

# **THE CHRISTOPHER CENTRE**

## **Trustees' Report**

For the year ended 31 March 2024

### **Administrative Information**

The Christopher Centre is a company limited by guarantee, registration no: 6173167 and registered with the Charity Commission no. 1120942.

The Christopher Centre, 10 Gainsborough Street, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2EU

#### ***Trustees***

Robin Hodgkinson (Chairperson) (SAVO CIC)

Jennifer Wilkins

Kathleen Leigh

David Lowe (Treasurer)

Karoline Wells

Susan Ayres

Dave Sullivan

Jesse Carter

Belinda Green

Jan Osborne (appointed December 2023)

#### ***Centre Co-ordinators***

Linda Adams

Kathy Lee-Rimmer

#### ***Company Secretary***

David Lowe

#### ***Cleaner***

Gregory Bishop

Sarah Dovell

#### ***Volunteers***

**Receptionists:** Jane Benton, Sarah Dovell, Belinda Green, Sue Howting, Jenny Ince, Jennie Wilkins, Lizzie Alexander, Jen Mullan MBE, Jolanta Giudici, Ann Crowther, Beverly Freeman and Liz Ward.

**Volunteer Handyman:** Niall Hennessy

**Volunteer Graphic designer:** M J Watts

**Volunteer Photographer/Website Adviser:** Ian Matthews

**Volunteer Gardener:** Lee Young

## **Structure, Governance & Management**

### **1. Nature of governing document**

The activities of *The Christopher Centre* are governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association that were incorporated by Companies House on 20 March 2007 and approved by the Charity Commission on 21 September 2007.

### **2. Recruitment and appointment of trustees**

The trustees and staff are always on the lookout for potential new trustees who can bring their skills and expertise to assist in the organisation's governance. Potential trustees have access to both the chair and the manager to discuss their involvement. When recruited, new trustees are inducted through meetings and an induction pack, which not only covers information about the organisation but their roles and responsibilities as trustees.

### **3. Review of the financial position**

Total income for 2023/4 was £66,495 an increase of £15,719 on the previous year due to an increase in rent & user charges, increased use of rooms hired and more fundraising and successful grant applications.

Expenditure for 2023/4 was £61,540, an increase of £9,545 on 2022/23.

The net result was an increase of £4,955 in the fund balances carried forward to £36,534. This is a large improvement of the overall financial position.

### **4. Financial Management**

The Christopher Centre accounts are managed by a Treasurer who is one of the trustees.

Bank accounts continue to be held at the Sudbury branch of Barclays Bank. All cheques require two signatories. The signatories are Robin Hodgkinson (Chair) and Jennie Wilkins, replaced by Belinda Green, in addition to the Treasurer.

The systems of internal control include written reports submitted by the Treasurer at the quarterly trustees' meetings. Also, consideration of the financial results and forecasting of possible funding shortfalls are discussed in detail at trustee meetings.

### **5. Reserve Policy**

The Christopher Centre has built up a reserve for possible redundancies (£3000). There is also a general reserve fund of £31,402, which includes a maintenance contingency.

## **6. Risk analysis and plan**

There are a number of areas that the Trustees consider as potential risks. These are as follows:

- a. The Christopher Centre Building – being an old building there is always a risk of the need for major structural repairs.
- b. The Christopher Centre Users – losing potential hirers of office accommodation and meeting rooms always remains a risk. Organisations' and people's circumstances change and this is obviously out of our hands. The Trustees ensure that rents and meeting room charges are kept at a competitive level to avoid losing users who might otherwise remain. However, office users who do decide to vacate the accommodation, are required to give three months' notice of their intention and this provides a reasonable window of opportunity to find a replacement.
- c. Energy costs – Energy costs have only slightly increased in the year since having a more efficient boiler purchased last year.

## **7. Funding**

The running of the Christopher Centre is financed from renting out office space and casual hire of rooms for meetings and community activities and the occasional donation or grant.

A number of donations were also received totalling £1,341.

We are very grateful to all our benefactors for their support and encouragement.

## **8. Objectives and Activities**

The Christopher Centre's objects are primarily for the benefit of the inhabitants of the district of Babergh and surrounding areas (in practice, the Sudbury district) to:

- o provide premises for the use of local and community groups, advance education through the provision of advice, advocacy, guidance, training, resources and associated activities
- o facilitate and encourage opportunities for local and community groups to come together to identify charitable need, express views on matters of local interest and to establish projects or policies to meet these needs. This includes running its own activities such as drop-ins, a community choir, a vegan supper club, arts and crafts activities.
- o develop the capacity and skills of said inhabitants in such ways as is thought fit, and particularly to enhance voluntary participation within the area of benefit
- o develop and promote community services for said inhabitants who are in need of such a service because of age, sickness or disability (mental or physical), or poverty, or because of a lack or availability of adequate and safe public services

- o improve or assist in the improvement of the physical and social environment in an effort to enhance the quality of life for said inhabitants.

The Christopher Centre has continued to fulfil its objects in a number of ways:

- by providing office space within the building for affordable and reasonable rents for a number of different voluntary and community groups
- by providing rooms available for hire by voluntary, community and statutory local groups
- by offering space free of charge within the reception area for local groups and services to promote their work, display leaflets and posters etc
- by utilising volunteers as reception staff who have a good knowledge of the local area and who can therefore offer information about local activities.
- by looking at ways of supporting or setting up community groups to help people who are disadvantaged or vulnerable to provide them with opportunities to learn new skills, make friends and build their confidence and self-esteem.

## **9. Meeting the Principles of Public Benefit**

The Christopher Centre has continued to fulfil its objects in a number of ways:

- through its facilities, activities and information services which are open to all voluntary and community groups, The Christopher Centre provides services which help local groups to meet, exchange information and develop their own services to a wide variety of people within the local community. It also develops its own services to help vulnerable and isolated members of the community through activities such as the Monday morning Drop-in Coffee and Chat, the Monday lunchtime Community Lunches, the Community Choir, monthly Community Markets etc.
- it provides a community resource which members of the public can visit to find out information about local groups, events and services.
- The Christopher Centre is a Grade 2 listed building and the staff, volunteers and trustee board are therefore maintaining and preserving an important piece of Sudbury heritage, ensuring that any improvements and refurbishments made are in keeping with local heritage regulations.

## **10. Achievements & Performance**

2023/2024 has probably been the busiest year we have ever had at the Centre with a host of new hirers booking rooms for their meetings and activities. These include Macmillan Cancer Support, 3 new therapists, Babergh Housing, Turning Point, After School Art Class, a Life drawing Class, the WI, Creative writing classes, a Lego Group and a U3 Class in Sign Language. This has almost all been due to the tireless efforts of our wonderful Centre Co-ordinators, Linda Adams and Kathy Lee-Rimmer who

have been brilliant in publicising the Centre and welcoming new groups into the fold. In addition, the Centre's own group activities continue to flourish – the Monday morning coffee mornings and community lunch continues to attract good numbers, the monthly menopause group regularly attracts 20 people with a list of high-profile speakers. The Community Singers and the Vegan Supper group continue to flourish. In addition, regular users like the Diabetic Eye Clinic have extended their bookings and several commercial companies have used the centre for their training.

The Centre has also put on its own events, including two successful quiz evenings in July and December, the latter event's catering provided by Fig and Olive. Questions were set by the Centre's Chairman who kept the evenings fun and light-hearted. Kathy and Linda also promoted a number of art exhibitions and sales of local artists' work as well as a Christmas market.

The Centre was recognised in various ways. Our wonderful receptionists were joint winners of the Group of Volunteers award at the Sudbury Volunteers award in Summer 2023. Roys made the centre its charity of the year for 2024 and the Mayor kindly agreed to the Christopher Centre being one of her two charities of the year (alongside the Kernos Centre). In addition the centre also benefitted from TOAST, who donated coffee to the centre for both staff and users.

Various maintenance jobs were undertaken during the year. The Weavers Room was refurbished, the tree in the car park was cut back and new laptops were purchased for staff. On a less positive note, the bad weather and heavy rain in the autumn and winter led to flooding problems at the front of the building. Sadly, although representations have been made to Suffolk County Council to improve the drainage on the main road, the underlying problem has not been rectified. On a more positive note, the Christopher Lane residents raised the money to install a defibrillator at the centre and a training course was run to learn how to use it.

There were various personnel changes at the end of the year. David Lowe stepped down as Treasurer, though he will continue as a trustee. We were delighted to welcome David Holmes as our new Treasurer. After many years of handling all the booking invoices, Jennie Wilkins stepped down and Belinda Green took on this role, alongside becoming a finance signatory. We were also delighted to welcome Jan Osborne as a new trustee.

Work has also been undertaken to re-brand the centre and update the website. This work was completed in the Autumn and has drawn high praise from the public.

The Centre received various grants that have allowed many of the above groups and plans to take shape. Two separate grants (totalling £5,000) came from Suffolk Community Foundation to pay for extra hours worked by the Centre Co-ordinators, £500 was received from Magic Little Star, £750 came from the closure of the Sudbury Market Town Partnership (£250 of which went to the Depot), £820 from Suffolk Town Council for replacement of lights and £1000 from the Mayor's Charity Fund.

Gregory Bishop retired in early 2024 after many years working as the Centre's cleaner. Part of the reason for the success of the centre has been because of the high standard of cleanliness within the building, thanks to

Gregory's hard work. This standard has been maintained by our new cleaner, Sarah Dovell.

We would like to thank all the volunteers who have contributed to a very successful year, whether helping out at reception, keeping the outside building tidy, doing odd jobs or helping with publicity and marketing.

## **11. Future Plans**

The Centre will continue to offer an excellent service to the local community and through increased marketing, will attract even more hirers to the building. In October the Centre will be celebrating 30 years of its existence with a special tea party. It will also launch a new volunteering service, helping to place volunteers with local organisations. During the year a new lease agreement will be developed with Sudbury Common Lands Charity who own the building. Although the annual rent will be going up (after 10 years of nil rises), the trustees of the Common Lands Charity have agreed to stagger this rise over three years.

I would finally pay tribute to my fellow trustees, who have discharged their duties and responsibilities as trustees and directors with pragmatism and good sense. In particular I would like to thank David Lowe for his excellent work in looking after the finances and to Jennie Wilkins who has been managing the invoices of hirers and office users over many years. Thanks must also go to Adrian Walters and the Sudbury Common Lands Trustees for their help during the year and also to those who have donated money or given grants to The Christopher Centre.



Robin Hodgkinson  
Chairperson

September 2024

## **Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Christopher Centre**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 March 2024 which are set out on pages 7 to 11.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

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

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

### **Independent examiner's statement**

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

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

*Signed:*

Name: Nick Farr FCA  
Moore Green

Address: 22 Friars Street  
Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2AA

Date:

**The Christopher Centre**  
(Registered Charity No: 1120942)

**Statement of Financial Activities for the Year ended 31 March 2024**

|                                 | Note<br>s | Unrestrict<br>ed<br>Funds | Restrict<br>ed<br>Funds | 2024   | 2023   |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------|
| <b>Income &amp; Expenditure</b> |           |                           |                         |        |        |
| <b>Incoming Resources</b>       |           |                           |                         |        |        |
| Voluntary income                | 2a        | 1,341                     |                         | 1,341  | 530    |
| Activities for generating funds | 2b        | 1,161                     |                         | 1,161  | -      |
| Income from investments         | 2c        | 327                       |                         | 327    | 59     |
| Charitable activities           | 2d        | 56,380                    | 7,286                   | 63,666 | 50,187 |
| Other incoming resources        | 2e        |                           |                         | -      | -      |

|                                           |    |               |              |               |               |
|-------------------------------------------|----|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Total Incoming resources</b>           |    | <u>59,209</u> | <u>7,286</u> | <u>66,495</u> | <u>50,776</u> |
| <b>Resources Expended</b>                 |    |               |              |               |               |
| Cost of generating voluntary income       | 3a | -             | -            | -             | -             |
| Fund raising trading costs                | 3b | -             | -            | -             | -             |
| Charitable activities                     | 3c | 53,279        | 6,996        | 60,275        | 50,945        |
| Governance costs                          | 3d | 1,265         |              | 1,265         | 1,050         |
| <b>Total Resources Expended</b>           |    | <u>54,544</u> | <u>6,996</u> | <u>61,540</u> | <u>51,995</u> |
| <b>Net movement in funds for the Year</b> |    | 4,665         | 290          | 4,955         | (1,219)       |
| Fund Balances Brought Forward             |    | 26,737        | 4,842        | 31,579        | 32,798        |
| <b>Fund balances carried forward</b>      |    | <u>31,402</u> | <u>5,132</u> | <u>36,534</u> | <u>31,579</u> |

## The Christopher Centre

(Registered Charity No: 1120942)

### BALANCE SHEET as at 31 MARCH 2024

|                       | Note | 2024              | 2023              |
|-----------------------|------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                       | s    | £                 | £                 |
| <b>Fixed Assets</b>   |      |                   |                   |
| Tangible assets       |      | -                 | -                 |
|                       |      | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> |
| <b>Current Assets</b> |      |                   |                   |
| Bank Current Account  |      | 9,703             | 4,771             |
| Tracker Account       | 6    | 27,518            | 27,191            |
| Petty Cash            |      | 63                | 152               |



|             |               |               |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| Prepayments | -             | -             |
| Debtors     | -             | -             |
|             | <u>37,284</u> | <u>32,114</u> |

### Current Liabilities

|           |              |            |
|-----------|--------------|------------|
| Creditors | -            | -          |
| Accruals  | 7 <u>750</u> | <u>535</u> |
|           | <u>750</u>   | <u>535</u> |

### Net Assets

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| <u>36,534</u> | <u>31,579</u> |
|---------------|---------------|

Represented by

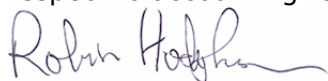
### Funds

|                        |               |               |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Unrestricted (General) | 31,402        | 26,737        |
| Restricted             | 5,132         | 4,842         |
|                        | <u>36,534</u> | <u>31,579</u> |

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with FRS 102. The Financial Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, the company was entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476. The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the act with respect to accounting records and preparation of financial statements.



Robin Hodgkinson – Chairperson

The notes form part of these financial statements.

**The Christopher Centre**  
(Registered Charity No: 1120942)

### Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024

#### 1 Accounting Policies

- The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance
- a with applicable accounting standards. Income is not anticipated, but recognised in the Statement of Financial
- b Activities only when it is received. Grants and donations are credited to income in the year to which they relate.
- c Full provision is made for all known liabilities (expenses and losses) whether the

amount

is known with certainty or is a best estimate in the light of the information available.

Only fixed assets under five years of age are capitalised and

d depreciation is calculated

on a straight-line basis from the year of purchase so as to reduce their value to nil at the

end of five years. Computer equipment is depreciated over three years.

|                              | Unrestricted<br>Funds | Restricted<br>Funds | Total<br>2024 | Total<br>2023 |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>2 Incoming Resources</b>  |                       |                     |               |               |
| a Voluntary income           |                       |                     |               |               |
| Donations                    | 1341                  |                     | 1341          | 530           |
| Activities for generating    |                       |                     |               |               |
| b funds                      |                       |                     |               |               |
| Fund raising                 | 1161                  |                     | 1161          | 0             |
| c Income from investments    |                       |                     |               |               |
| Bank interest                | 327                   |                     | 327           | 59            |
| d Charitable activities      |                       |                     |               |               |
| Grants                       | 7330                  | 7286                | 14616         | 6334          |
| Other income                 |                       |                     | 0             | 17            |
| Rent & user charges          | 49050                 |                     | 49050         | 43836         |
| e Other incoming resources   | 0                     |                     | 0             | 0             |
| Total Incoming Resources     | <u>59209</u>          | <u>7286</u>         | <u>66495</u>  | <u>50776</u>  |
| <b>3 Resources Expended</b>  |                       |                     |               |               |
| a Cost of generating         |                       |                     |               |               |
| voluntary income             | 0                     | 0                   | 0             | 0             |
| b Fund raising trading costs | 0                     |                     | 0             | 0             |
| c Charitable activities      |                       |                     |               |               |
| Restricted grant             |                       | 6996                | 6996          | 6435          |
| Salaries                     | 17505                 |                     | 17505         | 14091         |
| Travel expenses              | 0                     |                     | 0             | 0             |
| Council tax & waste          | 1699                  |                     | 1699          | 1915          |
| Rent                         | 15646                 |                     | 15646         | 16326         |
| Stationery & postage         | 721                   |                     | 721           | 564           |
| Telephone                    | 1282                  |                     | 1282          | 1274          |
| Advertising                  | 289                   |                     | 289           | 0             |
| Volunteer expenses           | 457                   |                     | 457           | 515           |
| Repairs & maintenance        | 5152                  |                     | 5152          | 1936          |
| Gas, electric & water        | 5855                  |                     | 5855          | 4861          |
| Furniture & equipment        | 2282                  |                     | 2282          | 1997          |
| Cleaning                     | 825                   |                     | 825           | 207           |
| Other admin                  | 996                   |                     | 996           | 824           |
| Depreciation                 | 0                     |                     | 0             | 0             |
|                              | <u>52709</u>          | <u>6996</u>         | <u>59705</u>  | <u>50945</u>  |
| Governance costs             |                       |                     |               |               |
| d Independent examination    | 1265                  | 0                   | 1265          | 1050          |
| Company House                | 0                     |                     | 0             | 0             |
|                              | <u>1265</u>           | <u>0</u>            | <u>1265</u>   | <u>1050</u>   |

|                          |              |             |              |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total Resources Expended | <u>53974</u> | <u>6996</u> | <u>60970</u> | <u>51995</u> |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|

#### **Donations**

Donations received from private individuals, local businesses and charitable trusts.

- 4 The amount  
does not include any Gift Aid tax refunds.

#### **Lease**

- 5 The 21 year lease for the Christopher Centre expired 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 and has been  
extended for a  
further 10 years with 3 yearly reviews. The current cost of the lease is now £14,000  
per annum,  
Paid quarterly with building insurance payments to the trustees of *the Sudbury  
Common Lands Charity*.

#### **Tracker Accounts**

- 6 The tracker account is an interest earning account with Barclays  
Bank.

#### **Accruals**

- 7 Expenses received after the year end which related to goods received or  
expenses incurred  
during the year ended  
31.3.24

#### **Trustee Remuneration & Related Party Transactions**

- 8 No member of the Trustee Board received any remuneration during the year.

No trustee or other person related to the charity had any personal interest in any contract  
or transaction entered into by the charity during the year (2023/4- nil).