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Welcome to the Annual Report, 2011-12

Adults often remember precious moments from childhood alone or with siblings or friends, away from the control or direction of adults. Children in modern Islington have less freedom than ever before due to adult concerns such as cars, stranger danger, working patterns and housing design, even money worries. The increase in computer-based play, whilst not intrinsically wrong, is impacting and reducing the mental and physical space for children. This reduction is what IPA is fighting to address.

In 2011 our main aim was to protect, maintain and develop Islington's adventure playgrounds as excellent places for children to play – free of charge, in their own neighbourhoods, in the care of their own communities – for the foreseeable future.

IPA also maintained involvement in strategic discussions across Islington. The focus on adventure play continued through the play review and IPA facilitated an expert play panel including Bob Hughes, Bernard Spiegel and David Yearley from ROSPA as well as staff and trustees from IPA who co-created a paper that fed into the review. The panel has agreed to continue to meet to discuss good practice for play in Islington.

The year ended with an amazing success when our proposal for Deeds of Dedication were agreed, ensuring the protection of play in perpetuity for Islington's children.



Anita Grant
Director



Our Mission

IPA aims to preserve, create, improve and promote places and opportunities for the children of Islington to play

We recognise that play is a child's right and is fundamental to a happy life. Play is an essential part of the health, education, development and happiness of children. We are committed to improving the quality of play experiences whenever they occur and wherever children are. Poverty or need can be an obstacle to a happy childhood and so we especially seek to help children and their families who are socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion. This includes children with special needs and disabilities, who often face barriers to using services.

For 40 years IPA has operated as a second tier umbrella organisation; supporting, advising and working with other play providers, as well as being a direct provider of services for children. This enables us to experience the challenges facing play providers and better learn how to respond. Our mission can be described through four overarching aims:

- **Excellence in Adventure Play**

We provide information, support, training and modelling of good practice to enable settings to provide an excellent experience that transforms lives and helps to ameliorate the effects of poverty.

- **Wider Play**

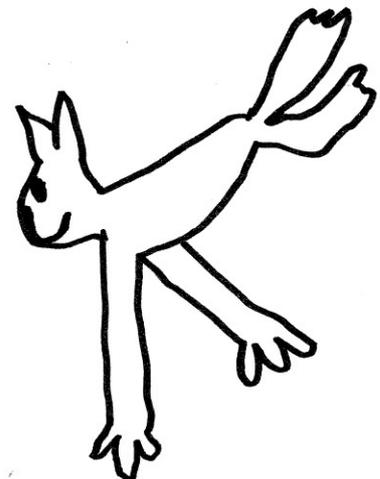
We develop innovative ways to provide creative, inclusive, challenging, fun and free play experiences where children are, in schools and open parks for example. We research, evaluate, model and disseminate play methods, values and opportunities so that they can be shared and utilised by others.

- **Strategy and Campaigning**

We ensure play is on everyone's agenda; working actively with communities, service users and partners to raise its profile at a local and national level.

- **Delivering Opportunity**

We manage Paradise Park Children's Centre, directly delivering a child-centred service at a play-focused centre reaching the most excluded families in the community and providing essential services for them.



Excellence in Adventure Play

In July 2011, IPA's Tree House Project received a Right to Play Award at the International Play Association's 50th Anniversary conference in Cardiff, in recognition of its implementation of Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the child's right to play and leisure.

The International Play Association's purpose is to protect, preserve and promote the child's right to play as a fundamental human right. The Right to Play Award was created in 1993 to recognize and present innovative projects that can serve as a model for replication in communities around the world.



Quality in Play for the Adventure Playgrounds

Over the course of the Quality in Play project IPA have been providing intensive, structured support to playgrounds, to assess, improve and demonstrate the quality of the play provided at each setting.



As Toffee Park Adventure Playground were the first to submit they won first prize in the QiP competition. A group of Toffee Park children visited Marble Hill Adventure Playground in Richmond in the Easter holidays. Haywards Adventure Playground came second and chose to visit Thames Valley Adventure Playground in Berkshire in the Summer. Three Corners Adventure Playground and King Henry's Walk Adventure Playground came joint third, each receiving a voucher for arts materials.

Wider Play

Children should have the opportunity to play outside, to manipulate and alter their environment and to learn about the wider world. Children who have these chances have better outcomes in so many areas of their lives.

Our peripatetic project workers travel the borough modelling and improving practice, and directly impacting on the lives of children and families.



In Islington's Parks and Adventure Playgrounds, children have been barrowing, building and planting through sun, rain, wind and snow to create new natural areas. They have made structures from living willow, dug ponds and planted trees. In taking part in these activities they have been able to explore the muddy earth digging up worms and chasing mini-beasts. They have created places that will grow and develop for children of the future whilst bringing pleasure and knowledge to children right now.



The 'Finding Nature through Play' project is funded by Natural England through Access to Nature, as part of the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme. We are very grateful to them for their support.



The Tree House Project

2011 saw the Tree House Project continuing its work with children on Adventure Playgrounds and reaching further into the community via parks, estates and schools. The project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, has run for three years and supported 1300 children in building dens and tree houses in their play. Throughout the three years there were no accidents more serious than a scratch or bruised thumb; strong evidence that children are able to assess their own risks and keep themselves safe when given the opportunity.

On the 16th March, the children's creativity was celebrated in an exhibition of their objects and photographs at Islington's Union Chapel. The event was attended by children, parents and play people from all over London.

The Tree House Project has proved instrumental in changing attitudes towards children participating in activities with an element of risk. Adults have recognised that many of their fears are unfounded after seeing the enthusiasm of children to use tools, work together and make great things and have seen how much they have benefitted from the experience.

This innovative project received a great deal of interest locally, nationally and internationally with visitors from as far afield as Belgium, Israel and Cincinnati.

Very few children have had any experience of using real tools and the concentration on their faces needs to be seen to be believed. There is evident progress within each session as the children's ability can be easily observed. The children have taken great pride in the development of the tree house and the by products (wooden off cuts) have been taken home with great pride and satisfaction. Perhaps, on a few occasions, this has been less well received by parents but we have been delighted by the obvious increase in self confidence attained by the children in just an hour's session.

Brian Bench
Head teacher, Hungerford School

Strategy and Campaigning

We've been working hard for children's play in Islington. The Road to protection of adventure playground land for children's play, in perpetuity:

2010-2011

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| May 2010 | As the Mayor's Charity for 2010-2011, IPA starts an appeal for the establishment of a "Children's Land Trust" |
| July | Secures support of the former Secretary of State and Privy Councillor Lord Smith of Finsbury |
| September | IPA and Lord Smith meet Islington Council Leader and Chief Executive |
| October -
December | Works with the Ethical Property Foundation and others to gain legal advice on governance, conveyancing and asset transfer implications |
| October | Community sign-up to land trust plan at a community event held at Timbuktu Adventure Playground |
| December | Islington Council agree 'in principle' to a "Children's Land Trust".

Postcard protest organised by IPA where 200 children across the borough write about why they support and value their play opportunities |
| February 2011 | LBI Children's Board agree to investigate IPA's proposal for a land trust

The IPA organises a 'play march' for children and staff from all the playgrounds to the town hall. The Executive Member for Children and Young People declares the council's commitment to "working with the IPA on a land trust".

City Bridge Trust commits to supporting IPA's proposal, with funding |

- April 2011 Islington Council announces a year-long Review of Adventure Play, with a sub-group to look at the IPA's land trust proposal
- May Islington Council implements improved planning status for the playground land in response for call to protect land
- July Following legal advice, IPA argues that the improved planning status provides insufficient security
- Summer IPA consults the local community about a land trust for the adventure playgrounds over a series of play events
- September IPA disseminates consultation findings, and holds a public meeting, showing further community support for a land trust
- December IPA produces a final report for the land trust proposal
- March 2012 Islington's Children and Families Board see the recommendations from the year-long Review of Adventure Play and agree that "the protection of green spaces for play and leisure should override any other issues"

Based on feedback that an asset transfer does not fit with current strategy IPA proposed a compromise – the drawing up of a Deed of Dedication, which would prevent, in perpetuity, the change of use of the land occupied by all 12 playgrounds without the consent of agreed parties, including Fields in Trust. Consent for any changes would be conditional on suitable replacement land being made available and equipped with the necessary facilities

May 2012

Islington Council agree to establish a Deed of Dedication for each Adventure Playground site in order to secure the land for children's play, in perpetuity

Islington Council's Director of Strategy and Commissioning, Children's Services, Thanos Morphitis said: "Thanks to the IPA for your work on securing the land for adventure play. You put this issue firmly on the agenda."



Delivering Opportunity

We have had an extremely good year at Paradise Park Children's Centre which has been reflected in being awarded a rating from Ofsted of 'Good with Outstanding Elements' in January.

"Paradise Park is a vibrant and welcoming centre which exploits its unique location in a park to place itself at the heart of its community. The centre's community café and its outdoor play areas are highly valued by families."

"'The centre turned my life around,' was the comment from one parent which demonstrates the positive impact of the centre on the lives of families. The quality of care for families is outstanding."

Ofsted Report, 2012



This is recognition of the valuable work we do for early years children and their families. It demonstrates how providing high quality play opportunities is central to improving lives.

IPA Update

Forty Years of IPA



The evening of the 27th October started with face painting and cupcake decorating, as well as competitions such as guess how many nails in the jar. There was a competition to colour in the party invitation (some completed entries are shown above). We were treated to great musical performances from IPA staff members, local children and young people. Later in the evening there were drinks aplenty, food for all and cake to celebrate in style.

It was a great celebration of forty years of Islington Play Association, working tirelessly to improve children and young people's lives in Islington.

IPA Staff Play Together

In September, over twenty IPA head office staff, Paradise Park staff and trustees descended on the Cardfields Centre in Chelmsford for the annual away day.

There were activities and events designed specifically with IPA staff in mind. The purpose of the weekend was to give people who don't work directly together the opportunity to get to know each other better, share knowledge and experience, and explore their place in the organisation.

The weekend culminated with the staff team decorating a kite, to demonstrate what they did at IPA to improve the lives of children and young people in Islington. The kite now has pride of place on the wall in Paradise Park Children's Centre.



Looking to the Future

There are big challenges facing the play sector as statutory sources of funding come under unprecedented pressure. As well as doing our utmost to protect Islington's children from the worst effects of this, we now also want to make our experience available to others. This will broaden our opportunities to develop new work and will also diversify our funding base.

IPA is currently operating at full management and administration capacity. The next year will see us strengthening the senior management team and increasing our finance and HR capacity, to be able to take advantage of the emerging opportunities whilst maintaining strong, strategic leadership along with robust internal systems, procedures and staff support.



In 2012/13 we will:

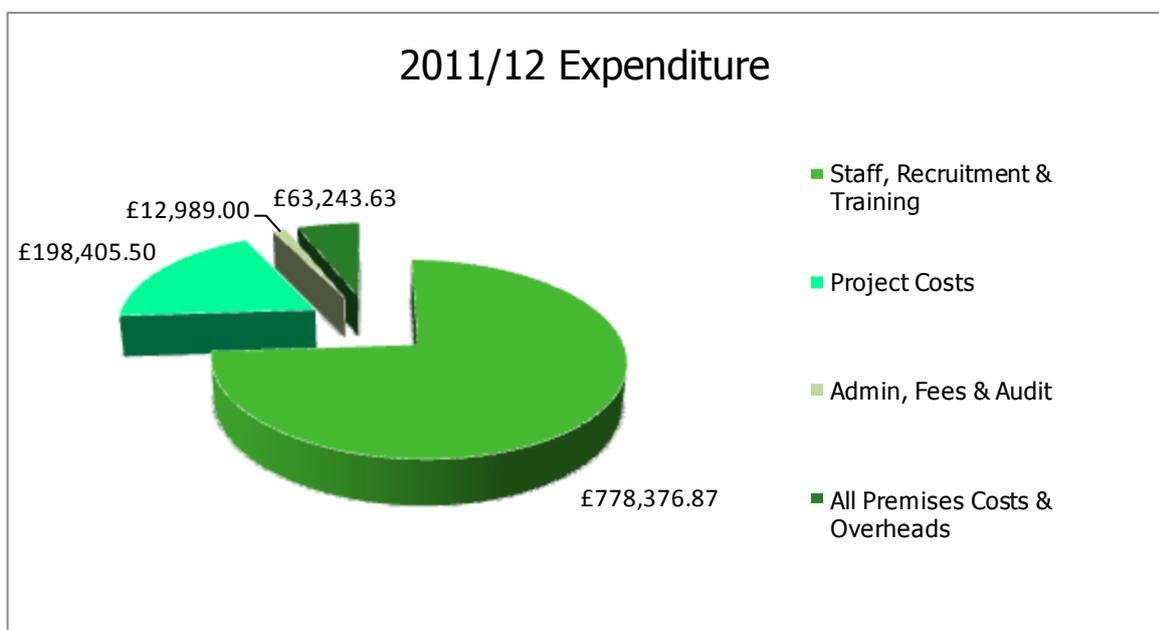
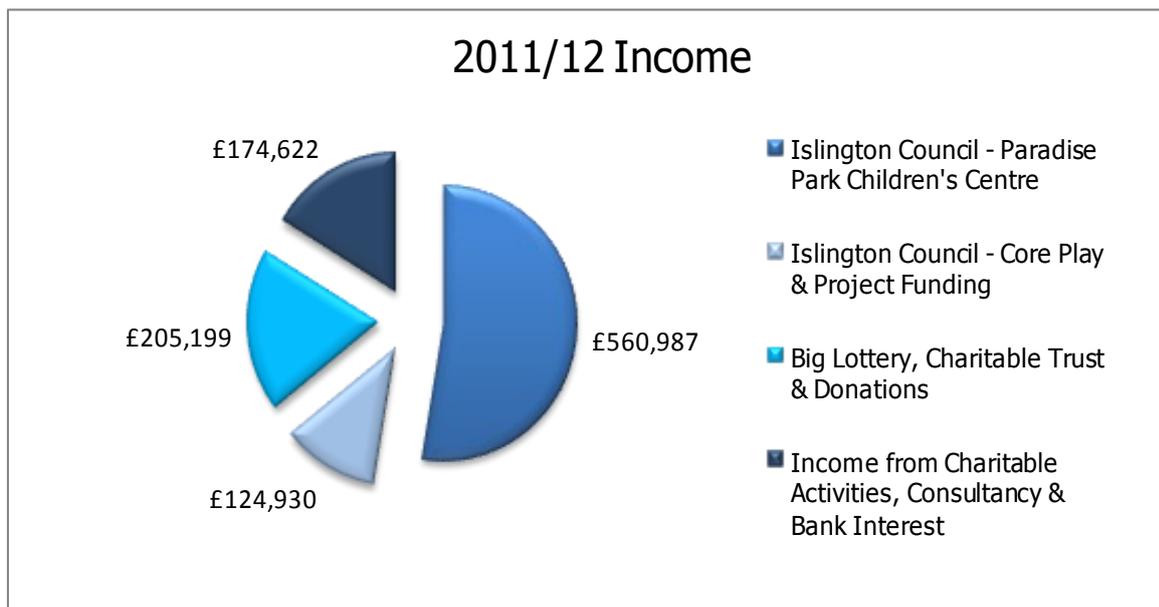
Continue to deliver a rainbow of services at Paradise Park Children's Centre, to support some of the borough's most vulnerable children's start in life – helping parents to bond with their children in playful ways.

Aim to build upon the 'good' rating by Ofsted for Paradise Park and achieve an 'outstanding' rating whilst also gaining Quality in Play status for our provision.

Consider the Borough's proposed arrangements for providing the adventure playground service, and tender for the new provider contract if we judge this to be in the best interests of Islington's children, consistent with our mission and ethos; and complementary to the sustainable business model for IPA.

Seek to sustain our peripatetic project workers who will continue to travel the borough modelling and improving practice and directly impacting the lives of children and families.

Financial Information



IPA is grateful to the following funders for their support in 2011-2012:

Big Lottery Fund – Playful Ideas
 City Bridge Trust
 Islington Giving
 Islington Mayor’s Charity of the Year Fund
 London Play

Big Lottery Fund – Natural England
 Islington Council
 Islington Greenspace
 Islington Strategic Partnership
 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

Full accounts are available on request.

Auditor: Chappmans Associates Limited, 3 Coombe Road, London NW10 0EB
 Bankers: Barclays Bank, The Co-operative Bank and the COIF Charities Deposit Fund

The IPA is a registered charity: 1086165 and a not for profit limited company: 3989283

Head Office Staff

Director

Anita Grant

Deputy Director

Suzanne Murray

Tree House Project Worker

Wendy Jeeves

Tree House Assistant

Roxanne Banjo (left May 2012)

Head of Adventure Playground Development

Paul Durr

Finding Nature Through Play Worker

Lucy Benson

Play Development Worker

Rachel Mathers (from June 2011)

Finance Manager

Biniam Ghebreyesus

Finance Worker

Bruna Ibraj

Management Committee

Chair

Jonah Grunsell

Treasurer

Lucia Garratt

Secretary

Christopher Hignett

Trustee

Ekaterina Aristovich (joined December 2011)

Trustee

Jennifer Chan

Trustee

Kelle Dittmar

Trustee

Paul Hocker

Trustee

Lorna Lewis (joined December 2011)

Trustee

Alan Sutton

Play Team

Elegia Clancey, Jason Daly, Thomas Hignett, Dawn Jennings, Kerry O'Connor, Fabrana Righi, Kitty Schuchard, Ellen Vellacott, Jamie Ward

Nursery and Crèche Team

Shakherah Akhtar, Onyi Anyanwu, Pauline Atkinson, Fatima Bahmani, Tracey Everitt, Marie Forde, Tracey Hollis, Stacey Jeakins, Julita John, Anne Lahart-Tigrine, Amo Mahadi, Patricia Okwan, Jermaine Payne, Yassin Sey, Emma Smith, Zarah Argel, Hatice Arik, Chelsea Freed, Margaret Gaskin, Keesha Green, Letisha Hunte, Heruth Iyasue, Gemma Lewis, Nazifa Rahman, Fiona Roberts, Gennet Teclé, Cinzia Tassinari

Café Team

Phillip Linley, Katrina Stephens, Lisa Wales, Turkan Arik, Aysel Gulec, Hayley Jeakins, Pasquale Tortora, Darren Hazelwood

Volunteers

We would like to thank the many volunteers that make our work possible including Juergen Heeg, Fataha Khanom, Nini Negussie and our fantastic Trustees.

Paradise Park Children's Centre Lead Staff

Lead for Early Years and Families

Simon Fry

Leader of Learning

Helen Richards

Senior Family Support Worker

Kemi Lawal

Family Support Worker

Joy Ayeni

Family Support Worker

Onyi Anyanwu (left March 2012)

Administrator

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www.islingtonplay.org.uk



Play energizes us and enlivens us. It eases our burdens. It renews our natural sense of optimism and opens us up to new possibilities

Stuart Brown, MD
Contemporary Psychiatrist

www.islingtonplay.org.uk

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