

## Trustees' Annual Report for the period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

### Objectives and Activities

#### **Summary of Connect Counselling Service's Purpose:**

Our charitable objects are THE RELIEF OF PERSONS RESIDENT IN CAMBERLEY AND THE SURROUNDING AREA WHO ARE SUFFERING FROM MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL STRESS IN ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS: (I) BY THE PROVISION OF A COUNSELLING SERVICE IN A CHRISTIAN CONTEXT; (II) BY PROVIDING SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN COUNSELLING ON BEHALF OF THE TRUST FUND AND THE GENERAL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY; AND (III) BY PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL TRAINING AND STUDY FACILITIES FOR THOSE CHRISTIANS INVOLVED IN COUNSELLING ON BEHALF OF THE TRUST FUND AND THE GENERAL COMMUNITY.

We articulate our mission in the local area as being "*to help those whose mental health challenges are preventing them from living fulfilling lives*"

**Summary of main activities:** We have provided affordable and accessible professional counselling to individual adults, couples and family groups, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic origin. Our counsellors have provided 1855 sessions in the financial year 2023 – 2024, a 15% increase over the previous year. We have provided training, support and supervision for those involved in counselling.

**Contribution made by volunteers:** All our counsellors give of their time as volunteers. During this year we had a total of 33 individual counsellors volunteer for some or all the year, 25 of whom were still counselling at the end of the fiscal year. We also had 10 welcome volunteers who help to staff reception, answering the door and telephone. We benefitted from other voluntary support on an ad-hoc basis, helping with fundraising activities. The trustees are deeply grateful for all of their support.

### Achievements and Performance

Connect has a long-term outstanding reputation in the surrounding area for the professional counselling services it offers. We also have an excellent reputation with local counselling training organisations, and we have no shortage of counsellors in advanced training who wish to do placements with us. This year we typically had 60% of our counsellors on their placement and 40% more experienced counsellors, by far the majority of whom have stayed after their placement. These counsellors may have anything up to 25 years post qualification experience! This depth of experience allows us to support extremely vulnerable clients with complex trauma.

The current socio-economic climate has exacerbated mental health challenges, leading to a surge in the number of individuals seeking our counselling services. This, coupled with an internal restructuring and refreshed awareness strategy, has seen our waiting list grow from single figures to well over 100 within the last year, underscoring the urgent need for increased resources to address this escalating demand.

An initial restructure was carried out in quarter one, with an emphasis on making Connect 'fit for purpose' for the future, as it had become clear that the organisation was not adequately resourced. A new role of Operations Manager (0.6FTE) was developed, and Jan Mulliner (Office Manager 0.175 FTE) left Connect after 18 years' service. We are grateful to Jan for all she contributed to the charity in this period.

The Operation Manager led the project to develop a new website, which went live in October 2023. The new website is more user-friendly, and improves our profile for potential clients, donors, volunteers and counsellors.

The prime focus from December onwards was to keeping Connect solvent, after the seriousness of the financial situation became clear, and phase two of the transformation began in quarter 4.

The Counselling Team Manager, Wendy Coope, had given the trustees over a year's notice of her planned retirement and she left at Christmas after 13 years' service. The CEO, Emma Laporte, handed in her notice and left in February.

Connect had a completely new team of employed staff running the organisation by the end of the year, the longest serving employee having completed eight months, and the other three (including the interim CEO) appointed in the last 3 months. Between them at the year-end they worked a total of 1.6 FTE.

The team have started to put in place systems, processes and capacity to significantly expand the number of annual sessions we can provide, and thereby the number of individuals whose lives we can help improve.

Detailed monthly cash flow forecasts have been produced. The initial work has been completed looking at an affordable fee model for client income.

## **Financial Review**

It became clear in early December that Connect was headed towards a serious deficit for the financial year, and that short term cash flow was a problem.

The Redwood bank account was requested to be closed in early December - an interest account used for reserves. Redwood agreed to release all the funds without penalty, given the serious position facing the charity, which allowed the reserve £32K to be available from mid-December.

The new reserves agreement was that the trustees would ensure monthly cash flow forecasts were completed, to be sure there are always sufficient funds to cover 2-3 months outgoings, otherwise wind-up procedures would need to be implemented.

An appeal went out to local churches and donors, and a larger than normal amount of money was requested in a grant application from Frimley Fuel Allotments (FFA). The trustees are hugely grateful to everyone who has supported the charity in this period, through personal and organisational

giving, including FFA who agreed £15,000 to support clients from GU15 and GU16 postcodes through the rest of the calendar year. This resulted in almost 60% of the year's income being given in the final four months of the fiscal year. Without this we would not be here today - thank you again.

Nonetheless this generosity was not sufficient to prevent a very significant deficit for the year, i.e. £33,853. A deficit is always a tale of two halves, and in total our cost base rose significantly, but our income dropped by over £16K. Almost £10k less of client income was received, despite seeing more clients than the previous year, and income from all other fundraising streams was significantly down, be that individual donations, churches, grants or community fundraising. This dramatic decrease was slightly offset by new income from the NHS using rooms.

Over the past decade client income was typically well in excess of £40k pa, peaking in 2020 at almost £52K; typically this was 40-50% of the annual charity income, requiring a 50-60% supplement from other funding streams. However, this dropped to below £24K, circa 30% of income after Covid, but as the table below shows this then significantly dropped over the past two years, with an all-time low income of less than £18K, providing only 16.3% of the annual income.

Fiscal Year	client income	total income	client income as a percentage of total income
24	£17,623	£107,894	16.3%
23	£27,242	£123,918	22.0%
22	£23,891	£80,885	29.5%
21	£23,741	£86,877	27.3%
20	£51,814	£105,177	49.3%
19	£43,764	£103,080	42.5%
18	£41,612	£103,774	40.1%
17	£41,156	£107,120	38.4%
16	£42,415	£86,915	48.8%
15	£44,016	£95,437	46.1%

The interim CEO was appointed by the trustees mid-February, with a clear remit of priority on cashflow and funding. The funding strategy will be a hybrid of client income (which needs to get back up to at least 50%), individual donors, churches and other community organisations / corporates, grants and community fundraising.

**Principle risks:** Cash flow/income continues to be our main risk. Additional uncertainty existed at the financial year end over the office, with the landlord selling the property, meaning Connect might have to face a significant rent increase and/or a move to a new location at short notice. (Post year end note - in May, a lease agreement was agreed the new landlord, from the business upstairs who bought the building. A six-year lease is in place, with favourable terms to Connect in the first year, providing much needed stability)

## Structure, Governance and Management

Connect is a charitable trust and its governing document is a trust deed. Connect is administered by the Trustees, who continue to have regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit. Trustees are appointed by the Board of Trustees. The CEO attends the meetings.

**Additional Information:** Connect abides by both the British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP) Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions, as well as the Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC)

## Administrative Details

### Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

Name	Role	Dates acted if not full year
Steven Ishwerwood	Chair	Retired 19 July 2023
Alison de Winter	Joint Interim Chair	(trustee full year, chair from July)
Andreas Sistig	Joint Interim Chair	(trustee full year, chair from July)
Mike Thomason	Trustee	
Charles Garraway	Trustee	
Rob Jackson	Trustee	
Pippa Ford	Trustee	Appointed 15 April 2023

### Name of CEO

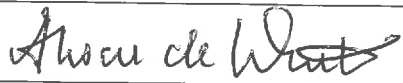
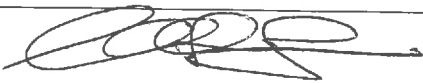
Dr Emma Laporte – until 9 February 2024

Carolyn Nahajski - from 12 February 2024

## Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature		
Full Name	Alison de Winter	Andreas Sistig
Position	Interim Chair	Interim Chair
Date	25th January 2025	25th January 2025

# CONNECT COUNSELLING SERVICE

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR TO 31ST MARCH 2024

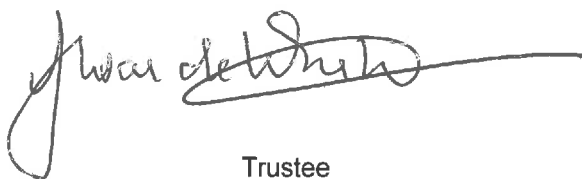
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds	Total Funds
	Note	Funds £	Funds £	2024 £	2023 £
<b>INCOME</b>					
<b>Donations and legacies</b>					
Donations, grants and similar funding	2	61,149	17,492	78,641	85,877
Counselling client donations		17,624	-	17,624	27,242
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
External training income		305	-	305	240
Other trading activities - fundraising		3,372	-	3,372	7,413
Room rental		7,075	-	7,075	2,430
Investment income - Bank interest		877	-	877	716
		90,402	17,492	107,894	123,918
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
<b>Raising funds</b>					
- salary costs		5,134	-	5,134	4,057
- premises costs		956	-	956	982
- fundraising costs		1,917	-	1,917	-
- training expenditure		1,070	-	1,070	-
- telephone		212	-	212	168
		9,289	-	9,289	5,207
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
- counselling session fees and expenses		4,387	-	4,387	1,912
- service provision	3	50,306	14,529	64,835	55,365
- support costs	4	63,236	-	63,236	40,470
		117,929	14,529	132,458	97,747
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		127,218	14,529	141,747	102,954
<b>NET INCOME (EXPENDITURE)</b>		(36,816)	2,963	(33,853)	20,964
Balances brought forward at 1 April 2023	10	80,635	11,083	91,718	70,754
Balances carried forward at 31 March 2024	11	43,819	14,046	57,865	91,718

## CONNECT COUNSELLING SERVICE

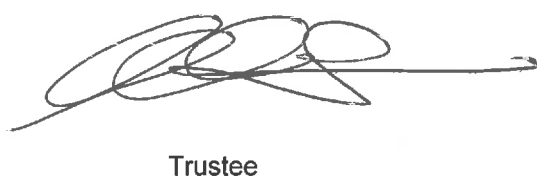
### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS:					
Fixtures, fittings and equipment	7		6,307		1,797
CURRENT ASSETS:					
Debtors and prepayments	8	9,706		11,267	
Balances at bank		46,743		84,152	
Cash in hand		29		38	
		<u>56,478</u>		<u>95,457</u>	
LESS CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year					
Creditors and accruals	9	4,920		5,536	
		<u>4,920</u>		<u>5,536</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			51,558		89,921
NET ASSETS			<u>57,865</u>		<u>91,718</u>
Represented by:					
FUNDS					
Restricted funds	10		14,046		11,083
Unrestricted funds	11		43,819		80,635
Total charity funds			<u>57,865</u>		<u>91,718</u>

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 25th January 2025



Trustee



Trustee

## **CONNECT COUNSELLING SERVICE**

### **Notes to the Accounts for the Year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

#### **1. Accounting Policies**

##### **General**

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2019.

Connect Counselling Service meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

The Financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair view' and have deviated from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following 'Accounting and Reporting By Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102 Second Edition rather than accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which was withdrawn.

##### **Income**

Donations under Gift Aid, together with the associated income tax recovery, are recognised as income when the donation is received.

Grants are recognised when the charity has an entitlement to the funds and any conditions linked to the grants have been met.

Rental income is accounted for on a receivable basis.

##### **Expenditure**

Expenditure is charged on an accruals basis. Governance costs are those associated with compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements. This includes the Independent Examination fee.

##### **Pension costs**

The charity contributes to a money purchase scheme on behalf of its employees. The scheme is managed by True Potential.

##### **Apportionment of costs**

Certain office and salary costs have been apportioned between service provision and support costs based on trustees' estimate of use of the office and time spent by staff.

##### **Operating leases**

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis under the terms of the lease.

##### **Fixed Assets**

Assets purchased with a value greater than £250 are capitalised.

Computer hardware	33% on cost
Furniture	25% on cost

##### **Debtors**

Debtors are recorded at their recoverable amount - that is the amount that it is anticipated will be received, or the amount that has been paid in advance for goods or services.

##### **Creditors**

Creditors are measured at historic cost and are held at settlement amount net of any discounts.

##### **Financial Instruments**

The charity's financial assets and liabilities qualify as basic financial instruments and as such are initially recorded at cash, transaction or settlement value. Subsequently, current assets and liabilities are measured at cash or settlement value.

## **CONNECT COUNSELLING SERVICE**

### **Notes to the Accounts for the Year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

#### **1. Accounting Policies**

##### **Funds**

General funds represent funds of the Service that are not subject to any restriction regarding their use and are available for application for the purposes of the Connect Counselling Service.

Donations and grants given for specific purposes are treated as restricted funds and are used in the way intended by the donor.

##### **Going Concern**

The trustees have considered going concern up to one year from the date of signing these accounts. Based on a review of forecasts and budgets the trustees believe there are sufficient reserves for the foreseeable future.

##### **Estimate and Judgements**

In preparing the financial statements it is necessary to make certain judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements. There are no areas of critical estimate or significant judgements that affects the preparation of these financial statements.



## CONNECT COUNSELLING SERVICE

Notes to the Accounts for the Year to 31st March 2024

### 2. Income from grants and donations

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
	£	£	£	£
Donations	48,528	-	48,528	71,791
Grants	12,621	17,492	30,113	14,086
	<u>61,149</u>	<u>17,492</u>	<u>78,641</u>	<u>85,877</u>

### 3. Service provision

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
	£	£	£	£
Counselling supervision	5,398	14,012	19,410	16,262
Hardship donation	-	-	-	1,200
Salary costs	23,885	-	23,885	19,731
Training costs	735	-	735	735
Other fees	-	-	-	240
Premises costs	13,379	-	13,379	14,092
Office supplies, postage and expenses	2,304	-	2,304	1,852
Publicity	1,968	-	1,968	-
Depreciation	1,999	517	2,516	748
Telephone	638	-	638	505
	<u>50,306</u>	<u>14,529</u>	<u>64,835</u>	<u>55,365</u>

### 4. Support costs

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
	£	£	£	£
Salary costs	38,437	-	38,437	20,271
Recruitment	292	-	292	-
Consultancy	7,390	-	7,390	930
Other fees	2,429	-	2,429	1,748
Premises costs	4,778	-	4,778	4,904
IT	1,433	-	1,433	2,674
Telephone	567	-	567	449
Bank charges	393	-	393	74
Sundries	1,164	-	1,164	1,826
Accountancy	4,853	-	4,853	6,094
Governance - Independent examiner's fee	1,500	-	1,500	1,500
	<u>63,236</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>63,236</u>	<u>40,470</u>

Support costs are charged in full to the charitable activities.  
Operating lease costs were £16,500 (2023:16,500)

### 5. Employees' Remuneration

	2,024	2,023
	£	£
Gross salaries	66,851.00	43,387
Employer Pension Contributions	<u>1,252.00</u>	<u>672</u>
	<u>68,103</u>	<u>44,059</u>

The average number of paid staff for the year were 3 part-time employees ( 2023 - 3 part-time).  
No staff member received remuneration in excess of £60,000.  
Due to the size of the organisation, all staff are considered to be key management personnel.

### 6. Trustees' Remuneration and Expenses

None of the Trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year, and no expenses were claimed.

## CONNECT COUNSELLING SERVICE

### Notes to the Accounts for the Year to 31st March 2024

#### 7. Fixed Assets - Tangible Assets

	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £
<b>Cost</b>	
1st April 2023	5,530
Additions	7,026
Disposals	0
31st March 2024	<u>12,556</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>	
1st April 2023	3,733
Disposals	-
Charge for the year	2,516
31st March 2024	<u>6,249</u>
<b>Net Book Values</b>	
At 31st March 2024	<u>6,307</u>
At 31st March 2023	<u>1,797</u>

#### 8. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade Debtors	860	-
Prepayments	670	820
Accrued Income	8,176	10,447
	<u>9,706</u>	<u>11,267</u>

#### 9. Creditors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade Creditors	1,911	-
Accruals	2,570	3,960
Other Creditors	440	1,576
	<u>4,920</u>	<u>5,536</u>

The Charity has written indemnities that in the event of a legitimate claim, on any part of residual agent balances donated from contributing firms where parties make contact or are traced; that the charity will satisfy the agreed charitable donation sum. On 31 March 2023 the total to date received net of repayments amounted to £15,000. (2023: £15,000)

#### 10. Restricted Funds

	Sparks £	Arnold Clarke £	Frimley Fuel £	Surrey Heath £	Total £
Balance at 1st April 2022	-	-	4,678	-	4,678
Funds Received in the year	-	1,000	10,000	3,086	14,086
Funds Used in the year	-	(1,000)	(4,878)	(1,803)	(7,681)
Balance at 1st April 2023	-	-	9,800	1,283	11,083
Funds Received in the year	1,992	-	15,000	500	17,492
Funds Used in the year	(1,992)	-	(12,020)	(517)	(14,529)
Balance at 31st March 2024	-	-	<u>12,780</u>	<u>1,266</u>	<u>14,046</u>

## CONNECT COUNSELLING SERVICE

### Notes to the Accounts for the Year to 31st March 2024

#### 10. Restricted Funds (cont'd)

Sparks will be used in financial year ended March 2025

Arnold Clarke was used for updating the Charity website, and other social media expenses.

Frimley Fuel fund is used against counselling sessions in the GU15 GU16 postcode area.

Surrey Heath Council has been used for purchasing a desktop computer, other costs and the balance is to be used for furniture,also the related depreciation will be retained.

#### 11. Analysis of Net Assets by Funds

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	5,089	1,218	6,307	1,462	335	1,797
Current Assets	43,650	12,828	56,478	84,709	10,748	95,457
Current Liabilities	(4,920)	-	(4,920)	(5,536)	-	(5,536)
	<u>43,819</u>	<u>14,046</u>	<u>57,865</u>	<u>80,635</u>	<u>11,083</u>	<u>91,718</u>



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name Connect Counselling Service
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On accounts for the year  
ended

31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	Charity no (if any)	1042852
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Set out on pages

5 - 11
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I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2024.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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.

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.

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:



Date:

22 Jan 2025

Name:

Jenny James

**Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):**

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**Address:**

	84 The Maultway
	Camberley
	GU15 1QF

## Section B

## Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**

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