



**Supporting Richmond since 1786**

RPLC, The Vestry House

21 Paradise Road, Richmond TW9 1SA

020 8948 5701 [www.rplc.org.uk](http://www.rplc.org.uk) [Sharon@rplc.org.uk](mailto:Sharon@rplc.org.uk)

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To Whom It May Concern,

### **Re Marble Hill Playcentres (Charity No: 1110616) & Development Plans**

Richmond Parish Lands Charity (RPLC) has been supporting individuals and the charities supporting them in Richmond, Ham & Petersham, East Sheen, Mortlake and Barnes since 1786. RPLC has social housing and a permanent endowment fund. We tackle need by the distribution of revenue income through grants to organisations and charities and small grants to those in extreme need. We also provide an education support programme.

Marble Hill Playcentres (MHP) is one of 38 local organisations which RPLC has chosen by invitation to be a Regularly Funded Organisation receiving an annual grant for core costs – an indication of the high regard in which Trustees hold MHP - and in addition provide project grants. RPLC has been a supporter of MHP over many years as a unique and long-established provision in LB of Richmond, meeting the needs of a wide range of children and young people for recreational play. The highly inclusive nature of the scheme in facilitating access to all - and especially to families on low income and to children with special needs as evidenced by specialist provision offered – is highly prized. The value of play for mental health and the development of key skills is well evidenced. MHP play a crucial role in providing these and in creating a community in a time when these are being eroded due to various factors, such as the prevalence of social media amongst our children and young people.

RPLC Trustees are committed to doing all they can to ensure that valued organisations delivering vital services in support of our beneficiaries have the means to continue their work. MHP suffered in recent years due to loss of income in part attributed to the fact that the building was neither fit for purpose nor suitable for letting, with restricted opening and no option for indoor activities in autumn/winter months.

In December 2017, Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity and RPLC were approached to provide emergency funding to prevent the provision from closing with the very real threat of these vital services being lost.

Since then, MHP has been revitalised with a dynamic and forward looking, strategically minded new Board of Trustees with a clear vision for the future to ensure sustainability through financial viability. This to be achieved through the creation of a new, fit for purpose building. The new building would ensure all year-round provision to maximise service delivery and income generation as well as providing vital premises and accommodation to benefit both MHP and 2 highly regarded and well used local charities supporting families with children with special needs. Both are desperately in need of suitable accommodation.

The fact that premises, meeting and office space are at a premium in LB Richmond and that the local voluntary sector are struggling to find and finance affordable and suitable accommodation is well known. Community hubs are a cost-effective way of addressing this challenge and of creating and sustaining local communities.

Children and young people's mental health and risky behaviours and isolation are well documented issues in LB Richmond and community initiatives and provision tackle this need. This is an innovative, creative and effective solution in bringing the community together and promoting play and mental health and wellbeing in a new collaborative approach with a strong vision. The proposed new building and facilities will be a model of how to make a real difference to our community and to our children, young people and families and will be a wonderful resource for so many now and in the future. We support this initiative.

Sharon La Ronde  
Grants Director