

The Brian Mercer Trust
Annual Report and Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 5 April 2023

The Brian Mercer Trust

Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 5 April 2023

Contents	Pages
Reference and administrative information	1
Report of the Trustees	2 to 6
1. Structure, governance, management	
2. Risk management	
3. Ethical Investing	
4. Objectives and activities for the public benefit	
5. Grant making policy	
6. Monitoring achievement	
7. Fundraising	
8. Financial review	
9. Investment policy	
10. Reserves	
11. Future plans	
12. Grant Awards	
13. Covid-19	
Statement of Financial Activities	7
Balance Sheet	8
Cashflow Statement	9
Notes to the Financial Statements	10 to 14
Independent Auditors' Report	15 to 17

The Brian Mercer Trust

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees	R P T Duckworth (Chairman) C J Clancy M A E T Clitheroe (resigned 19 January 2023) K J Merrill
Secretary to the trustees	C Kay
Accountants	Beever and Struthers Suite 9b The Beehive Lions Drive Shadsworth Business Park Blackburn Lancashire BB1 2QS
Investment Managers	Sarasin and Partners LLP 100 St Paul's Churchyard London EC4M 8BU
Bankers	Lloyds Bank Church Street Blackburn Lancashire BB2 1JQ
Auditors	MHA Moore & Smalley 9 Winckley Square Preston Lancashire PR1 3HP
Principal address of the charity	Suite 9b The Beehive Lions Drive Shadsworth Business Park Blackburn Lancashire BB1 2QS
Charity Number	1076925

The trustees present their annual report and audited financial statements for the year ended 5 April 2023. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 and the Charities SORP and in compliance with the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in notes to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland published in October 2019.

1. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Trust is a registered charity, charity number 1076925, and was established under a Declaration of Trust dated 5 July 1999. The trust was established in 1998 following the wishes of Dr Brian Mercer. The trust does not actively fundraise and seeks to continue the charitable work desired by the donor through the careful stewardship of its existing resources.

New trustees are appointed by the existing trustees by resolution. There are no fixed terms under which trustees must serve or seek re-appointment. The trustees meet at least four times a year and agree the broad strategy and areas of activity for the Trust, reviewing all areas including grant making and investment policy. The day to day administration of the charity is dealt with primarily by K J Merill, one of the trustees. He is assisted by the secretary of the trustees.

On appointment new trustees receive a formal induction which provides a brief history of the Trust, copies of meeting minutes (where relevant), copies of previous year's annual reports and accounts, a copy of the governing trust deed. Guidance is also provided on investments and the grant making process. All trustees are able to access further training to aid them in their duties and improve the management of the Trust. This is available through the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), of which the Trust is a member, or other sources.

All trustees give of their time freely and are unpaid. Details of trustee expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in note 4 to the accounts. Trustees are required to disclose all relevant interests and register them with the board of trustees and in accordance with the Trust's policy withdraw from decisions where a conflict of interest arises.

2. RISK MANAGEMENT

The trustees have considered the major risks to which the charity is exposed and have reviewed those risks and established systems and procedures to manage those risks.

The trustees consider the principal risk that the trust faces is the variability in performance of the investment portfolio and recent macro-economic events creating volatility in world stock markets have demonstrated this risk. To mitigate the risk the trustees have appointed Investment Managers who manage the investment portfolio on their behalf. The trustees meet with the Investment Managers, and receive investment reports, on a regular basis to review financial performance and to discuss potential future investment returns.

3. ETHICAL INVESTING

The trust is a signatory to the Funders Commitment on Climate Change. Investment policy is consistent with Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) principles, notably excluding any investments in fossil fuel industries.

4. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT

Charitable objects

- a) Prevention of, or relief from, disadvantage and suffering resulting from poverty, ill-health, or other causes globally.
- b) Promotion of visual arts, and artistic talent especially in the North West of England.
- c) Support for charitable community initiatives local to Blackburn, Lancashire.
- d) Furtherance of any other charitable purposes in any part of the world as the Trustees may in their absolute discretion think fit.

5. GRANT MAKING POLICY

The Trust :

- is proactive in seeking out effective organisations to support and less reliant on responding to applicants who have sought out the Trust.
- Prioritises applications that are supported by evidence of cost-effectiveness
- Provides feedback to unsuccessful applicants, explaining the reasons for trustees' decision within 48 hours of the meeting.

In order to be fully transparent about grants made and to assist potential grant applicants, the Trust now publishes comprehensive data through 360 Giving which details all grants made. Data includes the name of the grantee, nature of the grant, amount granted and duration of grant. A link to 360 Giving data is provided on the Trust's website.

How our grant programmes delivered public benefit:

Trustees are confident that the Trust's objectives are wholly charitable and that the means of selecting causes/organisations to fund meet the requirements of the best advice available.

Examples of grants made are provided below:

Prevention and Relief of Human Suffering

A further commitment of £300,000 was made to Medecins Sans Frontiere, a large charity that provides humanitarian medical care. £100,000 is to be paid per annum for the next three years.

The Brian Mercer Trust

Trustees' Report (*continued*)

For the Year Ended 5 April 2023

A further commitment of £150,000 was made to Against Malaria Foundation, a United Kingdom based charity that provides long lasting insecticidal nets to populations at high risk of Malaria, primarily Africa. This grant is to be paid over the next three years.

Arts

A further grant of £20,000 was made to The Whitaker Museum and Art Gallery, a small museum in Rossendale offering modern art exhibitions.

A three year commitment of £15,000 per annum was made to Blaze Arts, a youth led arts charity in Lancashire.

Causes Local to Blackburn Lancashire

The Trust continues to support local causes. A further grant of £75,000 (£25,000 per annum over the next three years) was made to Blackburn Youth Zone, a 21st Century inclusive youth hub in the centre of Blackburn.

Payments amounting to £34,420 were also made to The Community CVS, a membership based organisation which exists to promote, develop and support voluntary and community action in the borough of Blackburn with Darwen.

Climate Change

Commitments were made to Client Earth, Greenpeace and Oxfam, large charities that are campaigning to change the world for the better. One off payments of £25,000 each were made and a three year commitment of £75,000 to each charity.

6. MONITORING ACHIEVEMENT

Trustees are aware of the limitations of being able to effectively monitor the achievements of their grant giving. Nevertheless, the following procedures are applied:

Where large grants are given there is special attention to independent evidence of effectiveness before the grant is made. A meeting is usually held with senior personnel of the organisation. Brief written feedback is required annually and a more rigorous review using evidence from external sources (e.g. charity evaluators) made every three years, before the grant is reviewed.

In the case of smaller organisations (as for example Blackburn Youth Zone) Trustees have developed close working relationships with the organisations themselves and are actively involved in reviewing the activities of the organisations.

7. FUNDRAISING

The Charity does not do any fundraising activities.

8. FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Trust's work is entirely reliant on income and investment returns from its endowments. The funds held by the Trust have derived from the estate of the late Brian Mercer who died on 22 November 1998.

The Brian Mercer Trust

Trustees' Report (*continued*)

For the Year Ended 5 April 2023

The Trustees have placed funds for investment with Sarasin and Partners LLP. During the year the Trust has made unrealised investment losses of £2,662,676 reflecting the movement in stock markets (2022: unrealised investment gains of £917,780 were made). At 5 April 2023 the funds invested were valued at £36,023,902 (2022: £38,628,859).

During the year, the trustees paid and agreed grants for charitable purposes amounting to £1,088,077 (2022: £918,206). Grants are made in accordance with decisions reached after discussions at meetings of the Trustees and after taking advice, where appropriate.

9. INVESTMENT POLICY

Investments are held in the name of a nominee company. The trustees' policy is to invest for a combination of capital growth and income.

The trustees make use of the advice and support of their investment managers, Sarasin and Partners. The performance of the fund is reviewed frequently with the investment managers and investment reports are discussed at trustee meetings. Future performance is considered after taking due advice from the investment manager.

The trustees have a written investment policy which is regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.

10. RESERVES

The trustees aim to maintain cash reserves at a level which equates to approximately twelve months of charitable expenditure, including grant commitments. The trustees consider that this level will provide sufficient funds to meet the Trust's charitable commitments and ensure that there are sufficient funds available to cover governance costs. Unexpected expenditure or costs arising from an urgent need can be met from ongoing investment income. Future applications for grants will be considered in line with the grant making policy and will be funded from the investment return as resources allow.

The balance held in cash reserves at 5 April 2023 was £600,149 (2022 :£215,693), against grant commitments and anticipated governance costs of £1,100,000. However, if there is a shortfall in cash reserves, then Sarasins will sell a number of investments and transfer the appropriate level of cash to the Trust bank account.

Although the trustees are empowered to use both the income and capital of the trust in furtherance of the objects of the trust, the trustees have resolved to make charitable distributions out of the income of the Trust thereby maintaining the capital of the trust. The trustees may invest the funds of the Trust in any lawful manner.

11. FUTURE PLANS

At their meeting on April 13 2022, trustees decided to commit approximately 50% of funding from the "Prevention and Relief of Human Suffering" category towards issues that address climate change.

12. COVID-19

In 2022/23 the impact of Covid-19 to the Charity has been minimal. The Charity has been able to meet all grant obligations easily due to the level of funds held in the bank.

The Brian Mercer Trust

Trustees' Report (*continued*)

For the Year Ended 5 April 2023

Trustees' responsibilities for the financial statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

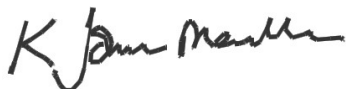
The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Trust and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with applicable law. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

05/02/2024

Approved by the trustees on and signed on their behalf by:



K J Merrill
Trustee

The Brian Mercer Trust

Statement of Financial Activities

For the Year Ended 5 April 2023

		Unrestricted Funds	
		2023	2022
	Notes	£	£
Income and endowments from:			
Investments	2	1,319,934	1,315,044
Total Income		<u>1,319,934</u>	<u>1,315,044</u>
Expenditure on:			
Raising Funds	3	151,289	156,802
Charitable Activities	4	1,108,545	938,565
Total Expenditure		<u>1,259,834</u>	<u>1,095,367</u>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	5	(2,662,676)	917,780
Net income/(expenditure)/ movement in funds		<u>(2,602,576)</u>	<u>1,137,457</u>
Reconciliation of funds			
Total funds brought forward		38,011,597	36,874,140
Total funds carried forward		<u>35,409,021</u>	<u>38,011,597</u>

The notes on pages 10 to 14 form an integral part of these accounts

The Brian Mercer Trust

Balance Sheet

For the Year Ended 5 April 2023

	Notes	2023		2022	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Investments	5		36,023,902		38,628,859
Current assets					
Debtors	6	29,970		32,229	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>600,149</u>		<u>215,693</u>	
		630,119		247,922	
Liabilities					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	7	<u>(602,000)</u>		<u>(579,184)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>28,119</u>		<u>(331,262)</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			36,052,021		38,297,597
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	8		<u>(643,000)</u>		<u>(286,000)</u>
Net assets			<u>35,409,021</u>		<u>38,011,597</u>
Funds					
Unrestricted income funds					
General fund			<u>35,409,021</u>		<u>38,011,597</u>

05/02/2024

Approved by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf by:



K J Merrill
Trustee

The Brian Mercer Trust

Cashflow Statement

For the Year Ended 5 April 2023

	Notes	2023	2022
		£	£
Cash flow from operating activities	1	<u>(877,759)</u>	<u>(864,203)</u>
Net cash flow from operating activities		(877,759)	(864,203)
Cash flow from investing activities			
Payments to acquire investments		(57,719)	(955,917)
Investment income received		<u>1,319,934</u>	<u>1,315,044</u>
		1,262,215	359,127
Net increase/ (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		<u>384,456</u>	<u>(505,076)</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 5 April 2022		215,693	720,769
Cash and cash equivalents at 5 April 2023	2	<u>600,149</u>	<u>215,693</u>

1 Reconciliation of net income/ (expenditure) to net cash flow from operation activities

	2023	2022
	£	£
Net income/(expenditure) in the year	(2,602,576)	1,137,457
Investment income received	(1,319,934)	(1,315,044)
(Gains)/losses on investments	2,662,676	(917,780)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	2,259	(2,300)
(Decrease)/Increase in creditors	379,816	233,464
	<u>(877,759)</u>	<u>(864,203)</u>

2 Cash and cash equivalents

	2023	2022
	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	600,149	215,693
Cash and cash equivalents at 5 April	<u>600,149</u>	<u>215,693</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements (*continued*)

For the year ended 5 April 2023

1. Accounting Policies

1.1 Basis of preparation

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed 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 the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are presented in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

1.2 Funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

1.3 Incoming resources

Investment income is accounted for in the period in which the charity is entitled to receipt and the amount can be measured with reasonable certainty. Other income is accounted for on an accruals basis as far as it is prudent to do so.

1.4 Resources expended and irrecoverable VAT

Liabilities are recognised as resources expended as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Trust to the expenditure. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category.

All expenditure is directly allocated to the relevant categories and no apportionments are considered necessary.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the category of resources expended for which it was incurred.

1.5 Raising funds

The costs of raising funds consist of investment management fees

The Brian Mercer Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements (*continued*)

For the year ended 5 April 2023

1.6 Charitable activities – Grants payable

Grants payable are payments and commitments made to third parties in the furtherance of the charitable objectives of the trust. Grant commitments are recognised when a constructive obligation arises that results in payment being unavoidable. In accordance with the Charities SORP, grants are therefore accounted for once the offer has been made in writing.

1.7 Charitable activities - Governance costs

Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the Trust and its compliance with statutory regulation and constitutional good practice. These are analysed in detail in note 4 to the financial statements.

1.8 Taxation

As a registered charity, the Trust is generally exempt from Income Tax and Capital Gains Tax, but not from VAT.

1.9 Investments

All investments are carried at their fair market value. Investments in equities and fixed interest securities are all traded in quoted public markets. The basis of fair value for quoted investments is equivalent to the market value, using the mid price. Asset sales and purchases recognised at the date of trade at cost (that is their transaction value). Realised and unrealised gains and losses are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities. Investment income has been taken into account on the basis of due date of payment.

1.10 Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

There have been no significant judgements (apart from those involving estimates) made in the process of applying the accounting policies.

There have been no key assumptions concerning the future and other key sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

2. Investment income

	2023	2022
	£	£
Income from UK listed investments (before deduction of fees)	1,316,314	1,314,931
Interest receivable on short term deposits and cash at bank	3,620	113
	<u>1,319,934</u>	<u>1,315,044</u>

3. Raising Funds

	2023	2022
	£	£
Management Fees		
Earned on Sarasin funds	272,905	288,413
Rebate	(121,616)	(131,611)
Net fees charged	<u>151,289</u>	<u>156,802</u>

Sarasin and Partners LLP charge fees to underlying investment funds in excess of the fee charges agreed with the trustees and a rebate of the excess fees is therefore made.

The Brian Mercer Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

For the year ended 5 April 2023

4. Charitable Activities	2023 £	2022 £
Grants Payable	1,088,077	918,206
Governance Costs	<u>20,468</u>	<u>20,359</u>
Total Charitable Activities	<u>1,108,545</u>	<u>938,565</u>
Analysis of Grants Payable	2023 £	2022 £
Intercare	-	30,000
Age UK Blackburn with Darwen	-	50,000
Chase Africa	-	30,000
Drugs for Neglected Diseases	-	150,000
Pragya	-	30,000
Team Kenya	-	30,000
LUV Leprosy	-	16,000
African Adventure Foundation	-	20,000
BFC Barefoot College	-	30,000
WSV	-	25,000
Adami Project	-	18,000
Sightsavers	-	300,000
Love Russia	-	11,000
Re-Cycle	-	7,000
Kids Club Kampala	58,400	15,000
Play Action International	-	14,114
Police Community Clubs of Great Britain	-	3,750
Haslingden High School	-	2,500
Bacup & Rawtenstall Grammar School	-	2,500
Runshaw College	-	2,500
Hope Health Action	15,000	5,500
Hello World	-	15,000
Cure International	-	4,350
Friends of Monze	-	2,140
Power for the People	-	15,000
Hope Foundation	-	3,000
Ring20 Research & Support	-	12,500
Carer's Worldwide	-	14,723
Deki	15,000	5,000
Practical Tools Initiative	-	15,000
CSEF Moneywise	4,000	4,000
Adrienne Seed	-	2,979
St Mary's Sixth Form College	(261)	2,500
Clitheroe Royal Grammar School	-	2,500
The Making Rooms	14,600	14,600
Lancashire Sailing School	-	6,050
The Whitaker	20,000	6,000
Festival of Making	30,000	-

The Brian Mercer Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

For the year ended 5 April 2023

Client Earth	100,000	-
Blaze Arts	45,000	-
Greenpeace	100,000	-
Oxfam	100,000	-
Cure International	9,000	-
Samaritans	15,000	-
Power for the People	30,000	-
Raising Futures Kenya	30,000	-
Cleanup Uk	3,000	-
Living Paintings Trust	2,000	-
Hutton Grammar School	2,500	-
Community Voluntary Service (CVS)	(10,662)	-
Stanley Grange Community Association	2,500	-
Open Eye Museum	(27,000)	-
Blackburn Youth Zone	95,000	-
Against Malaria Foundation	150,000	-
Nightsafe	75,000	-
Medecins Sans Frontiere	300,000	-
Legs4Africa	30,000	-
Tate Museum (reversal of commitment)	(40,000)	-
Blackburn with Darwen BC (reversal of commitment)	(80,000)	-
	<u>1,088,077</u>	<u>918,206</u>

Analysis of Governance costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accountancy and Trust administration	14,400	15,300
Audit fees	3,000	3,024
Trustees' travelling expenses	548	290
Legal Fees	-	1,140
Environmental Funders Network Membership	1,500	-
Miscellaneous	1,020	605
	<u>20,468</u>	<u>20,359</u>

Related party transactions

None of the Trustees received any remuneration from the Trust. C Kay, the secretary of the charity during the year ended 5 April 2023 was a tax manager at Beever and Struthers Accountants. Fees paid to Beever and Struthers Accountants for accountancy and trust administration £14,400 (2022: £15,300) were payable in the year.

The Brian Mercer Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

For the year ended 5 April 2023

5. Fixed asset investments

	2023 £	2022 £
Market value at 6 April	38,628,859	36,755,162
Additions	57,719	1,121,917
Sales	-	(166,000)
Unrealised (losses)/surplus on revaluation of investments	(2,662,676)	917,780
Market value at 5 April	<u>36,023,902</u>	<u>38,628,859</u>
Historic cost at 5 April	<u>24,559,119</u>	<u>24,501,400</u>
The market value of investments is made up as follows:		
UK investments listed on a recognised stock exchange	<u>36,023,902</u>	<u>38,605,599</u>

6. Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Investment Management Fee Rebate	<u>29,970</u>	<u>32,229</u>

7. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Accruals – Audit Fee	3,000	5,184
Grants agreed and payable	<u>599,000</u>	<u>574,000</u>
	<u>602,000</u>	<u>579,184</u>

8. Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Grants agreed and payable	<u>643,000</u>	<u>286,000</u>

Independent Auditor's Report on the Financial Statements to the Trustees of The Brian Mercer Trust

For the Year Ended 5 April 2023

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Brian Mercer Charitable Trust for the year ended 5 April 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cashflow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view, of the state of the charity's affairs as at 5 April 2023, and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the trustees' annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Independent Auditor's Report on the Financial Statements to the Trustees of The Brian Mercer Trust

For the Year Ended 5 April 2023

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustees' Annual Report; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement set out on page 6, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concerns basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with regulations made under section 154 of that Act.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Independent Auditor's Report on the Financial Statements to the Trustees of The Brian Mercer Trust

For the Year Ended 5 April 2023

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- Reviewing board minutes.
- Auditing the risk management override of controls, including through testing journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness.
- Enquiries with management about any known or suspected incidents on non-compliance with regulations and fraud.
- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their significant accounting estimates, in particular in relation to fixed asset investments.

Because of the field in which the client operates, we identified that compliance with the Charities Act 2011 is the are most likely to have a material impact on the financial statements.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/Our-Work/Audit/Audit-and-assurance/Standards-and-guidance/Standards-and-guidance-for-auditors/Auditors-responsibilities-for-audit/Description-of-auditors-responsibilities-for-audit.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

MHA Moore and Smalley
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
9 Winckley Square
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 3HP



Date: 05/02/2024

MHA Moore and Smalley is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006