

# ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2021

## DIDCOT TRAIN - INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE

Patron: Lord Vaizey  
Chairman: Brian McNamee

Registered Charity No:  
1176258

[didcottrain.org.uk](http://didcottrain.org.uk)



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## Objectives and Activities

Didcot TRAIN - Inspiring Young People ("TRAIN") is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation ("CIO") registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales under charity number 1176258.



We operate within the town of Didcot, Oxfordshire and work in the gap in provision of youth services for children and young people ("YP") who do not easily engage with mainstream provision but nevertheless are vulnerable and at high risk and are exposed to educational failure, crime, child sexual exploitation, child drug exploitation, alcohol and substance abuse, and other risky behaviours. TRAIN's mission is to seek out, engage and empower these children and YP and improve their longer-term life chances.

## Chairman's Welcome and Introduction

I am delighted to present to you the Annual Report and Accounts of TRAIN for the year ending 31 March 2021. As has been the case for many charities, COVID-19 has impacted our operations and continues to do so: we have yet to find suitable alternative premises following our move from 118 Broadway in November 2019 and have had to deal with ongoing disruption to our service provision resulting from numerous lockdowns and staff absenteeism due to illness and self-isolation requirements.

Despite these challenges, we have continued to support the development, health and emotional well-being of vulnerable young people in the Didcot area. This is in no small part thanks to the Didcot Methodist Church who have most generously continued to allow us to temporarily base our team at their offices whilst we search for new premises.

The extended lockdowns have, however, impacted our service provision as we were unable to provide certain core services, such as detached, outreach and school holiday trips, during these periods. We also had to postpone our Annual Celebration Evening as well as the residential camps over the summer in France under our Explore More programme. As a proportion of our funding is linked to these service provisions, we took the decision in April 2020 to defer the replacement of our Youth Work Delivery Manager and to furlough one part-time Youth Worker. However, following our success in obtaining funding from the National Lottery Community Fund and PJT Partners (UK) Ltd in May 2020, the furloughed youth worker was able to quickly return to work in June 2020. First time funding from the Society of the Holy Child Jesus Christ CIO meant that in October 2020 we were able to appoint a new Director of Youth Work Services.

In response to the pandemic, we moved many of our services to digital platforms so that we could continue to provide support throughout the lockdown period. Consequently, despite the difficult operating conditions we were able to meet most of our KPIs for the year ended March 2021, which was critical to us receiving a revenue grant from South Oxfordshire District Council ("SODC") for the financial year 21/22.

The Board of Trustees remained relatively stable over the period, except for the planned retirement of our business development trustee, Luke O'Neil, who, for positive personal reasons, did not stand for re-election after his three-year term of office expired. I would like to thank him for the tremendous contribution he has made to TRAIN. Subsequent to our year end, we were delighted to appoint Ieva Vitolina as our new business development trustee. During the year, the board was augmented by the appointment of Matt Bezzant as Secretary. However, for personal reasons, he will be retiring at the end of 2021 and we are therefore currently recruiting for this role.

On the financial side, our receipts for the period were £149,465 (PY: £142,580), whilst expenditure was £112,314 (PY: £123,939). Our unrestricted cash reserves at 31 March 2021 were £41,970 (PY: £41,255), thus enabling us to maintain our cash reserves at around 4.5 months of expenses, in line with our policy of maintaining reserves at 4 to 6 months of forecast expenses.

Finally, I would also like to express my heartfelt and sincere thanks and gratitude to the individuals and families who give private donations and the following supporters of TRAIN, without whom we would be unable to undertake our work serving our community and the young people of Didcot:

**Angus Lawson Memorial Trust**  
**All Saints Church**  
**Awards for All**  
**Children in Need**  
**The Community Safety Partnership**  
**Community of St. John the Baptist in**  
**Begbroke**  
**Didcot Baptist Church**  
**Didcot Methodist Church**  
**Didcot Town Council**  
**Great Western Railways (Didcot)**

**Infineum UK Ltd**  
**National Lottery Community Fund**  
**Oxfordshire Community Foundation**  
**OCC Youth Opportunity Fund**  
**PJT Partners (UK) Limited**  
**Pryors Didcot**  
**The Didcot & Wallingford Rotary Club**  
**Society of the Holy Child Jesus Christ CIO**  
**SODC**  
**Soha Housing**  
**Tesco**  
**The Good Exchange**

**TRAIN Chairman**

*Brian McNamee*



## Youth Work Report



### Introduction

We had to suspend all of our face-to-face delivery for large parts of the year due to the successive lockdowns. Given this, and uncertainties over funding, we chose to operate with a reduced team for most of this financial year. Where possible we moved our services to a virtual platform so that we could continue to support the YP in the Didcot area.

However, given the face-to-face nature of most of our core service delivery, i.e. detached, outreach, mentoring and holiday activities, the prolonged lockdowns made it difficult for us to meet our annual KPI and grant targets. We therefore worked closely with our funders to find alternative delivery routes and performance metrics. We would particularly like to thank the Angus Lawson Memorial Trust, Children in Need and the Community Safety Partnership for their flexibility in this regard.

Our current team consists of a Youth Work Delivery Manager and four part-time Youth Workers, representing 3.7 Full-Time Equivalent employees (FTEs), down from 4.0 last year.

We are currently recruiting for another part-time Youth Worker but believe we are well positioned to continue to deliver our face-to-face services.

#### Core work



As lockdown eased, we recommenced our core youth work streams of detached and outreach, holiday activities, 1:1 mentoring and group mentoring. Following our success in obtaining funding from the Youth Opportunity Fund, we also launched a youth club in June 2021.

## Detached and Outreach Youth Work



Our detached work traditionally involves us approaching YP in locations where they tend to spend their time across the town. Our outreach delivery is similar to detached but involves us setting up base at a location around the town and informing YP where we are via social media. Our Outreach sessions have also seen our youth workers setting up Outreach posts in secondary school grounds. This has been instigated by schools as we improve our relationship with them and their YP.

Both of these activities were curtailed during the year and whilst we moved to virtual drop-in sessions for Youth Workers to keep in touch with YP where we had established a relationship pre-pandemic, it was difficult to engage with new YP during the period.

### *Case Study - Detached and Outreach work*

*Whilst on a Detached session, youth workers approached a local skate park, where our staff could see a group of YP hanging around on the outskirts of the park. X, a young person known to Didcot TRAIN was amongst the group. Our team could tell something had happened due to their body language. When approached, they informed us that the police were at the skate park, so they had run off. They were unsure if they were going to get into trouble.*

*The youth workers asked X if they would like us to approach the police on their behalf to find out if they were allowed in the skate park. This was at a time when Covid-19 rules and guides were still very confusing for many people. X said they were happy for our youth workers to ask on their behalf.*

*The police officers approached, and our youth workers introduced themselves and explained the situation. They informed us that they had just come to say 'Hi' to the YP but that they had run off. Because of the way the YP had behaved, the police were concerned there was criminal activity going on. Our youth workers explained that the YP had panicked because they were concerned that they had misunderstood the guidelines. This positive engagement from Didcot TRAIN staff supported introductions with YP and the police officers and resulted in the YP continuing to use the skate park.*

*After this incident X and their friends, who would not normally engage with TRAIN, have become happy to speak with our youth workers when they are seen on detached.*

## Mentoring

We offer YP both one-to-one and group mentoring sessions and have also continued our work with local schools.

### *1:1 Mentoring*

Throughout the year we have continued to utilise our mentoring programme as a means for supporting YP particularly likely to benefit from additional tailored support. Despite the lockdowns, we were able to continue this provision as it translated relatively easily to online sessions.

### *Group Mentoring*

#### *Young Women's and Young Men's Groups*

These two gender specific groups have remained important in offering YP safe environments in which to enhance understandings of topics particularly relevant to their gender group. From discussions to team building and crafts, different techniques have been used to nurture knowledge and thinking, communication and awareness skills. Topics addressed and activities run are also largely influenced by the preferences of attendees. Examples of the sessions that have been delivered in these groups include:

- Using interactive website 'Be the Judge' to educate YP on court sentencing, by allowing YP to evaluate various crime and drug related scenarios.
- 'Reach Out': encouraging YP to consider the different services and individuals they can reach out to for support, writing them out onto paper hands as a regular reminder.
- Designing and pitching milkshake creations to develop creativity and problem-solving skills and boost YP's confidence in presenting their ideas.

### *Dinner & Debate*

Dinner and Debate has also continued to be a successful aspect of our provision. Overarching aims and topics correspond to those for Young Women's and Young Men's, but more typically addressed through group discussions or debates. Mid-way through YP head to our local Greggs the Bakers, which generously provides us with fresh food at the end of its business day, to collect donated food which can be enjoyed communally during continued discussions.

### *Dinner & Debate Group Mentoring Case Study*

*X has been engaging with Didcot TRAIN since 2019. They have attended a range of our provisions in that time especially our 'Dinner & Debate' sessions. This young person is being supported by social services and has a history of criminal activity. During the pandemic they struggled to engage with Didcot TRAIN via our online provision. However, since the easing of rules surrounding our sessions and group sizes, they have become a regular face again at 'Dinner & Debate'.*

*During the pandemic X's home life had become increasingly chaotic and disruptive, and X had stopped attending college. Since the return of our face-to-face provision, X has become more trusting of our youth workers and has built an excellent rapport. This has meant that X's only stability at this time has been attending sessions regularly with Didcot TRAIN, where they can share their own concerns and worries and ask advice.*

*This positive and trusting relationship resulted in X informing a youth worker of a safeguarding concern, of which our staff had to escalate to the Police and MASH team. X was not angry or upset that this had been escalated but trusted the support from youth workers at Didcot TRAIN.*

*X has also used the safe non-judgmental space at Dinner & Debate sessions to discuss they aspirations of having a house and a family soon. This led to youth workers having a session on teen pregnancy, as they explained they wanted to be a parent so they could get a house, youth workers had a critical conversation about whether having a baby just to get a house was the right thing to do and if there could be other ways of getting a house. Important discussions like this are important to support YP making the right decisions in life.*

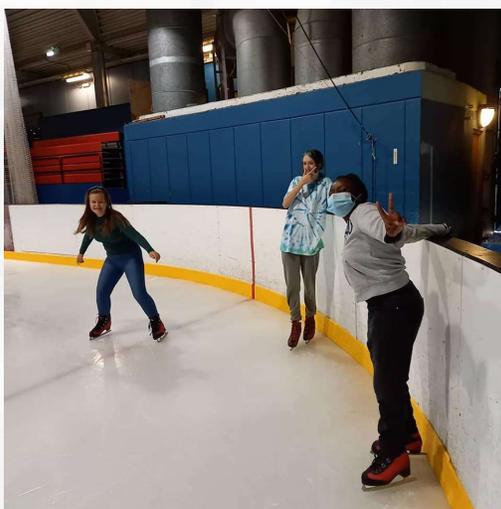
## Head Start Programme



Our Head Start programme was launched in 2019 and is an early intervention programme offering group mentoring sessions to Year 6 11-year-olds at local primary schools. This programme is supported by the Angus Lawson Memorial Trust who has confirmed, following an assessment our Year 2 performance, that they will continue to fund the programme for another year. Despite the lockdowns, we were able to run a number of these programmes in local schools.

Each programme comprises six sessions focused on either: Promoting Wellbeing and Exploring Mental Health, Positive Behaviour in School, Team Building and Self-Esteem. This also contributes towards building an effective transition into secondary school.

## Holiday Programmes



We were unable to run face-to-face activities, trips and workshops for YP during the financial year due to the pandemic but were delighted to be able to recommence our holiday programme in the summer of 2021.

## Youth Club



Following our success in obtaining two-year funding from the Youth Opportunity Fund, we launched a youth club in the financial year. Launching during the pandemic was not ideal as we were unable to host face-to-face groups. However, as with much of our provision, this did not stop us, but meant we needed to look at alternative ways of engaging young people.

Our online youth club started in October 2020. This provided online team activities and polls for young people to engage with what they would eventually like to see in a face-to-face youth club.

In May 2021 we hosted our first face-to-face youth club at the new Southern Community Centre on Great Western Park, this session now is run twice weekly. This new centre has excellent facilities which means Didcot TRAIN can host lots of different activities.

### Activities include:

- Gaming
- Table tennis
- Arts and crafts
- Outdoor games e.g. basketball and football
- Cooking





Over the last few months, we have seen large groups attend both evening sessions. YP come to engage with all the activities offered but also sometimes just to use the space to meet friends and chat to youth workers for advice.

We were also pleased to have Colin, a professional bicycle mechanic, attend one of our sessions in August to show young people how to look after their bikes.

### Investing in Young People's Futures

In order to help YP attain stability in their lives, we aim to invest in the futures of the YP we are working with throughout the year. This typically involves giving YP opportunities to gain recognition for their achievements through awards and qualifications. Unfortunately this programme was suspended due to the pandemic in 20/21.

### Participation Pathway

Our youth participation work is an important aspect of our delivery. Our Youth Workers aim to work with a number of YP engaged on our Participation Pathway, which gives YP the opportunity to gain greater responsibility and influence TRAIN's work by engaging with us at a variety of different strategic levels:

- **Young Volunteers:** YP that are at the beginning of their additional engagement with TRAIN and wish to offer their time to support the young ambassadors and young leaders at events.
- **Young Leaders:** YP who take a leadership role in planning and delivering events, trips and local social action projects to benefit other young people and their community.
- **Young Ambassadors:** YP are engaged at a strategic level and represent TRAIN and other young people at local community and regional meetings, as well as interviewing volunteers and staff.

### [Explore More Programme](#)

Explore More is an intensive personal development programme which culminates in YP attending a residential camp in the south of France. These residentials are made possible by the philanthropy of Mr Voorvaart, a Dutch entrepreneur and olive farmer, who generously hosts the YP at his olive farm, covers our transport, food and accommodation costs and provides a programme of activities with trained guides.

Unfortunately due to the pandemic we had to cancel the 2020 programme and have postponed the 2021 programme due to continued uncertainties surrounding foreign travel. We look forward to recommencing the programme in 2022.

### Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic substantially impacted our operations due to the reliance on face-to-face delivery for the majority of our services. However, we successfully transferred the majority of our programme to virtual platforms in order to support our YP and prevent the pandemic negatively impacting the rapport our youth workers had built with YP.

We are delighted that we have now been able to re-commence our face-to-face services and look forward to engaging with more YP in the Didcot area.

We would like to thank all who have supported TRAIN's youth work throughout the year, including all the trustees for their incredible hard work, the amazing volunteers for their inspiring degree of support and, of course, all the YP who have been a privilege to work with.

### **Youth Work Delivery Manager**

*Alex McSweeney*

## Financial review

Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

As a CIO with annual income of less than £250,000, TRAIN prepares its accounts using the Receipts and Payments method permitted by section 133 of the Charities Act 2011. TRAIN started the year with cash balances of £68,036 and ended it with cash balances of £105,186, an increase of £37,150.

### Income

	20/21	19/20
	£	£
Churches	6,914	7,814
Grant makers	122,004	118,255
Events	0	177
Donations from individuals and corporates	18,452	11,757
Other income (incl. from charitable activities)	2,095	4,577
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>149,465</b>	<b>142,580</b>

We are grateful to our grant-makers and company donors in the year:

- All Saints Church, Didcot
- Angus Lawson Memorial Trust
- Awards for All
- Children in Need
- the Community Safety Partnership
- the Community of St John the Baptist
- Didcot Baptist Church, Didcot
- Didcot Methodist Church, Didcot
- Great Western Railways (Didcot)
- Infineum UK Ltd
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Oxfordshire Community Foundation
- PJT Partners (UK) Limited
- SODC
- Soha Housing
- Society of the Holy Child Jesus Christ CIO
- Tesco
- The Good Exchange
- Youth Opportunity Fund

We are also grateful to all our private donors, for their continued loyalty and generosity. In particular, we would like to extend our grateful thanks to the following:

- All our regular donors
- Everyone who donated during the St Peter's online quiz night

### Expenditure

TRAIN's expenditure for the period can be analysed as follows:

	20/21	19/20
	£	£
Staff Costs	99,144	101,980
Building and Services Costs	(360)	6,993
Supplies and Consumables	2,684	2,765
Insurance	1,689	1,285
Project costs (incl. Residential trips)	2,961	10,486
Purchase of Assets	6,196	430
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>112,314</b>	<b>123,939</b>

**Staff costs:** In April 2020, as a result of the pandemic, we deferred the replacement of our Youth Work Delivery Manager and furloughed one part-time Youth Worker. However, as a result of successful fundraising and our move to online provision, we were able to go back to full strength by September. At the end of the year we operated with a full-time Youth Work Delivery Manager and four part-time Youth Workers representing 4.6 FTEs. Last year we operated with an average of 2.7 FTEs.

**Building & Services costs:** We had no premises during the year and received a credit from our electricity supplier on the termination of our contract.

**Supplies & Consumables:** These primarily reflect stationery, printing, website and subscription costs.

**Project costs:** This reflects the cash costs we incur relating to our detached and outreach work, holiday activities, mentoring and international residential trips organised for young people under our Explore More Programme. Project costs were lower in the current financial year primarily because the residential trips scheduled for Summer 2020 and all holiday activity programmes were cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

**Asset Purchases:** Four laptops with monitors, two tablets and four mobile phones were purchased in the year and our website was redesigned.

### Excess of Payments over Receipts

TRAIN had a surplus for the year ended 31 March 2021 of £37,150. This surplus was primarily due to the deferment of service provision, in particular the youth club, as a result of the lockdowns.

### Cash Balances

TRAIN's reserves lie in its unrestricted cash balances of £41,970 at 31 March 2021. The trustees have considered what an appropriate level of cash reserves would be, to provide stability to the operation, manage the cash flow timing differences between payments for youth work and receipts of income and cover the potential gaps between the end of one source of income and the securing of another. The trustees consider a cash reserve of between 4 and 6 months of expenses to be appropriate.

At the current scale of operations, with 4.6 FTEs as of 1 April 2021, the year-end unrestricted cash balance represented around 4.5 months of expenses. The trustees therefore consider the cash balance at the year-end to be appropriate for TRAIN's needs.

*Nicole Guest ACA*

**Treasurer**

## Structure, governance and management

The trustees of TRAIN are responsible for overseeing the running of the charity. The framework for the operation of TRAIN is set out in its Constitution dated 3 August 2020. The trustees hold a monthly meeting, with additional meetings as necessary, as they also double up as the management team. Individual trustees have responsibility for managing the charity's staff, finance, governance, fundraising, IT, premises and communications. Each individual trustee has responsibilities on which they lead. The chair of the trustees oversees all aspects of the charity's activities.

Alex McSweeney, our Youth Worker Delivery Manager, is currently responsible for the direct management of our Youth Workers. Alex reports to an Operations trustee, Maria Semmonds, who is responsible for overall staff management.

### Independent Review

TRAIN's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 have been independently examined by Esther Woollgar, ACA.

### Public Benefit Statement

TRAIN's trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties.

### Recruitment and Appointment of New Trustees

The trustees regularly review the balance of skills, competencies and experience which are needed to ensure that the charity continues to meet its aims and fulfil its charitable objects. Historically potential new trustees have been found through advertisements and through word of mouth. New trustees are appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

The policies and procedures for the induction and training of a new trustee are that, before appointment, the person is invited to meet with some of the trustees and attend a trustee meeting in order to become familiar with TRAIN's work. The potential trustee then has the opportunity to further discuss the factors involved in becoming a trustee before a decision concerning his/her appointment is made. All new trustees receive a copy of TRAIN's constitution and latest Annual Report and Accounts and are required to sign a Declaration of Eligibility.

The Structure for the past year

#### Current Trustees

Brian McNamee (Chairman)

Matthew Bezzant (Appointed 8 September 2020)

Nicole Guest

Greg Kurnikov

Maria Semmonds

#### Resignations in the Financial Period

Luke O'Neil (Resigned 9 December 2020)

James Seddon (Resigned 7 June 2020)

#### Appointments after the Financial Period

Ieva Vitolina (Appointed 14 September 2021)



TRAIN Chairman: Brian McNamee

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