



Bear Necessities

Trustees Annual Report

6 April 2023 – 5 April 2024

Charity Information Bear Necessities SC051215
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Message from our Chairperson

Welcome to Bear Necessities Annual Report for 2023/2024. It's been another exciting and sometimes challenging year at Bear Necessities. It's a privilege to continue to serve as the Chair of Bear Necessities and to share another report with you, friends, supporters and funders of Bear Necessities who support us to ensure that no child goes without. With one in four children in Scotland living in poverty the need for our service is even greater than before. So, if you have donated to us, attended one of our fundraising events, played with the children who come to our classes or walked a Kilt walk we are grateful to you. Your support has enabled us to provide the service that we do.

This annual report provides a summary of our achievements in the past year. We are always looking at ways we can continue to support children and families in our community. We are proud that we have continued to deliver a free and varied programme of classes and activities free of charge to parents, carers, babies and children. We are committed to the continuous development of our groups and classes so that they remain fresh and fun.

In North Lanarkshire, we have continued to work alongside the professional agencies, charities, schools and other community and third sector who refer families to us. Our relationships with these agencies and with the children and families we work with is fundamental to the work we do, and we look forward to forming new relationships in the forthcoming year.

Our Board and team of volunteers have grown and we are delighted to have been able to not only strengthen our Board but also bring new skills to the charity. We have a fantastic team who are passionate and committed and without them there would be no Bear Necessities. I cannot thank our team enough for all their hard work to ensure the success of Bear Necessities.

We are grateful to have welcomed new funders in the past year and in particular Children in Need. The current funding landscape is challenging for charities and there are less available funds to seek funding from. We are proud that funders continue to believe and are prepared to invest in Bear Necessities and see the value of the work we do with the families we support through clothing and essentials but also the support we provide to babies and pre-school children at our classes. .

I hope this report continues to encourage and inspire you to support the work of Bear Necessities and we look forward to what this year will bring.

Kind regards



Structure, Governance and Management

Bear Necessities was established on 1st February 2021 and is governed by a constitution. The Trustees are appointed by a collective decision of the Board of Trustees

Trustees 6 April 2023 – 6 April 2024

	Chair Person
	Treasurer
	Secretary

Objectives and activities charitable purposes.

Bear Necessities was established on 1st February 2021 to support local families who are living in poverty by providing clothing and other essentials for their children. Bear Necessities was granted charitable status on 24th August 2021.

Bear Necessities charitable purposes as set out in the constitution are

- The relief of poverty and the relief of those in need through the running of a baby bank and groups and activities to provide support as required by those in Airdrie and surrounding areas.
- To support and help the vulnerable, low income, domestic abuse victims and personally challenged families within Airdrie and surrounding areas to ensure that every child and family are given the best possible start and outcome.
- To promote recycling and upcycling of equipment and resourced donated by local families and businesses which will be donated to other families in need within the area. The organisation will also accept donations of clothing from local families which would be laundered and donated to families in need within the area.
- The organisation will also provide groups and activities to support social isolation of families and enhance development of babies and children. These will involve a varied range of groups from learning sign language to story book reading and sensory activities. All these activities will be free to families therefore reducing the inequality gap and helping to ensure that every child is given the best start in life.

Bear Necessities operates four main activities

1. A Baby Bank
2. A Clothing bank for children and families
3. A Hygiene bank
4. Delivery of a programme of free classes and activity groups for babies and children up to pre-school age

BABY AND CLOTHING BANK

We provide essentials to families in Airdrie and surrounding areas who are affected by poverty, who are experiencing homelessness or addiction, who may be fleeing domestic abuse, fleeing war or are affected by social issues and difficult family circumstances. Our Baby and Clothing Bank provides a wide range of practical support for children, young people and their families.

We work in close collaboration with Health and Social Care, Schools and Nurseries, First Steps Workers, One Parent Families, Citizen Advice Bureau and other local charities and community organisations to ensure that we can support those who are experiencing the greatest need within the community. Through this collaborative approach, we have been able to establish a strong referral system that takes account of the individual needs of the families referred to us and enables us to have a good understanding of the underpinning challenges faced by the children and families we support. We do not have direct contact with the families we support through our referral system. This is to protect the families' dignity.

By working alongside these professional agents and organisations, we have become an integral part of a local support network and this year have managed to support 453 children within our local community with clothing and other essentials through our referral system.

Every referral we receive is carefully packed into one of our recycled "gift bags" We consider the clothing and other items which are donated to us by the local community are "gifts from one family to another"

Most referrals received are for general clothing with hygiene essentials. We provide support for children and adults of all ages. Our clothing gift bags include a range of pre-loved and new clothing with items such as pants, socks and pyjamas which are provided new. Every child we support will also receive toys and books.

Our Baby Bank also provides clothing and essentials for newborn babies including moses baskets and cots which are supplied with new mattresses, bedding, baby baths and prams. In addition, items such as nappies and wipes are frequently requested from families who are struggling to meet the cost of these items. Due to demand, we have established a "drop-in service" for Health and Social care professionals who can collect these items prior to home visits to the families they are supporting. Also, due to demand we also provide hospital bags for mums to be. These hospitals bags contain all the essential items mum will need for her stay in hospital including new nightwear, slippers, toiletries and items for her newborn baby.

Our Hygiene Bank was established following obtaining funding and support with vouchers and donations from the local community. Toiletries such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap/shower gel and shampoo are given to every family in our gift bags.

Other items such as deodorant and sanitary products are provided to older children and teenagers whilst baby and toddlers will receive items such as nappies and wipes.

We work in association with Child Smile which enables us to supply toothpaste and toothbrushes to every child referred to us. We are also a distributor of NHS Healthy Start vitamins which are included within our gift bags. We are also a registered distributor with North Lanarkshire Council of free period products which we add to our gift bags for older girls, teenagers and mums.

In addition to our referral system, we also carry out Outreach Support either through community events or our partnerships with local schools and nurseries.

At the present time, we work in partnership with two local schools who have a huge number of pupils living in poverty. We not only receive regular referrals from those schools, but we also regularly stock the schools with jackets, footwear and other clothing essentials. We have once again held “fill a bag events” within those schools whereby families can attend and fill one of our gift bags with any clothing and toiletry items they require. This also allows us to reach families who might be reluctant to approach a health professional to access a referral.

Finally, we are very proud of our ability to find “homes” for every item that is “gifted” to us by the local community. Our excess stock is gifted to other charities and community organisations and we aim this forthcoming year to establish further relationships with other organisations who also support families with pre-loved clothing and essentials. This simple act of recycling helps to reduce waste and reduces landfill.

CLASSES

From our community space within our Unit, we deliver a programme of classes and activity groups at no costs to parents and carers for babies to pre-school age children. Our normal class timetable runs during term time. During the school holidays we have been able to deliver a programme of Arts and Crafts classes for children under nine years of age.

This year we have delivered eleven hours of free classes every week. In our space we can accommodate up to twelve babies and children accompanied by a parent or carer. These classes were as follows

1. Baby Massage – where parents and carers learn to massage their baby using their hands
2. Musical Bears – exploring different types of musical instruments - for babies and children of all ages.
3. Baby and Toddler Sensory Play – everyday activities including tummy time, textures, movement and interactive play that encourage babies and toddlers to explore their senses – for babies and children aged three and under.

4. Free Play – an opportunity to play with toys, musical instrument and arts and crafts – for children aged five and under
5. Book Bug – Sharing of stories, rhymes and songs with children aged five and under
6. Arts and Crafts - Fun and simple themed Arts and Crafts for children aged 9 years of age and under. Our Arts and Crafts classes run during the school holidays.
7. Breastfeeding Support Group – to provide advice and support for mums to be and new mums with their breastfeeding journey.
8. Interactive Bears – a class focusing on the development of a child's fine-motor skills through play for children aged three years and under
9. Little Bear Movers – a class focusing on exploring movement and play to develop a child's fine-motor skills for children aged three years and over
10. Adventure Bears – an opportunity for the children who attend our classes to participate in Outdoor Fun and Messy Play at Muddy Boots situated at Park Street, Airdrie for children aged 5 years and under
11. Storytime with Bears – a class for children to bring along their favourite teddy and join in with stories, singing and massage – for children aged 0 – 3 years

These classes

1. Support child development, bonding and attachment through play.
2. Encourage discovery and independent thinking
3. Can help a child develop their fine motor skills
4. Help parents learn about the importance of play, about how best to play with their children and give families access to new and varied toys and equipment for play
5. Reduce the inequality gap and help to ensure every child is given the best start in life with the aim of ensuring the children in our local community can grow and develop to their full potential no matter the circumstances they were born into.
6. Providing emotional and social support in order to reduce social isolation, decrease loneliness and improve confidence.

Parents and Carers can access our classes through our referral system. We give priority to those families who are referred to us by the professionals we collaborate with. We are also able to offer places to local families on a “first come first served basis” when space allows.

We have planned our classes and groups in consultation with parents and carers, our class leaders and volunteers. We recognise the importance of having classes for different ages and stages of development. Our classes are welcomed by families who because of funding barriers would not ordinarily be able to attend classes and activity groups with their children.

Our community space is a warm, child friendly, welcoming and safe environment. We aim to ensure that the families who attend feel supported by our team. Our classes also provide an opportunity for parents and carers who may be socially isolated to meet up and support each other. Emotional support is a lifeline for parents and carers, helping them feel more confident, less isolated and connected to support in their local community. Early bonding and attachment are crucial for child's development, and we are very fortunate that [REDACTED], one of our Trustees is a Solihill trainer. At the end of every class there is an allocated time for parents and carers to chat over tea and coffee. We recognise that often the best support a child and a family can receive is in the community connecting with other parents and carers and sharing their experiences, developing new friendships, sharing the joys and experiences of their parenting journeys whilst having fun and participating in a range of classes and activities.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

During the reporting period, we supported 453 babies and children with clothing and other essentials. This figure represents an increase of 24% on the previous years figure.

We delivered 360 classes throughout the year, each class being attended by between 8 and 12 babies and children accompanied by a parent or carer.

We also ran several campaigns throughout the year. In April 2023, through our outreach work we were able to deliver 170 easter eggs to a local nursery and school. Every child supported by us during the month of April 2023 also received an Easter egg. We will continue to develop our partnership with local schools as this enables us to support more children and young people in our community.

Further, on a Wednesday and a Thursday during July and August 2023, we delivered another term of "Back to Nature themed Arts and Craft sessions. These classes were aimed at children aged 9 years and under. During these classes the children designed their own dinosaur fossil, made handmade bird feeders, built a bug house, planted seeds and other nature themed activities. These classes were at no cost to parents and carers.

In October 2023, we ran our first "Fill a Bag" campaign. Recyclable gift bags were provided to supporters who filled the nappies, toiletries and other essentials for us to

gift to children and families throughout the year. We were delighted to receive 75 bags filled with essential items. We would like to thank 9th Airdrie Scout Group who filled bags to gain their Community Impact badge.

During December 2023, we again collaborated with other charities and community organisations to deliver the Airdrie Action Partnership Christmas Appeal. This collaboration of local charities and other organisations successfully supported 621 local children with Christmas presents.

Throughout February and March 2024, we also ran another successful “Gift for Mum” campaign, supporting mums and carers who wouldn’t ordinarily receive a gift on Mother’s day with a gift bag full of goodies. As a result of the donations we received, we were able to support over 50 local mums and carers with gifts.

To support our work, the charity has employed two part-time members of staff. Our Referral Co-ordinator is responsible for the day to day running of the charity, including managing our volunteers, stock control and our referral system. Our Class Co-ordinator is responsible for the delivery of our programme of classes, including managing bookings, toys and equipment and the planning and development of our programme of classes.

We also are very fortunate to be supported by a team of volunteers who attend daily to assist with the delivery of classes and our referrals. Our volunteers assist with a whole range of tasks including the setting up and tidying up of classes, cleaning toys and equipment, sorting our donations and referral gift bags. During the reporting period our volunteers contributed an average of 20 volunteer hours a week. The charity is also supported by our Trustees who are very “hands on” and regularly attend our unit to assist the volunteers and organise all our community and fundraising events. Our volunteers have been crucial to the growth of the charity. Their involvement brings skills and experience to the charity which has been key to our success.

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

BABY AND CLOTHING BANK

We don't have direct contact with the families we provide support to via our baby and clothing bank and hygiene bank, however our referral partners regularly provide feedback to us following delivering our gift bags to the families.

We are sometimes made aware of the difficult circumstances of the children and families we are supporting. We not only provide practical assistance but play a role in poverty alleviation, helping families manage low incomes as the support we provide

means the families can use any available funds for living costs. We are also showing the families we support that there is assistance available and that there are people in the community who do care. We hope that this practical support can help improve the mental health and physical well-being of the children and families we support.

CLASSES

At the end of every term of classes we evaluate our classes by providing every parent or carer who attends with an anonymous feedback form to be completed. This feedback is invaluable as this allows us to evaluate our classes but also enables us to plan and deliver future classes. From the feedback we receive, we hear from parents and carers the benefits of attending classes and groups

An example of the feedback we have received

“Just wanted to thank you both for your support and encouragement since we started coming to the Breasfeeding Group. A chance visit led to a tongue tie diagnosis and a whole new journey for us and a second chance at Breastfeeding. I am proud we made it to 7 months and now a happy wee boy. Thanks for always making us so welcome and for the tea and the chat”

“I really struggle with anxiety and big groups but I took the plunge and brought my little boy along. Thank you for making me feel so welcome and relaxed. We had a great time and we will be back next week”

FINANCIAL REVIEW, FUNDRAISING AND EVENTS

Our accounts demonstrate an increase in income from the previous year, which is due to funding received to meet the cost of staff but also to meet the cost of our client support expenditure, because of the rising demand for our service. We are funded by a combination of grants, fundraising and donations.

Our supporters are stepping up and undertaking challenges such as the kiltwalk and raising funds by organising bingo nights and other events to raise funds. We are grateful to everyone who has supported our work in this way.

We have also continued to organise fundraising events such as our annual Breakfast with Santa and Easter Party. These events are affordable for families who attend and provide us with an opportunity to raise funds. Most importantly, these events allow us

another opportunity to engage with children and families, raise awareness of the work we do and we get to see everyone having a fun time!

We have been grateful for every opportunity to raise awareness of the work we do and where possible have attended numerous information days held locally and lots of school events. We consider we have now established a strong presence in the area.

We are grateful to our funders who include The Robertson Trust, the National Lottery, Children in Needs, Asda, Co-op, North Lanarkshire Council, Scotmid, and Arnold Clark. We have also received donations from local groups and individuals who support our work in the community.

Our fundraisers and supporters are essential to keeping us running financially and we thank them for their generosity.

DECLARATION

Chairperson

Date 20/01/2025

Bear Necessities In Airdrie

**Report and Financial Statements
Period ended 5th April 2024**

Charity Number SC051215

Bear Necessities In Airdrie
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Bear Necessities In Airdrie Report of the Trustees

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the period 6 April 2023 to 5 April 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in March 2005.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity Number

SC051215

Principal Address

Unit 2
Saline Street
Airdrie
North Lanarkshire
ML6 9ES

Trustees

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Treasurer

Independent Examiner

[REDACTED] BA (Hons) FCCA
Benson Wood & Co (Scotland) Ltd.
2nd Floor (East)
Belgrave Court
Rosehall Road
Bellshill
ML4 3NR

Bear Necessities In Airdrie Report of the Trustees

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT Governing Document

The charity is controlled by its governing document a constitution of an unincorporated charity

Objectives and activities

The principal objectives and activities of the charity are the relief of poverty and the relief of those in need through the running of a baby bank and groups and activities to provide support as required by those in Airdrie and surrounding areas. In furtherance of those purposes the Organisation will:-

- support and help the vulnerable, low income, domestic abuse victims, and personal challenged families within Airdrie and surrounding areas to ensure that every child and family are given the best possible start and outcome.

- promote recycling and upcycling of equipment and resources donated by local families and businesses, which will be donated to other families in need within the area. The organisation will also accept donations of clothing from local families, which would be laundered and donated to families in need within the area.

- provide groups and activities to support social isolation of families and enhance development of babies and children. These will involve a varied range of groups from learning sign language to story book reading and sensory activities.

All these activities will be free to families therefore reducing the inequality gap and helping to ensure that every child is given the best start in life.

Achievements

Financial Review

During the period to 5 April 2024, Bear Necessities in Airdrie had total receipts of £59,699. Payments in connection with the work of the charity totalled £55,505.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of the charity to maintain unrestricted funds at a level which, in the opinion of the trustees, provides sufficient funds to cover management and administration and support costs which arise from time to time.

Risk Management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

Bear Necessities In Airdrie Report of the Trustees

Trustees responsibilities

Law applicable to charities in Scotland requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for

select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;

make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;

prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Trust and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 20 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by

.....
[Redacted Signature] - Trustee

Bear Necessities In Airdrie

Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of Bear Necessities In Airdrie

I report on the accounts of the charity for the period ended 05/04/2024 which are set out on pages 6 to 8

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the 2006 Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act

Basis of Independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit

Independent examiner's qualified statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention;


1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have not been met, or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



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Benson Wood & Co (Scotland) Ltd.
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29 December 2024

Bear Necessities In Airdrie
Receipts and payments accounts
For the period from 05/04/2023 to 05/04/2024

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds current period	Total funds last period
	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
Voluntary Receipts				
Donations	9,585	-	9,585	22,732
Grants	28,563	13,475	42,038	33,198
Receipts from fundraising activities	2,811	-	2,811	3,277
Items Returned	165	-	165	-
Loan Received	5,100	-	5,100	-
Total receipts	46,224	13,475	59,699	59,206
Payments				
Expenses for fundraising activities	340	-	340	778
Payments relating directly to charitable activities	1,666	-	1,666	-
Wages, NI & Pension Costs	5,970	14,100	20,070	22,979
Rent	12,000	-	12,000	12,000
Insurance	-	-	-	-
Telephone	761	-	761	668
Heat & Light	3,700	-	3,700	2,829
Postage & Stationery	430	-	430	30
Client Support	9,740	-	9,740	12,953
Group Activities	748	-	748	4,383
Repairs	83	-	83	177
Fixtures & fittings	618	-	618	1,170
Transport	-	-	-	-
Cleaning	452	-	452	288
Loan Repaid	3,000	-	3,000	-
Governance costs:				
Audit / independent examination	1,500	-	1,500	656
Payroll Processing	397	-	397	-
	41,405	14,100	55,505	58,909
Total payments	4,819	- 625	4,194	297
Surplus/(Deficit) for year				
A5 Transfers to / (from) funds				
Surplus / (deficit) for year	4,819	- 625	4,194	297

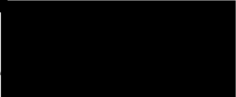
**Bear Necessities In Airdrie
Statement of Balances**

Categories	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total current period	Total last period
Funds Reconciliation	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
Cash and bank balances at 05/04/2023	- 315	1,275	960	663
Surplus / (deficit) shown on receipts and payments account	4,819	- 625	4,194	297
Cash and bank balances at 05/04/2024	4,504	650	5,154	960

Bank and Cash Balances

Bank Current Account	4,504	650	5,154	960
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**Signed by Trustees
Signature**

	20/12/2024
	
	20/12/2024
	
	20/12/2024
	

Bear Necessities In Airdrie
Notes to the Accounts

Related Party Transactions

During the year the charity received loans from the trustees totalling £5,100.

The balance owing to the trustees at the year end in respect of these loans was £2,100 (2023: £nil)