



INVERCAIRN PLAYGROUP

Trustees' Annual Report

August 2024 to August 2025

Scottish Charity Number: SC050323

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CHARITY TRUSTEES

The trustees of Invercairn Playgroup are responsible for overseeing the strategic direction, governance, and operations of the charity. The current trustees are committed to ensuring that the playgroup remains compliant with regulations and ensures the playgroup continues to meet the needs of its beneficiaries.

Suzanne Harvey



As Chairperson of Invercairn Playgroup, former Playgroup Leader, and a parent of a child who attended the playgroup, I've gained a lot of insight into how the sessions run and how the playgroup is managed. This gives me a unique perspective, allowing me to support the staff while ensuring everything is organised, compliant and focused on what's best for the children and families. With my background in Psychology and a specialism in Child Development, I have a strong understanding of early years learning, inclusion and child-centred approaches. I also run a private practice supporting children and families, which allows me to bring valuable insight into creating a nurturing, inclusive environment where every child can thrive. I'm passionate about supporting the team, pushing for necessary improvements, and building strong relationships with parents and the local community to help the playgroup continue to grow and succeed.

Chelsea Duncan



I am a mother of two. My son currently attends Invercairn Playgroup and my daughter will be starting after Summer. He has loved his time at the playgroup and always loves when they venture outside for the session. He attends twice a week and I have found it has greatly helped his social skills and developed his confidence to prepare him for nursery. I really wanted to give back to the playgroup so when the treasurer role became available, I volunteered to step up and support the charity. As a pharmacist, I work alongside a variety of people within a multidisciplinary team and have to think

on my feet when problems arise in the pharmacy. I feel this provides me with skills to assist the committee in problem solving and working together in a team to ensure we can effectively support the playgroup. I would like to help Invercairn Playgroup run to its full potential and support wherever necessary to ensure the children get maximum benefit from their time here.

April Jack



Hi my name is April Jack. I am a mum of three, two boys who attended the playgroup and a little girl who is currently there. I am a qualified dental nurse but have paused my career to be a stay at home Mum and raise my kids. I love to be involved in clubs and school events, as much as i can but can be alot. The playgroup has been such a great part of my kids' childhood and a great stepping stone into early education. I'm currently the secretary for the playgroup and love being part of the committee.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

AIMS OF THE PLAYGROUP

Invercairn Playgroup provides a safe, supportive, and stimulating environment for pre-school children. Our aim is to help them develop socially, emotionally, and cognitively through play-based learning. We strive to create a welcoming space where children can explore, interact, and build foundational skills for lifelong learning. We also work closely with parents and carers, taking a holistic approach to early childhood development. We support children aged two to five, alongside their parents and carers, and over the past year have welcomed families from both the village and the wider Fraserburgh area.

ACTIVITIES

The playgroup offers a balance of structured and free-play activities. Children engage in a wide variety of experiences, from arts and crafts to imaginative play, sensory exploration, music, and outdoor activities. Our play-based approach encourages children to explore new ideas, solve problems, and develop independence while learning social skills. During the year, we ran 152 playgroup sessions, each lasting two hours, across 38 weeks of term time, delivering a total of 304 hours of play-based learning. Sessions were designed to develop communication, independence, and social skills, and to prepare children for a smooth transition into nursery.

Some examples of our range of activities are explored below:

Seasonal Celebrations

Seasonal celebrations formed an important part of the playgroup experience, providing children with opportunities to engage in familiar cultural events through a play-based approach.



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Christmas Sing-Along and Party: The festive season was marked with a sing-along featuring classic carols, and Christmas party with a visit from a special visitor, bringing joy and holiday spirit.



Easter-themed Crafts: Children experienced crafts and sensory play, including the use of feathers, easter egg colour patterns and easter egg cups

Valentine's-themed baking: baking and decorating heart shaped treats to take home



These experiences supported children to explore new ideas through creative expression, develop independence in tasks such as crafting and baking, and build social skills through shared group celebrations and co-operative play.

Structured Activities

Structured activities were designed to provide guided learning opportunities while maintaining a strong emphasis on play. For example, children explored *The Hungry Caterpillar* through creative activities such as printing caterpillar patterns using painted potatoes. In addition, group reading sessions led by staff encouraged listening, language development, and engagement with stories.



These structured experiences helped children to develop problem-solving skills, follow instructions, and build confidence, while also promoting communication and social interaction within a supportive group environment.

Arts & Crafts

Arts & Crafts activities offered children a wide range of opportunities for creative exploration, including making mosaic flowers and participating in handprint painting.



These activities encouraged children to experiment with different materials, colours, and techniques, fostering creativity and self-expression. Through these experiences, children developed fine motor skills, independence in decision-making, and the ability to share resources and ideas, supporting both individual development and social learning.

Themed activities

Themed activities allowed children to engage more deeply with stories and ideas through integrated play experiences.

For example, the *Stick Man* theme involved reading the story, followed by outdoor exploration to collect sticks and create their own stick characters.



Similarly, during *The Three Little Pigs*, children made pig masks using paper plates and constructed houses using Lego, blocks, and straws to represent different materials from the story.



These themed approaches supported children to explore concepts in a meaningful context, develop problem-solving skills through collaborative play and shared story telling.

Sensory Exploration

Sensory exploration activities provided children with hands-on learning opportunities such as using a flour-filled tuff tray with a variety of tools and toys. Children were able to draw patterns, manipulate materials, and explore textures using both their hands and utensils.



These activities encouraged curiosity and experimentation, supported the development of fine motor skills, and promoted independent exploration. At the same time, shared use of sensory resources helped children to develop social skills such as turn-taking, co-operation and communication.

Outdoor Learning

At Invercairn Playgroup, we recognize the vital role outdoor learning plays in early childhood development. Our outdoor activities encourage children to explore, be active, and develop confidence in a natural setting.

Throughout the year, we have provided regular outdoor play sessions where children engage in physical activities, sensory exploration, and nature-based learning. These experiences support cognitive, social, and emotional development while fostering a connection with the environment.

Staff continually develop outdoor learning opportunities, aligning with Early Years Scotland's best practices.



FUNDRAISING

Throughout the year, Invercairn Playgroup organised a variety of fundraising activities to support the purchase of essential resources, ensuring a rich and engaging learning environment for our children. Funds raised help cover the cost of educational materials, play equipment, arts and crafts supplies, and general operational expenses.

Fundraising Events

Our fundraising activities this year included a variety of events designed to engage both families and the wider community.

Buttery Morning - brought together local families and businesses, featuring home baking, craft tables, raffles, games, refreshments, and stalls from local vendors, helping to strengthen community links while supporting local enterprise.

Robot Hoover Lucky Squares Draw - participants purchased numbered squares for a chance to win the robot hoover

Football Scratch Card - players selected teams for an opportunity to win a share of the proceeds, with remaining funds supporting the playgroup.

Sponsored Walk at Aden Park – This event encouraged children and families to be active while raising money through sponsorships. The walk not only promoted physical health but also engaged the wider community in supporting the playgroup.

Summer Holiday Raffle - sourced prizes such as family treats, trips and vouchers generously donated by local businesses, further strengthening community partnerships while raising valuable funds

Elves Workshop & Christmas Card Fundraiser – The Elves Workshop provided children with the opportunity to enjoy festive crafts, games and a visit from Santa. The Christmas Card Fundraiser allowed families to order personalised cards designed by their children, making it a special and sentimental way to raise funds during the holiday season.

Our continued fundraising efforts ensure that Invercairn Playgroup remains well-equipped to offer a stimulating and enriching environment for all children in our care.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Structure

Invercairn Playgroup is managed by a voluntary committee, primarily composed of parents and carers, who oversee governance, strategic direction, and compliance with regulatory requirements. The playgroup operates independently while following best practices and guidance from Early Years Scotland.

Role Bearers:

Role	Name
Chairperson	Suzanne Harvey
Secretary	April May Jack
Treasurer	Chelsea Duncan

Our playgroup is led by a qualified early years practitioner, supported by a dedicated team of staff.

Staff team:

Playgroup Leader	Jemma Buchan
Playgroup Assistant	Alix Watt
Playgroup Assistant	Beverley Buchan

Type of governing document

Invercairn Playgroup is governed by its Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) constitution which outlines its purpose, membership, and decision-making processes. The trustees are responsible for ensuring that all activities align with the constitution and that the playgroup operates in accordance with its stated objectives, legal obligations, and best practices in early years education.

Trustee recruitment and appointment

Trustees are appointed through an open and transparent recruitment process. New trustees are elected annually at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), where all members of the playgroup community, including parents and carers, are invited to participate. During the year, we actively sought new trustees to bring fresh perspectives and ensure the effective governance of the charity. Interested individuals were encouraged to put their names forward, and appointments were made based on their skills, experience, and commitment to the playgroup's mission.

No external organisations have the authority to appoint trustees. However, we welcome input from professionals and advisors where necessary to strengthen our governance and strategic planning.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Achievements and Performance

Over the past year, Invercairn Playgroup successfully delivered 152 sessions, supporting around 35 children throughout the year. Children developed stronger communication, independence and social skills, leaving ready for nursery. Families reported feeling supported, and volunteers on the committee contributed significantly to governance and the smooth running of the playgroup.

Activities to Achieve Our Aims

- We provided engaging, play-based learning sessions aligned with best practices in early years education.
- We followed Early Years Scotland guidance to enhance our policies and procedures.
- Termly committee meetings ensured effective governance, financial planning, and strategic direction.

Biggest Successes

- Staff completed introductory autism training to support an individual child, helping us to provide an inclusive environment
- Successful fundraising events, allowing us to invest in new learning resources
- The playgroup's growing reputation, attracting families from outside the village, demonstrates the trust placed in our provision
- Our Open Day was a key success, welcoming families from the local area and beyond to explore the setting, meet staff, and experience the playgroup environment. The event was very well attended and generated highly positive feedback, supporting increased engagement and helping to maintain strong enrolment levels

Impact and Outcomes

- Parents have observed improvements in social skills, confidence, and early learning abilities from the children who attend our setting
- Families have benefited from a supportive environment that encourages parental involvement and collaboration.
- Staff have received additional training opportunities, ensuring continuous professional development.

- Families benefited from a stable and consistent childcare service, even during staff shortages.

Volunteer Achievements

- Parents and carers have supported the playgroup through participation in special events and outings, enriching the children's experiences and enhancing the sense of community.
- Committee members have actively contributed to decision-making, governance, and fundraising efforts.

This year has been another highly positive and successful year for the playgroup, reflecting our ongoing commitment to high-quality early years education, strong community engagement, and continuous improvement. We are proud of the range of experiences provided and the positive impact these have had on children's development, wellbeing, and readiness for transition to nursery.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Statement of the Charity's Policy on Reserves

Invercairn Playgroup aims to maintain reserves equivalent to at least three month's operating costs. This is to ensure continuity of core activities and to cover essential expenditure such as staff wages, rent and utilities.

In addition to this, the trustees are seeking to build an additional reserve of approximately £2000. This is in response to ongoing building maintenance concerns, including loose floor tiles, outdated toilet facilities, and carpeted arrears within the playgroup room. Whilst responsibility for these repairs would typically sit with Aberdeenshire Council, funding constraints have meant that these issues remain unresolved to date. These matters have been raised as health and safety concerns, and discussions with the council are ongoing. In the event that external funding is not secured, the charity may need to contribute towards these costs to ensure a safe environment.

Details of Any Deficit

There is a deficit of £2,289.40 for this financial year, which is higher than the trustees would consider sustainable. As of year-end, the closing cash balance is £3,776.60, which is below the desired level of reserves.

The trustees are taking steps to address this position, including reviewing and increasing fees where appropriate, and placing a stronger focus on fundraising activities. Income and expenditure will continue to be closely monitored to support a return to a balanced budget and to strengthen the charity's financial resilience.

Donated facilities and services

The charity did not receive any donated facilities or services during the year. Access to previously available community resources has reduced significantly; the charity now pays rent for its premises and incurs additional costs to access the gym hall. Furthermore, the closure of the local library has removed another previously utilised community resource. These changes have increased operating costs and limited access to valuable facilities for children.

FUTURE PLANS

Over the next year, Invercairn Playgroup will focus on further developing staff skills to become a fully inclusive provider. While introductory autism training has been completed, we aim to provide ongoing and advanced training to build staff confidence and expertise in supporting all children.

We also plan to re-establish community links through visiting specialists providing music, football, and Bookbug sessions, and by working with the council to regain access to library services once a new base is available. Improving facilities and maintaining safety remain priorities, including repairs to flooring and toilets. Finally, we aim to strengthen committee engagement to ensure sustainable governance.

Through these initiatives, Invercairn Playgroup will continue to provide a safe, inclusive, and community-focused environment, supporting children, families, and the wider community.

Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:

Print name	Suzanne Harvey
Designation	Chairperson and Trustee
Date	28 th April 2026

S. Harvey