ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

England & Wales · Charity number 1103732

Details

Other names	Essex Sight
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	05098747
Registered	2004-05-13
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	40 North Hill Colchester Essex CO1 1PY
Phone	01206548196
Email	services@essexsight.org.uk
Website	www.essexsight.org.uk

Activities

Objects: To relieve and to assist by all charitable means people who are impaired, disabled or handicapped by lack of vision or impaired vision (and those responsible for their care) who are resident within the County of Essex.

Activities: To relieve and assist people with sight loss.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Disability
- **Who:** People With Disabilities

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Geography

- **Area of benefit:** THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, THE LONDON BOROUGHS OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM, HAVERING, REDBRIDGE, WALTHAM FORREST AND THE UNITARY AUTHORITIES OF SOUTHEND AND THURROCK.
- Essex

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-04-30	£214,617	£288,944	-	-
2024-04-30	£220,645	£259,203	-	-
2023-04-30	£2,061,972	£1,548,113	£2,837,051	58
2022-04-30	£1,378,621	£1,568,107	£2,344,690	64
2021-04-30	£1,478,594	£1,559,664	£2,527,238	68

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Alan Williams		2024-02-20
Darren Smith		2019-08-28
Harry Guido Meade		2025-08-04
James William Fernley		2024-10-29
Neil Meixner		2020-10-28
ROBERT LIONEL JACKSON		2012-02-08
Sara Dorothy Porter		2017-06-15
Theodora Helen Crawshaw		2020-02-26
Vanda June Watling		2024-05-30

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ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

England & Wales - Charity number 1103732

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER 05098747

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1103732

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

30 APRIL 2025

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

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ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

OFFICERS AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS

Trustees	T Crawshaw R Jackson ACCA*, CTA* S D Porter D Smith N Meixner (appointed as Chairman Oct 2023) A C Williams (appointed Feb 2024) V J Watling (appointed May 2024) J Fernley (appointed Oct 2024) *retired members of the professional bodies concerned
Company Secretary	J Dixon
Registered Office	1st Floor 146 High Street, Colchester Essex CO1 1PW
Registered Company Number	05098747
Registered Charity Number	1103732
Bankers	Handelsbanken The Octagon 27 Middleborough Colchester CO1 1TG

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees (who are also Directors for the purpose of company law) submit their annual report and the independently examined financial statements of Essex Blind Charity (the Charity) for the year ended 30 April 2025. This report also represents the Directors' Report required by S417 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the Charity have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charity's governing document and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS102) and the Charities Act 2011.

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Legal and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report.

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

The Charity is controlled by a Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 29 October 2003 and operates as a Charitable Company limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Structure, Management and Trustee Appointment

The Charity is managed by a Board of Directors, at the year-end there were eight Directors, one being visually impaired. Nominations to be a Director are considered and approved by the whole Board. Directors set operating plans and budgets and meet regularly to review the performance and strategy of the Charity. All major decisions are made at Board level and must be passed with a majority vote of the Directors present. To make a decision, one third of the Board has to be present. Minor day to day decisions are made by the Director of Operations, with authorisation from the Board. Most board meetings are held remotely by 'Zoom'.

Induction and training of new Trustees

The policy and procedures adopted for the induction and training of Directors includes visits to the Charities premises, introduction to staff and day to day operation, an introduction to the other Directors, including details of their particular areas of expertise, and details of the objectives of the charity, including information on current projects and plans for future development.

Remuneration Policy

The charity does not have any fixed criteria for setting pay and remuneration of key management or any other personnel. Pay rates are reviewed generally on an annual basis by the Board of Directors and awards depend on the current financial status of the organisation and any Government directives.

Risk Management

The Directors have conducted a review of the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risk the Charity may face. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers and visually impaired people (VIP) we work with. These risks and procedures are reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The Charity's objectives, as set out in its governing documents, are to meet the needs of visually impaired people and their carers and families throughout Essex and are undertaken to further the Charity's charitable purposes for the public benefit. To this end Essex Blind Charity:

1 Gives support, information, advice and guidance to all people with a visual impairment, and sighted people who have a vested interest.

2 Keeps up to date on new information and technological developments, assesses the viability of such developments for visually impaired people and offers advice on its implementation.

3 Provides trained staff to hospital eye clinics to give support and advice to people at the point of diagnosis.

4 Maintains pop up sight centres around the County so that visually impaired people can gain practical advice and have equipment demonstrations.

5 Carries out an assessment service to determine if people need further support in their place of residence or in the community.

6 Produces information via a newsletter, website and social media.

The Charity's community work operates under the name of 'Essex Sight'.

Public Benefit

In accordance with their duties in the Charity's Act 2006, it is incumbent on the Directors to conduct a Public Benefit Test, to assess whether the Charity has complied with its duties in due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

The Directors are satisfied that Essex Blind Charity has complied with its duty in regard to meeting the Charity Commission objectives over the past year.

1 There must be an identifiable benefit:

Essex Blind Charity's purposes are to provide support and relief to any member of the public who has concerns about sight loss, for themselves, family, friends or associates. Its services are open to anyone in Essex.

2 Benefit must be to the public or a section of the public:

All the Charity's services are open to members of the public at large and access to the Charity's services are not restrictive.

3 People on low incomes must be able to benefit:

The Board of Directors recognises that many visually impaired people are on low incomes, as people with impaired vision are more likely to be unemployed in comparison to fully sighted people. In addition, many do not avail themselves of their benefit entitlements. Essex Blind Charity does not make a charge for its services of support and advice and offers its services to the public at large free of charge.

4 Any private benefit must be incidental:

The Directors do not consider that any individual or organisation receives a 'private benefit' from the work of Essex Blind Charity.

SERVICE DELIVERY – ESSEX SIGHT PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Essex Sight team comprises three full time and three part time staff covering the eastern half of Essex stretching from the border with Suffolk to the M25. We closed our permanent sight centre in Colchester and opened a weekly pop up, whilst staff moved into offices on the High Street. During the year we have supported 2,514 VIP and had 6,259 contacts. We have achieved this through -

Pop Up Sight Centres

Our pop-up sight centres provide a vital role in allowing VIP to meet face to face with staff and volunteers to learn more about their eye condition, have assistance with difficult tasks, such as form filling or finding out about equipment that can help them in their daily lives. The Colchester Sight Centre moved to Lion Walk Church, an accessible venue in the city centre, whilst the library underwent refurbishment. We opened a new sight centre in Halstead Community Shed, a well-supported and accessible community venue to join alongside our regular pop ups in Chelmsford, Maldon, and Walton. The Malcolm and Beryl Crook Foundation project with BASIS continued to support people through our pop-up in Brentwood Community Hospital, whilst BASIS delivered home support.

Community Hospital Eye Clinic Support

Our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) has continued to support newly diagnosed patients through the Eye Clinic Liaison service in Colchester Eye Clinic (East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust). The service, which is entirely funded by the Charity, provides newly diagnosed VI people and their relatives/carers the opportunity to discuss their situation with an RNIB trained ECLO and receive support and advice to help them understand their condition and learn to live with it, as well as carrying out home visits to assess their living needs.

Home Visiting

Home Visiting is an important and regular part of the Charity's service, providing support to people unable to get out to pop-up sight centres. 80% of VIP we support are aged over 71 and they often face wider issues such as lack of mobility or other health conditions. A lack of accessible pathways and limited access to public or community transport makes this an essential part of our service, providing information, advice, and guidance to people in the comfort of their own home.

Exhibitions

The Charity holds well attended annual exhibitions in mid and north Essex to allow people to find out about our services, those offered by other community providers and try the latest equipment available from specialist suppliers. There is no substitute for face-to-face information and support and being able to have equipment demonstrated and trying it out.

Volunteers

The Charity relies on dedicated volunteers to provide support to VIP. Many of our volunteers have a Visual Impairment themselves and can share valuable lived experience. The volunteer role is vital in helping VIP to live the best life they can, supporting our social events and sight centres. Our 13 volunteers provided over 400 hours of support this year.

Partnership Working

The first of the 3-year Essex County Council Sensory Contract to provide information, advice and guidance and non-specialist assessments concluded in September 2024 with the Charity exceeding all the key performance indicators. In the first 7 months of the second year, the Charity has been dealing with cases of greater complexity and greater numbers, the majority through our work in the community.

Essex Vision, the partnership of Essex Sight Loss Charities continues to work collaboratively to provide a collective voice for blind and visually impaired people across the county and ensure their needs are taken into consideration, particularly in consultation on major changes to infrastructure or services to ensure the safety and accessibility of VIP is not compromised.

The Charity, alongside ECC and Essex Vision partners presented their solution to the rehabilitation crisis at the National Visionary Conference to a fully booked audience.

Website

Details about Essex Blind Charity's services can be found on the website at www.essexsight.org.uk, which was developed in 2019. The website attracted 4,500 users in the year and whilst fully accessible, has become dated. The Board have commissioned a new website for greater accessibility and navigation. The Chairty also uses Facebook and Instagram to provide regular information and updates on events.

Helpline

The Charity maintains a phone line for anybody who needs information, advice, or emotional support to call and has remained a lifeline for many who are unable to use internet-based services which have become so prevalent in recent years.

Financial Review

Reserves policy

The term "reserves," sometimes referred to as "free reserves", refers to the part of a Charity's unrestricted funds (cash or liquid funds) that is freely available to spend on any of the Charity's purposes. It is important that a Charity sets the reserves at a level which is not too high as to tie up funds unnecessarily or too low as to risk the ability to operate in the event of financial difficulties. The purpose of our reserves policy is to -

- give confidence to funders by demonstrating good stewardship and active financial management
- demonstrate the Charity's resilience and capacity to manage unforeseen financial difficulties to beneficiaries, funders and the public
- give funders, such as grant-makers, an understanding of why funding is needed to undertake a particular project or activity
- give assurance to lenders and creditors that the Charity can meet its financial commitments
- manage the risk to a Charity's reputation from holding substantial unspent funds at the year-end without explanation

This policy explains to all stakeholders why the Charity is setting money aside under the following key elements:

1. How much the Charity needs to hold in reserve and why;
2. How and when the Charity's reserves can be spent;
3. How often the reserves policy will be reviewed.

The Charity has provided support to Blind and Vision Impaired people in Essex for over 100 years. Following the sale of Read House, the Charity no longer generates its own funds and is entirely reliant on the financial return from its investments, the Essex County Council sensory contract, donations and legacies. The Charity supports over 2200 VI people annually through our community outreach, eye clinic liaison services, social activities, daily telephone and email support, pop-up sight centres, hospital support, home visiting and equipment exhibitions. For the year ending 30 April 2025, our total income was £214,617 and our total expenditure was £290,192. The income the Charity receives through contract, grant and donations does not cover our expenditure and is not guaranteed. Without reserves to produce investment income and cover any shortfall, the Charity would not be able to maintain its current service levels to the community.

How much the Charity needs to hold in reserve and why

The Trustees are responsible for ascertaining whether the funds we hold in reserve are adequate for our ongoing work. To do this, we consider the ongoing needs of our current and future beneficiaries, the external factors that could affect our work and the future projects that will require funding. The level of reserves required are unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend on any of the Charity's purposes. Reserves are calculated to ensure that there is appropriate funding in place to meet ongoing financial commitments, to cover expenditure in the event of reduced income or changes in circumstances, and financial capacity to achieve the Charity's strategic priorities for developing existing or establishing new services.

This Policy has been developed by the Board in accordance with the Charity Commission guidance CC19 and addresses our unrestricted funds. These free reserves include short-term investment balances, cash and other working capital balances. They also include any reserves balances which have been designated by the Trustees for particular future use (recognising that such designation may be changed in future by board resolution).

The Charity faces a range of risks, including an unforeseen drop in income or unbudgeted increases in expenditure. To ensure that we can continue in our charitable purpose, holding an appropriate level of reserves enables us to mitigate risk such as an unforeseen reduction in income, additional expenditure (for example when projects overrun, or unplanned events occur). The Essex County Council sensory contract, accounts for 45% of the Charity income. As Essex is undergoing Devolution and local government reorganisation over the next three years, there is uncertainty over the future of the contract, as ECC will cease to exist and between 3 and 5 Unitary authorities are created, each being responsible for sensory services. Whether the Charity will be able to bid for these services is entirely unknown. Coupled with inflation driven by global trade war and conflict, the Trustees have based reserve projections that would provide medium-term mitigation until long-term solutions can be established.

The Board review financial risks on an annual basis, and our assessments on the possible financial impact of those risks has been incorporated into the reserves range we have calculated.

How and when the Charity's reserves can be spent.

The Board has approved an investment management policy which addresses the approach to the investment of a larger level of cash reserves. The Board recognises that whilst increasing risk increases potential returns over a longer period, it also increases the risk of a shortfall in returns as well as produces more short-term volatility in the Charity's funding position. In addition to targeting an appropriate overall level of investment risk, the board seeks to spread risks across a range of different sources, believing that diversification limits the impact of any single risk. The Board aims to take on those risks for which they expect to be rewarded over time, in the form of excess returns. The Board have calculated a reserves range of £2,000,000 to £3,000,000 as appropriate for our organisation. These reserves are designated to reflect the future financial needs of the Charity. As of 30 April 2025 the Charity held reserves of £2,685,415 defined on this basis but is expecting to see a decrease in these reserves in the coming year to cover the operating deficit. The funds are designated as follows:

- Winding up fund – This is the amount needed to clear all outstanding financial commitments based on 6 months of committed operating costs +/- 15%, which would allow for a managed wind down if required £150,000
- Continuity fund – To mitigate against a range of risks faced, the Board have calculated that to ensure there is no disruption to service provision whilst we still have an underlying operating deficit during our strategy to grow the organisation and move to a sustainable financial footing £2m
- Growth Fund – The investment into new projects, to provide greater levels of support to VIP in Essex £450,000

How often the reserves policy will be reviewed.

The trustees remain committed to supporting as many blind and partially sighted people in Essex as possible and the Investment subcommittee will review the performance of invested funds and in conjunction with the Director of Operations, report back to the Board on the policy on an annual basis.

Funds

The activities during the year resulted in a deficit of Unrestricted funds of £119,155 (2024: Deficit of £27,085) for the year.

All Restricted funds received were spent within the year, as a result there were £0 Restricted funds at the year-end (2024: £0).

Overall, there was a deficit in total funds of £119,155 (2024: £31,232 deficit).

Investment Policy and Objectives

In May the Board carried out a request for proposal to a range of investment managers to invest the Charity's funds over a 10-year period. After due diligence Epworth Investment Management Limited and Amber River East Anglia were appointed to manage the funds. Their brief is to reinvest the income and to provide an investment report each quarter giving returns in real terms. The performance of the investments is reviewed by the Trustees appointed to the investment subcommittee, which reports back to the Board.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees (who are also the Directors of Essex Blind Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees must prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charitable Company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charitable Company 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 accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK 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 Charitable Company will continue to operate.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charitable Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charitable Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

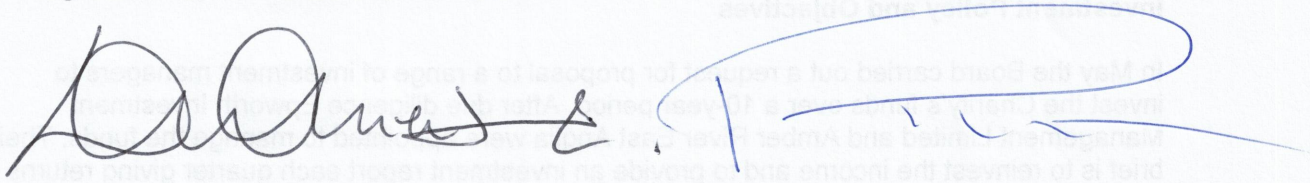
INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION

The Charity appointed Nicholas Lawrence ACA to carry out the independent examination, and RYPRO Accountants Ltd to prepare for the independent examination.

ACCOUNTING EXEMPTIONS

In preparing this report the Trustees have taken advantage of small companies' exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

Signed for and on behalf of the Trustees



N W Meixner
Trustee

R Jackson ACCA, CTA
Trustee

Approved by the Trustees on

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Charitable Company for the year ended 30 April 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity's Trustees (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 Charitable 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

Since the charitable company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a listed body. I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a registered member of ICAEW which is one of the listed bodies.

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:

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 charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.

Nicholas Lawrence, ACA
61 Benskin Road
Watford
WD18 0HN

Date: 03/12/2025

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	3	**9,498**	**121,381**	**130,879**	85,777
Charitable activities	4	**30**	**-**	**30**	696
Other trading activities	5	**1,505**	**-**	**1,505**	1,648
Investments	6	**82,203**	**-**	**82,203**	132,524
Total income		**93,236**	**121,381**	**214,617**	220,645
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	7	**11,915**	**-**	**11,915**	4,562
Charitable activities	8	**155,648**	**121,381**	**277,029**	254,641
Total expenditure		**167,563**	**121,381**	**288,944**	259,203
Net income/(expenditure)		**(74,327)**	**-**	**(74,327)**	(38,558)
Realised and unrealised (losses)/gains on investments		**(44,828)**	**-**	**(44,828)**	7,326
Transfers between funds		**-**	**-**	**-**	-
Net movement in funds		**(119,155)**	**-**	**(119,155)**	(31,232)
Total funds brought forward at 1 May 2024	17	**2,805,819**	**-**	**2,805,819**	2,837,051
Total funds carried forward at 30 April 2025	17	**2,686,664**	**-**	**2,686,664**	2,805,819

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 APRIL 2025

	Notes	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	12	**13,993**	15,154
Investments	13	**2,596,653**	372,826
		2,610,646	387,980
Current assets			
Stocks	14	**-**	3,797
Debtors – due within one year	15	**19,304**	10,792
Cash and cash equivalents		**64,393**	2,411,184
		83,697	2,425,773
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	**(7,678)**	(7,934)
Net current assets		**76,018**	2,417,839
Net assets		**2,686,664**	2,805,819
Income funds			
Restricted funds	17	**-**	-
Unrestricted funds	17	**2,686,664**	2,805,819
		2,686,664	2,805,819

The Directors consider that the Charitable Company is entitled to exemption from the requirement to have an audit under the provisions of section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 ("the Act") and members have not required the company to obtain an audit for the period in question in accordance with section 476 of the Act.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies' regime. In the directors' opinion the Charitable Company is entitled to these exemptions as a small company.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on and signed on its behalf by:

N W Meixner – Trustee **R Jackson – ACCA, CTA – Trustee**

Company registration number: 05098747
Charity registration number: 1103732

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Essex Blind Charity is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, registered company number 05098747 and registered charity number 1103732. The address of the registered office is 1st Floor 146 High Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1PW.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in pounds sterling and rounded to the nearest £1.

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern.

The following principal accounting policies have been applied:

Statement of Cash Flow

The Charity qualifies as a small charity as defined in the Charities SORP (FRS 102) Bulletin 1 and as such is exempt from preparing a Statement of Cash Flows.

Income

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Legacy gifts are recognised following the granting of probate when the administrator / executor for the estate has communicated in writing both the amount and settlement date.

Grants are accounted for when the charity has sufficient entitlement to them.

Expenditure

All expenditure included in the Statement of Financial Activities are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Expenditure on raising funds includes the expenditure associated with the sale of visual aids. Expenditure on charitable activities includes minor expenditure associated with the sale of the Read House.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES - (continued)

Fixed assets

Fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected lives on the following basis:

Computer Equipment	-	5 year Straight line
Fixtures and fittings	-	20% reducing balance
Motor vehicles	-	25% reducing balance

Investments

Investments are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their market value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and shown in the heading 'Realised and unrealised investment gains/(losses) on investments' in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Stock

Stock is valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items. The Charity holds display stock for visual aids, these items are being written down over a 5 year period.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash equivalents are recognised as such and included with other cash balances where they represent short term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash without being subject to a significant change in value.

Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the Charity. Contributions payable to the scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES - (continued)

Financial instruments

Financial instruments are classified and accounted for, according to the substance of the contractual arrangement, as either financial assets or financial liabilities.

Short term debtors (financial assets) are measured at transaction price.
Short term creditors (financial liabilities) are measured at the transaction price.

The Charitable Company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments.

Taxation

Essex Blind Charity is a charity within the meaning of the Charities Act 2011 and as such is a charity within the meaning of Part 11, Corporation Tax Act 2010. Accordingly Essex Blind Charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Part 11, Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to its charitable purposes.

Funds

Unrestricted general funds are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees. Restricted funds are funds that can only be used in accordance with specific conditions specified by the donor. Further details are provided in note 17.

Significant judgements and estimates

The more significant judgements and estimates involved in the preparation of the financial statements include assessing the depreciation rates applicable to tangible fixed assets and the way in which certain costs should be apportioned. Further details regarding these points are included within the accounting policies.

3 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Donations	**2,273**	**-**	**2,273**
Legacies	**7,225**	**-**	**7,225**
Grants received	**-**	**121,381**	**121,381**
	9,498	**121,381**	**130,879**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Donations	6,765	-	6,765
Legacies	6,875	-	6,875
Grants received	8,440	63,697	72,137
	22,080	63,697	85,777

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Grants received were as follows:			
ECC Sensory Contract	**-**	**110,075**	**110,075**
Brentwood Community Hosp. Project	**-**	**11,306**	**11,306**
	-	**121,381**	**121,381**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Grants received were as follows:			
Essex Cares Limited	8,440	-	8,440
ECC Sensory Contract	-	52,316	52,316
Brentwood Community Hosp. Project	-	11,381	11,381
	8,440	63,697	72,137

All grants support the key objective of enabling people with sight loss to remain independent and safe.

4 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Other activities	**30**	**30**
	30	**30**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Other activities	696	696
	696	696

5 INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Visual aids	**825**	**-**	**825**
Others	**680**	**-**	**680**
	1,505	**-**	**1,505**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Visual aids	999	-	999
Others	649	-	649
	1,648	-	1,648

6 INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS

	2025 £	2024 £
Interest receivable	**69,691**	122,483
Dividends receivable	**12,512**	10,041
	82,203	132,524

7 EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS

	2025 £	2024 £
Visual aids – net of stock adjustment	**4,166**	2,041
Investment management costs	**7,749**	2,521
	11,915	4,562

8 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2025 £	2024 £
Charitable activities	**275,234**	250,501
Governance costs (note 9)	**1,795**	4,140
	£ 277,029	£ 254,641

9 GOVERNANCE COSTS

	2025 £	2024 £
Subscriptions and registration fees	**-**	-
Auditors' remuneration	**-**	-
Remuneration for non-audit work	**1,795**	4,140
	£ 1,795	£ 4,140

10 NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

	2025 £	2024 £
This is stated after charging:		
Auditors' remuneration	**-**	-
Remuneration for non-audit work	**1,795**	4,140
Depreciation – owned assets	**3,405**	3,530
(Profit)/Loss on disposal of fixed assets	**(3,375)**	-

11 STAFF COSTS

	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	**166,037**	147,503
National insurance contributions	**9,554**	7,173
Pension costs	**3,594**	3,357
Pension administration	**-**	-
	179,185	158,033

The average number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2025	2024
Management	**2**	2
Administration	**1**	1
Community Services personnel	**4**	4
Care home staff	**-**	-
	7	7

No employee received emoluments in excess of £60,000 in the year (2024: None). Pension costs are wholly charged to unrestricted funds.

There were no Trustees' remuneration, expenses or other benefits for professional or other services supplied to the charity for the year ended 30 April 2025, nor for the year ended 30 April 2024.

The aggregate remuneration of key management personnel was £66,983 (2024: £49,043).

Indemnity insurance is maintained covering the Board of Trustees in their capacity as trustees.

12 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures and fittings	Motor Vehicles	Computer Equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£
Cost				
At 1 May 2024	20,852	21,981	-	42,833
Additions	-	-	5,618	5,618
Disposals	(5,434)	-	-	(5,434)
At 30 April 2025	15,418	21,981	5,618	43,017
Depreciation				
At 1 May 2024	10,915	16,764	-	27,679
Charge for the year	1,258	1,304	843	3,405
Disposals	(2,060)	-	-	(2,060)
At 30 April 2025	10,113	18,068	843	29,024
Net book value				
At 30 April 2025	5,305	3,913	4,775	13,993
At 30 April 2024	9,937	5,217	-	15,154

13 FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

	2025 £	2024 £
Movement in fixed asset investments		
Market value brought forward at 1 May 2024	**372,826**	357,798
Additions to investment at cost	**2,360,845**	279,550
Disposals	**(99,961)**	(245,872)
Gain/(loss) on revaluation	**(44,828)**	7,326
Increase/(decrease) in cash held	**7,771**	(25,976)
Market value carried forward at 30 April 2025	**2,596,653**	372,826

Investment portfolio at market value comprised

	2025 £	2024 £
Epworth	**1,134,032**	372,826
Fidelity International	**1,462,621**	-
	2,596,653	372,826

Epworth		
EP Global Equity Income Fund	**593,301**	195,634
EP UK Equity Income Fund	**101,957**	32,699
FP Foresight global real infrastructure	**87,910**	40,781
Rathbone Ethical bond	**24,170**	12,943
Royal London Short Term Money	**18,334**	9,380
Threadneedle UK Social bond	**12,243**	5,568
Vanguard UK Government bond	**-**	7,402
Vanguard US Government bond	**12,353**	11,089
L&G UK Property Feeder	**23,963**	7,534
Epworth Climate Stewardship Fund	**104,038**	32,649
Rathbone Greenbank Global Sustainable Bond Fund	**49,451**	14,830
Royal Mint Responsibly Sourced Physical Gold ETC	**13,000**	-
Spark Change Physical Carbon EUA ETC	**34,173**	-
Vanguard UK Government bond Dist	**49,051**	
Cash held by Investment Manager	**10,088**	2,317
	1,134,032	£ 372,826

13 FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS – continued

	2025	2024
	£	£
Fidelity International		
Artemis	**73,923**	-
Fidelity Cash Fund	**247,455**	-
Fidelity Extra Income Fund	**29,319**	-
Fidelity Index Japan	**61,921**	-
Fidelity Index UK	**132,997**	-
Fidelity world	**73,495**	-
HSBC FTSE	**146,187**	-
iShares Continental	**163,783**	-
iShares Emerging	**64,996**	-
Legal & General Global Health	**48,970**	-
Legal & General Global Tech	**36,715**	-
UBS FTSE RAFI	**41,821**	-
Vanguard Global	**43,874**	-
iShares	**74,536**	-
FRANKLIN Templeton	**29,163**	-
iShares V PLC 500	**68,026**	-
iShares V	**55,625**	-
VANECK	**69,744**	-
Cash held by Investment Manager	**71**	-
	1,462,621	-

14 STOCK

	2025 £	2024 £
Visual aids – resale stocks	-	3,797
	-	£ 3,797

15 DEBTORS

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	**9,497**	8,719
Prepayments and accrued income	**9,807**	2,073
	£ 19,304	£ 10,792

16 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	**1,910**	1,567
Social security and other taxes	**1,935**	1,548
Other creditors	**651**	322
Accruals and deferred income	**3,182**	4,497
	£ 7,678	£ 7,934

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	Balance at 1 May 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Expenditure including gains/(losses) £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at 30 April 2025 £
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	2,392,304	**93,236**	**(167,563)**	**-**	**2,317,977**
Designated funds					
Essex support 5 year plan	300,000	-		-	**300,000**
Essex support exit strategy fund	25,000	-	-	-	**25,000**
Investment revaluation reserve	88,515	-	**(44,828)**	-	**43,687**
	2,805,819	**93,236**	**(212,391)**	**-**	**2,686,664**
Restricted Funds					
Mobile Sight Centre	-	-	-	-	-
ECC Sensory Contract	-	**11,306**	**(11,306)**	-	-
Brentwood Community Hosp. Project	-	**110,075**	**(110,075)**	-	-
	-	**121,381**	**(121,381)**	-	-
	£ 2,805,819	**£ 214,617**	**£ (333,772)**	**-**	**2,686,664**

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

	Balance at 1 May 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Expenditure including gains/(losses) £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at 30 April 2024 £
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	2,426,715	**156,948**	**(191,359)**	-	**2,392,304**
Designated funds					
Essex support 5 year plan	300,000	-		-	**300,000**
Essex support exit strategy fund	25,000	-	-	-	**25,000**
Investment revaluation reserve	81,189	-	**7,326**	-	**88,515**
	2,832,904	**156,948**	**(184,033)**	-	**2,805,819**
Restricted Funds					
Mobile Sight Centre	4,147	-	**(4,147)**	-	-
ECC Sensory Contract	-	**11,381**	**(11,381)**	-	-
Brentwood Community Hosp. Project	-	**52,316**	**(52,316)**	-	-
	4,147	**63,697**	**(67,844)**	-	-
	£ 2,837,051	**£ 220,645**	**£ (251,877)**	-	**£ 2,805,819**

The general fund represents the free funds of the charity which are not designated for a particular purpose.

Essex support 5 year plan fund is to provide half the cost of the community services over a five-year period, in order to attract matching grant funding for the balance.

Essex support exit strategy fund is a worst-case scenario and the cost of ceasing the community services altogether.

Both the 5-year plan and the exit strategy will be reassessed by Trustees and a new plan put in place to take into account the changes to the NHS and Local Government Reorganisation

The investment revaluation reserve represents cumulative realised and unrealised investment gains and losses on investments.

The Mobile Sight Centre project relates to funding received from Colchester Catalyst and the Saffron Building Society Fund, the vehicle was purchased by April 23 and the remaining capital works were carried out in the previous financial year (year ending April 24).

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

The Brentwood Community Hospital project relates to a grant from The Malcolm and Beryl Cook Foundation. It has been carried out jointly with the Blind and Visual Sight Impaired Society (BASIS).

18 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Tangible fixed assets £	Investments £	Net current assets £	2025 Total £
Restricted funds	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Unrestricted funds	**13,993**	**2,596,653**	**76,018**	**2,686,664**
	13,993	**2,596,653**	**76,018**	**2,686,664**

	Tangible fixed assets £	Investments £	Net current assets £	2024 Total £
Restricted funds	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted funds	15,154	372,826	2,417,839	2,805,819
	15,154	372,826	2,417,839	2,805,819

19 CONTROLLING PARTY

The Charitable Company was under the control of the trustees during the year.

20 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

If any discussions are held in relation to transactions with related parties, it is the Charity's process that the associated Trustee will remove themselves from any discussions surrounding such transactions and the decisions reached on these. Allan Williams is a Partner of Fenn Wright. For the year ended 30 April 2025, Essex Blind Charity acquired services from Fenn Wright amounting to £26,728.

No other related party transactions have been identified which need to be disclosed. (2024 : £2,110).

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

England & Wales - Charity number 1103732

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER 05098747

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1103732

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

30 APRIL 2024

THURSDAY

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A06 19/12/2024 #259

COMPANIES HOUSE

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

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ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

OFFICERS AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS

Trustees	S M Mann JP (Chairman – resigned Jan 2024) T Crawshaw R Jackson ACCA*, CTA* A Mabert (resigned Jun 2023) R Marshall FRICS*, FAAV* (resigned Jun 2023) S D Porter D Smith N Meixner (appointed as Chairman Jan 2024) A C Williams (appointed Feb 2024) V J Watling (appointed May 2024) J Fernley (appointed Oct 2024) *retired members of the professional bodies concerned
Company Secretary	J Dixon
Registered Office	1st Floor 146 High Street, Colchester Essex CO1 1PW
Registered Company Number	05098747
Registered Charity Number	1103732
Bankers	Handelsbanken The Octagon 27 Middleborough Colchester CO1 1TG

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The trustees (who are also directors for the purpose of company law) submit their annual report and the independently examined financial statements of Essex Blind Charity (the charity) for the year ended 30 April 2024. This report also represents the Directors' Report required by S417 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the charity have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the charity's governing document and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS102) and the Charities Act 2011.

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Legal and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report.

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

The charity is controlled by a Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 29 October 2003 and operates as a Charitable Company limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Structure, Management and Trustee Appointment

The charity is managed by a Board of Directors, which consists of not less than three members. At the year-end there were six Directors, one being visually impaired. Nominations to be a Director are considered and approved by the whole Board. Directors set operating plans and budgets and meet 10 times a year to review the performance and strategy of the charity. All major decisions are made at Board level and must be passed with a majority vote of the Directors present. In order to make a decision, one third of the Board has to be present. Minor day to day decisions are made by the Director of Operations, with authorisation from the Board. The majority of board meetings are held remotely by 'Zoom'.

Induction and training of new Trustees

The policy and procedures adopted for the induction and training of Directors includes visits to the charities premises, introduction to staff and day to day operation, an introduction to the other Directors, including details of their particular areas of expertise, and details of the objectives of the charity, including information on current projects and plans for future development.

Remuneration Policy

The charity does not have any fixed criteria for setting pay and remuneration of key management or any other personnel. Pay rates are reviewed generally on an annual basis by the Board of Directors and awards depend on the current financial status of the organisation and any Government directives.

Risk Management

The Directors have conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risk the charity faces. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers and visually impaired people (VIP) we work with. These risks and procedures are reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The charity's objectives, as set out in its governing documents, are to meet the needs of visually impaired people and their carers and families throughout Essex and are undertaken to further the charity's charitable purposes for the public benefit. To this end Essex Blind Charity:

1 Gives support, advice, and information to all people with a visual impairment, and sighted people with a vested interest in such subjects;

2 Keeps up-to-date on new information and technological developments, assesses the viability of such developments for visually impaired people and offers advice on its implementation;

3 Provides trained staff to hospital eye clinics to give support and advice to people at the point of diagnosis;

4 Maintains Sight Centres around the County so that visually impaired people can learn about new aids to living and try them out before purchasing them;

5 Runs a home-visiting service for visually impaired people who are unable to travel; and

6 Produces information via a newsletter, website and social media.

The charity's community work operates under the name of 'Essex Sight'.

Public Benefit

In accordance with their duties in the Charity's Act 2006, it is incumbent on the Directors to conduct a Public Benefit Test, to assess whether the charity has complied with its duties in due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

The Directors are satisfied that Essex Blind Charity has complied with its duty in regard to the Public Benefit Test over the past year, based on the four principles in the Commission's Guidance.

1 There must be an identifiable benefit:

Essex Blind Charity's purposes are to provide support and relief to any member of the public who has concerns about sight loss, blindness or partial vision. Its services benefit a large number of the general public in Essex.

2 Benefit must be to the public or a section of the public:

All the charity's services are open to members of the public at large and access to the charity's services are not restrictive.

3 People on low incomes must be able to benefit:

The Board of Directors recognises that many visually impaired people are on low incomes, as people with impaired vision are more likely to be unemployed in comparison to fully sighted people. In addition, many do not avail themselves of their benefit entitlements. Essex Blind Charity does not make a charge for its services of support and advice and offers its services to the public at large free of charge.

4 Any private benefit must be incidental:

The Directors do not consider that any individual or organisation receives a 'private benefit' from the work of Essex Blind Charity.

SERVICE DELIVERY – ESSEX SIGHT PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Essex Sight team comprises three full time and four part time staff covering the eastern half of Essex stretching from the border with Suffolk to the M25. In the year ending 30 April 2024 we have supported 2,430 VIP and had 8,034 contacts.

This is achieved through the following:-

Sight Centres

Our permanent and pop-up sight centres provide a vital role in allowing VIP to meet face to face with staff and volunteers to learn more about their eye condition, have assistance with difficult tasks, such as form filling or finding out about equipment that can help them in their daily lives.

During the year, Colchester Sight Centre moved to a busier weekly pop-up location in the library, where we also installed a donated video magnifier to allow anyone to use during library open hours. The Malcolm and Beryl Crook Foundation project with BASIS continued to support people through our pop up in Brentwood Community Hospital, whilst BASIS delivered home support.

Community Hospital Eye Clinic Support

Our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) has continued to support newly diagnosed patients through the Eye Clinic Liaison service in Colchester Eye Clinic (East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust) and Broomfield Hospital (Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust).

The service, which is entirely funded by the charity, provides newly diagnosed VIP people and their relatives/carers the opportunity to discuss their situation with an RNIB trained ECLO and receive support and advice to help them understand their condition and learn to live with it, as well as carrying out home visits to assess their living needs.

In November 2023, MSE Trust in conjunction with the RNIB decided to fund a full time ECLO role and our eye clinic support ended in January. Whilst disappointing, we still support MSE patients through home visits as the new ECLO role is purely hospital based, so patients are referred onto us for community support.

Home Visiting

Home Visiting is an important and regular part of the charity's service, providing support to people unable to get out to pop-up sight centres. With our fully equipped Mobile Sight Centre, we can demonstrate equipment, provide information, advice, and guidance to people in the comfort of their own home.

Exhibitions

The charity holds two well attended Annual exhibitions in mid and north Essex to allow people to find out about our services, those offered by other community providers and try the latest equipment available from specialist suppliers. There is no substitute for face-to-face information and support and being able to have equipment demonstrated and trying it out.

Volunteers

The charity relies on dedicated volunteers to provide support to VIP. Many of our volunteers have a Visual Impairment themselves and can share valuable lived experience. The volunteer role is vital in helping VIP to live the best life they can, supporting our social events and sight centres.

As these works have no quantifiable value this is not recognised in the financial statements.

Partnership Working

In November, Essex Sight along with the other sight loss and hearing loss charities in Essex were awarded the Sensory Contract by Essex County Council to provide Information, Advice and Guidance and non-specialist assessments for a period of three years. ECC designed this new pathway to increase capacity to meet a growing demand, reduce unnecessary delays and offset a growing crisis in sensory rehabilitation.

Essex Vision, which is the strategic partnership group of sight loss organisations in Essex, became a legal partnership to strengthen its ongoing work to provide a collective voice for blind and visually impaired people across the county.

The charity is a member of Visionary, the collective body of sight loss organisations nationally, attending regional and national meetings to keep up to date and share knowledge.

The charity also works with local government and other organisations to ensure the needs of VIP are taken into consideration and has, where possible, influenced the design of new pedestrian and cycle routes to ensure the safety of VIP is not compromised.

Website

Details about Essex Blind Charity's services can be found on the website at www.essexsight.org.uk. The website is accessible to visually impaired people and is very informative. The charity also uses Facebook to provide regular information and contact via social media.

Helpline

The charity maintains a phone line for anybody who needs information, advice, or emotional support to call and has remained a lifeline for many who are unable to use internet-based services.

Financial Review

Reserves policy

Unrestricted funds are needed:

a. to provide funds which can be designated to specific projects to enable those projects to be undertaken at short notice.

b. to cover the costs of running the charity in the short term, if there is an interruption in funding.

c. to cover administration and support costs.

The Directors consider adequate funding exists presently to meet these requirements. They regularly review and monitor the situation.

Funds

The activities during the year resulted in a deficit of unrestricted funds of £27,085 (2023: Surplus of £504,933) for the year.

There was a decrease in restricted fund balances at the year end as the mobile sight centre restricted funds were spent on the van and a new laptop. The deficit on restricted funds for the year was £4,147 (2023: £12,572). There were no restricted funds at the year-end (2023: £4,147).

Overall, there was a deficit in total funds of £31,232 (2023: £492,361 surplus).

Investment Policy and Objectives

Epworth Investment Management Limited was appointed to manage the charity's investment fund. Their brief is to reinvest the income and to provide an investment report each quarter giving returns in real terms and against chosen benchmarks. To date, Epworth's have more than met our expectations. Epworth are ethical investors and do not invest in munitions, tobacco, oil companies or those with links to modern slavery.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the Directors of Essex Blind Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees must prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charitable Company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charitable Company 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 accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK 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 Charitable Company will continue to operate.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charitable Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charitable Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION

With a reduction in income, the charity has now appointed Scrutton Bland Limited to carry out the independent examination, and RYPRO Accountants Ltd to prepare for the independent examination.

ACCOUNTING EXEMPTIONS

In preparing this report the trustees have taken advantage of small companies' exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

Signed for and on behalf of the Trustees

N W Meixner
Trustee

R Jackson ACCA, CTA
Trustee

Approved by the Trustees on 5th December 2024

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

I report to the trustees (who are also Directors for the purpose of company law) on my examination of the financial statements of Essex Blind Charity ('the charitable company') for the year ended 30 April 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet and related notes.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of charitable company you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act'). Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charitable company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charitable company's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('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 2011 Act.

An independent examination does not involve gathering all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently does not cover all the matters that an auditor considers in giving their opinion on the financial statements. The planning and conduct of an audit goes beyond the limited assurance that an independent examination can provide. Consequently, I express no opinion as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair' view and my report is limited to those specific matters set out in the independent examiner's statement.

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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the charitable company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

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 financial statements to be reached.

Tim O'Connor ACA FCCA DChA
Scrutton Bland Limited
820 The Crescent
Colchester Business Park
Colchester
Essex
CO4 9YQ
Date: 17/12/24

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	3	**22,080**	**63,697**	**85,777**	55,596
Charitable activities	4	**696**	-	**696**	1,557,329
Other trading activities	5	**1,648**	-	**1,648**	3,432
Investments	6	**132,524**	-	**132,524**	16,837
Total income		**156,948**	**63,697**	**220,645**	1,633,194
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	7	**4,562**	-	**4,562**	15,995
Charitable activities	8	**186,797**	**67,844**	**254,641**	1,103,340
Total expenditure		**191,359**	**67,844**	**259,203**	1,119,335
Net income/(expenditure)		**(34,411)**	**(4,147)**	**(38,558)**	513,859
Realised and unrealised (losses)/gains on investments		**7,326**	-	**7,326**	(21,498)
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		**(27,085)**	**(4,147)**	**(31,232)**	492,361
Total funds brought forward at 1 May 2023	17	**2,832,904**	**4,147**	**2,837,051**	2,344,690
Total funds carried forward at 30 April 2024	17	**£ 2,805,819**	-	**£ 2,805,819**	£ 2,837,051

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 APRIL 2024

	Notes	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	12	**15,154**	15,242
Investments	13	**372,826**	357,798
		387,980	373,040
Current assets			
Stocks	14	**3,797**	5,374
Debtors – due within one year	15	**10,792**	7,303
Cash and cash equivalents		**2,411,184**	2,474,678
		2,425,773	2,487,355
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	**(7,934)**	(23,344)
Net current assets		**2,417,839**	2,464,011
Net assets		**£ 2,805,819**	£ 2,837,051
Income funds			
Restricted funds	17	**-**	4,147
Unrestricted funds	17	**2,805,819**	2,832,904
		£ 2,805,819	£ 2,837,051

The directors consider that the charitable company is entitled to exemption from the requirement to have an audit under the provisions of section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 ("the Act") and members have not required the company to obtain an audit for the period in question in accordance with section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies' regime. In the directors' opinion the Charitable Company is entitled to these exemptions as a small company.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 5th December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

N W Meixner – Trustee

Company registration number: 05098747
Charity registration number: 1103732

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Essex Blind Charity is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, registered company number 05098747 and registered charity number 1103732. The address of the registered office is 1st Floor 146 High Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1PW.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in pounds sterling and rounded to the nearest £1.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern.

The following principal accounting policies have been applied:

Statement of Cash Flow

The Charity qualifies as a small charity as defined in the Charities SORP (FRS 102) Bulletin 1 and as such is exempt from preparing a Statement of Cash Flows.

Income

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Legacy gifts are recognised following the granting of probate when the administrator/executor for the estate has communicated in writing both the amount and settlement date.

Grants are accounted for when the charity has sufficient entitlement to them.

Expenditure

All expenditure included in the Statement of Financial Activities are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Expenditure on raising funds includes the expenditure associated with the sale of visual aids.

Expenditure on charitable activities includes minor expenditure associated with the sale of the Residential Home.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES - (continued)

Fixed assets

Fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected lives on the following basis:

Fixtures and fittings	-	20% reducing balance
Motor vehicles	-	25% reducing balance

Contrary to the accounting requirement of the Companies Act 2006, depreciation is not provided in respect of the charity's freehold buildings. The trustees are of the opinion that this is necessary to give a true and fair view of the financial position of the charity. The ongoing maintenance work undertaken keeps properties in a continual state of repair and accordingly the trustees' opinion is that the life of the property is so long and residual values so high that their depreciation is insignificant.

Leasing commitments

Rentals under operating leases are charged through the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Investments

Investments are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their market value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and shown in the heading 'Realised and unrealised investment gains/(losses) on investments' in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Stock

Stock is valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items. The charity holds display stock for visual aids, these items are being written down over a 5 year period.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash equivalents are recognised as such and included with other cash balances where they represent short term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash without being subject to a significant change in value.

Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity. Contributions payable to the scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES - (continued)

Financial instruments

Financial instruments are classified and accounted for, according to the substance of the contractual arrangement, as either financial assets or financial liabilities.

Short term debtors (financial assets) are measured at transaction price.
Short term creditors (financial liabilities) are measured at transaction price.

The charitable company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments.

Taxation

Essex Blind Charity is a charity within the meaning of the Charities Act 2011 and as such is a charity within the meaning of Part 11, Corporation Tax Act 2010. Accordingly Essex Blind charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Part 11, Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to its charitable purposes.

Funds

Unrestricted general funds are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees. Restricted funds are funds that can only be used in accordance with specific conditions specified by the donor. Further details are provided in note 17.

Significant judgements and estimates

The more significant judgements and estimates involved in the preparation of the financial statements include assessing the depreciation rates applicable to tangible fixed assets and the way in which certain costs should be apportioned. Further details regarding these points are included within the accounting policies.

3 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Donations	6,765	-	6,765
Legacies	6,875	-	6,875
Grants received	8,440	63,697	72,137
	£ 22,080	£ 63,697	£ 85,777

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Donations	3,254	-	3,254
Legacies	5,000	-	5,000
Grants received	21,342	26,000	47,342
Government grant received			
	£ 29,596	£ 26,000	£ 55,596

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Grants received were as follows:			
Essex Cares Limited	8,440	-	8,440
ECC Sensory Contract	-	52,316	52,316
Brentwood Community Hosp. Project	-	11,381	11,381
	£ 8,440	£ 63,697	£ 72,137

3 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES - continued

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Grants received were as follows:			
Essex Cares Limited	12,412	-	12,412
Essex Community Foundation	-	21,000	21,000
SOS Blind	4,000	-	4,000
Infection Control (Read House)	-	5,000	5,000
Essex covid grant	4,930	-	4,930
	£ 21,342	£ 26,000	£ 47,342

All grants support the key objective of enabling people with sight loss to remain independent and safe.

4 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Other activities	**696**	**696**
	£ 696	**£ 696**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Residential home	1,555,432	1,555,432
Day centre	988	988
Other activities	909	909
	£ 1,557,329	£ 1,557,329

5 INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Visual aids	999	-	999
Others	649	-	649
	£ 1,648	-	£ 1,648

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Visual aids	1,324	-	1,324
Others	2,108	-	2,108
	£ 3,432	-	£ 3,432

6 INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS

	2024 £	2023 £
Interest receivable	122,483	5,559
Dividends receivable	10,041	11,278
	£ 132,524	£ 16,837

7 EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS

	2024 £	2023 £
Visual aids – net of stock adjustment	2,041	15,523
Investment management costs	2,521	472
	£ 4,562	£ 15,995

8 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2024 £	2023 £
Charitable activities	**250,501**	1,086,180
Governance costs (note 9)	**4,140**	17,160
	£ 254,641	£ 1,103,340

9 GOVERNANCE COSTS

	2024 £	2023 £
Subscriptions and registration fees	**-**	6,390
Auditors' remuneration	**-**	5,765
Remuneration for non-audit work	**4,140**	5,005
	£ 4,140	£ 17,160

10 NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

	2024 £	2023 £
This is stated after charging:		
Auditors' remuneration	**-**	5,765
Remuneration for non-audit work	**4,140**	-
Depreciation – owned assets	**3,530**	9,176
(Profit)/Loss on disposal of fixed assets	**-**	(428,778)

11 STAFF COSTS

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	**147,503**	1,051,436
National insurance contributions	**7,173**	74,067
Pension costs	**3,357**	17,735
Pension administration	-	3,360
	£ 158,033	£ 1,146,598

The average number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
Management	**2**	2
Administration	**1**	3
Community Services personnel	**4**	5
Care home staff	-	48
	7	58

No employee received emoluments in excess of £60,000 in the year (2023: None). Pension costs are wholly charged to unrestricted funds.

There were no Trustees' remuneration, expenses or other benefits for professional or other services supplied to the charity for the year ended 30 April 2024, nor for the year ended 30 April 2023.

The aggregate remuneration of key management personnel was £49,043 (2023: £40,564).

Indemnity insurance is maintained covering the Board of Trustees in their capacity as trustees.

12 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor Vehicles £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 May 2023	17,410	21,981	39,391
Additions	3,442	-	3,442
Disposals	-	-	-
At 30 April 2024	20,852	21,981	42,833
Depreciation			
At 1 May 2023	9,124	15,025	24,149
Charge for the year	1,791	1,739	3,530
Disposals	-	-	-
At 30 April 2024	10,915	16,764	27,679
Net book value			
At 30 April 2024	£ 9,937	£ 5,217	£ 15,154
At 30 April 2023	£ 8,286	£ 6,956	£ 15,242

13 FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

	2024 £	2023 £
Movement in fixed asset investments		
Market value brought forward at 1 May 2023	**357,798**	368,170
Additions to investment at cost	**279,550**	124,363
Disposals	**(245,872)**	(134,276)
Gain/(loss) on revaluation	**7,326**	(21,498)
Increase/(decrease) in cash held	**(25,976)**	21,039
Market value carried forward at 30 April 2024	**£ 372,826**	£ 357,798
Investment portfolio at market value comprised		
EP Global Equity Income Fund	**195,634**	40,523
EP UK Equity Income Fund	**32,699**	212,117
FP Foresight global real infrastructure	**40,781**	22,780
Rathbone Ethical bond	**12,943**	12,386
Royal London Short Term Money	**9,380**	5,016
Threadneedle UK Social bond	**5,568**	5,034
Vanguard UK Government bond	**7,402**	6,967
Vanguard US Government bond	**11,089**	24,683
L&G UK Property Feeder	**7,534**	-
Epworth Climate Stewardship Fund	**32,649**	-
Rathbone Greenbank Global Sustainable Bond Fund	**14,830**	-
Cash held by Investment Manager	**2,317**	28,292
	£ 372,826	£ 357,798

14 STOCK

	2024 £	2023 £
Visual aids – resale stocks	**3,797**	5,374
	£ 3,797	£ 5,374

15 DEBTORS

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	**8,719**	2,536
Prepayments and accrued income	**2,073**	4,767
	£ 10,792	£ 7,303

16 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	**1,567**	6,934
Social security and other taxes	**1,548**	1,604
Other creditors	**322**	544
Accruals and deferred income	**4,497**	14,262
	£ 7,934	£ 23,344

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	Balance at 1 May 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Expenditure including gains/(losses) £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at 30 April 2024 £
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	2,426,715	156,948	(191,359)	-	2,392,304
Designated funds					
Essex support 5 year plan	300,000	-		-	300,000
Essex support exit strategy fund	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Investment revaluation reserve	81,189	-	7,326	-	88,515
	2,832,904	156,948	(184,033)	-	2,805,819
Restricted Funds					
Mobile Sight Centre	4,147	-	(4,147)	-	-
ECC Sensory Contract	-	52,316	(52,316)	-	-
Brentwood Community Hosp. Project	-	11,381	(11,381)	-	-
	4,147	63,697	(67,844)	-	-
	£ 2,837,051	£ 220,645	£ (251,877)	-	£ 2,805,819

The general fund represents the free funds of the charity which are not designated for a particular purpose.

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

	Balance at 1 May 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Expenditure including gains/(losses) £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at 30 April 2023 £
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	45,494	1,607,194	(1,075,973)	1,850,000	2,426,715
Designated funds					
Essex support 5 year plan	300,000	-		-	300,000
Read House	4,790	-	(4,790)	-	-
Essex support exit strategy fund	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Investment revaluation reserve	102,687	-	(21,498)	-	81,189
Designated property asset fund	1,850,000	-	-	(1,850,000)	-
	2,327,971	1,607,194	(1,102,261)	-	2,832,904
Restricted Funds					
Residents amenities at Read House	648	-	(648)	-	-
Mobile Sight Centre	4,147	-	-	-	4,147
Brentwood Community Hospital Project	3,312	-	(3,312)	-	-
Extended provision in Chelmsford	4,160	-	(4,160)	-	-
Staff fund	3,088	-	(3,088)	-	-
Infection control grant	1,364	-	(1,364)	-	-
ECF Capital grant	-	21,000	(21,000)	-	-
Thomas Pocklington Trust	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
	16,719	26,000	(38,572)	-	4,147
	£ 2,344,690	£ 1,633,194	£ (1,140,833)	-	£ 2,837,051

The general fund represents the free funds of the charity which are not designated for a particular purpose.

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Essex support 5 year plan fund is to provide half the cost of the community services over a five year period, in order to attract matching grant funding for the balance.

Essex support exit strategy fund is a worst-case scenario and the cost of ceasing the community services altogether.

The Read House fund represents donations received in memory of residents of the House. These were set aside by the charity to be used for resident amenities.

The investment revaluation reserve represents cumulative realised and unrealised investment gains and losses on investments.

The designated property asset fund is represented by the fair value of the freehold property previously owned by the charity.

Residents amenities fund represented funds raised specifically for residents' amenities (entertainment, outings, etc). The staff fund represented donations for the staff at Read House.

The Mobile Sight Centre project relates to funding received from Colchester Catalyst and the Saffron Building Society Fund, the vehicle was purchased by April 23 and the remaining capital works were carried out in the current financial year.

The Extended Provision in Chelmsford fund relates to a grant from The Yellow Car Charitable Fund for sight services.

The Brentwood Community Hospital project relates to a grant from The Malcolm and Beryl Cook Foundation and has been carried out jointly with the Blind and Visual Sight Impaired Society (BASIS).

The ECC sensory contract is for the purpose of supporting work for those with a sensory impairment who are having issues directly connected to covid.

The staff fund represents money received to be used directly for the benefit of individuals employed by the charity.

The infection control grant provided funding to improve infection control and therefore reduce the rate of Covid-19 transmission.

ECF capital grants was funding to replace the flooring in the Day Centre to provide a community resource, an interactive table to help people with cognitive problems, funding for staffing to activate the day centre and table at Read House and the purchase of charity Log database and hardware to accurately store visually impaired clients' details and allow full remote access by staff.

The Thomas Pocklington Trust funding is to be used towards consultancy services.

18 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Tangible fixed assets £	Investments £	Net current assets £	2024 Total £
Restricted funds	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted funds	**15,154**	**372,826**	**2,417,839**	**2,805,819**
	£ 15,154	**£ 372,826**	**£ 2,417,839**	**£ 2,805,819**

	Tangible fixed assets £	Investments £	Net current assets £	2023 Total £
Restricted funds	-	-	4,147	4,147
Unrestricted funds	15,242	357,798	2,459,864	2,832,904
	£ 15,242	£ 357,798	£ 2,464,011	£ 2,837,051

19 CONTROLLING PARTY

The Charitable Company was under the control of the trustees during the year.

20 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

If any discussions are held in relation to transactions with related parties, it is the Charity's process that the associated Trustee will remove themselves from any discussions surrounding such transactions and the decisions reached on these. Allan Williams is a Partner of Fenn Wright and was appointed as a Trustee of Essex Blind Charity on 20 February 2024. During this period of being a Trustee, Essex Blind Charity acquired services from Fenn Wright amounting to £2,110.

No other related party transactions have been identified which need to be disclosed. (2023 : None).

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

England & Wales - Charity number 1103732

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER 05098747

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1103732

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

30 APRIL 2023

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

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ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

OFFICERS AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS

Trustees	S M Mann JP (Chairman – resigned Jan 2024) T Crawshaw R Jackson ACCA*, CTA* A Mabert (resigned 30 June 2023) R Marshall FRICS*, FAAV* (resigned 30 June 2023) S D Porter D Smith N Meixner (appointed as Chairman Jan 2024) *retired members of the professional bodies concerned
Company Secretary	J Dixon
Registered Office	Colchester Sight Centre 40 Osborne Street Colchester Essex CO2 7DB
Registered Company Number	05098747
Registered Charity Number	1103732
Auditor	SB Audit LLP Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor 820 The Crescent Colchester Business Park Colchester CO4 9YQ
Bankers	Natwest Bank Plc 4-5 High Street Chelmsford Essex CM1 1FZ

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The trustees (who are also directors for the purpose of company law) submit their annual report and the audited financial statements of Essex Blind Charity (the Charity) for the year ended 30 April 2023. This report also represents the Directors' Report required by S417 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the Charity have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charity's governing document and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS102) and the Charities Act 2011.

Legal and administrative information

Legal and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report.

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

The Charity is controlled by a Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 29 October 2003 and operates as a Charitable Company limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Structure, Management and Trustee Appointment

The Charity is managed by a Board of Directors, which consists of not less than three members. At the year-end there were eight Directors, two of whom are visually impaired. Directors are appointed by the Board. Nominations are considered and approved by the whole Board. Directors meet monthly to review the performance and strategy of the Charity as well as to set operating plans and budgets. All major decisions are made at Board level and must be passed with a majority vote of the Directors present. In order to make a decision, one third of the Board has to be present. Minor day to day decisions are made by the General Manager, with authorisation from the Board.

Since the coronavirus lockdown in March 2020 Board meetings are held remotely by 'Zoom'.

Induction and training of new trustees

The policy and procedures adopted for the induction and training of Directors includes visits to the Charities premises, introduction to staff and day to day operation, an introduction to the other Directors, including details of their particular areas of expertise, and details of the objectives of the Charity, including information on current projects and plans for future development.

Remuneration Policy

The Charity does not have any fixed criteria for setting pay and remuneration of key management or any other personnel. Pay rates are reviewed generally on an annual basis by the Board of Directors and awards depend on the current financial status of the organisation and any Government directives.

Risk Management

The Directors have conducted a review of the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risk the Charity faces. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers and vision impaired people (VIP) we work with. These risks and procedures are reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the Charity.

The Charity has followed Government guidance relating to the management of all operations during and post the coronavirus pandemic.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES DELIVER PUBLIC INTEREST

Objectives and aims

The Charity's objectives, as set out in its governing documents, are to meet the needs of visually impaired people and their carers and families throughout Essex and are undertaken to further the Charity's charitable purposes for the public benefit. To this end Essex Blind Charity:

1 Gives support, advice, and information to all people with a visual impairment, and sighted people with a vested interest in such subjects;

2 Keeps up-to-date on new information and technological developments, assesses the viability of such developments for visually impaired people and offers advice on its implementation;

3 Provides trained staff to hospital eye clinics to give support and advice to people at the point of diagnosis;

4 Maintains Sight Centres around the County so that visually impaired people can learn about new aids to living and try them out before purchasing them;

5 Runs a home-visiting service for visually impaired people who are unable to travel; and

6 Produces information via a newsletter, website and social media.

The Charity's community work operates under the name of 'Essex Sight'.

Further details of these and other aspects of the Charity's work will be covered in later sections.

Public Benefit

In accordance with their duties in the Charity's Act 2011, it is incumbent on the Directors to conduct a Public Benefit Test, to assess whether the Charity has complied with its duties in due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

The Directors are satisfied that Essex Blind Charity has complied with its duty in regards to the Public Benefit Test over the past year, based on the four principles in the Commission's Guidance.

1 There must be an identifiable benefit:

Essex Blind Charity's purposes are to provide support and relief to any member of the public who has concerns about sight loss, blindness or partial vision. Its services benefit a large number of the general public in Essex.

2 Benefit must be to the public or a section of the public:

All the Charity's services are open to members of the public at large and access to the Charity's services are not restrictive.

3 People on low incomes must be able to benefit:

The Board of Directors recognises that many visually impaired people are on low incomes, as people with impaired vision are more likely to be unemployed in comparison to fully sighted people. In addition many do not avail themselves of their benefit entitlements. Essex Blind Charity does not make a charge for its services of support and advice and offers its services to the public at large free of charge.

4 Any private benefit must be incidental:

The Directors do not consider that any individual or organisation receives a 'private benefit' from the work of Essex Blind Charity.

Service Delivery – Achievements and Performance

Read House

The residential care home in Frinton-on-Sea has provided the majority income and expenditure of the Charity. Whilst created in 1999 as a retirement home for visually impaired people, nearly all residents had no visual impairment. With an increasing demand for support needed for VIP in the community, the Directors took independent advice to examine the role Read House played in meeting the charitable aims and objectives. The Directors unanimously agreed that the best way to meet those objectives now and, in the future, would be to sell Read House. Following independent valuations, the staff and residents were consulted, and the fully occupied home was sold as a going concern to Memory Lane Care Homes Ltd on 6th March 2023. The Board of Directors are grateful to the staff for their many years of dedication in making Read House a wonderful place for the residents to enjoy their retirement.

Essex Sight

We are grateful to Essex County Council, ECL (Essex Cares Limited) and Essex Community Foundation (which administers multiple grant giving trusts), which have helped to fund our services.

The Essex Sight team comprises a Community Services Manager, Administrator, Eye Care Liaison Officer and three Community Support Officers who have managed the charity's work for the community in the eastern half of the County.

Sight Centres

The pop-up sight centres provide a vital role in allowing VIP to meet face to face with staff and volunteers to learn more about their eye condition, have assistance with difficult tasks, such as form filling or finding out about equipment that can help them in their daily lives. Sight Centres have increased and now include Colchester, Chelmsford, Clacton, Maldon, Harwich and Walton. Funding from the Malcolm and Beryl Crook Foundation through a joint project with BASIS has allowed us to re-establish a pop up in Brentwood Community Hospital.

Community Hospital Eye Clinic Support

The charity has continued to support newly diagnosed patients through the Eye Clinic Liaison service in Colchester Eye Clinic (East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust) and Broomfield Hospital (Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust). The service, which is entirely funded by the Charity, provides newly diagnosed VI people and their relatives/carers the opportunity to discuss their situation with an RNIB trained officer (ECLO) and receive support and advice to help them understand their condition and learn to live with it. Following lockdown, at the request of the Trust, the ECLO support at Broomfield was carried out remotely and the ECLO was able to contact every patient on the two-year waiting list to provide support and guidance and re-establish the service.

Home Visiting

Home Visiting is an important and regular part of the charity's service, providing support to people unable to get out to pop-up sight centres. With our fully equipped Mobile Sight Centre, we can demonstrate equipment, provide information, advice, and guidance to people in the comfort of their own home.

Exhibitions

The Charity holds two well attended Annual exhibitions in mid and north Essex to allow people to find out about our services, those offered by other providers and try the latest equipment available from specialist suppliers. There is no substitute for face-to-face information and support and being able to have equipment demonstrated and trying it out.

Volunteers

The charity relies on dedicated volunteers to provide support to VIP. Many of our volunteers have a Visual Impairment themselves and can share valuable lived experience. The pandemic had a huge impact on volunteering and like many other charities, not all our volunteers have returned post pandemic. The volunteer role is vital in helping VIP to live the best life they can, supporting our social events and sight centres.

As these works have no quantifiable value this is not recognised in the financial statements. .

Exhibitions

The Charity's own annual exhibition was held at the Central Baptist Church in Chelmsford in May. After such a long gap, it had a fantastic turnout of VIP to experience the latest technological innovations, try out new equipment, find out about support services and have a chat.

Website

Details about Essex Blind Charity's services can be found on the website at www.essexsight.org.uk. The website is accessible to visually impaired people and is very informative. The charity also uses Facebook to provide regular information and contact via social media.

Helpline

The Charity maintains a phone line for anybody who needs information, advice, or emotional support to call and has remained a lifeline for many who are unable to use internet-based services.

Spotlight – Essex Blind Charity Newsletter

The newsletter is quarterly and provides a variety of information for visually impaired people in large print, in audio format or by email. It is also available via our website. The audio description is very kindly provided by Chelmsford Talking Newspapers, to whom we are very grateful. Since the pandemic the readership has declined, so the Charity will be looking at ways to revitalise the newsletter to ensure it continues to meet the needs of VIP.

Partnership working

The Directors are pleased with the development of Essex Vision, which is the strategic group of sight loss organisations in Essex. The aim of the group is to champion the creation and implementation of a Vision Strategy in Essex.

The charity is a member of Visionary, the collective body of sight loss organisations Nationally, attending regional and national meetings to keep up to date and share knowledge.

The Charity also works with local government and other organisations to ensure the needs of VIP are taken into consideration.

Financial Review

Reserves policy

Unrestricted funds are needed:

a. to provide funds which can be designated to specific projects to enable those projects to be undertaken at short notice.

b. to cover the costs of running the charity in the short term, if there is an interruption in funding.

c. to cover administration and support costs.

The Directors consider adequate funding exists presently to meet these requirements. They regularly review and monitor the situation.

Funds

The activities during the year resulted in a surplus of unrestricted funds of £504,933 (2022: £185,264 deficit) for the year.

There was a decrease in restricted fund balances at the year end as the majority of restricted income was fully spent. The deficit on restricted funds for the year was £12,572 (2022: £2,716 surplus). Restricted funds at the year-end totalled £4,147 (2022: £16,719).

Overall, there was a surplus in total funds of £492,361 (2022: £182,548 deficit).

Investment policy and objectives

Epworth Investment Management Limited was appointed to manage the Charity's investment fund. Their brief is to reinvest the income and to provide an investment report each quarter giving returns in real terms and against chosen benchmarks. To date, Epworth's have more than met our expectations. Epworth are ethical investors and do not invest in munitions, tobacco, oil companies or those with links to modern slavery.

Future Developments

Following the sale of Read House, the Charity has been working on a strategy to set out their future operation which will be launched in 2024. This will include an expansion of services to meet growing demand. The Charity is excited to be working with other sensory charities and ECL in the ongoing provision of the Sensory Service contract with Essex County Council.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the Directors of Essex Blind Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees must prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charitable Company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charitable Company 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 accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK 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 Charitable Company will continue to operate.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charitable Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charitable Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees confirm that so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information (as defined by section 418(3) of the Companies Act 2006) of which the Charitable Company's auditors are unaware. They have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charitable Company's auditors are aware of that information.

AUDIT

With a reduction in income, the charity will move to appoint a suitable person to carry out the independent examination, and an accountant to prepare for the independent examination.

ACCOUNTING EXEMPTIONS

In preparing this report the trustees have taken advantage of small companies exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

Signed for and on behalf of the Trustees

N W Meixner
Trustee

R Jackson ACCA, CTA
Trustee

Approved by the Trustees on 19/1/2024.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Essex Blind Charity (the Charitable Company) for the year ended 30 April 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the Income and Expenditure Account), Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows, and related notes to the financial statements. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 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 Charitable Company's affairs as at 30 April 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Charitable Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained 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 entity'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 annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. 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. 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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees, which includes the Directors' Report prepared for company law purposes, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Trustees and the Directors' Report included within the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Charitable Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Annual Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 8 the trustees (who are also the directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they 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 Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the Charitable Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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.

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:

We identified areas of laws and regulations that could reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the financial statements from our general commercial and sector experience, through discussion with the trustees (as required by auditing standards), inspection of the Charitable Company's regulatory and legal correspondence and discussed with the trustees the policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations. We communicated identified laws and regulations throughout our team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit. The potential effect of these laws and regulations on the financial statements varies considerably.

Firstly, the Charitable Company is subject to laws and regulations that directly affect the financial statements including financial reporting legislation and taxation legislation and we assessed the extent of compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement items.

Secondly, the Charitable Company is subject to many other laws and regulations where the consequences of non-compliance could have a material effect on amounts or disclosures in the financial statements, for instance through the imposition of fines or litigation. We identified the following areas as those most likely to have such an effect: compliance with the requirements of The Care Quality Commission (CQC), health and safety, safeguarding rules, human rights and employment law and GDPR compliance. Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements (continued)

Audit procedures undertaken in response to the potential risks relating to irregularities (which include fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations) comprised of: enquiries of management and those charged with governance as to whether the company complies with such regulations, enquiries of management and those charged with governance concerning any actual or potential litigation or claims, inspection of any relevant legal documentation, review of board minutes, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and the performance of analytical review to identify any unexpected movements in account balances which may be indicative of fraud.

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 for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Charitable Company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Charitable Company'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 Charitable Company and the Charitable Company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

SB Audit LLP

TIMOTHY O'CONNOR (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of
SB Audit LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
820 The Crescent
Colchester Business Park
Colchester
Essex
CO4 9YQ

Date: 26/1/24

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2022 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	3	29,596	26,000	55,596	183,087
Charitable activities	4	1,557,329	-	1,557,329	1,181,827
Other trading activities	5	3,432	-	3,432	2,310
Investments	6	16,837	-	16,837	11,397
Total income		1,607,194	26,000	1,633,194	1,378,621
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	7	7,467	8,528	15,995	4,964
Charitable activities	8	1,073,296	30,044	1,103,340	1,563,143
Total expenditure		1,080,763	38,572	1,119,335	1,568,107
Net income/(expenditure)		526,431	(12,572)	513,859	(189,486)
Realised and unrealised (losses)/gains on investments		(21,498)	-	(21,498)	6,938
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		504,933	(12,572)	492,361	(182,548)
Total funds brought forward at 1 May 2022	17	2,327,971	16,719	2,344,690	2,527,238
Total funds carried forward at 30 April 2023	17	2,832,904	4,147	2,837,051	2,344,690

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 APRIL 2023

	Notes	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	12	**15,242**	1,890,830
Investments	13	**357,798**	368,170
		373,040	2,259,000
Current assets			
Stocks	14	**5,374**	28,400
Debtors – due within one year	15	**7,303**	11,520
Cash and cash equivalents		**2,474,678**	145,189
		2,487,355	185,109
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	**(23,344)**	(99,419)
Net current assets		**2,464,011**	85,690
Net assets		**2,837,051**	£ 2,344,690
Income funds			
Restricted funds	17	**4,147**	16,719
Unrestricted funds	17	**2,832,904**	2,327,971
		£ 2,837,051	£ 2,344,690

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies' regime. In the directors' opinion the Charitable Company is entitled to these exemptions as a small company.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 19/1/2024 and signed on its behalf by:

N W Meixner – Trustee **R Jackson – ACCA, CTA – Trustee**

Company registration number: 05098747
Charity registration number: 1103732

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net movements in funds	**492,361**	(182,548)
Depreciation of tangible assets	**9,176**	10,745
(Profit)/loss on disposal of tangible assets	**(428,778)**	424
Impairment of fixed assets	**-**	50,000
Interest received	**(5,559)**	(305)
Unrealised investment gain	**21,498**	(6,938)
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	**23,026**	(3,261)
Decrease in debtors	**4,217**	419
(Increase)/decrease in creditors	**(76,075)**	19,583
Net cash from operating activities	**39,866**	(111,881)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Interest received	**5,559**	305
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	**(15,058)**	(15,407)
Sale of tangible fixed assets	**2,310,248**	-
Purchase of investments	**(124,363)**	(35,019)
Sale of investments	**134,276**	175,301
Net cash generated in investing activities	**2,310,662**	125,180
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	**2,350,528**	13,299
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward	**152,442**	139,143
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward	**2,502,970**	152,442
Represented by:		
Cash in hand and at bank	**2,474,678**	145,189
Cash held in investment	**28,292**	7,253
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward	**2,502,970**	£ 152,442

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Essex Blind Charity is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, registered company number 05098747 and registered Charity number 1103732. The address of the registered office is Colchester Sight Centre, 40 Osborne Street, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7DB.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in pounds sterling and rounded to the nearest £1.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern.

The following principal accounting policies have been applied:

Income

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the Charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Legacy gifts are recognised following the granting of probate when the administrator/executor for the estate has communicated in writing both the amount and settlement date.

Grants are accounted for when the Charity has sufficient entitlement to them.

Expenditure

All expenditure included in the Statement of Financial Activities are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Expenditure on raising funds includes the expenditure associated with the sale of visual aids.

Expenditure on charitable activities includes the expenditure associated with the Residential Home.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES - (continued)

Fixed assets

Fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected lives on the following basis:

Freehold land & buildings	-	nil
Fixtures and fittings	-	20% reducing balance
Motor vehicles	-	25% reducing balance

Contrary to the accounting requirement of the Companies Act 2006, depreciation is not provided in respect of the Charity's freehold buildings. The trustees are of the opinion that this is necessary to give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Charity. The ongoing maintenance work undertaken keeps properties in a continual state of repair and accordingly the trustees' opinion is that the life of the property is so long and residual values so high that their depreciation is insignificant.

Leasing commitments

Rentals under operating leases are charged through the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Investments

Investments are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their market value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and shown in the heading 'Realised and unrealised investment gains/(losses) on investments' in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Stock

Stock is valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items. The Charity holds display stock for visual aids, these items are being written down over a 5 year period.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash equivalents are recognised as such and included with other cash balances where they represent short term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash without being subject to a significant change in value.

Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the Charity. Contributions payable to the scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES - (continued)

Financial instruments

The Charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Taxation

Essex Blind Charity is a Charity within the meaning of the Charities Act 2011 and as such is a Charity within the meaning of Part 11, Corporation Tax Act 2010. Accordingly Essex Blind Charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Part 11, Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to its charitable purposes.

Funds

Unrestricted general funds are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees. Restricted funds are funds that can only be used in accordance with specific conditions specified by the donor. Further details are provided in note 17.

Significant judgements and estimates

The more significant judgements and estimates involved in the preparation of the financial statements include assessing the depreciation rates applicable to tangible fixed assets and the way in which certain costs should be apportioned. Further details regarding these points are included within the accounting policies.

3 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Donations	3,254	-	3,254
Legacies	5,000	-	5,000
Grants received	21,342	26,000	47,342
	29,596	26,000	55,596

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Donations	7,077	4,993	12,070
Legacies	6,986	-	6,986
Grants received	47,618	117,536	165,154
Government grant received	(1,123)	-	(1,123)
	£ 60,558	£ 122,529	£ 183,087

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Grants received were as follows:			
Essex Cares Limited	12,412	-	12,412
Essex Community Foundation	-	21,000	21,000
SOS Blind	4,000	-	4,000
Infection Control	-	5,000	5,000
Essex covid grant	4,930	-	4,930
	£ 21,342	£ 26,000	£ 47,342

3 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES - continued

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Grants received were as follows:			
Essex Cares Limited	17,850	13,285	31,135
BASIS	(3,227)	-	(3,227)
Essex Community Foundation	-	33,265	33,265
SOS Blind	-	5,875	5,875
CRF Fund	32,995	-	32,995
Workplace Capacity Fund	-	4,800	4,800
Infection Control	-	50,244	50,244
WRRF	-	8,760	8,760
Omicron	-	1,307	1,307
	£ 47,618	£ 117,536	£ 165,154

All grants support the key objective of enabling people with sight loss to remain independent and safe.

4 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2023 £**
Residential home	**1,555,432**	**1,555,432**
Day centre	**988**	**988**
Other activities	**909**	**909**
	£ 1,557,329	**£ 1,557,329**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Residential home	1,180,751	1,180,751
Day centre	22	22
Other activities	1,054	1,054
	£ 1,181,827	£ 1,181,827

5 INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Visual aids	1,324	-	1,324
Others	2,108	-	2,108
	£ 3,432	-	£ 3,432

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Visual aids	1,456	-	1,456
Others	854	-	854
	£ 2,310	-	£ 2,310

6 INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS

	2023 £	2022 £
Interest receivable	5,559	305
Dividends receivable	11,278	11,092
	£ 16,837	£ 11,397

7 EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS

	2023 £	2022 £
Visual aids – net of stock adjustment	15,523	4,801
Investment management costs	472	163
	£ 15,995	£ 4,964

8 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2023 £	2022 £
Residential home and day centre	**1,086,180**	1,495,804
Impairment of freehold property	**-**	50,000
Governance costs (note 9)	**17,160**	17,339
	£ 1,103,340	£ 1,563,143

9 GOVERNANCE COSTS

	2023 £	2022 £
Subscriptions and registration fees	**6,390**	6,485
Auditors' remuneration	**5,765**	5,700
Auditors' remuneration for non-audit work	**5,005**	5,154
	£ 17,160	£ 17,339

10 NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

	2023 £	2022 £
This is stated after charging:		
Auditors' remuneration	**5,765**	5,700
Depreciation – owned assets	**9,176**	10,745
(Profit)/Loss on disposal of fixed assets	**(428,778)**	424

11 STAFF COSTS

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	**1,051,436**	1,067,754
National insurance contributions	**74,067**	66,055
Pension costs	**17,735**	17,021
Pension administration	**3,360**	4,080
	£1,146,598	£ 1,154,910

The average number of employees during the year was as follows.

	2023	2022
Management	**2**	2
Administration	**3**	3
Community Services personnel	**5**	5
Care home staff	**48**	54
	58	64

No employee received emoluments in excess of £60,000 in the year (2022: None). Pension costs are wholly charged to unrestricted funds.

There were no Trustees' remuneration, expenses or other benefits for professional or other services supplied to the Charity for the year ended 30 April 2023, nor for the year ended 30 April 2022.

The aggregate remuneration of key management personnel was £40,564 (2022: £38,859).

Indemnity insurance is maintained covering the Board of Trustees in their capacity as trustees.

12 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold property £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor Vehicles £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 May 2022	1,850,000	72,768	21,981	1,944,749
Additions	-	15,058	-	15,058
Disposals	(1,850,000)	(70,416)	-	(1,920,416)
At 30 April 2023	-	17,410	21,981	39,391
Depreciation				
At 1 May 2022	-	41,212	12,707	53,919
Charge for the year	-	6,858	2,318	9,176
Disposals	-	(38,946)	-	(38,946)
At 30 April 2023	-	9,124	15,025	24,149
Net book value				
At 30 April 2023	-	£ 8,286	£ 6,956	£ 15,242
At 30 April 2022	£ 1,850,000	£ 31,566	£ 9,274	£ 1,890,830

13 FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

	2023 £	2022 £
Movement in fixed asset investments		
Market value brought forward at 1 May 2022	**368,170**	500,295
Additions to investment at cost	**124,363**	35,019
Disposals	**(134,276)**	(175,301)
Gain on revaluation	**(21,498)**	6,938
Increase/(decrease) in cash held	**21,039**	1,219
Market value carried forward at 30 April 2023	**£ 357,798**	£ 368,170
Investment portfolio at market value comprised		
Property Income Trust for Charities	**-**	37,338
EP Corporate Bond Income Fund	**-**	55,411
EP Global Equity Income Fund	**40,523**	27,531
EP UK Equity Income Fund	**212,117**	240,637
FP Foresight global real infrastructure	**22,780**	-
Rathbone Ethical bond	**12,386**	-
Royal London Short Term Money	**5,016**	-
Threadneedle UK Social bond	**5,034**	-
Vanguard UK Government bond	**6,967**	-
Vanguard US Government bond	**24,683**	-
Cash held by Investment Manager	**28,292**	7,253
	£ 357,798	£ 368,170

14 STOCK

	2023 £	2022 £
Medical and domestic supplies	**-**	15,856
Food	**-**	2,705
Visual aids – resale stocks	**5,374**	9,839
	£ 5,374	£ 28,400

15 DEBTORS

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	2,536	4,086
Prepayments and accrued income	4,767	7,434
	£ 7,303	£ 11,520

16 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	6,934	37,326
Social security and other taxes	1,604	22,094
Other creditors	544	18,834
Accruals and deferred income	14,262	21,165
	£ 23,344	£ 99,419

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	Balance at 1 May 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Expenditure including gains/(losses) £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at 30 April 2023 £
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	45,494	1,607,194	(1,075,973)	1,850,000	2,426,715
Designated funds					
Essex support 5 year plan	300,000	-		-	300,000
Read House	4,790	-	(4,790)	-	-
Essex support exit strategy fund	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Investment revaluation reserve	102,687	-	(21,498)	-	81,189
Designated property asset fund	1,850,000	-	-	(1,850,000)	-
	2,327,971	1,607,194	(1,102,261)	-	2,832,904
Restricted Funds					
Residents amenities at Read House	648	-	(648)	-	-
Mobile Sight Centre	4,147	-	-	-	4,147
Brentwood Community Hospital Project	3,312	-	(3,312)	-	-
Extended provision in Chelmsford	4,160	-	(4,160)	-	-
Staff fund	3,088	-	(3,088)	-	-
Infection control grant	1,364	-	(1,364)	-	-
ECF Capital grant	-	21,000	(21,000)	-	-
Thomas Pocklington trust	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
	16,719	26,000	(38,572)	-	4,147
	£ 2,344,690	£ 1,633,194	£ (1,140,833)	-	£ 2,837,051

The general fund represents the free funds of the Charity which are not designated for a particular purpose.

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

	Balance at 1 May 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Expenditure including gains/(losses) £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at 30 April 2022 £
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	184,589	1,255,199	(1,394,294)	-	45,494
Designated funds					
Essex support 5 year plan	300,000	-	-	-	300,000
Read House	7,897	893	(4,000)		4,790
Essex support exit strategy fund	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Investment revaluation reserve	95,749	-	6,938	-	102,687
Designated property asset fund	1,900,000	-	(50,000)	-	1,850,000
	2,513,235	1,256,092	(1,441,356)	-	2,327,971
Restricted Funds					
Residents amenities at Read House	783	380	(515)	-	648
Mobile Sight Centre	4,147	-	-	-	4,147
Brentwood Community Hospital Project	3,312	-	-	-	3,312
Extended provision in Chelmsford	4,160	-	-	-	4,160
Staff fund	1,601	4,613	(3,126)	-	3,088
Workplace Capacity grant	-	4,800	(4,800)	-	-
WRRF		8,760	(8,760)	-	-
Infection control grant	-	50,244	(48,880)	-	1,364
LFT grant	-	1,307	(1,307)	-	-
ECL additional funds	-	13,285	(13,285)	-	-
ECF Capital grant	-	33,265	(33,265)	-	-
SOS Blind	-	5,875	(5,875)	-	-
	14,003	122,529	(119,813)	-	16,719
	£ 2,527,238	£ 1,378,621	£ (1,561,169)	-	£ 2,344,690

The general fund represents the free funds of the Charity which are not designated for a particular purpose.

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Essex support 5 year plan fund is to provide half the cost of the community services over a five year period, in order to attract matching grant funding for the balance.

Essex support exit strategy fund is a worse case scenario and the cost of ceasing the community services altogether.

The Read House fund represents donations received in memory of residents of the House. These were set aside by the Charity to be used for resident amenities.

The investment revaluation reserve represents cumulative realised and unrealised investment gains and losses on investments.

The designated property asset fund is represented by the fair value of the freehold property previously owned by the Charity.

Residents amenities fund represented funds raised specifically for residents' amenities (entertainment, outings, etc). The staff fund represented donations for the staff at Read House.

The Mobile Sight Centre project relates to funding received from Colchester Catalyst and the Saffron Building Society Fund, the vehicle was purchased by the prior year end but other capital works are yet to be carried out.

The Extended Provision in Chelmsford fund relates to a grant from The Yellow Car Charitable Fund for sight services.

The Brentwood Community Hospital project relates to a grant from The Malcolm and Beryl Cook Foundation and has been carried out jointly with the Blind and Visual Sight Impaired Society (BASIS).

The staff fund represents money received to be used directly for the benefit of individuals employed by the charity.

The workplace capacity grant is to support new expenditure that delivers additional staff capacity.

The infection control grant provided funding to improve infection control and therefore reduce the rate of Covid-19 transmission.

The LFT grant (adult social care rapid testing fund) was used to support additional rapid testing of staff in care homes and to support visiting professionals and enable indoors, close contact visiting where possible.

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

The WRRF funding from the Government via ECC was dedicated to improving the recruitment and staff retention of care workers in adult social care at a time when the sector was experiencing unprecedented pressures from workforce absences due to Covid-19 and to allow us to maintain safe staffing levels due to seasonal pressures during the winter months.

The ECL additional funds are for the purpose of supporting work for those with a sensory impairment who are having issues directly connected to covid.

ECF capital grants was funding to replace the flooring in the Day Centre to provide a community resource, an interactive table to help people with cognitive problems, funding for staffing to activate the day centre and table at Read House and the purchase of Charity Log database and hardware to accurately store visually impaired clients' details and allow full remote access by staff.

The SOS Blind fund is from Mid and South Essex NHS to help visually impaired people rebuild confidence post Covid 19.

The Thomas Pocklington Trust funding is to be used towards consultancy services.

18 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Tangible fixed assets £	Investments £	Net current assets £	2023 Total £
Restricted funds	-	-	4,147	4,147
Unrestricted funds	15,242	357,798	2,459,864	2,832,904
	£ 15,242	£ 357,798	2,464,011	2,837,051

	Tangible fixed assets £	Investments £	Net current assets £	2022 Total £
Restricted funds	-	-	16,719	16,719
Unrestricted funds	1,890,830	368,170	68,971	2,327,971
	£ 1,890,830	£ 368,170	£ 85,690	£ 2,344,690

19 OPERATING LEASES

At 30 April 2023 the total commitments under non-cancellable operating leases were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Expiry date:		
Within one year	-	31,915
Between two and five years	-	95,724
Later than five years	-	-
	-	£ 127,639

During the year, the Charity incurred expenditure of £20,294 (2022 : £19,554) relating to operating leases.

20 CONTROLLING PARTY

The Charitable Company was under the control of the trustees during the year.

21 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

No related party transactions incurred during the year (2022 : None).

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

England & Wales - Charity number 1103732

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER 05098747

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1103732

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

30 APRIL 2022

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

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ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

OFFICERS AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS

Trustees	S M Mann JP (Chairman) T Crawshaw R Jackson ACCA*, CTA* A Mabert R Marshall FRICS*, FAAV* S D Porter D Smith A Williams (resigned 27 October 2021) N Meixner *retired members of the professional bodies concerned
Company Secretary	J Dixon
Registered Office	Read House 23 The Esplanade Frinton-on-Sea Essex CO13 9AU
Registered Company Number	05098747
Registered Charity Number	1103732
Auditor	Scrutton Bland LLP Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor 820 The Crescent Colchester Business Park Colchester CO4 9YQ
Bankers	Natwest Bank Plc 4-5 High Street Chelmsford Essex CM1 1FZ

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The trustees (who are also directors for the purpose of company law) submit their annual report and the audited financial statements of Essex Blind Charity (the Charity) for the year ended 30 April 2022. This report also represents the Directors' Report required by S417 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the Charity have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charity's governing document and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS102) and the Charities Act 2011.

Legal and administrative information

Legal and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report.

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

The Charity is controlled by a Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 29 October 2003 and operates as a Charitable Company limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Structure, Management and Trustee Appointment

The Charity is managed by a Board of Directors, which consists of not less than three members. At the year end there were eight Directors, two of whom are visually impaired. Directors are appointed by the Board. Nominations are considered and approved by the whole Board. Directors meet monthly to review the performance and strategy of the Charity as well as to set operating plans and budgets. All major decisions are made at Board level and must be passed with a majority vote of the Directors present. In order to make a decision one third of the Board has to be present. Minor day to day decisions are made by the General Manager, with authorisation from the Board.

Induction and training of new trustees

The policy and procedures adopted for the induction and training of Directors includes visits to the residential home and the community services office, an introduction to the other Directors, including details of their particular areas of expertise, and details of the objectives of the Charity, including information on current projects and plans for future development.

Remuneration Policy

The Charity does not have any fixed criteria for setting pay and remuneration of key management or any other personnel. Pay rates are reviewed generally on an annual basis by the Board of Directors and awards depend on the current financial status of the organisation and any Government directives.

Risk Management

The Directors have conducted a review of the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risk the Charity faces. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers, clients and visitors to the home. These risks and procedures are reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the Charity.

The Charity has followed Government guidance relating to the management of all operations during and post the coronavirus pandemic.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES DELIVER PUBLIC INTEREST

Objectives and aims

The Charity's objectives, as set out in its governing documents, are to meet the needs of visually impaired people and their carers and families throughout Essex and are undertaken to further the Charity's charitable purposes for the public benefit. To this end Essex Blind Charity:

1 Maintains Read House, a purpose-built residential care home for elderly people which has a dedicated provision for blind and partially sighted people in Frinton-on-Sea;

2 Gives support, advice, and information to all people with a visual impairment, and sighted people with a vested interest in such subjects;

3 Keeps up-to-date on new information and technological developments, assesses the viability of such developments for visually impaired people and offers advice on its implementation;

4 Provides trained staff to hospital eye clinics to give support and advice to people at the point of diagnosis;

5 Maintains Sight Centres around the County so that visually impaired people can learn about new aids to living and try them out before purchasing them;

6 Runs a home-visiting service for newly registered visually impaired people; and

7 Produces a quarterly newsletter.

The Charity's community work operates under the name of 'Essex Sight'.

Further details of these and other aspects of the Charity's work will be covered in later sections.

Public Benefit

In accordance with their duties in the Charity's Act 2006, it is incumbent on the Directors to conduct a Public Benefit Test, to assess whether the Charity has complied with its duties in due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

The Directors are satisfied that Essex Blind Charity has complied with its duty in regards to the Public Benefit Test over the past year, based on the four principles in the Commission's Guidance.

There must be an identifiable benefit:
Essex Blind Charity's purposes are to provide support and relief to any member of the public who has concerns about sight loss, blindness or partial vision. Its services benefit a large number of the general public in Essex.

Benefit must be to the public or a section of the public:
All the Charity's services are open to members of the public at large and access to the Charity's services are not restrictive.

People on low incomes must be able to benefit:
The Board of Directors recognises that many visually impaired people are on low incomes, as people with impaired vision are more likely to be unemployed in comparison to fully sighted people. In addition many do not avail themselves of their benefit entitlements. Essex Blind Charity does not make a charge for its services of support and advice and offers its services to the public at large free of charge.

Any private benefit must be incidental:
The Directors do not consider that any individual or organisation receives a 'private benefit' from the work of Essex Blind Charity.

Service Delivery – Achievements and Performance

Read House

The residential care home in Frinton-on-Sea is run by a Registered Manager and a Care Manager, who are overseen by the General Manager of the Charity. All staff undertake induction training and the necessary care training. Read House was delighted to receive an overall rating as 'Good', as well as 'Good' ratings for each of the 5 categories inspected (i.e., Caring, Effective, Safe, Responsive and Well Led) at the CQC Inspection which took place in November 2020. There have been no further inspections to date. The charity has continually invested in the Read House, introducing care management software to improve the flow of communication at all levels and a programme of refurbishment to bring residents rooms up to date. Funding from Essex Community Foundation has enabled the day centre floor to be replaced to allow greater community use of this wonderful space and the purchase of an interactive console, to allow visitors and residents, particularly those with Dementia or neurological conditions a fun and immersive digital experience. The Board of Directors are grateful to the staff for their skills and enthusiastic efforts which have provided this excellent service for residents. The care home has its own designated website at www.readhouse.org.

Essex Sight

We are grateful to the ECL (Essex Cares Limited) and Essex Community Foundation, which have helped to fund our Community Services.

The Essex Sight team comprises a Community Services Manager and four Community Support Officers who have managed the charity's work for the community providing in person, online and telephone support to visually impaired people (VIP). The legacy of the pandemic has meant a change in the way the team works, driven by the needs of VIP. The service has become more outwardly facing and home visiting and pop-up sight centre provision has increased, whilst the visitors to the permanent sight centre in Colchester has declined, which could also reflect the changes the pandemic brought to town centres and shopping habits across the County.

Sight Centres

The pop-up sight centres in Chelmsford, Maldon, Clacton and Brentwood were all reinstated this year and thanks to the Provide Foundation funding, joined by three more in areas where access to services for VIP is poor.

Community Hospital Eye Clinic Support

The charity has continued to support newly diagnosed patients through the Eye Clinic Liaison service in Colchester Eye Clinic (East Suffolk and North Essex NHS foundation trust) and Broomfield Hospital (Mid and South Essex NHS foundation trust). The service provides newly diagnosed VI people and their relatives/carers the opportunity to discuss their situation with a trained officer and receive support and advice to help them cope with their daily lives. The Broomfield low vision clinic was suspended during the pandemic and with the Eye Clinic Liaison service resuming this summer, the ECLO has been able to provide support to those on the waiting list.

Services to the Community and Home Visiting

Home Visiting is an important and regular part of the charity's service, and maintaining a face-to-face connection is crucial, particularly for those who are isolated or have limited mobility. There is greater demand for the use of our Mobile Sight Centre, particularly when larger items of equipment need demonstrating.

The charity is fortunate to have specialist equipment donated that is no longer required, especially electronic magnifiers, that are expensive to purchase. The team have found them new homes with VIP that would not normally be able to afford them.

Awareness Talks

Raising awareness within the wider community is an essential part of the Charity's work. We maintained a digital, print and spoken word presence and belatedly celebrated our Centenary by attending large open air public events during the summer to promote eye health. We also join the local voluntary sectors to promote our services to other third sector organisations and their clients.

Volunteers

The charity relies on volunteers to provide support with social events, pop up sight centres and for those who are VIP, being able to share lived experience, which is hugely important. As these works have no quantifiable value this is not recognised in the financial statements, however, the Directors recognise the immense benefit the volunteers bring to the Charity.

Exhibitions

The Charity's own annual exhibition was held at the Central Baptist Church in Chelmsford in May. After such a long gap, it had a fantastic turnout of VIP to experience the latest technological innovations, try out new equipment, find out about support services and have a chat.

Website

Details about Essex Blind Charity's services can be found on the website at www.essexsight.org.uk and www.readhouse.org. enables people to find out about services offered by the charity with the click of a button. The websites are fully accessible and very informative. The charity also uses Facebook and twitter accounts to provide regular information and contact via social media.

Spotlight – Essex Blind Charity Newsletter

This large print newsletter goes out four times a year to more than 1,000 residents across the County. It provides a variety of information for visually impaired people and can be provided in audio form or by email and is available via our website. The audio description is very kindly provided by Chelmsford Talking Newspapers, to whom we are very grateful. Readers are encouraged to send in articles, and the local theatres and libraries use the newsletter to keep residents up to date with their events.

Partnership working

The Directors are pleased with the development of Essex Vision, which is the strategic group of sight loss organisations in Essex. The aim of the group is to champion the creation and implementation of a Vision Strategy in Essex.

The charity is also part of the Essex Sensory Community, a group of local sensory organisations who are funded by ECL to provide information, advice and guidance to those with sensory needs.

The charity is a member of Visionary, the collective body of sight loss organisations Nationally, attending regional and national meetings to keep up to date and share knowledge.

Financial Review

Reserves policy

Unrestricted funds are needed:

a. to provide funds which can be designated to specific projects to enable those projects to be undertaken at short notice.
b. to cover the costs of running the residential home in the short term, if there is an interruption in funding.
c. to cover administration and support costs.

The Directors consider it prudent that unrestricted reserves should be sufficient:

a. to avoid the necessity of realising fixed assets held for the Charity's use.
b. to cover the three months running costs of the residential home.

The Directors consider adequate funding exists presently to meet these requirements and during the pandemic were able to bolster a loss of income by utilising reserve funds.

Funds

The activities during the year resulted in a deficit of unrestricted funds of £185,264 (2021: £8,768 surplus) for the year. This includes a £50,000 impairment of freehold property (2021: £nil).

There was an increase in restricted fund balances at the year end as not all additional restricted income was fully spent. The surplus on restricted funds for the year was £2,716 (2021: £1,369 deficit). Restricted funds at the year-end totalled £16,719 (2021: £14,003).

Overall, there was a deficit in total funds of £182,548 (2021: £7,399 surplus).

Investment policy and objectives

Epworth Investment Management Limited, who manage the Charity's investment fund have managed to provide growth during turbulent times.

The Trustees have decreed that the Charity should not invest in munitions or tobacco companies but other than that would wish the Portfolio to have an ethical bias.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The need to support VIP in the County is increasing. Essex already has the second highest number of VIP in the Country and it is estimated that the number will continue to increase. The Charity will review its strategic plan and further engage with VIP and partner organisations to ensure the services provided meet their needs into the future. We expect to formalise Essex Vision, to provide even greater partnership working between the sight loss Charities and further benefit the VIP in Essex.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the Directors of Essex Blind Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees must prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charitable Company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charitable Company 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 accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK 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 Charitable Company will continue to operate.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charitable Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charitable Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees confirm that so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information (as defined by section 418(3) of the Companies Act 2006) of which the Charitable Company's auditors are unaware. They have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charitable Company's auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

A resolution to re-appoint Scrutton Bland LLP as auditors of the Charity will be put to the trustees.

ACCOUNTING EXEMPTIONS

In preparing this report the trustees have taken advantage of small companies exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

Signed for and on behalf of the Trustees

Signed for and on behalf of the Truste

S M Mann JP
Trustee

R Jackson ACCA, CTA
Trustee

Approved by the Trustees on 31 January 2023

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Essex Blind Charity (the Charitable Company) for the year ended 30 April 2022 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the Income and Expenditure Account), Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows, and related notes to the financial statements. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 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 Charitable Company's affairs as at 30 April 2022 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Charitable Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained 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 entity'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 annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. 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. 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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees, which includes the Directors' Report prepared for company law purposes, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and

- the Report of the Trustees and the Directors' Report included within the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Charitable Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Annual Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or

- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or

- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or

- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 8 the trustees (who are also the directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they 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 Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the Charitable Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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.

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:

We identified areas of laws and regulations that could reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the financial statements from our general commercial and sector experience, through discussion with the trustees (as required by auditing standards), inspection of the Charitable Company's regulatory and legal correspondence and discussed with the trustees the policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations. We communicated identified laws and regulations throughout our team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit. The potential effect of these laws and regulations on the financial statements varies considerably.

Firstly, the Charitable Company is subject to laws and regulations that directly affect the financial statements including financial reporting legislation and taxation legislation and we assessed the extent of compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement items.

Secondly, the Charitable Company is subject to many other laws and regulations where the consequences of non-compliance could have a material effect on amounts or disclosures in the financial statements, for instance through the imposition of fines or litigation. We identified the following areas as those most likely to have such an effect: compliance with the requirements of The Care Quality Commission (CQC), health and safety, safeguarding rules, human rights and employment law and GDPR compliance. Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements (continued)

Audit procedures undertaken in response to the potential risks relating to irregularities (which include fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations) comprised of: enquiries of management and those charged with governance as to whether the company complies with such regulations, enquiries of management and those charged with governance concerning any actual or potential litigation or claims, inspection of any relevant legal documentation, review of board minutes, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and the performance of analytical review to identify any unexpected movements in account balances which may be indicative of fraud.

No instances of material non-compliance were identified.

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 for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Charitable Company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Charitable Company'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 Charitable Company and the Charitable Company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Scrutton Bland LLP

TIMOTHY O'CONNOR (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of
SCRUTTON BLAND LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
820 The Crescent
Colchester Business Park
Colchester
Essex
CO4 9YQ

Date: 2/2/23

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2021 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	3	**60,558**	**122,529**	**183,087**	167,473
Charitable activities	4	**1,181,827**	**-**	**1,181,827**	1,298,977
Other trading activities	5	**2,310**	**-**	**2,310**	759
Investments	6	**11,397**	**-**	**11,397**	11,385
Total income		**1,256,092**	**122,529**	**1,378,621**	1,478,594
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	7	**4,964**	**-**	**4,964**	2,965
Charitable activities	8	**1,443,330**	**119,813**	**1,563,143**	1,556,699
Total expenditure		**1,448,294**	**119,813**	**1,568,107**	1,559,664
Net (expenditure)/income		**(192,202)**	**2,716**	**(189,486)**	(81,070)
Realised and unrealised gains on investments		**6,938**	**-**	**6,938**	88,469
Transfers between funds		**-**	**-**	**-**	-
Net movement in funds		**(185,264)**	**2,716**	**(182,548)**	7,399
Total funds brought forward at 1 May 2021		**2,513,235**	**14,003**	**2,527,238**	2,519,839
Total funds carried forward at 30 April 2022		**2,327,971**	**16,719**	**2,344,690**	£ 2,527,238

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 APRIL 2022

	Notes	Total Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2021 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	12	**1,890,830**	1,936,592
Investments	13	**368,170**	500,295
		2,259,000	2,436,887
Current assets			
Stocks	14	**28,400**	25,139
Debtors – due within one year	15	**11,520**	11,939
Cash and cash equivalents		**145,189**	133,109
		185,109	170,187
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	**(99,419)**	(79,836)
Net current assets		**85,690**	90,351
Net assets		**£ 2,344,690**	£ 2,527,238
Income funds			
Restricted funds	17	**16,719**	14,003
Unrestricted funds	17	**2,327,971**	2,513,235
		£2,344,690	£ 2,527,238

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies' regime. In the directors' opinion the Charitable Company is entitled to these exemptions as a small company.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 31 January 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

S M Mann JP – Trustee

R Jackson – ACCA, CTA – Trustee

Company registration number: 05098747
Charity registration number: 1103732

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net movements in funds	**(182,548)**	7,399
Depreciation of tangible assets	**10,745**	10,076
Loss on disposal of tangible assets	**424**	-
Impairment of fixed assets	**50,000**	-
Interest received	**(305)**	(424)
Unrealised investment gain	**(6,938)**	(88,469)
Increase in stocks	**(3,261)**	(1,028)
Decrease in debtors	**419**	30,185
Increase in creditors	**19,583**	26,996
Net cash from operating activities	**(111,881)**	(15,265)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Interest received	**305**	424
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	**(15,407)**	(9,489)
Purchase of investments	**(35,019)**	(26,100)
Sale of investments	**175,301**	114,300
Net cash generated in investing activities	**125,180**	79,135
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	**13,299**	63,870
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward	**139,143**	75,273
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward	**152,442**	139,143
Represented by:		
Cash in hand and at bank	**145,189**	133,109
Cash held in investment	**7,253**	6,034
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward	**£ 152,442**	£ 139,143

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Essex Blind Charity is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, registered company number 05098747 and registered Charity number 1103732. The address of the registered office is Read House, 23 The Esplanade, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, CO13 9AU.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in pounds sterling and rounded to the nearest £1.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern.

The following principal accounting policies have been applied:

Income

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the Charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Legacy gifts are recognised following the granting of probate when the administrator/executor for the estate has communicated in writing both the amount and settlement date.

Grants are accounted for when the Charity has sufficient entitlement to them.

Expenditure

All expenditure included in the Statement of Financial Activities are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Expenditure on raising funds includes the expenditure associated with the sale of visual aids.

Expenditure on charitable activities includes the expenditure associated with the Residential Home.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES - (continued)

Fixed assets

Fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected lives on the following basis:

Freehold land & buildings	-	nil
Fixtures and fittings	-	20% reducing balance
Motor vehicles	-	25% reducing balance

Contrary to the accounting requirement of the Companies Act 2006, depreciation is not provided in respect of the Charity's freehold buildings. The trustees are of the opinion that this is necessary to give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Charity. The ongoing maintenance work undertaken keeps properties in a continual state of repair and accordingly the trustees' opinion is that the life of the property is so long and residual values so high that their depreciation is insignificant.

Leasing commitments

Rentals under operating leases are charged through the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Investments

Investments are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their market value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and shown in the heading 'Realised and unrealised investment gains/(losses) on investments' in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Stock

Stock is valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items. The Charity holds display stock for visual aids, these items are being written down over a 5 year period.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash equivalents are recognised as such and included with other cash balances where they represent short term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash without being subject to a significant change in value.

Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the Charity. Contributions payable to the scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES - (continued)

Financial instruments

The Charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Taxation

Essex Blind Charity is a Charity within the meaning of the Charities Act 2011 and as such is a Charity within the meaning of Part 11, Corporation Tax Act 2010. Accordingly Essex Blind Charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Part 11, Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to its charitable purposes.

Funds

Unrestricted general funds are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees. Restricted funds are funds that can only be used in accordance with specific conditions specified by the donor. Further details are provided in note 17.

Significant judgements and estimates

The more significant judgements and estimates involved in the preparation of the financial statements include assessing the depreciation rates applicable to tangible fixed assets and the way in which certain costs should be apportioned. Further details regarding these points are included within the accounting policies.

3 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Donations	**7,077**	**4,993**	**12,070**
Legacies	**6,986**	**-**	**6,986**
Grants received	**47,618**	**117,536**	**165,154**
Government grant received	**(1,123)**	**-**	**(1,123)**
	£ 60,558	**£ 122,529**	**£ 183,087**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Donations	2,936	4,353	7,289
Legacies	21,465	-	21,465
Grants received	14,895	83,285	98,180
Government grant received	40,539	-	40,539
	£ 79,835	£ 87,638	£ 167,473

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Grants received were as follows:			
Essex Cares Limited	**17,850**	**13,285**	**31,135**
BASIS	**(3,227)**	**-**	**(3,227)**
Essex Community Foundation	**-**	**33,265**	**33,265**
SOS Blind	**-**	**5,875**	**5,875**
CRF Fund	**32,995**	**-**	**32,995**
Workplace Capacity Fund	**-**	**4,800**	**4,800**
Infection Control	**-**	**50,244**	**50,244**
WRRF	**-**	**8,760**	**8,760**
Omicron	**-**	**1,307**	**1,307**
	£ 47,618	**£ 117,536**	**£ 165,154**

3 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES - continued

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Grants received were as follows:			
Essex Cares Limited	14,895	-	14,895
Workplace Capacity Fund	-	2,600	2,600
Infection Control	-	68,285	68,285
LFT Grant	-	12,400	12,400
	£ 14,895	£ 83,285	£ 98,180

All grants support the key objective of enabling people with sight loss to remain independent and safe.

4 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2022 £**
Residential home	**1,180,751**	**1,180,751**
Day care	**-**	**-**
Day centre	**22**	**22**
Other activities	**1,054**	**1,054**
	£ 1,181,827	**£ 1,181,827**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Residential home	1,298,135	1,298,135
Day care	608	608
Day centre	(31)	(31)
Other activities	265	265
	£ 1,298,977	£ 1,298,977

5 INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Visual aids	**1,456**	**-**	**1,456**
Others	**854**	**-**	**854**
	£ 2,310	**-**	**£ 2,310**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Visual aids	757	-	757
Others	2	-	2
	£ 759	-	£ 759

6 INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS

	2022 £	2021 £
Interest receivable	**305**	424
Dividends receivable	**11,092**	10,961
	£ 11,397	£ 11,385

7 EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS

	2022 £	2021 £
Visual aids – net of stock adjustment	**4,801**	2,788
Investment management costs	**163**	177
	£ 4,964	£ 2,965

8 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2022 £	2021 £
Residential home and day centre	**1,495,804**	1,542,839
Impairment of freehold property	**50,000**	-
Governance costs (note 9)	**17,339**	13,860
	£ 1,563,143	£ 1,556,699

9 GOVERNANCE COSTS

	2022 £	2021 £
Subscriptions and registration fees	**6,485**	6,510
Auditors' remuneration	**5,700**	5,100
Auditors' remuneration for non-audit work	**5,154**	2,250
	£ 17,339	£ 13,860

10 NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME

	2022 £	2021 £
This is stated after charging:		
Auditors' remuneration	**5,700**	5,100
Depreciation – owned assets	**10,745**	10,076

11 STAFF COSTS

	2022 £	2021 £
Wages and salaries	**1,067,754**	1,122,023
National insurance contributions	**66,055**	71,834
Pension costs	**17,021**	18,156
Pension administration	**4,080**	4,680
	£ 1,154,910	£ 1,216,693

The average number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2022	2021
Management	**2**	2
Administration	**3**	3
Community Services personnel	**5**	5
Care home staff	**54**	58
	64	68

No employee received emoluments in excess of £60,000 in the year (2021: None). Pension costs are wholly charged to unrestricted funds.

There were no Trustees' remuneration, expenses or other benefits for professional or other services supplied to the Charity for the year ended 30 April 2022, nor for the year ended 30 April 2021.

The aggregate remuneration of key management personnel was £38,859 (2021: £30,858).

Indemnity insurance is maintained covering the Board of Trustees in their capacity as trustees.

12 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold property £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor Vehicles £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 May 2021	**1,900,000**	**58,250**	**21,981**	**1,980,231**
Additions	**-**	**15,407**	**-**	**15,407**
Disposals	**-**	**(889)**	**-**	**(889)**
Impairment	**(50,000)**	**-**	**-**	**(50,000)**
At 30 April 2022	**1,850,000**	**72,768**	**21,981**	**1,944,749**
Depreciation				
At 1 May 2021	**-**	**34,023**	**9,616**	**43,639**
Charge for the year	**-**	**7,654**	**3,091**	**10,745**
Disposals	**-**	**(465)**	**-**	**(465)**
At 30 April 2022	**-**	**41,212**	**12,707**	**53,919**
Net book value				
At 30 April 2022	**£ 1,850,000**	**£ 31,566**	**£ 9,274**	**£ 1,890,830**
At 30 April 2021	£ 1,900,000	£ 24,227	£ 12,365	£ 1,936,592

The freehold property was valued on 4 February 2022 on an existing value basis. The valuation was carried out by Eddisons Commercial Limited. The asset was impaired to the valuation of £1,850,000 in these accounts.

The historical cost of the freehold property is £1,921,076.

13 FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

	2022 £	2021 £
Movement in fixed asset investments		
Market value brought forward at 1 May 2021	**500,295**	501,010
Additions to investment at cost	**35,019**	26,100
Disposals	**(175,301)**	(114,300)
Gain on revaluation	**6,938**	88,469
increase/(decrease) in cash held	**1,219**	(984)
Market value carried forward at 30 April 2022	**£ 368,170**	£ 500,295
Investment portfolio at market value comprised		
Property Income Trust for Charities	**37,338**	59,804
EP Corporate Bond Income Fund	**55,411**	73,929
EP Global Equity Income Fund	**27,531**	39,879
EP UK Equity Income Fund	**240,637**	320,649
Cash held by Investment Manager	**7,253**	6,034
	£ 368,170	£ 500,295

14 STOCK

	2022 £	2021 £
Medical and domestic supplies	**15,856**	8,328
Food	**2,705**	2,589
Visual aids – resale stocks	**9,839**	11,973
Visual aids – display stocks	**-**	2,249
	£ 28,400	£ 25,139

15 DEBTORS

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	**4,086**	6,994
Government Grants	**-**	-
Prepayments and accrued income	**7,434**	4,945
	£ 11,520	£ 11,939

16 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade creditors	**37,326**	41,113
Social security and other taxes	**22,094**	15,518
Other creditors	**18,834**	7,309
Accruals and deferred income	**21,165**	15,896
	£ 99,419	£ 79,836

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	Balance at 1 May 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Expenditure including gains/(losses) £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at 30 April 2022 £
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	184,589	**1,255,199**	**(1,394,294)**	-	**45,494**
Designated funds					
Essex support 5 year plan	300,000	-	-	-	**300,000**
Read House	7,897	**893**	**(4,000)**		**4,790**
Essex support exit strategy fund	25,000	-	-	-	**25,000**
Investment revaluation reserve	95,749	-	**6,938**	-	**102,687**
Designated property asset fund	1,900,000	-	**(50,000)**	-	**1,850,000**
	2,513,235	**1,256,092**	**(1,441,356)**	-	**2,327,971**
Restricted Funds					
Residents amenities at Read House	783	**380**	**(515)**	-	**648**
Mobile Sight Centre	4,147	-	-	-	**4,147**
Brentwood Community Hospital Project	3,312	-	-	-	**3,312**
Extended provision in Chelmsford	4,160	-	-	-	**4,160**
Staff fund	1,601	**4,613**	**(3,126)**	-	**3,088**
Workplace Capacity grant	-	**4,800**	**(4,800)**	-	-
WRRF		**8,760**	**(8,760)**		
Infection control grant	-	**50,244**	**(48,880)**	-	**1,364**
LFT grant	-	**1,307**	**(1,307)**	-	-
ECL additional funds	-	**13,285**	**(13,285)**	-	-
ECF Capital grant	-	**33,265**	**(33,265)**	-	-
SOS Blind	-	**5,875**	**(5,875)**	-	-
				-	-
	14,003	**122,529**	**(119,813)**	-	**16,719**
	£ 2,527,238	**£ 1,378,621**	**£ (1,561,169)**	-	**£ 2,344,690**

The general fund represents the free funds of the Charity which are not designated for a particular purpose.

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

	Balance at 1 May 2020 £	Incoming resources £	Expenditure including gains/(losses) £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at 30 April 2021 £
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	264,187	1,389,821	(1,470,357)	938	184,589
Designated funds					
Essex support 5 year plan	300,000	-	-	-	300,000
Read House	8,000	1,135	-	(1,238)	7,897
Essex support exit strategy fund	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Investment revaluation reserve	7,280	-	88,469	-	95,749
Designated property asset fund	1,900,000	-	-	-	1,900,000
	2,504,467	1,390,956	(1,381,888)	(300)	2,513,235
Restricted Funds					
Residents amenities at Read House	3,019	1,345	(3,581)	-	783
Mobile Sight Centre	4,147	-	-	-	4,147
Brentwood Community Hospital Project	3,312	-	-	-	3,312
Extended provision in Chelmsford	4,160	-	-	-	4,160
Staff fund	734	3,008	(2,441)	300	1,601
Workplace Capacity grant	-	2,600	(2,600)	-	-
Infection control grant	-	68,285	(68,285)	-	-
LFT grant	-	12,400	(12,400)	-	-
	15,372	87,638	(89,307)	300	14,003
	£ 2,519,839	£ 1,478,594	£ (1,471,195)	-	£ 2,527,238

The general fund represents the free funds of the Charity which are not designated for a particular purpose.

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Essex support 5 year plan fund is to provide half the cost of the community services over a five year period, in order to attract matching grant funding for the balance.

Essex support exit strategy fund is a worse case scenario and the cost of ceasing the community services altogether.

The Read House fund represents donations received in memory of residents of the House. These are set aside by the Charity to be used for resident amenities.

The investment revaluation reserve represents cumulative realised and unrealised investment gains and losses on investments.

The designated property asset fund is represented by the fair value of the freehold property owned by the Charity.

Residents amenities fund represents funds raised specifically for residents' amenities (entertainment, outings, etc). The staff fund represents donations for the staff at Read House.

The Mobile Sight Centre project relates to funding received from Colchester Catalyst and the Saffron Building Society Fund, the vehicle was purchased by the year end but other capital works are yet to be carried out.

The Extended Provision in Chelmsford fund relates to a grant from The Yellow Car Charitable Fund for sight services.

The Brentwood Community Hospital project relates to a grant from The Malcolm and Beryl Cook Foundation and is being carried out jointly with the Blind and Visual Sight Impaired Society (BASIS)

The staff fund represents money received to be used directly for the benefit of individuals employed by the charity.

The workplace capacity grant is to support new expenditure that delivers additional staff capacity.

The infection control grant is to provide funding to improve infection control and therefore reduce the rate of Covid-19 transmission.

The LFT grant (adult social care rapid testing fund) is to support additional rapid testing of staff in care homes and to support visiting professionals and enable indoors, close contact visiting where possible.

The WRRF funding from the Government via ECC was dedicated to improving the recruitment and staff retention of care workers in adult social care at a time when the sector was experiencing unprecedented pressures from workforce absences due to Covid-19 and to allow us to maintain safe staffing levels due to seasonal pressures during the winter months.

17 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

The ECL additional funds are for the purpose of supporting work for those with a sensory impairment who are having issues directly connected to covid.

ECF capital grants are funding to replace the flooring in the Day Centre to provide a community resource, an interactive table to help people with cognitive problems, funding for staffing to activate the day centre and table at Read House and the purchase of Charity Log database and hardware to accurately store visually impaired clients' details and allow full remote access by staff.

The SOS Blind fund is from Mid and South Essex NHS to help visually impaired people rebuild confidence post covid 19.

18 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Tangible fixed assets £	**Investments £**	**Net current assets £**	**2022 Total £**
Restricted funds	**-**	**-**	**16,719**	**16,719**
Unrestricted funds	**1,890,830**	**368,170**	**68,971**	**2,327,971**
	1,890,830	**368,170**	**85,690**	**2,344,690**

	Tangible fixed assets £	Investments £	Net current assets £	2021 Total £
Restricted funds	-	-	14,003	14,003
Unrestricted funds	1,936,592	500,295	76,348	2,513,235
	£ 1,936,592	£ 500,295	£ 90,351	£ 2,527,238

19 OPERATING LEASES

At 30 April 2022 the total commitments under non-cancellable operating leases were as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Expiry date:		
Within one year	**31,915**	28,663
Between two and five years	**95,724**	64,781
Later than five years	**-**	-
	£ 127,639	£ 93,444

During the year, the Charity incurred expenditure of £19,554 (2021 : £16,210) relating to operating leases.

20 CONTROLLING PARTY

The Charitable Company was under the control of the trustees during the year.

21 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

No related party transactions incurred during the year (2021 : None).

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

England & Wales - Charity number 1103732

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER 05098747

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1103732

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

30 APRIL 2021

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

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ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

OFFICERS AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS

Trustees	S M Mann JP (Chairman) T Crawshaw M J FitzPatrick FRICS (resigned 31 December 2020) R Jackson ACCA*, CTA* A Mabert R Marshall FRICS*, FAAV* S D Porter D Smith A Williams (resigned 27 October 2021) N Meixner (appointed 28 October 2020) *retired members of the professional bodies concerned
Company Secretary	J Plant (resigned 28 October 2020) J Dixon (appointed 28 October 2020)
Registered Office	Read House 23 The Esplanade Frinton-on-Sea Essex CO13 9AU
Registered Company Number	05098747
Registered Charity Number	1103732
Auditor	Scrutton Bland LLP Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor 820 The Crescent Colchester Business Park Colchester CO4 9YQ
Bankers	Natwest Bank Plc 4-5 High Street Chelmsford Essex CM1 1FZ

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The trustees (who are also directors for the purpose of company law) submit their annual report and the audited financial statements of Essex Blind Charity (the Charity) for the year ended 30 April 2021. This report also represents the Directors' Report required by S417 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the Charity have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charity's governing document and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS102) and the Charities Act 2011.

Legal and administrative information

Legal and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report.

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

The Charity is controlled by a Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 29 October 2003 and operates as a Charitable Company limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Structure, Management and Trustee Appointment

The Charity is managed by a Board of Directors, which consists of not less than three members. At the year end there were nine Directors, two of whom are visually impaired. Directors are appointed by the Board. Nominations are considered and approved by the whole Board. Directors meet monthly to review the performance and strategy of the Charity as well as to set operating plans and budgets. All major decisions are made at Board level and must be passed with a majority vote of the Directors present. In order to make a decision one third of the Board has to be present. Minor day to day decisions are made by the General Manager, with authorisation from the Board.

Since the coronavirus lockdown in March 2020, most Board meetings are held remotely by 'Zoom'.

Induction and training of new trustees

The policy and procedures adopted for the induction and training of Directors includes visits to the residential home and the community services office, an introduction to the other Directors, including details of their particular areas of expertise, and details of the objectives of the Charity, including information on current projects and plans for future development.

Remuneration Policy

The Charity does not have any fixed criteria for setting pay and remuneration of key management or any other personnel. Pay rates are reviewed generally on an annual basis by the Board of Directors and awards depend on the current financial status of the organisation and any Government directives.

Risk management

The Directors have conducted a review of the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risk the Charity faces. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers, clients and visitors to the home. These risks and procedures are reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the Charity.

The Charity is following Government guidance relating to the management of all operations during the coronavirus pandemic.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES DELIVER PUBLIC INTEREST

Objectives and aims

The Charity's objectives, as set out in its governing documents, are to meet the needs of visually impaired people and their carers and families throughout Essex and are undertaken to further the Charity's charitable purposes for the public benefit. To this end Essex Blind Charity:

1 Maintains Read House, a purpose-built residential care home for for elderly people which has a dedicated provision for blind and partially sighted people in Frinton-on-Sea;

2 Gives support, advice, and information to all people with a visual impairment, and sighted people with a vested interest in such subjects;

3 Keeps up-to-date on new information and technological developments, assesses the viability of such developments for visually impaired people and offers advice on its implementation;

4 Provides trained staff to hospital eye clinics to give support and advice to people at the point of diagnosis;

5 Maintains Sight Centres around the County so that visually impaired people can learn about new aids to living and try them out before purchasing them;

6 Runs a home-visiting service for newly registered visually impaired people; and

7 Produces a bi-monthly newsletter.

The Charity's community work operates under the name of 'Essex Sight'.

Further details of these and other aspects of the Charity's work will be covered in later sections.

Public Benefit

In accordance with their duties in the Charity's Act 2006, it is incumbent on the Directors to conduct a Public Benefit Test, to assess whether the Charity has complied with its duties in due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

The Directors are satisfied that Essex Blind Charity has complied with its duty in regards to the Public Benefit Test over the past year, based on the four principles in the Commission's Guidance.

1 There must be an identifiable benefit:
Essex Blind Charity's purposes are to provide support and relief to any member of the public who has concerns about sight loss, blindness or partial vision. Its services benefit a large number of the general public in Essex.

2 Benefit must be to the public or a section of the public:
All the Charity's services are open to members of the public at large and access to the Charity's services are not restrictive.

3 People on low incomes must be able to benefit:
The Board of Directors recognises that many visually impaired people are on low incomes, as people with impaired vision are more likely to be unemployed in comparison to fully sighted people. In addition many do not avail themselves of their benefit entitlements. Essex Blind Charity does not make a charge for its services of support and advice and offers its services to the public at large free of charge.

4 Any private benefit must be incidental:
The Directors do not consider that any individual or organisation receives a 'private benefit' from the work of Essex Blind Charity.

Service Delivery – Achievements and Performance

Read House

The residential care home in Frinton-on-Sea is run by a Registered Manager and a Care Manager, who are overseen by the General Manager of the Charity. All staff undertake induction training and the necessary care training. Read House was delighted to receive an overall rating as 'Good', as well as 'Good' ratings for each of the 5 categories inspected (i.e., Caring, Effective, Safe, Responsive and Well Led) at the CQC Inspection which took place in November 2020. A subsequent review in March 2022 did not identify any evidence that the CQC needs to carry out an inspection or reassess their rating. The Board of Directors are grateful to the staff for their skills and enthusiastic efforts which have provided this excellent service for residents. The care home has its own designated website at www.readhouse.org.

Like many organisations, the Charity has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic which had a significant impact on the running of the Home and the operation of a community service throughout the year. Despite the challenges, the home and community service has operated throughout and managed to remain Covid Free until February 2021. All residents and 98% of staff have received both covid vaccinations.

Essex Sight

We are grateful to the ECL (Essex Cares Limited) and Essex Community Foundation, which have helped to fund our Community Services.

The Essex Sight team comprises a Community Services Manager and four Community Support Officers who have managed the charity's work for the community during the pandemic from home and on a rota at the Essex Sight office in Colchester to provide telephone support. All home visiting was changed to doorstep or garden visits to maintain social distancing guidelines, the Mobile Sight Centre and pop-up locations across the County were suspended and only Colchester Eye Clinic allowed ECLO support. Social activity was moved online with a 'zoom' coffee morning to keep clients in touch.

When permitted, the Sight Centre in Colchester operated a limited appointment only service to assist clients who could not be supported via telephone, online or by doorstep visit with all necessary covid guidelines adhered to.

Sight Centres

The pop-up sight centres were all suspended due to the pandemic, however Essex Sight plans on reopening them to help provide a readily accessible service, particularly for those who do not have online access. The mobile sight centre could only be used to support doorstep visits but will be back out supporting people in rurally isolated areas when permitted.

Community Hospital Eye Clinic Support

The charity has continued to support newly diagnosed patients through the Eye Clinic Liaison service in Colchester Eye Clinic (Colchester Primary care trust). The service provides newly diagnosed VI people and their relatives/carers the opportunity to discuss their situation with a trained officer and receive support and advice to help them cope with their daily lives. The Broomfield (low vision clinic) and ECLO support has remained suspended as has the ECLO service in Brentwood Community Hospital. We hope to provide support once the services reopen to outside agencies.

Services to the Community and Home Visiting

Home Visiting is an important and regular part of the charity's service, and it was important to maintain it albeit in a socially distanced format during the pandemic. The Community Support Team were able to maintain the face-to-face connection that is desperately needed by some clients who were particularly isolated

The charity was fortunate to have specialist equipment donated that is no longer required, especially electronic magnifiers, that are expensive to purchase. The team were able to advertise these items and deliver them to VI clients that would not normally be able to afford them.

Awareness Talks

Raising awareness within the wider community is an essential part of the Charity's work. We maintained a digital, print and spoken word presence throughout the pandemic to ensure visually impaired clients were aware of the support offered and the services that were still available to them.

Volunteers

The charity relies on volunteers to provide support; however, the majority have remained inactive this year. Regular contact has been maintained with them and they are looking forward to helping clients once again.

As these works have no quantifiable value this is not recognised in the financial statements.

Exhibitions

The charity was looking forward to celebrating its centenary with a presence at all the major community events in Essex to promote eye health and provide information on sight loss. Most of these events and the Charity's own annual exhibitions that demonstrate the latest equipment innovations have been postponed to 2022.

Website

Details about Essex Blind Charity's services can be found on the website at www.essexsight.org.uk and www.readhouse.org. This enables people to find out about services offered by the charity without having to travel to our Essex Sight Office or Read House. The Essex Sight website is accessible to visually impaired people and is very informative. The Read House website is in the process of being redeveloped and we are grateful for the expertise given by Hughes and Co. The charity also uses Facebook and twitter accounts to provide regular information and contact via social media.

Helpline

Essex Blind Charity maintains a phone line for anybody who needs information, advice, or emotional support to call and has remained a lifeline for many who were shielding or unable to use internet-based services.

Spotlight – Essex Blind Charity Newsletter

This newsletter goes out six times a year to more than 1,000 residents across the County. It provides a variety of information for visually impaired people and can be provided in large print, in audio form or by email. It is also available via our website. The audio description is very kindly provided by Chelmsford Talking Newspapers, to whom we are very grateful. Readers are encouraged to send in articles, and the local theatres and libraries use the newsletter to keep residents up to date with their events.

Partnership working

The Directors are pleased with the development of Essex Vision, which is the strategic group of sight loss organisations in Essex. The aim of the group is to champion the creation and implementation of a Vision Strategy in Essex.

The charity is also part of the Essex Sensory Community, a group of local sensory organisations who are funded by ECL to provide information, advice and guidance to those with sensory needs.

The charity is a member of Visionary, the collective body of sight loss organisations Nationally, attending regional and national meetings to keep up to date and share knowledge.

Financial Review

Reserves policy

Unrestricted funds are needed:

a. to provide funds which can be designated to specific projects to enable those projects to be undertaken at short notice.
b. to cover the costs of running the residential home in the short term, if there is an interruption in funding.
c. to cover administration and support costs.

The Directors consider it prudent that unrestricted reserves should be sufficient:

a. to avoid the necessity of realising fixed assets held for the Charity's use.
b. to cover the three months running costs of the residential home.

The Directors consider adequate funding exists presently to meet these requirements. They regularly review and monitor the situation.

Funds

The activities during the year resulted in a surplus of unrestricted funds of £8,768 (2020: £71,246 deficit) for the year.

There was a decrease in restricted fund balances at the year end, as a number of projects that had been interrupted as a result of the restrictions imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic were restarted. The deficit on restricted funds for the year was £1,369 (2020: £11,943 surplus). Restricted funds at the year-end totalled £14,003 (2020: £15,372).

Overall, there was a surplus in total funds of £7,399 (2020: £59,303 deficit).

Investment policy and objectives

Following the unexpected bequest of approximately £1m. in 2016, the Charity spent a considerable sum refurbishing Read House. The remaining £500,000 was available for investment and the Trustees decided that they wished this element of the bequest to be invested for the long term benefit of the Charity. The Charity required an income of approximately 3% of the initial capital invested and for capital growth (after investment charges) ahead of current inflation. To this extent, Epworth Investment Management Limited was appointed to manage the fund. Their brief is to reinvest the income and to provide an investment report each quarter giving returns in real terms and against chosen benchmarks. To date, Epworth's have more than met our expectations.

The Trustees have decreed that the Charity should not invest in munitions or tobacco companies but other than that would wish the Portfolio to have an ethical bias.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The Charity's plans are to continue to provide accommodation and support to the elderly visually impaired in the Essex area who need a residential home. Continuing its partnership in Essex Vision and the Essex Sensory Community, it intends to continue to encourage Essex County Council to improve its advice and support for visually impaired people. The Charity plans to continue to ensure all its RNIB trained Eye Clinic Liaison officers are effectively deployed in supporting Eye Clinics and to continue to encourage consultant ophthalmologists to recognise the value and make more effective use of our ECLO service. It is planned to develop an internet-based phone system to improve communication and response for clients

The charity was unable to celebrate its centenary (2020) as the planned events to mark this milestone in the charity's history have been cancelled due to the current restrictions due to Covid 19. It is hoped that they may resume in 2022.

In February 2021, the effects of the pandemic caused Read House to sadly loose half its residents. This was a devastating blow to the Charity on a personal level. Thanks to the Charity's investment policy, it was able to draw down funds to sustain Read House for the remainder of the year until by which time it had recovered financially. Essex Sight's service became much more outward facing with more time spent going out to clients, a greater demand for support whilst the permanent sight centre footfall dropped considerably. The Directors have reviewed how the Charity meets the needs of Visually Impaired people and in order to secure that is considering how best all the existing services can be delivered. There must be a focus in sustainability and service delivery to the beneficiaries of the charity so all alternatives as to how to best utilise the assets will be considered.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the Directors of Essex Blind Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees must prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charitable Company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charitable Company 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 accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK 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 Charitable Company will continue to operate.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charitable Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charitable Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees confirm that so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information (as defined by section 418(3) of the Companies Act 2006) of which the Charitable Company's auditors are unaware. They have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charitable Company's auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

A resolution to re-appoint Scrutton Bland LLP as auditors of the Charity will be put to the trustees.

ACCOUNTING EXEMPTIONS

In preparing this report the trustees have taken advantage of small companies exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

Signed for and on behalf of the Trustees

S M Mann JP
Trustee

R Jackson ACCA, CTA
Trustee

Approved by the Trustees on 8 April 2022

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Essex Blind Charity (the Charitable Company) for the year ended 30 April 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the Income and Expenditure Account), Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows, and related notes to the financial statements. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 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 Charitable Company's affairs as at 30 April 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Charitable Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained 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 entity'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 annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. 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. 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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees, which includes the Directors' Report prepared for company law purposes, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and

- the Report of the Trustees and the Directors' Report included within the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Charitable Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Annual Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion**:**

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or

- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or

- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or

- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 9 the trustees (who are also the directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they 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 Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the Charitable Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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.

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:

We identified areas of laws and regulations that could reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the financial statements from our general commercial and sector experience, through discussion with the trustees (as required by auditing standards), inspection of the Charitable Company's regulatory and legal correspondence and discussed with the trustees the policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations. We communicated identified laws and regulations throughout our team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit. The potential effect of these laws and regulations on the financial statements varies considerably.

Firstly, the Charitable Company is subject to laws and regulations that directly affect the financial statements including financial reporting legislation and taxation legislation and we assessed the extent of compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement items.

Secondly, the Charitable Company is subject to many other laws and regulations where the consequences of non-compliance could have a material effect on amounts or disclosures in the financial statements, for instance through the imposition of fines or litigation. We identified the following areas as those most likely to have such an effect: compliance with the requirements of The Quality Care Commission, health and safety, safeguarding rules, human rights and employment law and GDPR compliance. Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements (continued)

Audit procedures undertaken in response to the potential risks relating to irregularities (which include fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations) comprised of: enquiries of management and those charged with governance as to whether the company complies with such regulations, enquiries of management and those charged with governance concerning any actual or potential litigation or claims, inspection of any relevant legal documentation, review of board minutes, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and the performance of analytical review to identify any unexpected movements in account balances which may be indicative of fraud.

No instances of material non-compliance were identified.

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 for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Charitable Company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Charitable Company'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 Charitable Company and the Charitable Company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Scrutton Bland LLP

TIMOTHY O'CONNOR (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of
SCRUTTON BLAND LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
820 The Crescent
Colchester Business Park
Colchester
Essex
CO4 9YQ

Date: 19/04/2022

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2020 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	3	**79,835**	**87,638**	**167,473**	105,279
Charitable activities	4	**1,298,977**	**-**	**1,298,977**	1,318,432
Other trading activities	5	**759**	**-**	**759**	9,740
Investments	6	**11,385**	**-**	**11,385**	17,842
Total income		**1,390,956**	**87,638**	**1,478,594**	1,451,293
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	7	**2,965**	**-**	**2,965**	6,666
Charitable activities	8	**1,467,392**	**89,307**	**1,556,699**	1,448,760
Total expenditure		**1,470,357**	**89,307**	**1,559,664**	1,455,426
Realised and unrealised gains/(losses) on investments		**88,469**	**-**	**88,469**	(55,170)
Net income/(expenditure)		**9,068**	**(1,669)**	**7,399**	(59,303)
Transfers between funds		**(300)**	**300**	**-**	-
Net movement in funds		**8,768**	**(1,369)**	**7,399**	(59,303)
Total funds brought forward at 1 May 2020		**2,504,467**	**15,372**	**2,519,839**	2,579,142
Total funds carried forward at 30 April 2021		**£ 2,513,235**	**£ 14,003**	**£ 2,527,238**	£ 2,519,839

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 APRIL 2021

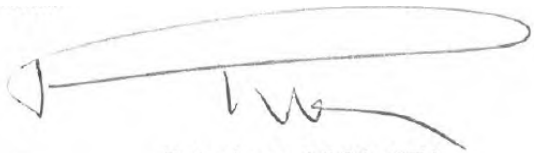
	Notes	Total Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2020 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	12	**1,936,592**	1,937,179
Investments	13	**500,295**	501,010
		2,436,887	2,438,189
Current assets			
Stocks	14	**25,139**	24,111
Debtors – due within one year	15	**11,939**	42,124
Cash and cash equivalents		**133,109**	68,255
		170,187	134,490
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	**(79,836)**	(52,840)
Net current assets		**90,351**	81,650
Net assets		**£ 2,527,238**	£ 2,519,839
Income funds			
Restricted funds	18	**14,003**	15,372
Unrestricted funds	18	**2,513,235**	2,504,467
		£ 2,527,238	£ 2,519,839

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies' regime. In the directors' opinion the Charitable Company is entitled to these exemptions as a small company.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 8 April 2022 and signed on its behalf by:



S M Mann JP - Trustee



R Jackson – ACCA, CTA

Company registration number: 05098747
Charity registration number: 1103732

ESSEX BLIND CHARITY

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net movements in funds	**7,399**	(59,303)
Depreciation of tangible assets	**10,076**	10,333
Loss on disposal of tangible assets	**-**	368
Interest received	**(424)**	(976)
Unrealised investment (gain)/loss	**(88,469)**	55,170
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	**(1,028)**	1,750
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	**30,185**	(28,630)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	**26,996**	(34,300)
Net cash from operating activities	**(15,265)**	(55,588)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Interest received	**424**	976
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	**(9,489)**	(24,238)
Purchase of investments	**(26,100)**	(52,500)
Sale of investments	**114,300**	77,430
Net cash generated in investing activities	**79,135**	1,668
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	**63,870**	(53,920)
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward	**75,273**	129,193
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward	**139,143**	£ 75,273
Represented by:		
Cash in hand and at bank	**133,109**	68,255
Cash held in investment	**6,034**	7,018
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward	**£ 139,143**	£ 75,273

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Essex Blind Charity is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, registered company number 05098747 and registered Charity number 1103732. The address of the registered office is Read House, 23 The Esplanade, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, CO13 9AU.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in pounds sterling and rounded to the nearest £1.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern.

The following principal accounting policies have been applied:

Income

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the Charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Legacy gifts are recognised following the granting of probate when the administrator/executor for the estate has communicated in writing both the amount and settlement date.

Grants are accounted for when the Charity has sufficient entitlement to them.

Expenditure

All expenditure included in the Statement of Financial Activities are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Expenditure on raising funds includes the expenditure associated with the sale of visual aids.

Expenditure on charitable activities includes the expenditure associated with the Residential Home.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES - (continued)

Fixed assets

Fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected lives on the following basis:

Freehold land & buildings	-	nil
Fixtures and fittings	-	20% reducing balance
Motor vehicles	-	25% reducing balance

Contrary to the accounting requirement of the Companies Act 2006, depreciation is not provided in respect of the Charity's freehold buildings. The trustees are of the opinion that this is necessary to give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Charity. The ongoing maintenance work undertaken keeps properties in a continual state of repair and accordingly the trustees' opinion is that the life of the property is so long and residual values so high that their depreciation is insignificant.

Leasing commitments

Rentals under operating leases are charged through the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Investments

Investments are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their market value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and shown in the heading 'Realised and unrealised investment gains/(losses) on investments' in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Stock

Stock is valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items. The Charity holds display stock for visual aids, these items are being written down over a 5 year period.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash equivalents are recognised as such and included with other cash balances where they represent short term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash without being subject to a significant change in value.

Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the Charity. Contributions payable to the scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES - (continued)

Financial instruments

The Charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Taxation

Essex Blind Charity is a Charity within the meaning of the Charities Act 2011 and as such is a Charity within the meaning of Part 11, Corporation Tax Act 2010. Accordingly Essex Blind Charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Part 11, Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to its charitable purposes.

Funds

Unrestricted general funds are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees. Restricted funds are funds that can only be used in accordance with specific conditions specified by the donor. Further details are provided in note 18.

Significant judgements and estimates

The more significant judgements and estimates involved in the preparation of the financial statements include assessing the depreciation rates applicable to tangible fixed assets and the way in which certain costs should be apportioned. Further details regarding these points are included within the accounting policies.

3 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Restricted Funds £**	**Total Funds 2021 £**
Donations	**2,936**	**4,353**	**7,289**
Legacies	**21,465**	**-**	**21,465**
Grants received	**14,895**	**83,285**	**98,180**
Government grant received	**40,539**	**-**	**40,539**
	£ 79,835	**£ 87,638**	**£ 167,473**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2020 £
Donations	3,350	639	3,989
Legacies	29,229	-	29,229
Grants received	14,895	38,423	53,318
Government grant received	18,743	-	18,743
	£ 66,217	£ 39,062	£ 105,279

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Restricted Funds £**	**Total Funds 2021 £**
Grants received were as follows:			
Essex Cares Limited	**14,895**	**-**	**14,895**
Workplace Capacity Fund	**-**	**2,600**	**2,600**
Infection Control	**-**	**68,285**	**68,285**
LFT Grant	**-**	**12,400**	**12,400**
	£ 14,895	**£ 83,285**	**£ 98,180**

3 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES - continued

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2020 £
Grants received were as follows:			
Essex Cares Limited	14,895	-	14,895
Colchester Catalyst	-	22,828	22,828
Yellow Car Charitable Fund	-	4,992	4,992
Malcolm and Beryl Cook Foundation	-	3,974	3,974
Saffron Building Society	-	4,147	4,147
iBCF	-	2,482	2,482
	£ 14,895	£ 38,423	£ 53,318

All grants support the key objective of enabling people with sight loss to remain independent and safe.

4 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2021 £**
Residential home	**1,298,135**	**1,298,135**
Day care	**608**	**608**
Day centre	**(31)**	**(31)**
Other activities	**265**	**265**
	£ 1,298,977	**£ 1,298,977**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2020 £
Residential home	1,280,964	1,280,964
Day care	24,696	24,696
Day centre	12,472	12,472
Other activities	300	300
	£ 1,318,432	£ 1,318,432

5 INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Restricted Funds £**	**Total Funds 2021 £**
Visual aids	**757**	**-**	**757**
Others	**2**	**-**	**2**
	£ 759	**-**	**£ 759**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2020 £
Visual aids	7,565	-	7,565
Others	2,105	70	2,175
	£ 9,670	£ 70	£ 9,740

6 INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS

	2021 £	**2020 £**
Interest receivable	**424**	976
Dividends receivable	**10,961**	16,866
	£ 11,385	£ 17,842

7 RAISING FUNDS

	2021 £	**2020 £**
Visual aids – net of stock adjustment	**2,788**	6,524
Investment management costs	**177**	142
	£ 2,965	£ 6,666

8 CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2021 £	2020 £
Residential home and day centre	**1,542,839**	1,434,805
Governance costs (note 9)	**13,860**	13,955
	£ 1,556,699	£ 1,448,760

9 GOVERNANCE COSTS

	2021 £	2020 £
Subscriptions and registration fees	**6,510**	6,605
Auditors' remuneration	**5,100**	5,100
Auditors' remuneration for non-audit work	**2,250**	2,250
	£ 13,860	£ 13,955

10 NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

	2021 £	2020 £
This is stated after charging:		
Auditors' remuneration	**5,950**	5,750
Depreciation – owned assets	**£ 10,076**	£ 10,333

11 STAFF COSTS

	2021 £	2020 £
Wages and salaries	**1,122,023**	1,039,366
National insurance contributions	**71,834**	64,968
Pension costs	**18,156**	17,091
Pension administration	**4,680**	4,260
	£ 1,216,693	£ 1,125,685

The average number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2021	2020
Management	**2**	3
Administration	**3**	3
Community Services personnel	**5**	5
Care home staff	**58**	58
	68	69

No employee received emoluments in excess of £60,000 in the year (2020: None). Pension costs are wholly charged to unrestricted funds.

There were no Trustees' remuneration, expenses or other benefits for professional or other services supplied to the Charity for the year ended 30 April 2021, nor for the year ended 30 April 2020.

The aggregate remuneration of key management personnel was £30,858 (2020: £30,442).

Indemnity insurance is maintained covering the Board of Trustees in their capacity as trustees.

12 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold property £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor Vehicles £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 May 2020	**1,900,000**	**48,761**	**21,981**	**1,970,742**
Additions	**-**	**9,489**	**-**	**9,489**
Disposals	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
At 30 April 2021	**1,900,000**	**58,250**	**21,981**	**1,980,231**
Depreciation				
At 1 May 2020	**-**	**28,068**	**5,495**	**33,563**
Charge for the year	**-**	**5,955**	**4,121**	**10,076**
Disposals	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
At 30 April 2021	**-**	**34,023**	**9,616**	**43,639**
Net book value				
At 30 April 2021	**£ 1,900,000**	**£ 24,227**	**£ 12,365**	**£ 1,936,592**
At 30 April 2020	£ 1,900,000	£ 20,693	£ 16,486	£ 1,937,179

The freehold property was valued on 26 May 2015 on an existing value basis. The valuation was carried out by Karl Hines MRICS of Christie & Co. The valuation of £1,900,000 was incorporated in these accounts.

The historical cost of the freehold property is £1,921,076.

13 FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

	2021 £	2020 £
Movement in fixed asset investments		
Market value brought forward at 1 May 2020	**501,010**	574,371
Additions to investment at cost	**26,100**	52,500
Disposals	**(114,300)**	(77,430)
Gain/(loss) on revaluation	**88,469**	(55,170)
(Decrease)/increase in cash held	**(984)**	6,739
Market value carried forward at 30 April 2021	**£ 500,295**	£ 501,010
Investment portfolio at market value comprised		
Property Income Trust for Charities	**59,804**	62,439
EP Corporate Bond Income Fund	**73,929**	60,829
EP Global Equity Income Fund	**39,879**	29,585
EP UK Equity Income Fund	**320,649**	341,139
Cash held by Investment Manager	**6,034**	7,018
	£ 500,295	£ 501,010

14 STOCK

	2021 £	2020 £
Medical and domestic supplies	**8,328**	4,049
Food	**2,589**	3,592
Visual aids – resale stocks	**11,973**	11,973
Visual aids – display stocks	**2,249**	4,497
	£ 25,139	£ 24,111

15 DEBTORS

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade debtors	**6,994**	35,608
Government Grants	**-**	1,089
Prepayments and accrued income	**4,945**	5,427
	£ 11,939	£ 42,124

16 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade creditors	**41,113**	12,783
Social security and other taxes	**15,518**	16,183
Other creditors	**7,309**	4,072
Accruals and deferred income	**15,896**	19,802
	£ 79,836	£ 52,840

17 DEFERRED INCOME

	2021 £	2020 £
Balance as at 1 May 2020	**-**	2,482
Amount received	**-**	-
Amount released to income	**-**	(2,482)
Balance as at 30 April 2021	**-**	-

18 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	Balance at 1 May 2020 £	Incoming resources £	Expenditure including gains/(losses) £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at 30 April 2021 £
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	264,187	**1,389,821**	**(1,470,357)**	**938**	**184,589**
Designated funds					
Essex support 5 year plan	300,000	**-**	**-**	**-**	**300,000**
Read House	8,000	**1,135**	**-**	**(1,238)**	**7,897**
Essex support exit strategy fund	25,000	**-**	**-**	**-**	**25,000**
Investment revaluation reserve	7,280	**-**	**88,469**	**-**	**95,749**
Designated property asset fund	1,900,000	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1,900,000**
	2,504,467	**1,390,956**	**(1,381,888)**	**(300)**	**2,513,235**
Restricted Funds					
Residents amenities at Read House	3,019	**1,345**	**(3,581)**	**-**	**783**
Mobile Sight Centre	4,147	**-**	**-**	**-**	**4,147**
Brentwood Community Hospital Project	3,312	**-**	**-**	**-**	**3,312**
Extended provision in Chelmsford	4,160	**-**	**-**	**-**	**4,160**
Staff fund	734	**3,008**	**(2,441)**	**300**	**1,601**
Workplace Capacity grant	**-**	**2,600**	**(2,600)**	**-**	**-**
Infection control grant	**-**	**68,285**	**(68,285)**	**-**	**-**
LFT grant	**-**	**12,400**	**(12,400)**	**-**	**-**
	15,372	**87,638**	**(89,307)**	**300**	**14,003**
	£ 2,519,839	**£ 1,478,594**	**£ (1,471,195)**	**-**	**£ 2,527,238**

The general fund represents the free funds of the Charity which are not designated for a particular purpose.

18 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

	Balance at 1 May 2019 £	Incoming resources £	Expenditure including gains/(losses) £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at 30 April 2020 £
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	277,759	1,411,053	(1,447,453)	22,828	264,187
Designated funds					
Essex support 5 year plan	300,000	-	-	-	300,000
Read House	10,504	1,108	(3,612)	-	8,000
Essex support exit strategy fund	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Investment revaluation reserve	62,450	-	(55,170)	-	7,280
Designated property asset fund	1,900,000	-	-	-	1,900,000
	2,575,713	1,412,161	(1,506,235)	22,828	2,504,467
Restricted Funds					
Residents amenities at Read House	3,334	70	(385)	-	3,019
Mobile Sight Centre	-	24,147	-	(20,000)	4,147
Kitchen project	-	2,828	-	(2,828)	-
Brentwood Community Hospital Project	-	3,974	(662)	-	3,312
Extended provision in Chelmsford	-	4,992	(832)	-	4,160
iCBF	-	2,482	(2,482)	-	-
Staff fund	95	639	-	-	734
	3,429	39,132	(4,361)	(22,828)	15,372
	£ 2,579,142	£ 1,451,293	£ (1,510,596)	-	£ 2,519,839

The general fund represents the free funds of the Charity which are not designated for a particular purpose.

18 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Essex support 5 year plan fund is to provide half the cost of the community services over a five year period, in order to attract matching grant funding for the balance.

Essex support exit strategy fund is a worse case scenario and the cost of ceasing the community services altogether.

The Read House fund represents donations received in memory of residents of the House. These are set aside by the Charity to be used for resident amenities.

The investment revaluation reserve represents cumulative realised and unrealised investment gains and losses on investments.

The designated property asset fund is represented by the fair value of the freehold property owned by the Charity.

Residents amenities fund represents funds raised specifically for residents' amenities (entertainment, outings, etc). The staff fund represents donations for the staff at Read House.

The Mobile Sight Centre project relates to funding received from Colchester Catalyst and the Saffron Building Society Fund, the vehicle was purchased by the year end but other capital works are yet to be carried out.

The Kitchen Project relates to funding received from Colchester Catalyst and was complete in the prior year.

The Extended Provision in Chelmsford fund relates to a grant from The Yellow Car Charitable Fund for sight services.

The Brentwood Community Hospital project relates to a grant from The Malcolm and Beryl Cook Foundation and is being carried out jointly with the Blind and Visual Sight Impaired Society (BASIS)

The staff fund represents money received to be used directly for the benefit of individuals employed by the charity.

The workplace capacity grant is to support new expenditure that delivers additional staff capacity.

The infection control grant is to provide funding to improve infection control and therefore reduce the rate of Covid-19 transmission.

The LFT grant (adult social care rapid testing fund) is to support additional rapid testing of staff in care homes and to support visiting professionals and enable indoors, close contact visiting where possible.

19 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Tangible fixed assets £	Investments £	Net current assets £	2021 Total £
Restricted funds	**-**	**-**	**14,003**	**14,003**
Unrestricted funds	**1,936,592**	**500,295**	**76,348**	**2,513,235**
	£ 1,936,592	**£ 500,295**	**£ 90,351**	**£ 2,527,238**

	Tangible fixed assets £	Investments £	Net current assets £	2020 Total £
Restricted funds	-	-	15,372	15,372
Unrestricted funds	1,937,179	501,010	66,278	2,504,467
	£ 1,937,179	£ 501,010	£ 81,650	£ 2,519,839

20 OPERATING LEASES

At 30 April 2021 the total commitments under non-cancellable operating leases were as follows:

	2021 £	2020 £
Expiry date:		
Within one year	**28,663**	28,663
Between two and five years	**64,781**	80,748
Later than five years	**-**	12,696
	£ 93,444	£ 122,107

During the year, the Charity incurred expenditure of £16,210 (2020 : £16,832) relating to operating leases.

21 CONTROLLING PARTY

The Charitable Company was under the control of the trustees during the year.

22 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

No related party transactions incurred during the year (2020 : None).