

Registered number: 03068661

Charity number: 1047403

Branching Out Limited (A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016



Accountants:

WHITING & PARTNERS

Chartered Accountants & Business Advisers

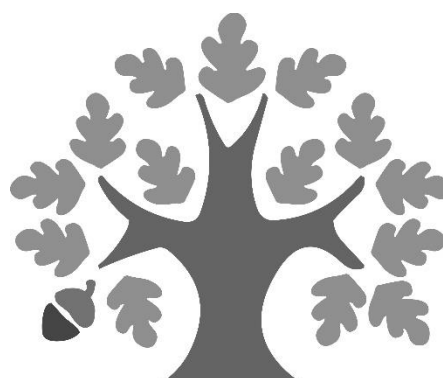
George Court

Bartholomew's Walk

Ely

Cambridgeshire

CB7 4JW



About Us:

We are a local charity based in East Cambridgeshire. We support adults at risk with learning disabilities in a variety of fun work experience and social activities. Our high quality staff team help people, with encouragement to overcome difficulties and achieve in everyday life. The people we support are involved to become part of the Branching Out team helping the community with hands on experience.

Vision:

When we achieve, we have value, when we make mistakes we have understanding, when we look after our environment we have a community.

Mission:

We provide work experience with training for adults with learning disabilities, improving the environment and community. A wide choice of provision, tailored to meet the needs of the individual creates achievement and self-worth.

Values:

Branching Out value and support vulnerable adults with learning disabilities in East Cambridgeshire.

The people we support are given a choice of the types of work experience they would like to do and are regularly consulted to see if they would like any changes.

We encourage the people we support to feel safe and build friendships with respect for each other and the wider community of Branching out.

We will also:

- Continue to monitor the quality of the services we are providing to adults with learning disabilities to ensure that we provide flexibility and meet the needs of each individual.
- Continue to strive to be financially sustainable to secure the future of our staff and the people we support.
- Recruit and train high quality staff who are committed to providing the best care standards we expect for people with learning disabilities.

What we do

We do lots of activities and these photographs show some of what we do every day.



Growing plants

Sensory garden

Cooking

Village planters

Working in the charity
shop



Upcycling furniture

Making craft items

Shop window displays

Sensory room

Delivering the village
magazine



Trustees Report and Financial Statements

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Trustees' Review 2016

We are proud of the support of our staff and volunteers, who have again shown how passionately they care about adults who use Branching Out services.

Our focus is upon adults with learning disabilities who live in the Cambridgeshire area.

The objects of the charity say:

'The objects of the company shall be support and training for adults residing in the Cambridgeshire area who have learning disabilities, in particular the provision of education, training and advocacy to equip them for independent living within the community'

We have found that by listening to people carefully we are able to develop our sense of ambition as Trustees to create wider services to support adults who access services we provide.

We know we can continue to make impact by listening to the views of adults who use our services, volunteers and staff and that will continue to be the most important way to guide our decisions.

We have the following additional objects for the charity:

'To grant emergency financial assistance to current clients of the charity to alleviate temporary hardship to them'

'To establish and run shops to raise funds for the charity by selling donated and second hand goods of any kind but not in such a way as would constitute permanent trading'

We know that Branching Out services enrich the lives of so many people and we want everyone involved to feel that sense of optimism and belonging to Branching Out.

Recruitment and retention of staff that share common values are vital to enhance our services and to support the advocacy work social care ask us to undertake. We have an apprenticeship scheme to support potential new staff into employment. Staff training continues to be a priority to maintain safe practice for vulnerable adults and to adhere to national guidelines for health and safety.

Our charity shops at Littleport and Chatteris continue to be vital to the success of Branching Out and provide work related experiences for adults accessing services and for volunteers from the community.

Our website and use of social media has improved our communications overall, and we are always happy to receive feedback and suggestions.

Finally we thank our General Manager, Susan Wiggans for her ambition and hard work over the last year to develop Branching Out

Making a difference and public benefit:

All the adults at risk with learning disabilities who use our services have an annual review of their progress. This review is attended by everyone and all organisations working together in partnership to support the adult at risk. During these reviews objectives are agreed for the year ahead and progress during the past year is reviewed and monitored. In 2015/16 we delivered 4,100 day placements to adults with learning disabilities.

We use a photographic based progress tracking document to record the achievements of the adult at risk who is using our service, which enables full participation.

Our volunteers make a real difference to peoples' lives on a daily basis and they also benefit from the opportunity to be involved in their community. Last year they contributed by giving 3820 hours of their time. All volunteers time is recorded and they are supported in their roles with policies and procedures for good practice.

We would like to thank all our volunteers who make such a difference to the lives of adults at risk in their community through all the various volunteer roles they undertake at Branching Out.

We are grateful to all the individual donors and organisations from our community who have worked hard to help us to raise funds over the last year to support our work and build on our success of previous years.

During the year we have continued to develop the promotion of Branching Out via social media and increased our presence and awareness amongst our local community. It is important that we build on our social media presence in the community to increase awareness of our work and how the community can get involved to support us.

The activities we provide to our service users day provision are based on their preferences and identified need. These preferences and needs are identified with the service users and their circle of support including other professionals at each individual service user's review. This leads to service user led change and development of Branching Out activities to meet the needs of the people we support. Information on current activities is available on our website and Facebook.

We have two charity shops which we run for fundraising to subsidise the income we receive for social care placements and to pay for additional resources to ensure our ability to work to high quality standards. The charity shops also have the added benefit of providing quality items to the community at a low cost and recycling to reduce landfill. We have a system for helping those from or moving into our community in desperate need, with a basics pack subject to stock availability.

We continue to plant and water the village planters in Littleport for the Parish Council. In addition we deliver 600 Littleport Life Magazines to houses and businesses in the village. We represent both Branching Out and the Littleport Town Centre trading businesses on Littleport Town Team and manage their Facebook page.

We recognise that social care day provision is not at the current time subject to Care Quality Commission inspections, however we realise that this will happen in the future and we are actively working to CQC standards. As such we have registered Branching Out with National Minimum Data Set – Skills for Care and we work to update our data on a monthly basis.

We intend to continue our apprenticeship scheme in order to transfer skills to a younger generation of people who want to develop a career in social care.

Reserves Policy:

Branching Out has an agreed Reserves Policy in place since 2005 which is reviewed by the Trustees on an annual basis. The Trustees recognise the expenditure to maintenance, health & safety, structural alterations needed, actual costs of service user placements and the development of the future business plan. Currently monthly commitments are £29,500 – £30,000. Branching Out has the equivalent of three months commitment in reserve as very best practice. Trustees intend to continue to monitor Branching Out reserves and annual budget to ensure appropriate levels of reserves are maintained.

Replacement Fund:

Over the last year Branching Out has started saving on a regular monthly basis in order to set aside a sum of money equivalent to the amount of money our assets depreciate on an annual basis. This fund will be used to replace assets such as computers or vehicles when appropriate. The Trustees intend to continue to monitor Branching Out's Replacement Fund.

Emergency Fund:

Over the last year Branching Out has started putting all interest received from the charities Reserves into an Emergency Fund up to a maximum of £2,000 at any one time. An application form has been agreed with the Trustees of Branching Out and the Learning Disability Partnership East Team. The Emergency Fund is open for applications on behalf of adults at risk with learning disabilities who are supported by Branching Out or who have been supported by Branching Out sometime in the previous 10 years and are suffering hardship. Applications are subject to terms and conditions and details are available on request from the General Manager.

Going concern

Branching Out's Board of Trustees have assessed the charity's finances and resources, alongside a review of the budget for 2015/16. On the basis of this assessment the Board of Trustees believe that the charity is in a position to manage its business risks.

The Board therefore has a reasonable expectation that adequate resources exist for the charity to continue to operate for the foreseeable future and thus continues to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing these financial statements

Health & Safety:

The trustees and management monitor health and safety with the organisation. Each work area carries out periodic health and safety checks. The General Manager and Trustees carry out an annual Health and Safety check. In addition we have an annual external health and safety audit. All checks and audits result in setting of actions as required. All employees have a vital part to play in the monitoring of health and safety within Branching Out and they are encouraged to report all hazards using our hazard reporting system. Any hazards are followed up with an open and honest discussion with the sole purpose of working to identify and reduce hazards to a minimum.

Disability and Equality

We have a Disability & Equality Scheme regarding ensuring Branching Out give full and equal access to all our beneficiaries and a copy of this is available from our website www.branchingoutuk.com

We have an Equal Opportunities Policy which is given to all new employees as part of their induction process.

Where employees or beneficiaries have or develop a disability it is Branching Out's policy that wherever possible to provide reasonable adaptations to enable their employment or the service they receive to continue.

Employee involvement

We have employee involvement embedded into the culture of our organisation. Information is continually provided and shared with all our employees within the open culture of our organisation. All staff are consulted on all major and minor changes affecting their work activities and the organisation. Regular meetings are held with staff to seek a two way flow of information. We use our intranet to share information with staff and in addition we use a specified social media site to share ideas among the staff team.

Service User involvement

We are committed to providing our service users with the information they need to access our site as independently as possible. We use specialised software for signage and assistive technology.

In addition our open culture within Branching Out is extended to include our service users. The staff explain all activities to our service users and expand on service users ideas and choices throughout the organisation. All major and minor changes are discussed with all our service users and their opinion is valued.

All service users are involved in their support plan. All support plans are personalised to include likes, dislikes and photographic evidence of achievement. All service users are familiar with their support plan and are able to use it to communicate their achievements with their circle of support during their annual reviews.

Structure, governance, and management

As a limited company and a registered charity Branching Out is governed by its Board of Trustees who are elected by attendees at our General Meeting. Trustees can also co-opt additional Trustees to the Board, who must subsequently be elected at the General Meeting. The election or appointment of Trustees is detailed in the Articles of Association.

Trustees meet 6 times a year to review the strategic direction of the charity. Day to day management is delegated to the General Manager. Membership of the Board reflects the expertise of the respective Trustees in relation to the activities undertaken by the charity. Minutes of the meetings are subsequently circulated to the full Board.

The induction process for Trustees includes attendance at an initial meeting of the Board and further in-depth briefings from the General Manager. Further training is arranged to meet the specific needs of individual Trustees.

Use of Restrictive Interventions

Our support staff receive high quality, specialised training from PROACT SCIP[®] UK for proactive, active and reactive support using the least restrictive option focusing in on individuals skills and preferences establishing the most proactive options.

Trustees Liabilities

Branching Out indemnifies the Trustees and management against liability in respect of proceedings brought by third parties. This third party indemnity provision was in force during the year.

Finance and Audit

The Trustees have responsibility for the oversight of key issues such as the financial management and prevention of fraud. Twice a year the Board specifically reviews the budget and finances of the charity and informally monitors the charity's progress throughout the year.

Governance

The Board ensures the good and effective ongoing governance of Branching Out. Key responsibilities are any governance matters which need to be addressed, overseeing the appointment, re-election and retirement of Trustees, ensuring good distribution of skills and experience among the Trustees and advising of the appointment of the General Manager.

Auditors

A resolution proposing the appointment of Whiting & Partners as auditors will be proposed at the AGM.

Staff, Volunteers and Trustees

Finally the Board would like to thank the service users, staff, volunteers and fellow Board members for their commitment, dedication and hard work during the past year.

The report of the Board of Trustees was approved by the Board on 13th July 2016 and signed on its behalf by:

Seton McNeill
Chair of Trustees

The Trustees

The trustees who served the charity during the period were as follows:

Miss R Baker (Chairperson)	Resigned 31 August 2015
Mr J S McNeill (Vice Chair)	Appointed Chairperson 25 November 2015
Mr G Spinks	
Mrs K Taylor	
Ms W Wilkinson	
Mr B Hayes	
Mr A J McClelland	
Ms M Kolodziejka	Appointed Trustee 25 November 2015

Plans for the future

We will continue to deliver our good quality, and efficient service for adults with learning disabilities.

- a. **Improve Staff Recruitment to enable us to continue to support our current and future service users. There is a national shortage of people working in social care and the demand for social care provision is increasing rapidly.**

We have reviewed our recruitment procedures resulting in the introduction of a telephone interview, psychometric testing and a more in-depth face to face interview. We are taking part in a project to research the impact of integrating beliefs, values and attitudes into our recruitment procedures.

We will also be continuing to expand our apprenticeship scheme to train staff to work in social care.

An important part of this is to continually review our ability to raise income to support our work with our charity shops.

- b. **We are currently reviewing a strategy for our charity shop over the next 5 years. A consultation process is underway with all our shop employees and volunteers to gain their input into the document.**

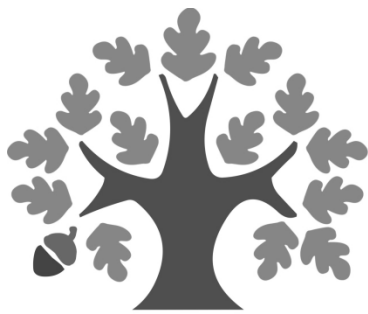
Striving to ensure our facilities are good quality.

- c. **Work is continuing to improve the facilities at our Head Office. Our employees were consulted about the layout and content of the kitchen to get as close a match as possible to the needs of our service users who do cooking training in the kitchen.**
- d. **Work has also started on improving the facilities at the charity shops which also included and consultation process with everyone effected.**

Subject to cost we are hoping to complete the following over the next few years:

- e. Extend the rail around the Brook Building to secure the sloping ground. This rail will also extend around the paving area in front of the potting shed leaving an access gap.
- f. Install post and rail fencing around the allotments and field edge secure to site and reduce risk.
- g. Line, insulate and plaster the walls at the far end of the workshop to make a games/social area.
- h. Replace the double height doors on the workshop with automatic doors for ease of access.
- i. Resurface the rear parking area, the side parking area and the front car park.

Branching Out is proud to be the charity partner of White Stuff store in Ely and we have enjoyed working with them over the past year to raise money for our charity.



Branching Out

'Supporting people with learning disabilities in the community'



01353 863221 for our Head Office



[/thebranchingout](#)



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Branching Out, 27 Grange Lane, Littleport, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 1HW
reception@branchingoutuk.com

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