

OPEN DOOR - ST ALBANS

Report of the Directors For the Year ended 31 March 2025

The Directors present their report with the financial statements for the Company¹ for the year ended 31 March 2025.

PURPOSES AND AIMS

The Charity's purpose, as set out in the objects contained in its Memorandum of Association, is the relief of those in need, by reason of homelessness or other causes of vulnerability. The principal activity of the Company in the year under review was that of fundraising and provision of volunteer services for the relief of financial need and the provision of accommodation and support for the homeless in St Albans and Hertfordshire. The Charity works in partnership with Hightown Housing Association (Hightown), which operates and manages the services provided at Open Door Night Shelter. It also provides additional accommodation for homeless people during the winter months; and makes occasional grants to other organisations.

Open Door – St Albans is a registered charity (reg no. 1028528) and company limited by guarantee (no. 02868633).

How our activities deliver Public Benefit

The Open Door – St. Albans Charity contributes to the running costs of the Open Door Night Shelter at 8 Bricket Road, St. Albans. The Shelter benefits from grants from Hertfordshire County Council's Housing-related Support grant, and St Albans City and District Council.

The Shelter gives single ensuite accommodation to up to 12 people each night. The facilities are available either by agency referral or by self-referral. Open Door Night Shelter also provides daytime drop-in services which offer support and advice, including on housing, health care, and the services available from other relevant agencies.

The Open Door Charity supports the Open Door Night Shelter homelessness service, which during 2024/25 supported 49 individuals into more settled housing. The Charity makes grants for specific purposes to supplement public funding, provides volunteers and raises awareness of homelessness issues. Our volunteers make an important contribution to the success of the project. In particular they prepare and serve lunch at the drop-in, and also provide residents and Winter Beds service users with a hot evening meal. Volunteers also provide services for individuals, such as helping those for whom English is a second language, and a number of local businesses give practical help from the donation of food to working to improve the facilities provided and to enhance the environment for residents. These volunteers are recruited and overseen by our Publicity, Fundraising and Administration Coordinator, directly employed by the Charity.

The Charity provides grant funding to Hightown to employ the Safer Streets Outreach Worker, who makes contact with and supports those on the streets, to help rough sleepers to lead a more settled way of life. There are still people sleeping rough in St Albans – during 2024/25, on average 9 rough sleepers were verified at quarterly counts, though the

¹ The Company is a registered charity (number 1028528). In this report, the Company is referred to on occasion as 'the Charity'.

actual number is estimated at 12 to 15, unchanged from the previous year. Many of these have limited options for moving on both because there is a serious shortage of suitable accommodation, and/or because of their particular circumstances and issues.

The Charity also provides food supplies and manages a volunteer team of 70 to prepare lunches and a hot evening meal; these are part funded by Hightown. We meet regularly with Hightown to review service provision through Street Outreach and the Night Shelter, and to consider ways in which services might be developed. Discussions are ongoing to find ways to extend the operating hours of the Night Shelter.

Over the winter months the Charity provides volunteer run direct services to rough sleepers, via the Winter Beds project. This year, the project returned to a city centre, shared sleeping space, hosted by Marlborough Road Methodist Church. Accommodation was provided every night from December 2024 through to the end of March 2025: in total, 9 individuals were accommodated, using 72 volunteers across the season. The service was jointly funded by the Council, with referrals managed by our Safer Streets Outreach worker. The charity is reviewing with Hightown and the Council how we can best provide effective support to rough sleepers over the winter months.

Across these services, volunteers gave almost 4,000 hours of their time during 2024/25, with an estimated value of £45,500.

During the year the Charity continued to fund a counselling scheme, provided by Rephael House, to give access to early therapy for service users at the Night Shelter, those recently moved to supported accommodation, and rough sleepers. The service has been well received by clients, with reasonable levels of engagement, enabling them to begin to address often complex issues, as a prelude to engaging with further support.

The Charity provides small grants to assist resettlement of individuals, although none were made in 2024/25. We occasionally pay rent and services for people in need who have nowhere to stay and have no access to benefits or other public funds, to give some time to find them a place to go.

We continue to maintain strong relationships with other local charities and statutory agencies including St Albans District Council; for example, liaising in the provision of meals to rough sleepers, and in exploring options for our winter provision and for further daytime facilities.

The Charity's funding benefits the direct recipients of the services provided at the Night Shelter and also has indirect impacts on the wider community. We encourage charitable giving by local people, whether through volunteering or through fundraising and donations. Many of our supporters and fundraisers are young people, who want to help homeless and vulnerable people.

Our support for the Night Shelter over many years has helped improve the lives of homeless people, by enabling them to address their personal issues and live more settled lives, in turn helping them to play a fuller part in the local community.

The Directors (who are also trustees of the Charity, appointed by existing trustees) for the year ending March 2025 were:

Rachel Merelie (Chairman, from November 2024)
Peter Graham (Vice Chairman and Acting Chair to October 2024)
Lindsey McLeod (Treasurer)
Jacqueline Button (Secretary)
Richard Upton
Andy Thoms
Roger Gosine
Edward Dunn

In addition, Carla Watson has been appointed as a Director and trustee, (from April 2025).

The Directors have complied with the duty laid out in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on 22.09.25 and are signed on its behalf by:



Rachel Merelie
Chairman

Charity Registration Number 1028528 (England and Wales)

OPEN DOOR – ST ALBANS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted income funds £	Total Funds 2024/25 £	Total Funds 2023/24 £
Income					
Donations and legacies	2	64,549	26,606	91,155	114,066
Investments	2	9,988		9,988	10,790
Total		74,537	26,606	101,143	124,856
Expenditure					
Raising funds		-	-	-	-
Charitable activities	3	86,760	26,606	113,366	134,593
Publicity & Admin	3	18,746		18,746	16,026
Total		105,506	26,606	132,112	150,619
Net income/(Expenditure)		(30,969)	-	(30,969)	(25,763)

OPEN DOOR – ST ALBANS
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Note	Total 2024/25 £	Total 2023/24 £
Current assets			
Debtors	4	20,149	23,048
Cash at bank and in hand		206,358	244,961
Total current assets		226,507	268,009
 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	4	<u>(6,109)</u>	<u>(16,642)</u>
 Net current assets/ (liabilities)		<u>220,398</u>	<u>251,367</u>
 Reserves			
Unrestricted funds:			
General	14	158,956	189,925
Development	14	61,442	61,442
Total Reserves		<u>220,398</u>	<u>251,367</u>

The Company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The members have not required the Company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- a) ensuring that the Company keeps accounting records which comply with Section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
- b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company as at the end of each financial year and of its profit or loss for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Section 396 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the Company.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies subject to the small companies regime and in accordance with FRS102 SORP.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:

Rachel Merchi

Approved by the Board on 22/09/25

OPEN DOOR – ST ALBANS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Year Ended 31 March 2025

1 Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the 2019 Charities SORP (FRS102).

Income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when:

- the charity becomes entitled to the resources;
- it is more likely than not that the trustees will receive the resources;
- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Grants and donations are only included in the SoFA when the general income recognition criteria are met

There has been no offsetting of assets and liabilities, or income and expenses.

Legacies are included in the SoFA when receipt is probable, that is, where there has been grant of probate, the executors have established that there are sufficient assets in the estate, and any conditions attached to the legacy are either within the control of the charity, or have been met.

Gift Aid receivable is included in income when there is a valid declaration from the donor. Any Gift Aid amount recovered on a donation is considered to be part of that gift and is treated as an addition to the same fund as the initial donation unless the donor or the terms of the appeal have specified otherwise.

Donated services and facilities are included in the SOFA when received, at the value of the gift to the charity (if material) provided the value of the gift can be measured reliably.

The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the accounts but is described in the trustees' annual report.

Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.

2 Analysis of Income

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted income funds £	Total 2024/25 £	Total 2023/24 £
Donations and Legacies				
Donations and gifts	51,218	-	51,218	64,242
Gift Aid	2,194	-	2,194	2,412
Legacies	-	-	-	2,500
Grants	-	26,606	26,606	27,684
Fundraising	11,137	-	11,137	17,228
Total	64,549	26,606	91,155	114,066
Income from investments				
Interest income	9,988	-	9,988	10,790
Total Income	74,537	26,606	101,143	124,856

3 Expenditure

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024/25 £	Total 2023/24 £
Expenditure on charitable activities				
Activities undertaken directly:				
Winter Beds Project	10,189	16,206	26,395	35,527
Night Shelter - food provision	3,305	10,400	13,705	12,979
Volunteer Coordination	12,282	-	12,282	11,708
Other Night Shelter support	191	-	191	610
Grant funding of activities:				
Safer Streets Outreach Worker	47,428	-	47,428	45,569
Counselling	13,365	-	13,365	13,200
Druglink pilot	-	-	-	9,500
Night shelter - furniture & equipment	-	-	-	5,500
Total Expenditure on Charitable Activities	86,760	26,606	113,366	134,593
Other Costs				
Publicity, Fundraising & Admin Coordinator	12,282	-	12,282	11,708
Other Admin costs	6,464	-	6,464	4,318
Fundraising Costs	-	-	-	-
Total Other Costs	18,746	-	18,746	16,026
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	105,506	26,606	132,112	150,619

4 Debtors and Creditors

The following debtors and creditors were held at 31 March.

	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2024 £
Debtors:		
Gift Aid tax reclaimed	2,178	2,389
St Albans City & District Council	15,000	17,531
Interest	660	928
Prepayment for counselling	<u>2,311</u>	<u>2,200</u>
	20,149	23,048
Creditors:		
Winter Beds	5,658	4,854
Hightown HA – grant for Street Outreach	-	11,392
Other services	<u>451</u>	<u>396</u>
	6,109	16,642

5 Operating Surplus/ (Deficit)

The operating deficit for the year ended 31 March 2025 is £40,957 and the overall deficit after interest earned is £30,969. There were no reporting fees for accountancy, and no directors' emoluments or other benefits accruing to Directors.

6 Restricted Funds

Income given to meet specific expenditure, and the related expenditure, are classified as restricted in the accounts. All such income received in 2024/25 (St Albans District Council contribution to Winter Bed Project, and Hightown contribution to food costs) was fully spent during the year.

7 Taxation

The Company is a registered charity with no trading activities, and therefore not subject to corporation tax.

8 Company Status

The Company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital.

9 Related Parties

No transactions have been incurred where trustees hold related party interests.

10 Remuneration

No director or any party related to them has received any remuneration, expenses or other benefit during the year.

11 Employee Costs

The Charity employs one part time member of staff, with total salary, pension and employer's national insurance costs below £25,000. A PAYE scheme is operated in compliance with HMRC regulations.

12 Defined Contribution Pension Scheme

The employee is enrolled in a Defined Contribution pension scheme, to which both employer's and employee's contributions are made.

13 Grants to Other Organisations and Individuals

Grants to other organisations for the provision of homeless support activities at or from the Bricket Road Night Shelter comprise:

	£
Hightown – Safer Streets Outreach Worker	47,428
Rephael House – Counselling	<u>13,365</u>
	60,793

No other grants were made to other organisations and individuals during the financial year.

14 General Reserves

Movements on General Reserves are as shown in the Statement of Financial Activities. The balance on the General Fund at 31 March 2025 was £158,956, and on the Development Fund was £61,442.

Reserves Policy

The General Fund is held to support the ongoing activities of the charity.

It is the Charity's policy to hold in reserves, as a minimum, the amount needed to meet running costs for 9 months. This reflects the uncertain nature of donations income, and the commitments made to grant funding and specific projects. The Charity's expenditure budget for 2025/26 is £133,000, giving 9 months costs of £99,750.

The current level of the General Fund (£159k) represents a balance built up since 2010, during which time the Charity has benefited from reductions in the net annual running costs of the Open Door Night Shelter services, largely due to increased income from higher occupancy; continued generous donations, legacies and fundraising.

For the last four years, the Charity has run with an annual deficit of £25-30k. This reflects the cost of the Winter Beds project, along with more general cost increases. We are working to cover this shortfall by generating new sources of income, including grants, but we expect the General Fund to continue to reduce in 2025/26 and possibly beyond, until this additional income is achieved.

The Charity also holds a Development Fund account, which at 31 March 2025 stands at £61,442. This fund is used for the development of new projects in line with our charitable objectives; and for the refurbishment and development of

facilities at the Night Shelter, which is leased to Hightown by St Albans City and District Council at a peppercorn rent.

The Trustees recognise the need to use its reserves to help address the continuing issues facing homeless people and those at risk of homelessness, in the St Albans area. Whilst support for the Night Shelter and drop in services provided at 8 Bricket Road remains a core activity, the Charity has the scope to use its reserves to fund and support new initiatives which help vulnerable people in St Albans, particularly the homeless, change their lives for the better, and to find suitable short or long term housing solutions which meet their particular needs. These may be either at or away from Bricket Road, with Hightown and/or in conjunction with other charitable organisations. We are currently exploring options to provide increased support for Night Shelter guests, in partnership with Hightown and the District Council.

We will draw on reserves as we develop the portfolio of new projects based on these research findings and the changing homelessness situation, over the future months and years. We will also extend our fundraising activities to support new ventures where appropriate.

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Open Door St Albans

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Open Door – St Albans Charitable Company ('the Company') for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by small companies subject to the small company's regime.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Name: Anne Hutchison BA CA MCT CTA

Address: Highfield Ave, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 6LZ

Date: 5 October 2025