



Registered Charity No: 1191061

**Trustees' Annual Report &
Statement of Financial Activity**
for the period 28th August 2020 to 31st March 2021

Trustees

Angela Betts

David Wassell

Mike Goodwin

Maggie Barker

JANUARY 2022

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Darwin Dogs
Trustees' Annual Report &
Statement of Financial Activity
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Trustees Annual Report & Statement of Financial Activity for the Year Ended 31st March 2021

1 Activities, Achievements & Performance

1.1 Statutory Declaration

The Trustees confirm that they have paid due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

1.2 Overview (*Executive Summary*)

Our charity has grown out of the realisation that it is to the public benefit that adults with a diagnosis and disablement caused by a long term mental health condition and those on the autistic spectrum in the UK can benefit from an improved quality of life through the support of an Assistance Dog. At the time of forming as a C.I.C. there was minimal provision for this need. Darwin Dogs has gone from strength to strength and in 2020 became a charity registered in England and Wales. We provide access to specialist dog training services to allow client's pet canines to train as specialised Assistance Dogs able to perform physical tasks and provide psychological support individual to their owner's needs to facilitate them to perform activities and tasks that would otherwise be inaccessible to them. Training is provided country wide and we aim to provide it at a low cost or even free where beneficiaries cannot otherwise afford it. We educate clients and their guardians/carers and families in the use and care of Assistance Dogs. Continued education of clients and our dog trainers, raising awareness of issues faced by those living with mental health conditions, and the welfare of the dogs themselves, are extremely important to us.

1.3 Activities, Achievements & Performance (*In More Detail*)

Objectives

Make specialised dog training available to anyone disabled by a mental health problem or on the autistic spectrum who could benefit from it.

Build a national network of accredited dog trainers to deliver the training.

Build links with accredited bodies to i) increase our understanding and that of our trainers of the medical conditions that our clients suffer from and the different types of support they require and ii) participate in proposing further research in this field, where possible.

Work to develop more precisely focused packages of training to deliver the above support.

Promote continuing professional development by up-skilling the charity's accredited dog trainers as required.

Carry out publicity to promote the profile of the charity in order to enable its work.

To develop and implement a sustainable fundraising strategy.

Review of Activities and Achievements

Darwin Dogs has used this last irregular year to consolidate contact and support for existing clients and trainers. Management decisions were focused on education, policy and growth support.

Education for clients and trainers was stepped up by the inception of contact groups which are functioning well. We have worked on Fit-for-purpose fundraising by updating promotional materials and establishing and commencing a protocol to source and contact grant bodies, utilising all committee members.

Despite the COVID-19 related challenges which prevented face to face support, training and fundraising, Darwin Dogs has been able to identify and respond quickly to support its current clients immediate needs. Social media groups and emails have enabled vital contact to support

clients who were especially vulnerable due to mental health needs during isolation. Furthermore this method of communication allowed circulation of advice and discussion of modified support needs required by clients from their canine partners as well as continuation of training and good practice to maintain animal health. Members have found this an empowering service.

Negotiating normal life incurs dealing with complex and severe anxiety needs, so as the country began to emerge from lockdown these barriers were magnified for our clients. Darwin Dogs responded in a timely way, again using its newly formed client and trainer groups and emails to ensure that clients also benefited from sustained support, encouragement and strategic advice to recommence visits and tasks outside the home.

Our CEO, Julie Wassell, took part in a virtual conference aimed at reward based dog trainers to publicise our work and try to attract new trainers to join us. She was assisted in this by 2 clients and the presentation was well received.

Funding and grant applications

We have continued with the funding activities allowed making grant applications and contacting potential funding partners, but the usual promotion at fairs and events has of course not been possible in this year of COVID related shutdowns.

We wish to thank all of the clients and their families and friends who have donated time and money to support us during this year.

Special thanks also to our amazing social media team. Anne Wassell and Nicola Betts have used their technical expertise and enthusiasm tirelessly to make the above mentioned pandemic contact services possible.

Organisational development

The Trustees recognised the need to review current systems and processes as a result of the change from CIC to CIO and to develop a new organisational structure together with appropriate support systems and processes to meet the anticipated increase in demand and greater volume of financial transactions.

To date new contracts for clients and dog trainers; a memorandum of cooperation to underpin the formation of the Darwin Dogs Trainer Association; Fees and Charges policy; revised application forms for both clients and dog trainers have been drafted - all of which still have to be trialled.

Full membership of Assistance Dogs International

We are well on the way to meeting the requirements for us to achieve full membership of Assistance Dogs International (ADI) - the only organisation to offer internationally recognised assistance dog training standards. Currently we are candidate members of ADI and all training / assessment is underpinned by their standards. ADI membership is important because it assures our clients and the public that our dogs are trained to the highest standards using training methods that ensure their physical and emotional safety at all times. We will also be subject to regular reassessments to ensure ongoing adherence to the required standards. We anticipate that our submission and required visits from ADI will take place in 2022.

1.4 How the Public Have Benefitted

Evaluation of the most recent Outcome Evaluation Questionnaires which are completed by clients 6 months after they start yielded the following results:

1. These clients are a vulnerable group, 64% of whom are unable to do any paid employment while none are able to work full time. Only 9% can manage their own health and wellbeing needs, while the vast majority require significant help with these.
2. All clients report that the dog has made a significant difference to their health and wellbeing, as well as providing significant (70%+ change) support practically and socially.
3. Before acquiring their dogs 64% of clients were unable to shop on their own at all, while only 9% were able to shop on their own 50% of the time or less.

4. However, with the assistance dog 81% were able to shop on their own for 70% of the time or above, while all clients were able to shop with their dog at least 40% of the time alone with their dog.

5. Before acquiring their dogs, 72% of clients were unable to go out socially on their own. The remainder went out very rarely. However, after acquiring their dogs all clients were able to go out socially alone with only the dog for company for 60% of the time or over. 36% required no / very little support other than their dog. 18% required no other support than their dog.

6. 100% of clients report that the Darwin Dogs service has helped them and provided excellent value for money. They unanimously report that the trainers are competent, courteous, focused on the client's needs and always careful of their safety. All clients report that they are happy to continue with the Darwin Dog's Service.

7. The quality and popularity of the services is underlined by the fact that the majority of these clients are currently self-funding.

As at the end of March 2021 we have successfully qualified 17 assistance dog partnerships, with a further 32 in training. There is a waiting list of another 120 eager to start training with us.

1.5 Trustee Development

In our first year as trustees for Darwin Dogs, the trustees have all been acquainting themselves with responsibilities and roles as set out by the Charities Commission. All of our trustees bring their own skills and life-experience to this role and we are fortunate to be able to learn from each other.

1.6 Looking Ahead

In the coming year we look forward to getting back to face to face training, new qualifications and bringing the annual reassessments up to date.

For us to grow as a charity we have short and medium term goals to aid our development:

Short term:

1. Completion of ADI application and assessment for membership status, to facilitate links with other bodies, education and funding
2. Procurement of additional voluntary admin support to alleviate the bottleneck in our intake service

Medium term:

1. Fundraising activity and grant applications to support increased training of dog trainers and clients and to employ paid staff to provide the professional support services required.
2. Develop a financial management strategy which includes provision of an appropriate level of reserves.
3. By collaborating with Universities and other relevant organisations we plan to develop further our understanding of mental health conditions in order to improve the design and delivery of training appropriate to the needs of our clients. Similarly, the information given to clients and their guardians/carers and families on how to care for their assistance dog will be guided by our links with the PDSA.

Then the CIO, with its improved resources and organisation, will focus on achieving a sustainable financial position by:

- growing the network of trainers to increase capacity and geographical availability of the service;
- working with local and central government departments to raise awareness of the benefits of the service and so increase the availability of public funding to clients;
- attracting sponsorship and applying for grants in order to pump prime the CIO's activities
- commissioning research;
- developing and publishing training materials.

2 Financial Review

2.1 Details of Any Funds Materially in Deficit

The Charity has no funds which are materially in deficit.

2.2 Policy on Reserves

The Charity's policy on reserves is to generate and maintain a balance which is sufficient:

- a) to preserve the financial viability of the Charity in the event that unforeseen and/or unavoidable circumstances precipitate a short-term fall in its income;
- b) to continue to support staff and maintain our obligations to our clients;
- c) to enable the Charity, in the interests of meeting its objectives, to undertake from time to time the setting up of new and innovative projects on a pilot basis to demonstrate the viability and potential benefits of such activities as a precursor to securing the external funding necessary to maintain such projects on an on-going basis.

For these purposes the Charity will endeavour to generate and maintain reserves which are at least 50% of its annual expenditure.

2.3 Principal Sources of Funding and Outgoings

Most of our funds come from clients paying for the training they receive

Outgoings are mainly paying trainers for services delivered, travel, subsidising free and low cost provision of training, and equipment.

In order to move away from this model, during the Covid lockdown, we worked on developing a pamphlet to circulate for fundraising purposes and drafted material suitable for incorporating in bids or grant applications.

There are no other outgoings of a significant nature because of the generosity of David and Julie Wassell who provide a base for the charity at their home where they, unpaid and with no administrative support, undertake all the operational day to day activities as well as working with the trustees to develop the necessary policies and administrative and financial management systems to enable the charity to develop and function effectively.

2.4 Remuneration of Trustees

All Trustees act in a voluntary capacity and receive no remuneration or other material benefits from their services to the Charity.

Out-of-pocket expenses necessarily and reasonably incurred by Trustees in promoting the purposes of the Charity are reimbursed at cost.

2.5 Financial Status

The charity's current resources from income and unrestricted donations are sufficient to meet its regular outgoings and to contribute to building its reserves.

All the indications are that this will remain the case for the foreseeable future.

2.6 Statutory Statements on Liabilities

The Trustees declare that:

The charity has given no guarantees where potential liability under the guarantee is outstanding at the date of this statement

The charity has no debt outstanding at the date of this statement which is owed by the CIO and which is secured by an express charge on any assets of the CIO

3 Reference and Administration Details

3.1 Charity Name & Registration

Name of the Charity is Darwin Dogs

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registration no: 1191061, registered with the Charity Commission on 28th August 2020.

The charity is registered with HM Revenue & Customs

3.2 Charity's Address

52 Cavendish Road, Long Eaton, Notts NG10 4HY

e-mail: darwindogs2020@gmail.com

website: www.darwins.org.uk

3.3 Names of the Trustees Who Manage the Charity

<i>Name</i>	<i>Office</i>	<i>Appointed</i>
Michael Goodwin	Chair	28 August 2020
David Wassell	Treasurer	28 August 2020
Angela Betts		28 August 2020
Margaret Barker	Social Media Manager	28 August 2020

3.4 Names of Advisors & Senior Members of Staff

Julie Wassell Chief Executive Officer

3.5 Bank

Barclays 2 High Street, Nottingham NG1 2EN

3.6 Independent Examiner

None

4 Structure, Governance & Management

4.1 Type of Governing Document

Constitution – based on the Charity Commission's model governing document for Foundation Charitable Incorporated Organisations.

4.2 Charitable Objects

Such purposes as are exclusively charitable for the public benefit as the trustees shall see fit.

The objects of the CIO are:

To improve the lives of, and relieve the disability of, adults with a primary diagnosis of a long-term mental health condition, or on the autistic spectrum, across Great Britain, by providing access to specialised dog training services to help them to train their pet dog to mitigate the problems caused by their condition. The ultimate aim of the training is for the dog to become an Assistance Dog, if both dog and human are capable.

4.3 Trustee Selection Methods

There must be at least three charity trustees. The maximum number of trustees is 12. In accordance with the Constitution, Trustees are appointed or re-appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. In appointing Trustees due consideration is given to ensuring that the Trustees have, between them, the skills and experience necessary to manage the charity effectively and in accordance with charity law.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf,



Michael Goodwin (Chair)

Date: 24th January 2022

5 Statement of Financial Activity

5.1 Financial Report by Trustee/Treasurer

Financial Report for 2020/21

By David Wassell, Trustee and Treasurer

On 28th August 2020 the charity Darwin Dogs was born, with all the assets and debts from the former Darwin Dogs CIC (a Community Interest Company), £3434 and 1 laptop worth £79 as assets and debts of £337, made up of accruals for future bills to be paid.

Companies House holds financial reports up to 31.3.19 for the CIC. Attached are the unaudited accounts for 1.4.2019 to 31.3.2020 and 1.4.2020 to 28.8.2020, to show continuity of reporting.

From 28.8.20 the financial report, covering the first 7 months of the charity, shows restricted funds of £1670 passed from the CIC (prepaid money for 2 client's needs) and unrestricted funds of £9356. This breaks down into income £7110, donations £482, from CIC £1764 = £9356.

Taking the year 2020/21 as a whole there was a reduction of income of 45.7% along with a reduction in expenses of 48.8%. This was down to reductions of 48.3% in training costs and 92.3% in travel costs, all caused by the pandemic. On the plus side everyone learnt how to do online video calls.

Looking forward there are some major fundraising events planned, but they are currently on hold, some of the funds were ear marked to pay for the cost of Darwin's assessment to become a fully accredited member of Assistance Dog International in early 2022 at an approximate cost £3500.

Other Trustees are working on possible grant applications to provide income for staff. Currently all work is done by unpaid Trustees and volunteers and this must change if the charity is to continue expanding, along with moving the office from a private residence to a more suitable location, and most importantly to have funds in the pot to provide more subsidised and free support to clients. In conclusion as a trustee I believe the charity will get bigger and stronger, there is plenty of good evidence that the work does have a positive effect on our clients life's and their family's. The fact that Assistance Dog International is not only willing but pushing for Darwin Dogs to become a full member as soon as possible, speaks volumes.

5.2 Receipts & Payments During the Financial Year Ended March 2021

Full accounts for the period September 2020 to March 2021 are attached.

5.2.1 Disposition of Funds

The Charity has restricted funds, as shown on page 5 of published accounts for year ending March 2021.

5.2.2 Approval of the Board of Trustees

The Trustees declare that they have approved the above Annual Report & Statement of Financial Activity.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

David Wassell, Treasurer



Date: 24.1.22

5.3 Notes to the Accounts

a) Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 Section 133, using the Receipts and Payments basis available to small charities and the charity's own simple accounts spreadsheet.

b) Reimbursement of Out-of-Pocket Expenses

Out-of-pocket expenses necessarily, reasonably and incidentally incurred by Trustee in the course of their duties as Trustees are reimbursed in accordance with the prevailing Financial Policies & Procedures.

c) Salaries & Professional Fees

No trustee receives any payments for the services they provide to the charity.

In the current financial year the charity employed no staff or external contractors;

d) Fixed Assets

The charity has not purchased or disposed of any fixed assets in the current financial year;

e) Creditors

Cheques issued prior to the end of the financial year but not appearing in the end of financial year bank statement are only reported as outstanding creditors if they remain unrepresented at the time of producing the financial statements.

f) Rounding Discrepancies

All amounts are recorded to the penny, but in these accounts are shown as digitally rounded to the nearest pound. This can occasionally result in a total apparently not being the sum of its constituent amounts. All individual amounts, and their totals, are nevertheless correct.