

The Commonweal Trust: Charity Trustees' Annual Report 2025

For the financial period ending 5th April 2025

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Name: The Commonweal Trust

Registered Charity Number: 1053157

Principal Address: Commonweal Trust, c/o JBPriestley Library, University of Bradford, BRADFORD, BD7 1DP commonweal@riseup.net

Charity Trustees

The trustees who served the charity during the period and up to present date (or were appointed/resigned as indicated) were:

- Susan Mottram (Chair)
- Ellie Clement (Vice-Chair)
- Heather Blakey (Secretary)
- Jen Fox (Treasurer)
- Rachel Julian
- Ute Kelly

Structure, Governance, and Management

Governing Document: Trust deed.

How the Charity is Constituted: Trust

Trustee Selection and Appointment Method: As Commonweal has grown, we have this year invited applications for new trustees. We are very moved by the interest shown in the Collection by some incredible people – some of whom we hope to welcome as new Trustees at this year's AGM. Trustees are invited, and formally added at the AGM by a majority vote of trustees.

Objectives, Activities, and Public Benefit

Summary of the Charity's Purposes (Legal Objects):

Establishing and maintaining a library for providing the opportunity for and promoting the study and general knowledge of philosophy religion political economic and social science, history, jurisprudence and all matters relating to the progress and development of communities and of mankind generally and especially relating to the solving of conflict and the progress of mankind towards non-violence.

Summary of the Main Activities in Relation to These Objects:

In the current political climate, the wealth of wisdom contained in the Collection (the history, theory and practice of nonviolence) is needed more than ever. I write this Annual Report at a time not simply of global uncertainty, but of increasing authoritarianism and rising right-wing populist politics. These anti-democratic forces highlight an immediate need for responses which foreground human security and dignity, not the protection of wealth and power. But they also bring with them a crackdown on nonviolent action, precisely because it is on the rise and effective. We see this globally, not least in the US under Donald Trump, and sadly we are also seeing it here in the UK. For the first time, an apparently nonviolent organisation has been proscribed, against the backdrop of a political culture marked by a shocking growth in divisive rhetoric. Rhetoric which embeds cultural and structural violence along class as well as race and gender lines and encourages direct violence towards refugees, asylum-seekers and other vulnerable groups. The agenda that underpins this violence is well-funded, well-organised, omnipresent online and increasingly accepted as normal in our communities. It thrives on pessimism and a sense of powerlessness.

It is easy to feel pessimistic and powerless at times like this, but the stories and ideas within the Commonweal Collection (the history, theory and practice of nonviolent action) are a reminder that abuses of power can be challenged, evil can be resisted, rights can be defended. They are also a call to action.

The world needs hope right now. The world needs nonviolent activists.

We are passionate about the role active nonviolence can play in building hope, fostering respect for the dignity of others, and helping people embrace their own political agency. Against this need, I am very pleased to report that the past year, our JRCT-funded project 'Growing the Movements' has hugely increased Commonweal's visibility and reach.

Public Benefit Statement (Mandatory Legal Declaration):

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit issued by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers and duties.

Achievements and Performance

Our Collection Development Worker, Sue Easterbrook, has reorganised and relabelled our resources, and added new titles, including new holdings on Disability Rights activism, as well as a new fiction section. The Collection is now much more accessible and easy to engage with – we urge you to come and visit!

Our previous Outreach Worker, Donna Craine, left us last Summer through mutual agreement. In November, we were delighted to welcome Emma Goodway in her place. Emma has hit the ground running, and has facilitated hundreds of conversations on nonviolence and activism. Emma has focused on a different theme each month: hope, creating a community, women and peace, poetry and storytelling – to name but a few. We have made connections with a wide range of people and organisations (religious, cultural, creative, trade unions, activists, political and more). We have hosted events and talks, facilitated a nonviolence book club, trialled resources and used creative workshops to encourage learning and conversation. We are grateful to Ludi Simpson and Mollie Somerville for sharing their thought-provoking reflections on their Just Stop Oil soup-throwing action, and to Dr Majbritt Lyck-Bowen for an inspiring talk on her new book: *Moving with Dignity*, a positive peace approach to migration. Our link with the Peace Museum continues to provide a gateway to new audiences, and we look forward to collaborating ever more closely with them as they go from strength to strength in their wonderful new premises.

We also now have a set of book lists and other online resources, which we hope you will find useful. You can find all our digital resources here:

<https://www.commonwealnonviolence.org/resources>.

Through this work, membership has grown, more books are being borrowed (in person and via inter-library loans) and we have a thriving mailing list who regularly receive an email newsletter from Commonweal.

However, we have also identified challenges in the much-needed work we are doing to increase the visibility and use of nonviolent tools and resources. Firstly, people's information habits have changed vastly since our founder David Hoggett founded the collection in the 1960s! Not only are people reading books less, but they are more likely to buy second-hand than borrow from a library. Secondly, there is a disconnect between short-form internet content and the resources we hold for deeper exploration and engagement with these vital ideas. Thirdly, we are acutely aware of the historical structural biases in traditional approaches to nonviolence. These challenges are also opportunities, and Emma is leading on our work to decolonise the collection, as well as bringing her wealth of creative experience to develop more emotionally engaging ways of connecting people with the ideas within the collection. We also plan to employ a new member of staff on a fixed term contract to work with us to develop our digital strategy, and are seeking ongoing funding for all areas of our work.

Allied to this, we are working to integrate the internationally significant Civil Resistance bibliography established by Michael Randle, April Carter and Howard Clark (<https://civilresistance.info/>) with Commonweal's own online presence.

Our wonderful Chair, Susan Mottram, sadly leaves us as a Trustee this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Susan from the heart for the huge amount she has contributed to Commonweal over the years. You will be sorely missed, Susan!

Financial Review

Financial Summary:

As we grow, we urgently need to ensure our financial stability in terms of unrestricted funds, not least as we now employ staff and take our responsibilities towards them very seriously. To this end, we are having a Ceilidh! It should be a fantastic night, with the wonderful Ey Up Klezmer! (who have generously donated their time for this event). Tickets include a buffet supper and a raffle. And all for £15! Solidarity tickets at £20 are available, which enables us to also offer low-income tickets at £10.

Total receipts for the year were £42,795 the majority of which was funding for Growing the Movements from JRCT (£42,612), £312.00 for the civil resistance bibliography and £183 of unrestricted funds.

Total payments were £29,173.26 again mostly in wages for the Growing the Movements project (£23,164.08) with additional monies on office costs and project deliverables. £1,799.29 was spent on invoices to Femonic for work on the Civil Resistance Bibliography project and £459.65 was spent of unrestricted funds, £234.66 of this on organisational overheads.

Reserves Policy:

The charity is building its unrestricted funds with an aim towards holding 2 months running costs as reserves. We are not yet at this stage.

Funds in Deficit:

We are not in deficit.

Looking Ahead

As you can see, there is a lot going on at Commonweal. We would love to hear your reflections on the work we are doing, and your ideas for what we can do next. And if you'd like to get involved – whether as a volunteer, a prospective Trustee, or simply to join our mailing list, please get in touch:

- Sue Easterbrook (Collection Development): commonweal@peacemuseum.org.uk
- Emma Goodway (Outreach): commonwealoutreach@peacemuseum.org.uk
- Trustees: commonweal@riseup.net

Finally, thanks are due as always to the staff of the JB Priestley Library, as well as the Peace Museum, to our fantastic staff Emma and Sue, and to our amazing volunteers.

Thank you also to our supporters, to our readers, and most of all to the nonviolent activists here and around the world who continue to inspire us and give us hope.

Heather Blakey on behalf of the Commonweal Trustees

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature: ____H.Blakey_____

Full Name: ____Heather Blakey_____

Position (e.g., Chair): ____Chair_____

Date of Approval by the Board: [12/09/2025]

Report to the trustees of the Commonweal Trust

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 05/04/2025

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Acthave not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



30 / 07 / 2026

Patrick Morrello ACA
Third Sector Accountancy Limited
Holyoake House
Hanover Street
Manchester
M60 0AS



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05/04/2025

Section A Receipts and payments

Total receipts

A3 Payments

Publicity	-	242	-	242	-
Operational Costs	225	-	-	225	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	460	28,714	-	29,174	4,851

A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	

Total payments **460** **28,714** **-** **29,174** **4,851**

Net of receipts/(payments)	-	13,898	-	13,621	6,122
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	6,151	14,479	-	20,630	14,508
Cash funds this year end	5,874	28,377	-	34,251	20,630

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Current Account	5,874	28,377	
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	5,874	28,377	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account (s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	Details			

B2 Other monetary assets

		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of
all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Jenifer Fox	16/07/2026