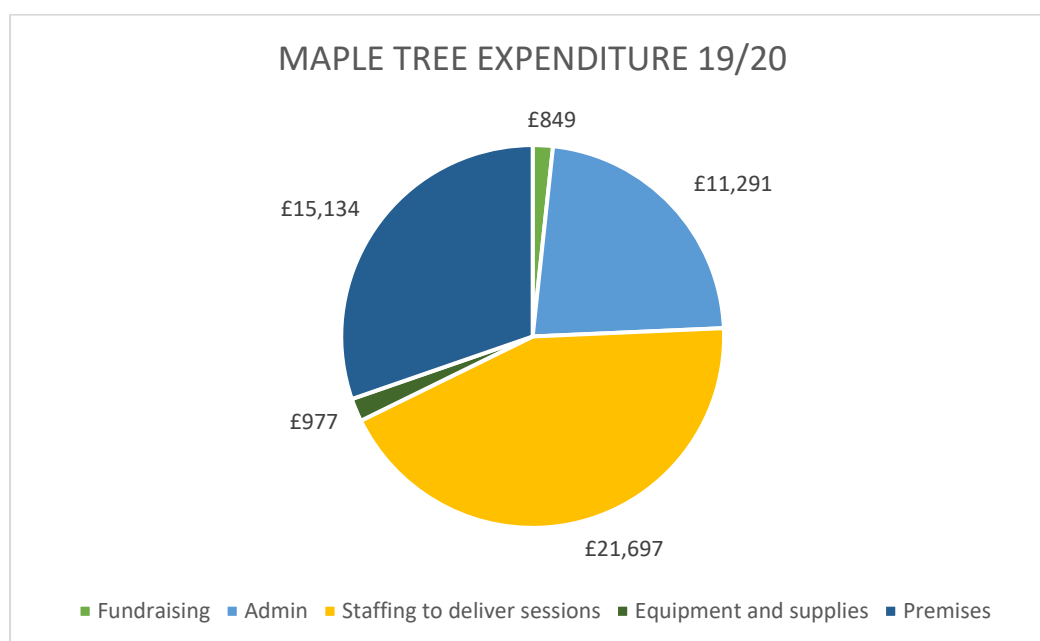
The increase in community support for the centre has been very pleasing with donations received from local well-wishers, businesses and organisations. During the year we increased the number of charity collecting tins in shops and other outlets from four to thirteen bringing an income of £561. In addition, we raised funds through the SODC lottery, through sale of pre-loved goods at the centre and through shopping cash back schemes. Voluntary donations made by users of the centre attending sessions amounted to £4,232. During the year we launched a 'Friends of The Maple Tree' regular donation scheme which is slowly but steadily gaining support; pleasingly much of this is from people within our catchment area who value what the centre is offering. We hope to raise £1,000 from this scheme in 20-21.

¹ Three-year stepped funding given to former OCC children's centres now being run by charities

We hire out The Maple Tree premises for evening classes and social activities like children’s parties and last year this raised £1,695. In addition, fundraising activities brought an income of £8,809 compared with £1,234 the previous year. These activities included an auction, a fete, a grand draw and a magic show, and family learning events that included outdoor, craft and science activities. We held several partnership events like a Bubbles Lab workshop with Oxford Science Museum and Christmas tree sales in partnership with the Scouts; these brought an income and also introduced new families to the centre.

Expenditure

Our expenditure for the year was £49,949. At the end of the year the funds of the charity were £31,298, an increase of £16,999 from March 2018.



Staffing related costs made up the most significant part of the expenditure in 2019-20. During the year we employed a new part time family support worker giving us three part time members of staff focused on family work, and a part time administrator. This enabled us to ensure cover for all of our sessions and to support the development of a new parent and child group at Forest Hill. Additionally, we continued to use skilled family support workers on a sessional basis to provide Saturdays and adhoc cover, and we contracted book-keeping and payroll services.

Premises costs are the second greatest area of expenditure with £10,500 paid in rent to Oxfordshire County Council plus costs for utility bills, maintenance and cleaning.

Besides staffing and premises, we spent money on the supplies and resources to run sessions, on marketing and communications, administrative costs, website development, licences, insurances and subscriptions, and a small amount to support fundraising activities.

Building reserves

In accordance with our reserves policy we have an intention to ensure the long-term

sustainability of the charity by building a sufficient reserve of funds to enable us to manage in an emergency. As a first step, in August 2019 we placed £10,000 in a one-year savings account with the Charity Bank.

Trustee remuneration

The trustees did not receive any remuneration for carrying out their trustee responsibilities.

Looking forward

We continue to seek to build a broad and sustainable base for the future operation of the charity without compromising our fundamental principle of providing high quality, supportive and affordable services for all local families with young children. We recognise both the challenges and possibilities going forward.

Our financial challenges:

- As the financial year drew to an end The Maple Tree had to close the physical building under Covid-19 restrictions. Although we continue online and via telephone there will be a significant drop in income from session donations, premises hire, sale of goods and fundraising and family learning events. There's also likely to be an impact on the ability of community members and businesses to support us, and with shops closed there will be little income from collection tins. At the same time many of the day to day costs, like rent, continue.
- There will be costs associated with re-opening the centre at a future date and a likely increase in cleaning costs.
- There will be costs associated with maintaining the building, including establishing the cause of wet weather flooding in the garden, and also with further development of indoor and outdoor spaces for family friendly learning.
- Our transition grant funding from Oxfordshire County Council was reduced to £7,500 for 19-20 and there will be no transition grant funding in 20-21.
- As with most small charitable organisations we are dependent on significant amounts of work by trustees, staff and volunteers to generate funding and also the availability of funds to bid for. Our ambition is tempered by our capacity to pursue funding opportunities in addition to managing the charity.

Our possibilities and opportunities

- We have a robust fundraising plan for 2020.
- We have a committed group of trustees, staff and volunteers who seek out opportunities for increasing the charity's finances.
- We are part of a group of children's centres in South Oxfordshire that meet regularly to share opportunities and provide mutual support.
- We are well supported by the local community and are planning further joint fundraising events in the future.



This is a summary of the main report. Copies of the full report and accounts for 2019-20 are available on request

The Maple Tree is required to produce an annual report and accounts in compliance with the Charities Act 2011, the charity's constitution and the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Our catchment area

We serve the villages of Beckley, Cuddesdon, Denton, Drayton, Elsfeld, Forest Hill, Garsington, Great Haseley, Great Milton, Holton, Horspath, Little Haseley, Little Milton, Littleworth, Marsh Baldon, Milton Common, Nuneham Courtenay, Rycote, Shotover, Stanton St John, Tiddington, Toot Baldon, Waterperry, Waterstock, Wheatley and Woodeaton.

Acknowledgements

The Maple Tree Board of Trustees are grateful to our parents and carers for their financial contributions when attending sessions and to some very generous local individuals for their financial support. We thank the following organisations for financial support in 2019-20:

Oxfordshire County Council
Cuddesdon and Denton Parish Council
Forest Hill and Shotover Parish Council
Garsington Parish Council
Great Milton Parish Council
Holton Parish Council
Horspath Parish Council
Little Milton Parish Council
Great Haseley Parish Council
Yemaya's Kitchen
Waitrose, Headington
RCP
Merton College

Stanton St John Parish Council
Wheatley Parish Council
ASDA Superstore
Mazars UK
Thame Rotary Club
Holton Church congregation
Pye Charitable Settlement
Wheatley Society
Jesus College
Wadham College
Christchurch College
New College
St John's College

Thank you to the following organisations that have supported us with prizes and auction lots and/or hosted a collection tin.

Arbequina restaurant and bar
Asda
Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust
Cinnamons restaurant
Co-op Travel
Cornfield Bakery
Cricks Butchers, Wheatley
Costcutter, Wheatley
Fox and Goat, Tiddington
Gail Kharegat, Bowen Technique therapist
Horspath Village Stores
Jangneus
Karen Jane Boutique
Manoir aux Quat' Saisons
Mill View Garden Centre
Oxford United FC

Oxspines Osteopathy
RCP
Sandy Lane Farm, Tiddington
Shotover Brewery, Horspath
Studley Wood Golf Club
Sunny Hill Vineyard, Horspath
The Bull at Great Milton
The New Club, Wheatley
The Oxford Artisan Distillery
The Post Office at the Old Bank
The Wheatley Society
Waterperry Gardens
Waterstock Golf Club
Waterwood Contracts
Wheatley Farm Shop
Yemaya's Kitchen

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