

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

England & Wales · Charity number 1123023

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	06389120
Registered	2008-02-29
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	New Kings Court Tollgate Chandler's Ford Eastleigh Hampshire SO53 3LG
Phone	023 8090 8090
Email	cope_execofficer@publicationethics.org
Website	www.publicationethics.org

Activities

Objects: THE PROMOTION FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT OF ETHICAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND THE PUBLICATION OF SCIENCE JOURNALS

Activities: COPE is a forum for editors and publishers of scholarly journals to discuss all aspects of publication ethics. It also provides support, education, and advises editors on how to handle cases of research and publication misconduct.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** Education/training
- **Who:** Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** UNDEFINED. IN PRACTICE WORLDWIDE
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£638,162	£682,134	£343,304	4
2023-12-31	£565,669	£533,158	£387,276	4
2022-12-31	£524,742	£488,274	£354,127	3
2021-12-31	£461,119	£401,354	-	-
2020-12-31	£450,014	£396,988	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Dr Nancy Chescheir	Chair	2020-11-24
Daniel Kulp		2017-11-02
Dr Howard Browman		2022-09-01
Dr Marie Souliere		2026-03-05
Dr Susan Garfinkel		2023-08-07
Dr Trevor Lane		2022-10-02
Professor Ana Marusic		2026-03-05
Professor Emilio Jose Sanz Alvarez		2023-11-13
Professor Frits ROSENDAAL		2026-03-05
Rachel Safer		2025-05-01
Tim Kersjes		2022-09-06

Accounts

Registered number: 06389120
Charity number: 1123023

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS
UNAUDITED
TRUSTEES REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

Trustees

Daniel Kulp, Chair (became Past-Chair on 1 May 2025)
Nancy Chescheir (Vice-Chair) (became Chair on 1 May 2025)
Tara Lee Hoke, Secretary (stepped down at end of term on 1 May 2025)
Michael Wise, Treasurer (stepped down at end of term on 1 May 2025)
Caroline Porter
Deborah Kahn (Resigned 9 June 2024)
Tim Kersjes
Howard Browman
Trevor Lane
Susan Garfinkel
Emilio José Sanz Álvarez
James Williams Mwangi Kigera
Rachel Safer, Treasurer (appointed 1 May 2025)
Heather Tierney, Secretary (appointed 1 May 2025)

Company registered number

06389120

Charity registered number

1123023

Registered office

New Kings Court, Tollgate, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO53 3LG

Company secretary

Natalie Ridgeway, Executive Officer

Independent Examiner

Danielle Griffin, FCA, Moore (South) LLP, Suite 3, Second Floor, Friary Court, 13-21 High Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3DG

Bankers

Co-operative Bank plc, PO Box 250, Delf House, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

Solicitors

Blake Morgan, New Kings Court, Tollgate, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO53 3LG

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

The Trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their annual report together with the financial statements of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (the company) for the year ended 31 December 2024. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS102) second edition.

Structure, governance and management

- **Constitution**

The company is registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee and was set up by a Memorandum of Association on 3 October 2007 as amended by Special Resolutions dated 18 February 2008, 3 May 2011, 22 March 2013, 17 April 2015, 9 September 2015, 12 December 2019 and 25 September 2025, and is a registered charity number 1123023.

The Trustee Board and Council are the constitutional members of COPE.

The principal objects of the company are the promotion for the public benefit of ethical standards of conduct in research and ethical standards in the publication of scholarly journals.

- **Method of appointment or election of Trustees**

The Trustee Board (maximum of 12) consists of the Officers, namely: Chair; Vice-chair; Secretary; Treasurer; Immediate Past Chair, elected members, and those who are co-opted. Officers and the Trustee Board are elected by the full Constitutional Members (Trustees and Council Members). The Trustee Board also appoint a Chair-elect from within the Constitutional Membership who serves for 12 months before taking on the role of Chair. Up to four Trustees may be co-opted by the Trustee Board between general meetings.

- **Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees**

Upon appointment Trustees are provided with a copy of the Articles of Association and the Regulations of COPE; they are also provided with an online briefing session, and a written document outlining the responsibilities entailed 'On being a Trustee of COPE'. Additionally, they are required to access an 'eLearning' module which outlines COPE processes and procedures. This introduction to COPE is usually conducted by one or more of the current Officers and the Executive Officer. Each Trustee is also required to complete a Conflict of Interest form which is updated annually and posted on the COPE website.

Subsequent training is provided as needed. In addition, we nominate a current Trustee or Council member to be a mentor to each new Trustee. Ad hoc training is carried out as and when necessary to ensure that Trustees are kept abreast of developments with regard to the legal and other obligations of COPE as a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee and any of the resultant obligations of the Trustees.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

• Organisational structure and decision making

The Trustee Board (<http://publicationethics.org/about/trustees>) is ultimately responsible for the financial, legal and business operations of COPE as a charitable business and it gives authority to Council, the Executive Officer and the COPE team (<http://publicationethics.org/cope-staff>) to manage the day to day affairs of the organisation. The Trustees of the charity are also the directors of the limited company.

Day-to-day operational activities of the business are managed by COPE's full time Executive Officer and a full time Operations Manager. The administration of the business activities of COPE are carried out by the full time Administrator. Managing the bank account and all financial transactions is the responsibility of the Executive Officer with oversight by the Treasurer and Finance subcommittee. The COPE website is managed by a freelance Web Manager. A full-time Senior Membership Administrator is employed to review and administer the applications from potential new members. A freelance Engagement and Outreach Officer manages COPE's communications and engagement with the membership, supported by a freelance Designer who develops and implements all of COPE's design and branding needs. A freelance Facilitation & Integrity Officer administers the COPE complaints process.

• Risk management

The principal risks identified with regard to COPE and its operations, and their mitigation, are as follows:

(i) Litigation arising from advice, guidance or recommendations offered to authors, editors, publishers and publishing staff and others with regard to ethical issues raised in connection with published academic (learned) journals. Full insurance cover for professional indemnity is provided at COPE's expense for Trustees and Council members and for the Executive Officer and COPE Team acting for and on behalf of COPE. The risk is graded as low-to-medium on the basis that COPE specifically does not offer adjudication or judgements with regard to cases involving ethical issues brought to its attention.

(ii) Loss of subscription income. COPE will regularly review subscription income to ensure it is providing value for members, that the subscriptions are in line with industry expectations, and that any changes ensure broadly the same income year on year. Two policies are in place to support a level of financial stability: 1) increasing subscription fees by the Retail Price Index (RPI) each year when it is prudent to do so; and 2) diversifying our income streams by seeking new members in underrepresented disciplines and countries within the COPE membership. The Finance subcommittee, led by the Treasurer and supported by the Executive Officer, is in charge of managing this policy.

(iii) Loss of data. Data relating to COPE's business and financial affairs are retained by the Executive Officer and COPE Team and held in a secure location as electronic copies in the 'cloud' on Google Drive and two online management systems: Basecamp and Monday.com. No electronic files are held on computer hard drives by the Executive Officer or any members of the team. In addition, the database of COPE Members is retained on the COPE website which is managed separately under contract by the company responsible for general maintenance and development of the COPE website. This company provides for automatic back-up of COPE data. The risk of loss of irrecoverable data is regarded as low-to-medium.

(v) COPE continually reviews its constitution to ensure good governance and oversight which is now the sole province of the Trustee Board and a project to actively review the Articles of Association and Regulations took place during 2025 and is due to be approved shortly.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

Objectives and Activities

Activities for achieving objectives and acting for public benefit

In planning our activities for the year we have kept in mind the Charity Commissioners guidance on public benefit. COPE was established to provide a range of services and products aimed primarily, but not exclusively, at editors and publishers of scholarly journals and designed to provide advice and guidance on best practice for dealing with ethical issues in journal publishing.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

Strategy

After an extensive and lengthy consultation and discussion process, COPE published its new strategic plan for 2024-2027 and beyond. The strategic plan has been guided by a clear vision: "to make ethical practice the norm in research and publishing". This is pursued through guidance, education, and leadership to uphold integrity, collaboration to address challenges in publication ethics, and a strong commitment to diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility. The goal is to ensure that research is published honestly, transparently, and ethically.

The strategic plan consists of 4 key goals: Integrity, Education, Collaboration and Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity and Accessibility. All 4 key goals are supported by clear objectives and a set of new COPE values. More can be seen on the COPE website at: <https://publicationethics.org/about/what-we-do/strategic-plan>.

Handling concerns raised against COPE members

In January 2023, COPE published an editorial in the monthly newsletter where it committed to a thorough review of its facilitation and integrity process to ensure it is still fit for purpose in today's landscape. During 2023 and through 2024 a working group have been working steadily to consider the changes that are necessary to this and the new policy and process is due to be launched by the end of 2025.

Membership application process

In early 2023, COPE committed to a wide-ranging review of its membership application process to ensure that we are accepting appropriate members into COPE Membership. An extremely complex process, involving many different systems and individuals at different points in the process, a working group has been steadily working through the changes we need to make to the process. The first phase of the process: providing guidance on the website detailing COPE expectations plus guidance for potential journal members on the application process – as well as a new application form and clearer triage process – was launched in August 2025. The second phase will review the subcommittee assessment process and guidance needed for other membership types.

United2Act Summit

In 2023 COPE, with STM Association, held a joint summit to tackle the issues of paper mills. The summit was held virtually, and attended by key representatives from the global stakeholder community — governments, institutions, researchers, funders, publishers — and a few others with particular knowledge and influence related to research integrity. The Summit led to the publication of a consensus statement signed by the participants and others post-Summit. Further to this, COPE and STM created the United2Act initiative, a joint project, which has seen the implementation of a number of working

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

groups who are all leading different initiatives to help in combatting paper mills. The working groups were tasked with providing:

- Education and awareness, including the creation of educational tools and resources
- Improvements to post-publication corrections
- More research on paper mills
- Support for the development of trust markers
- Continuing to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders about the manipulation of the publishing process

This initiative achieved its objectives for the first phase in June 2025 and moved into a second phase with new leadership and objectives. At this time, United2Act is no longer an official project of COPE and STM's, but are a collaborative partner and we offer some administrative support.

New website project

The COPE website underwent a major refresh during 2018/19 to enable easier discoverability of resources and guidance and the new site was launched in 2019. As websites continually evolve, and owing to the need to move its content management system due to the existing version nearing end of life, we circulated a tender for a new website partner in 2022. This extensive and intensive process culminated in COPE contracting with CTI Digital. Since November 2022 we have been working closely and intensively with CTI Digital to develop a new website. The first phase of the new website – transferring all COPE to the new site – was launched in December 2024. The second phase will see the website connect to a new CRM to support the membership database. This will be implemented during 2026.

The first phase of the new website incorporated:

- a refreshed design and improved layout to support our content
- improvements to the search and filtering
- better accessibility and device optimisation

EVENTS

COPE Forum

COPE holds a virtual Forum meeting, four times a year (all are virtual), at which members can raise and discuss specific cases and general ethical issues. COPE then undertakes to publish written summaries of these Forum discussions (suitably edited and anonymised to ensure that identifiable details such as names of individuals, journals and institutions are removed) on the COPE website with free, unhindered access for anyone visiting the website. A classification hierarchy is used to allow all interested users of the website to find cases on specific issues more easily. The Forum reports thus form part of a developing database of 'case law' relating to ethical issues in journal publishing and hence a valuable and valued resource for those involved with ethical matters, COPE members and non-members alike. Member queries or cases that are unable to wait for Forum, or where they would prefer them to be discussed in confidence, are responded to internally via Council.

At each Forum, COPE also present a discussion topic which is the first step in understanding the requirements for any potential guidance that may be required from COPE. The topics discussed at Forum in 2024 include:

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

- Ethical considerations against watchlists
- Publishing when English is not your first language
- Plagiarism in 2024
- Revisiting expressions of concern

Publication Integrity Week

COPE has been holding in person, one day seminars for many years. During the pandemic, these moved online and since then has remained a virtual offering as we are able to reach more of COPE's global membership. In 2023, the seminar was rebranded as Publication Integrity Week – the event was very successful and it was agreed that it would now run as an annual event.

Publication Integrity Week in 2024 contained events on topics such as peer review, paper mills, authorship, plagiarism, inclusivity and interpretation of qualitative data. Over 1000 members registered across all sessions with an attendance rate on average of about 65%. Edited videos of each session were published online after the events for members unable to attend.

2025's week-long event is shaping to be even bigger than previously with presentations on:

- why ethics matters in scholarly publishing
- a conversation with early leaders of COPE
- how AI is changing scholarly publishing
- weaponisation/commercialisation of research
- changing scholarly publishing as we know it
- how technology is being used to support publication of research
- equitable access to scholarly publishing
- indigenous data sovereignty
- handling freedom of expression and controversy in scholarly publications
- best practices for cooperation
- techniques and teamwork in publication sleuthing
- building communities through trust markers
- boosting incentives for ethical conduct
- addressing misconduct and upholding integrity at universities and research institutes
- authorship disputes and authorship manipulation
- research integrity tools: challenges, experiences, and emerging best practice
- ai use: policies and reality

Other events

In addition to Publication Integrity Week, during 2024, COPE held events on:

- AI (an online 'lightning talk')
- text recycling (an online 'lightning talk')
- an introduction to publication ethics. This was held in person, in Split, Croatia with approximately 40 members present from across the region.
- an online introduction to publication ethics workshop aimed primarily at members from India, Pakistan, the Middle East and China.
- Hosting of a podcast interview with representatives from CrossRef and RetractionWatch regarding CrossRef's acquisition of RetractionWatch's retractions database was also held by COPE and published online.

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RESOURCES

COPE has produced specific guidance and discussion documents on a number of issues. During 2024 the following were developed or updated:

COPE Positions

A new resource, COPE published 36 COPE positions. These were developed to provide COPE's formal position on a particular issue. Purposefully brief, they provide a succinct overview of COPE's position with links to the fuller guidance for deeper reading (where available).

Flowcharts:

- New. Concurrent submissions of a manuscript to multiple journals
- New. When institutions are contacted by journals
- Revised. Inappropriate image manipulation in a published article
- Revised. What to consider when asked to peer review a manuscript

Guidelines:

- Revised. Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research integrity and publication misconduct cases

In 2025, efforts to release new guidance and update existing guidance continued apace and the following guidance was published:

- New guidelines on Expressions of Concern.
- A revision of the Retraction guidelines.
- New guidelines on author fees and waivers.
- New guidelines on handling guest edited collections
- Revision of the reviewer suspected to have appropriated an author's ideas or data flowchart
- Revision of the how to recognise potential manipulation of the peer review process flowchart.

Additional new or revised guidance is coming soon and this cover topics such as:

- Claiming affiliations in scholarly publications (new guidance)
- Identifying funding sources in publications (new guidance)
- Revision to the authorship flowcharts
- Updating the citation manipulation discussion document and converting it into formal COPE guidelines
- Revision of the short guide to ethical editing
- Consideration of the issues around GDPR and other data privacy laws and how this affects COPE guidance
- A new discussion document on Watchlists.
- New discussion document on Best practices around identity and name changes.
- New guidance on Data availability.
- A new discussion document on Historical offensive content.
- New guidance on Intellectual property and copyright.
- New guidance on Claiming affiliations in scholarly publications.
- New guidance on Author behavioural misconduct.

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Additional guidelines or discussion document that COPE offers, includes:

- 'Journals' Best Practices for Ensuring Consent for Publishing Medical Case Reports'.
- 'Short Guide to Ethical Editing for New Editors'.
- 'Ethical guidelines for peer reviewers'.
- Editors' relations with learned societies', which was revised and renamed as 'Guidelines for management relationships between society-owned journals, their society and publishers'.

Achievements and performance

- **Review of activities**

During the period under review, that is the calendar year ended 31 December 2024, COPE continued to attract and recruit new journal and publisher members. As of September 2025, 14,813 members were listed on its website – an increase of more than 600 since the end of 2023. Nearly all major publishers have agreed to sign up their journals as members of COPE by paying a subscription fee; however, COPE is reliant on the publishers to provide details of their journals, and to inform COPE of any changes. It is therefore not always possible to give an exact figure of the number of COPE journal members at any specific date as there is often a delay before the publisher updates its records.

The launch of COPE's university and research institutes membership in May 2022 saw eleven universities agree to become members. During 2024 an additional three universities joined COPE and the initiative is due to be launched more widely during 2025/2026.

Financial review

The overall result for 2024 was a deficit and has resulted in a decrease in total reserves:

(i)	Opening balance, reserves at 01 January 2024	£387,276
(ii)	Closing balance, reserves at 31 December 2024	£343,304

The year end deficit of £43,972 represents a decrease from a surplus in 2023 of £33,149. Operating costs increased from 2023 to 2024:

(i)	Total costs 2023	£533,158
(ii)	Total costs 2024	£682,134

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

The increase in costs from 2023 to 2024 was £148,976. The main reasons for the rise in costs in 2024 relate to:

- a) major investment in the COPE website to better support our users ability to find the guidance and content that support their needs. This entailed a full refresh of the design, layout and navigation features.
- b) Supporting United2Act, a joint project, in collaboration with the STM Association, on working to eradicate paper mills.
- c) An increase in meeting costs owing to a COPE 'retreat' and supporting attendance at the World Conference on Research Integrity.

- **Investment policy and performance**

COPE is committed to the adoption and implementation of ethical policies with regard to its financial investments. As such its banking arrangements reviewed to ensure that any monies held by COPE are secure. COPE has since opened an additional savings account with the Nationwide to hold some of its reserves to spread the risk in case of a banking issue.

- **Reserves policy**

It has been agreed by the Council that it is appropriate for COPE to maintain strategic financial reserves sufficient to accommodate unavoidable operating costs for a period of 12 months in the event that the decision were to be made to close COPE and cease activities.

The Council has agreed that the amount for the strategic reserve should be at least £225,000 - this amount to be reviewed and agreed annually. The figure has been set largely to accommodate the costs of the Executive Officer, Operations Manager, Senior Membership Administrator, Administrator and freelance staff (Engagement & Outreach Officer, Website Manager, Designer, and Facilitation & Integrity Officer); COPE does not incur significant overhead costs such as office accommodation or capital assets. To the period ending 2024, the actual reserves were slightly higher than the £225,000 agreed. To return the reserve closer to the agreed level during 2024 the Trustees have:

- Committed to a large, multi-year project which will transform our digital offering for our members. As mentioned elsewhere, we have released phase one of a three-year project to upgrade and transform our website, offering a better experience for our members. We will also be implementing a CRM (Customer Relationship Management system) which will allow us to more effectively communicate with our members as well as our members engage more easily with COPE. This is a significant project, with a significant budget attached, which will be paid for out of the surplus we have accrued.

Plans for the future

- **Future developments**

COPE will continue to investigate and, where appropriate, develop and make available, relevant new services and resources for its Members and others. Amongst those planned for 2025-2026 are:

- Opening up general application for University & Research Institutes.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

- The implementation of its new strategic plan, ensuring that COPE's operations can support the goals and objectives.
- A tender will be circulated during 2026 for a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This will help COPE to support its members better with more targeted resources and events.
- Further development will also be undertaken on its website during 2026 to integrate the CRM with the website.
- Further collaboration with its partner organisations, including STM, DOAJ, WAME, UKRI etc.

Trustees Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Committee on Publication Ethics for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the 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:

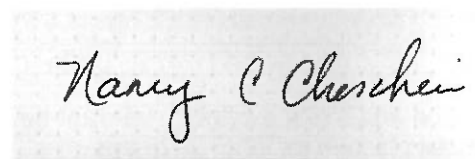
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that 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 charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities, and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 section 1A for Smaller Entities.

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

This report was approved by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf, by:



Nancy Chescheir, Chair

Dated: September 29, 2025

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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Committee on Publication Ethics

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2024 which are set out on pages 12 to 21.

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

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a 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 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: *Danielle Griffin*

Dated: *30 September 2025*

Danielle Griffin FCA

Moore (South) LLP
Suite 3, Second Floor
Friary Court
13-21 High Street
Guildford
Surrey GU1 3DG

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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(incorporating income and expenditure account)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
INCOMING RESOURCES			
Other trading activities	2	636,230	565,669
Investment income		1,932	638
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		638,162	566,307
RESOURCES EXPENDED			
Charitable activities	3	675,274	525,304
Other	4	6,860	7,854
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		682,134	533,158
MOVEMENT IN TOTAL FUNDS FOR THE YEAR – NET (LOSS)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		(43,972)	33,149
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:			
<i>Total funds at 1 January 2024</i>		387,276	354,127
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024		343,304	387,276

The results for the year derive from continuing activities and there are no gains or losses other than those shown above.

The notes on pages 14 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

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REGISTERED NUMBER: 06389120

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Note	£	2024	£	£	2023	£
CURRENT ASSETS							
Debtors	8		65,857			5,568	
Cash at bank			288,448			428,879	
			354,305			434,447	
LIABILITIES							
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	9		(11,001)			(47,171)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS				343,304			387,276
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES				343,304			387,276
CHARITY FUNDS							
Unrestricted funds	12			343,304			387,276

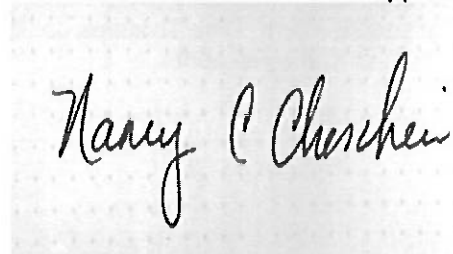
For the financial year ended 31 December 2024 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

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 the preparation of financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and the charities Statement of Recommended Practice and Financial Reporting Standard 102 section 1A.

The financial statements were approved by the Directors on and signed on their behalf, by:



Nancy Chescheir, Chair

Dated: September 29, 2025

The notes on pages 14 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 Company Status

The company is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The company is incorporated in England & Wales. The company is governed by its association of articles completed on 3 October 2007, and subsequent amends as noted on page 2. The company was registered with the Charity Commission on 29 February 2008, registered number 1123023. The address of the registered office is given in the Reference and Administrative Details given on page 1 of these financial statements. The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the company. The nature of the charities operations and principal activities are explained in the Trustees Report.

The company constitutes a public benefit as defined by FRS102.

1.2 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, SORP (FRS102) (second edition), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) section 1A and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention. The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency, and have been rounded to the nearest pound.

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

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption not to produce a cash flow under SORP (FRS102) (Second edition).

1.3 Going concern

At the time of approving the accounts, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the company has adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future. The Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1.4 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income, the amount can be reliably measured and it is probable that the income will be received.

Subscriptions are raised from the date of acceptance to 31 December each year. They are recorded in full when receivable. Any subscriptions that are waived in the year are included as subscription income and as a grant payable.

Other income is recorded when it is received.

Interest receivable is accounted for on an accruals basis.

1.5 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the obligation can be measured reliably.

The charity's seminar costs are allocated to direct charitable expenditure.

Expenditure on charitable activities includes grants with relevant support costs and governance costs.

- Grants are charged in the year they are approved for payment. No grants are deferred.

Other expenditure includes all expenditure that is neither related to raising funds for the charity nor part of its expenditure on charitable activities.

1.6 Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity, but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include salaries and administrative expenses. These costs have all been allocated to charitable activities as there is only one activity undertaken by the charity.

1.7 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

1.8 Cash at Bank and in Hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.9 Creditors

Creditors are recognised when the charity has a present obligation resulting from past events and can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are recognised at their settlement amounts.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1.10 Pension Costs

The charitable company pays contributions into a defined contribution scheme for its employees and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the charitable company in respect of the year. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company in an independently administered fund.

1.11 Financial instruments

The company 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.

1.12 Foreign currencies

Foreign currency transactions are initially recognised by applying to the foreign currency amount the spot exchange rate between the functional currency and the foreign currency at the date of the transaction.

Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in a foreign currency at the balance sheet date are translated using the closing rate.

1.13 Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds are subscriptions and incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

1.14 Judgements and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

In the application of the charitable company's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

The Trustees do not believe that there are any judgements or estimates that affect these accounts.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

2. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Subscriptions	551,582	495,472
Subscriptions waived	82,853	70,197
Other income	1,795	-
	636,230	565,669

All income from other trading activities for 2024 and 2023 was unrestricted.

3. RESOURCES EXPENDED ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Grants Payable (Note 5)	82,853	70,197
Seminar costs	56,042	37,798
Website costs	189,897	95,679
Support costs (see below)	346,482	321,630
	675,274	525,304

All expenditure on charitable activities for 2024 and 2023 was unrestricted.

ALLOCATION OF SUPPORT COSTS

	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
General administration	66,546	67,317
Administration	189,098	171,535
Research	-	13,743
Insurance	2,509	2,331
Meeting costs	14,992	3,604
PR & Marketing	26,892	33,109
Personal development and training	1,782	2,334
Sponsorship	910	884
University membership and administration	26,595	24,515
Bad debts	-	2,258
United to Act	17,158	-
	346,482	321,630

All support costs are directly attributable to the Charitable Activities.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

4. OTHER

	Total Funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Independent examiner's fees	2,500	2,380
Accountancy and bookkeeping	2,925	3,368
Legal and professional fees	1,401	1,304
Governance costs	34	802
	6,860	7,854

All expenditure on other costs for 2024 and 2023 was unrestricted.

Included in the above are governance costs totalling £4,360 (2023 - £5,385).

5. ANALYSIS OF GRANTS PAYABLE

	2024 £	2023 £
Individuals		
Subscriptions waived	82,853	70,197

The subscriptions waived relate to 356 members (2023 - 337) receiving grants of various amounts, depending upon the number of journals published.

6. TRUSTEES

During the year, no Trustees received any benefits in kind (2023 - £Nil).

No (2023 – no) trustees received reimbursement of expenses of £Nil (2023 - £Nil) in respect of travel and subsistence costs for attendance at council meetings and seminars.

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Trustees may be paid all reasonable and proper expenses incurred by them in connection with their attendance at meetings and in discharge of their duties.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

7. STAFF COSTS

Staff costs were as follows:

	31 December 2024 £	31 December 2023 £
Wages and salaries	179,939	159,882
Social security costs	19,811	17,670
Employers allowance	(5,000)	(5,000)
Pension costs	3,754	3,284
	198,504	169,268

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

	31 December 2024 No.	31 December 2023 No.
Operational staff	4	4

1 employee (2023 – 1) received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) amounting to between £80,000 and £90,000 during the year.

The total amount of remuneration, including Employers NIC and pension, paid to key management personnel in the year was £91,252 (2023 - £87,225).

8. DEBTORS

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	65,093	4,804
Prepayments and accrued income	764	764
	65,857	5,568

**9. CREDITORS:
Amounts falling due within one year**

	2024 £	2023 £
Accruals and deferred income	4,140	4,140
Trade creditors	-	36,353
Other creditors	1,691	1,636
Taxation and social security	5,170	5,042
	11,001	47,171

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

10. DEFERRED INCOME

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 January	-	171
Additions in year	-	-
Released in year	-	(171)
At 31 December	-	-

11. PENSIONS

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund.

At 31 December 2024 £1,691 (2023 - £1,636) was included in creditors.

12. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Carried Forward £
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	387,276	638,162	(682,134)	343,304

Unrestricted funds for year ended 31 December 2023

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Carried Forward £
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	354,127	566,307	(533,158)	387,276

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

13. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Current Assets £	Liabilities £	Total £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	302,504	(11,001)	291,503

Unrestricted funds for year ended 31 December 2023

	Current Assets £	Liabilities £	Total £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	434,447	(47,171)	387,276

14. CONTROLLING PARTY

There is no controlling party.

15. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year the company indemnified the trustees against any liability by taking out insurance costing £2,509 (2023 - £2,231) on their behalf.

Accounts

Registered number: 06389120
Charity number: 1123023

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS
UNAUDITED
TRUSTEES REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS
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COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Trustees

Daniel Kulp, Chair
Nancy Chescheir (Vice-Chair)
Tara Lee Hoke, Secretary
Michael Wise, Treasurer
Caroline Porter
Deborah Kahn (Resigned 9 June 2024)
Simon Linacre (Resigned 1 August 2023)
Tim Kersjes
Howard Browman
Trevor Lane
Susan Garfinkel (Appointed 7 August 2023)
Emilio José Sanz Álvarez
James Williams Mwangi Kigera

Company registered number

06389120

Charity registered number

1123023

Registered office

New Kings Court, Tollgate, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO53 3LG

Company secretary

Natalie Ridgeway, Executive Officer

Independent Examiner

Matthew Bather, ACA, Moore (South) LLP, Suite 3, Second Floor, Friary Court, 13-21 High Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3DG

Bankers

Co-operative Bank plc, PO Box 250, Delf House, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

Solicitors

Blake Morgan, New Kings Court, Tollgate, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO53 3LG

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The Trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their annual report together with the financial statements of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (the company) for the year ended 31 December 2023. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS102) second edition.

Structure, governance and management

• Constitution

The company is registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee and was set up by a Memorandum of Association on 3 October 2007 as amended by Special Resolutions dated 18 February 2008, 3 May 2011, 22 March 2013, 17 April 2015, 9 September 2015 and 12 December 2019, and is a registered charity number 1123023.

The Trustee Board and Council are the constitutional members of COPE.

The principal objects of the company are the promotion for the public benefit of ethical standards of conduct in research and ethical standards in the publication of scholarly journals.

• Method of appointment or election of Trustees

The Trustee Board (maximum of 12) consists of the Officers, namely: Chair; Vice-chair; Secretary; Treasurer; Immediate Past Chair, elected members, and those who are co-opted. Officers and the Trustee Board are elected by the full Constitutional Members (Trustees and Council Members). The Trustee Board also appoint a Chair-elect from within the Constitutional Membership who serves for 12 months before taking on the role of Chair. Up to four Trustees may be co-opted by the Trustee Board between general meetings.

• Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees

Upon appointment Trustees are provided with a copy of the Articles of Association and the Regulations of COPE; they are also provided with a briefing session, and a written document outlining the responsibilities entailed 'On being a Trustee of COPE'. Additionally, they are required to access an 'eLearning' module which outlines COPE processes and procedures. This introduction to COPE is usually conducted by one or more of the current Officers or by the Executive Officer. Each Trustee is also required to complete a Conflict of Interest form which is updated annually and posted on the COPE website.

Subsequent training is provided as needed. In addition, we nominate a current Trustee or Council member to be a mentor to each new Trustee. Ad hoc training is carried out as and when necessary to ensure that Trustees are kept abreast of developments with regard to the legal and other obligations of COPE as a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee and any of the resultant obligations of the Trustees.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

• Organisational structure and decision making

The Trustee Board (<http://publicationethics.org/about/trustees>) is ultimately responsible for the financial, legal and business operations of COPE as a charitable business and it gives authority to Council, the Executive Officer and the COPE team (<http://publicationethics.org/cope-staff>) to manage the day to day affairs of the organization. The Trustees of the charity are also the directors of the limited company.

Day-to-day operational activities of the business are managed by COPE's full time Executive Officer and a full time Operations Manager. The administration of the business activities of COPE are carried out by the full time Administrator. Managing the bank account and all financial transactions is the responsibility of the Executive Officer with oversight by the Treasurer and Finance subcommittee. The COPE website is managed by a freelance Web Manager. A full-time Senior Membership Administrator is employed to review and administer the applications from potential new members. A freelance Engagement and Outreach Officer manages COPE's communications and engagement with the membership, supported by a freelance Designer who develops and implements all of COPE's design and branding needs. A freelance Facilitation & Integrity Officer administers the COPE complaints process.

• Risk management

The principal risks identified with regard to COPE and its operations, and their mitigation, are as follows:

(i) Litigation arising from advice, guidance or recommendations offered to authors, editors, publishers and publishing staff and others with regard to ethical issues raised in connection with published academic (learned) journals. Full insurance cover for professional indemnity is provided at COPE's expense for Trustees and Council members and for the Executive Officer and COPE Team acting for and on behalf of COPE. The risk is graded as low-to-medium on the basis that COPE specifically does not offer adjudication or judgements with regard to cases involving ethical issues brought to its attention.

(ii) Loss of subscription income. COPE will regularly review subscription income to ensure it is providing value for members, that the subscriptions are in line with industry expectations, and that any changes ensure broadly the same income year on year. Two policies are in place to support a level of financial stability: 1) increasing subscription fees by the Retail Price Index (RPI) each year when it is prudent to do so; and 2) diversifying our income streams by seeking new members in underrepresented disciplines and countries within the COPE membership. The Finance subcommittee, led by the Treasurer, is in charge of managing this policy.

(iii) Loss of data. Data relating to COPE's business and financial affairs are retained by the Executive Officer and COPE Team and held in a secure location as electronic copies in the 'cloud' on Google Drive and two online management systems: Basecamp and Monday.com. No electronic files are held on computer hard drives by the Executive Officer or any members of the team. In addition, the database of COPE Members is retained on the COPE website which is managed separately under contract by the company responsible for general maintenance and development of the COPE website. This company provides for automatic back-up of COPE data. The risk of loss of irrecoverable data is regarded as low-to-medium.

(iv) Physical assets. COPE has no substantial physical assets.

(v) COPE continually reviews its constitution to ensure good governance and oversight which is now the sole province of the Trustee Board and a project to actively review the Articles of Association and Regulations is in place for 2024.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Objectives and Activities

Activities for achieving objectives and acting for public benefit

In planning our activities for the year we have kept in mind the Charity Commissioners guidance on public benefit. COPE was established to provide a range of services and products aimed primarily, but not exclusively, at editors and publishers of learned journals and designed to provide advice and guidance on best practice for dealing with ethical issues in journal publishing.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

Strategy

Since June 2023, COPE has been developing its next strategic plan. This development process has seen input from many different avenues: a membership survey and telephone interviews with a small group of non-members who publish outside of the 'traditional' journal structure to understand their needs; extensive and complex discussions among the Trustee Board and Council to consider where COPE should be focussing its efforts; and listening to members of the scholarly community outside of the publisher and/or editor role. This has been a well thought through process and COPE will be publishing its new strategic plan for the period 2024-2027 in the last quarter of 2024.

Handling concerns raised against COPE members

In January 2023, COPE published an editorial in the monthly newsletter where it committed to a thorough review of its facilitation and integrity process to ensure it is still fit for purpose in today's landscape. During 2023 and into 2024 a working group have been working steadily to consider the changes that are necessary to this and the new policy and process is due to be launched in last quarter of 2024.

Membership application process

In early 2023, COPE committed to a wide-ranging review of its membership application process to ensure that we are accepting appropriate members into COPE Membership. An extremely complex process, involving many different systems and individuals at different points in the process, a working group has been steadily working through the changes we need to make to the process and we expect to launch the first phase of this in early 2025.

United2Act Summit

In 2023 COPE, with STM Association, held a joint summit to tackle the issues of paper mills. The summit was held virtually, and attended by key representatives from the global stakeholder community — governments, institutions, researchers, funders, publishers — and a few others with particular knowledge and influence related to research integrity. The Summit led to the publication of a consensus statement signed by the participants and others post-Summit. Further to this, COPE and STM created the United2Act initiative, a joint project, which has seen the implementation of a number of working groups who are all leading different initiatives to help in combatting paper mills.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

New website project

The COPE website underwent a major refresh during 2018/19 to enable easier discoverability of resources and guidance and the new site was launched in 2019. As websites continually evolve, and owing to the need to move its content management system due to the existing version reaching end of life, we circulated a tender for a new website partner in 2022. This extensive and intensive process culminated in COPE contracting with CTI Digital. Since November 2022 we have been working closely and intensively with CTI Digital to develop a new website. This exciting project will see phase one launched in December 2024.

EVENTS

COPE Forum

COPE holds a Forum meeting, four times a year (all are virtual), at which members can raise and discuss particular and general ethical issues. COPE then undertakes to publish written summaries of these Forum discussions (suitably edited and anonymised to ensure that identifiable details such as names of individuals, journals and institutions are removed) on the COPE website with free, unhindered access for anyone visiting the website. A classification hierarchy is used to allow all interested users of the website to find cases on specific issues more easily. The Forum reports thus form part of a developing database of 'case law' relating to ethical issues in journal publishing and hence a valuable and valued resource for those involved with ethical matters, COPE members and non-members alike. Member queries or cases that are unable to wait for Forum, or where they would prefer them to be discussed in confidence, are responded to internally via Council.

At each Forum, COPE also present a discussion topic which is the first step in understanding the requirements for any potential guidance that may be required from COPE. The topics discussed at Forum in 2023 include:

- Artificial intelligence and fake papers
- Best practices for guest edited collections
- Peer review models
- Claiming institutional affiliations.

Publication Integrity Week

COPE has been holding in person, one day seminars for many years. During the pandemic, these moved online and since then has remained a virtual offering as we are able to reach more of COPE's global membership. In 2023, the seminar was rebranded as Publication Integrity Week and COPE hosted 10 online sessions covering topics such as inclusive language, AI and peer review, publication misconduct and handling cases of misconduct. The event was very successful and will now become an annual event.

Webinar

In 2023 COPE held an online webinar on the topic of 'Enhancing partnerships of institutions and journals'.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

RESOURCES

Audit

COPE has a journal audit which many of its members have used to check that their publications or operations are following best practice. This audit was completely updated and revised during 2018 and republished as the "COPE Journal Audit". The Journal Audit is in planning for further development in 2024 to support more interactivity with the Audit and for different versions to be used at different times within a Member's journey within COPE. COPE has also published a Spanish version of the Journal Audit and is planning more translations, specifically Chinese and Portuguese. COPE's recommendations are also available in the form of flowcharts and infographics, which are used in many editorial offices and have been translated into several languages. The flowcharts and infographics have been restyled to ensure consistency across all versions and were released in 2021.

COPE also produces specific guidance and discussion documents on a number of issues. During 2023 the following were developed or updated:

- New guidance on 'Addressing concerns about systematic manipulation of the publication process'.
- A new discussion document on 'Dealing with concerns about the integrity of published research'.
- A new discussion document on 'Best practices for handling guest edited collections'.
- 8 new flowcharts on issues regarding data sharing published in collaboration with Force 11.
- Revisions to two flowcharts on fabricated data: "Fabricated data in a submitted manuscript" and 'Fabricated data in a published article'.
- A revisions to the flowchart 'How to recognise potential authorship problems'.

During 2024, resources published include:

- A new flowchart on 'guidance for when institutions are contacted by journals'.
- A new flowchart on 'handling concurrent submissions'.
- Fully revised guidelines on 'Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research, integrity and publication misconduct cases'.
- An updated flowchart on 'Inappropriate image manipulation in a published article'.
- An updated flowchart 'What to consider when asked to peer review a manuscript'.

Initial work has also begun by COPE Members on creating new or updating existing and includes:

- New guidelines on 'Expressions of Concern'.
- A full update of the 'Retraction guidelines'.
- A new discussion document on 'Watchlists'.
- New discussion document on 'Best practices around identity and name changes'.
- New guidance on 'Data availability'.
- A new discussion document on 'Historical offensive content'.
- New guidance on 'Intellectual property and copyright'.
- New guidance on 'Claiming affiliations in scholarly publications'.
- New guidance on 'Author behavioural misconduct'.
- New guidelines on How to disclose, apply, and administer author fees and waivers / discounts / incentives.
- A new discussion document on Claiming affiliations in scholarly publications.
- New guidance on 'Identifying funding sources in publications'.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

- Converting the discussion document on 'Handling guest edited collections' into formal COPE guidelines.
- Revision to the discussion documents 'What constitutes plagiarism' and 'Text recycling'.
- Consideration the issues around GDPR and other data privacy laws and how this affects COPE guidance.

Additional guidelines or discussion document that COPE offers, includes:

- 'Journals' Best Practices for Ensuring Consent for Publishing Medical Case Reports'.
- 'Short Guide to Ethical Editing for New Editors'.
- 'Ethical guidelines for peer reviewers'.
- Editors' relations with learned societies', which was revised and renamed as 'Guidelines for management relationships between society-owned journals, their society and publishers'.

Position statements

COPE has issued three position statements over the past three years: (1) published in 2021, COPE confirmed its position on the issue of 'the protection of vulnerable groups and individuals'; (2) in 2022, we reaffirmed our 2013 position on 'geopolitical intrusions on editorial decisions' owing to the war in Ukraine. In 2023, we issued a statement on Authorship and AI tools where we reiterated that AI tools cannot be considered an author; and (4) a new position statement in 2024 on paper mills.

In addition to this, during 2024, COPE has been working to distill all of its guidance into short COPE positions which we can easily point members and non-member to on its website. These will be published in the last quarter of 2024.

COPE WEBSITE

Internal work we have conducted to improve the existing website includes: consistency of content across the site; a clear archiving policy for old content; full html pages for all guidance (in addition to pdfs); changes to tagging and URL creation to ensure improved SEO.

The website is also kept updated with news about ethical issues and publications likely to be of interest to editors and publishers. In 2022, COPE launched a new initiative in our monthly newsletters seeking opinion pieces or invited guest editorials for publication in the newsletters. COPE also has a presence on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter with an active membership. COPE publishes a monthly eNewsletter, *COPE Digest*, available to members and non-members which contains COPE updates, an analysis of publication ethics in the news, and educational material.

Achievements and performance

- **Review of activities**

During the period under review, that is the calendar year ended 31 December 2023, COPE continued to attract and recruit new journal and publisher members. At the end of 2023 14,265 members were listed on its. Nearly all major publishers have agreed to sign up their journals as members of COPE by paying a subscription; however, COPE is reliant on the publishers to provide details of their journals, and to inform COPE of any changes. It is therefore not always possible to give an exact figure of the number of COPE journal members at any specific date as there is often a delay before the publisher updates its records.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The launch of COPE's university and research institutes membership in May 2022 saw eleven universities agree to become members. During 2023 an additional three universities joined COPE and the initiative will be opened up more widely at the end of 2024.

Financial review

The overall result for 2023 was positive and has resulted in an increase in total reserves:

(i)	Opening balance, reserves at 01 January 2023	£354,127
(ii)	Closing balance, reserves at 31 December 2023	£387,276

The year end surplus of £33,149 represents a decrease from a surplus in 2022 of £3,319. Operating costs increased from 2022 to 2023:

(i)	Total costs 2022	£488,274
(ii)	Total costs 2023	£533,158

The increase in costs from 2022 to 2023 was £44,884. The main reasons for the rise in costs in 2023 relate to:

- a) The appointment of a new COPE Administrator who joined us in July 2023 as a full time employee. This role replaced a position that had been vacant for the previous 12 months.
- b) Initial costs related to the development of the new COPE website as we undertook work with the digital agency to develop 'wireframes' which form the foundation of the new website.
- c) An online membership survey and telephone interviews conducted by an external market research agency, both of which supported the development of COPE's new strategic plan.

• Investment policy and performance

COPE is committed to the adoption and implementation of ethical policies with regard to its financial investments. As such its banking arrangements reviewed to ensure that any monies held by COPE are secure. COPE has since opened an additional savings account with the Nationwide to hold some of its reserves to spread the risk in case of a banking issue.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

• Reserves policy

It has been agreed by the Council that it is appropriate for COPE to maintain strategic financial reserves sufficient to accommodate unavoidable operating costs for a period of 12 months in the event that the decision were to be made to close COPE and cease activities.

The Council has agreed that the amount for the strategic reserve should be at least £225,000 - this amount to be reviewed and agreed annually. The figure has been set largely to accommodate the costs of the Executive Officer, Operations Manager, Senior Membership Administrator, Administrator and freelance staff (Engagement & Outreach Officer, Website Manager, Designer, and Facilitation & Integrity Officer): COPE does not incur significant overhead costs such as office accommodation or capital assets. To the period ending 2022, the actual reserves were higher than the £225,000 agreed. To return the reserve closer to the agreed level during 2023 the Trustees have:

- Committed to a large project which will transform our digital offering for our members. As mentioned elsewhere, we are in phase one of a three-year project to upgrade and transform our website, offering a better experience for our members. We will also be implementing a CRM (Customer Relationship Management system) which will allow us to more effectively communicate with our members as well as our members engage more easily with COPE. This is a significant project, with a significant budget attached, which will be paid for out of the surplus we have accrued.

Plans for the future

• Future developments

COPE will continue to investigate and, where appropriate, develop and make available, relevant new services and resources for its Members and others. Amongst those planned for 2023-2024 are:

- Opening up general application for University & Research Institutes.
- The implementation of its new strategic plan, ensuring that COPE's operations can support the goals and objectives.
- A tender will be circulated at the end of 2024 for a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This will help COPE to support its members better with more targeted resources and events.
- Further development will also be undertaken on its website during 2025 to integrate the CRM with the website.
- Further collaboration with its partner organisations, including STM, DOAJ, WAME, UKRI etc.

Trustees Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Committee on Publication Ethics for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the 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:

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

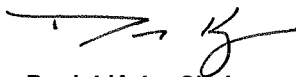
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that 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 charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities, and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 section 1A for Smaller Entities.

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

This report was approved by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf, by:



Daniel Kulp, Chair

Dated: 24 September 2024

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Committee on Publication Ethics

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 12 to 21.

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

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a 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 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:



Dated: 25th September 2024

Matthew Bather ACA

Moore (South) LLP
Suite 3, Second Floor
Friary Court
13-21 High Street
Guildford
Surrey GU1 3DG

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(incorporating income and expenditure account)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
INCOMING RESOURCES			
Other trading activities	2	565,669	524,742
Investment income		638	-
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		566,307	524,742
RESOURCES EXPENDED			
Charitable activities	3	525,304	481,143
Other	4	7,854	7,131
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		533,158	488,274
MOVEMENT IN TOTAL FUNDS FOR THE YEAR – NET SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		33,149	36,468
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:			
<i>Total funds at 1 January 2023</i>		354,127	317,659
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023		387,276	354,127

The results for the year derive from continuing activities and there are no gains or losses other than those shown above.

The notes on pages 14 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 06389120

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Note	2023	2022
		£	£
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	8	5,568	3,952
Cash at bank		<u>428,879</u>	<u>360,292</u>
		434,447	364,244
LIABILITIES			
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	9	<u>(47,171)</u>	<u>(10,117)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>387,276</u>	<u>354,127</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>387,276</u>	<u>354,127</u>
CHARITY FUNDS			
Unrestricted funds	12	<u>387,276</u>	<u>354,127</u>

For the financial year ended 31 December 2023 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the 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 the preparation of financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and the charities Statement of Recommended Practice and Financial Reporting Standard 102 section 1A.

The financial statements were approved by the Directors on and signed on their behalf, by:


Daniel Kulp, Chair

Dated: 24. September. 2024

The notes on pages 14 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 Company Status

The company is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The company is incorporated in England & Wales. The company is governed by its association of articles completed on 3 October 2007, and subsequent amends as noted on page 2. The company was registered with the Charity Commission on 29 February 2008, registered number 1123023. The address of the registered office is given in the Reference and Administrative Details given on page 1 of these financial statements. The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the company. The nature of the charities operations and principal activities are explained in the Trustees Report.

The company constitutes a public benefit as defined by FRS102.

1.2 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, SORP (FRS102) (second edition), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) section 1A and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention. The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency, and have been rounded to the nearest pound.

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

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption not to produce a cash flow under FRS102 Section 1A and SORP 2019.

1.3 Going concern

At the time of approving the accounts, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the company has adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future. The Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.4 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income, the amount can be reliably measured and it is probable that the income will be received.

Subscriptions are raised from the date of acceptance to 31 December each year. They are recorded in full when receivable. Any subscriptions that are waived in the year are included as subscription income and as a grant payable.

Interest receivable is accounted for on an accruals basis.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1.5 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the obligation can be measured reliably.

The charity's seminar costs are allocated to direct charitable expenditure.

Expenditure on charitable activities includes grants with relevant support costs and governance costs.

- Grants are charged in the year they are approved for payment. No grants are deferred.

Other expenditure includes all expenditure that is neither related to raising funds for the charity nor part of its expenditure on charitable activities.

1.6 Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity, but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include salaries and administrative expenses. These costs have all been allocated to charitable activities as there is only one activity undertaken by the charity.

1.7 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

1.8 Cash at Bank and in Hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.9 Creditors

Creditors are recognised when the charity has a present obligation resulting from past events and can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are recognised at their settlement amounts.

1.10 Pension Costs

The charitable company pays contributions into a defined contribution scheme for its employees and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the charitable company in respect of the year. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company in an independently administered fund.

1.11 Financial instruments

The company 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.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1.12 Foreign currencies

Foreign currency transactions are initially recognised by applying to the foreign currency amount the spot exchange rate between the functional currency and the foreign currency at the date of the transaction.

Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in a foreign currency at the balance sheet date are translated using the closing rate.

1.13 Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds are subscriptions and incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

1.14 Judgements and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

In the application of the charitable company's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

The Trustees do not believe that there are any judgements or estimates that affect these accounts.

2. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Total funds 2023 £	<i>Total funds 2022 £</i>
Subscriptions	495,472	467,743
Subscriptions waived	70,197	56,999
	565,669	524,742

All income from other trading activities for 2023 and 2022 was unrestricted.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

3. RESOURCES EXPENDED ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Total funds 2023 £	<i>Total funds 2022 £</i>
Grants Payable (Note 5)	70,197	56,999
Seminar costs	37,798	32,868
Website costs	95,679	117,965
Support costs (see below)	321,630	273,311
	525,304	481,143

All expenditure on charitable activities for 2023 and 2022 was unrestricted.

ALLOCATION OF SUPPORT COSTS

	Total 2023 £	<i>Total 2022 £</i>
General administration	67,317	23,693
Administration	171,535	205,606
Research	13,743	5,337
Insurance	2,331	2,245
Meeting costs	3,604	708
PR & Marketing	33,109	28,459
Personal development and training	2,334	-
Sponsorship	884	850
University membership and administration	24,515	5,931
Bad debts	2,258	482
	321,630	273,311

All support costs are directly attributable to the Charitable Activities.

4. OTHER

	Total Funds 2023 £	<i>Total funds 2022 £</i>
Independent examiner's fees	2,380	2,265
Accountancy and bookkeeping	3,368	3,356
Legal and professional fees	1,304	840
Governance costs	802	670
	7,854	7,131

All expenditure on other costs for 2023 and 2022 was unrestricted.

Included in the above are governance costs totalling £5,385 (2022 - £5,163).

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

5. ANALYSIS OF GRANTS PAYABLE

	2023 £	2022 £
Individuals		
Subscriptions waived	<u>70,197</u>	<u>56,999</u>

The subscriptions waived relate to 337 members (2022 - 240) receiving grants of various amounts, depending upon the number of journals published.

6. TRUSTEES

During the year, no Trustees received any benefits in kind (2022 - £Nil).

No (2022 - 2) trustees received reimbursement of expenses of £Nil (2022 - £192.60) in respect of travel and subsistence costs for attendance at council meetings and seminars.

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Trustees may be paid all reasonable and proper expenses incurred by them in connection with their attendance at meetings and in discharge of their duties.

7. STAFF COSTS

Staff costs were as follows:

	31 December 2023 £	31 December 2022 £
Wages and salaries	159,882	123,713
Social security costs	17,670	14,361
Employers allowance	(5,000)	(5,000)
Pension costs	<u>3,284</u>	<u>2,283</u>
	<u>169,268</u>	<u>135,357</u>

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

	31 December 2023 No.	31 December 2022 No.
Operational staff	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>

1 employee (2022 - 1) received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) amounting to between £80,000 and £90,000 during the year.

The total amount of remuneration, including Employers NIC and pension, paid to key management personnel in the year was £87,225 (2022 - £83,555).

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

8. DEBTORS

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	4,804	3,188
Prepayments and accrued income	764	764
	<u>5,568</u>	<u>3,952</u>

**9. CREDITORS:
Amounts falling due within one year**

	2023 £	2022 £
Accruals and deferred income	4,140	3,839
Trade creditors	36,353	-
Other creditors	1,636	1,268
Taxation and social security	5,042	5,010
	<u>47,171</u>	<u>10,117</u>

10. DEFERRED INCOME

	2023 £	2022 £
At 1 January	171	171
Additions in year	-	-
Released in year	(171)	-
At 31 December	<u>-</u>	<u>171</u>

11. PENSIONS

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund.

At 31 December 2023 £1,636 (2022 - £1,268) was included in creditors.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

12. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Carried Forward £
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	<u>354,127</u>	<u>566,307</u>	<u>(533,158)</u>	<u>387,276</u>

Unrestricted funds for year ended 31 December 2022

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Carried Forward £
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	<u>317,659</u>	<u>524,742</u>	<u>(488,274)</u>	<u>354,127</u>

13. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Current Assets £	Liabilities £	Total £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	<u>434,447</u>	<u>(47,171)</u>	<u>387,276</u>

Unrestricted funds for year ended 31 December 2022

	Current Assets £	Liabilities £	Total £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	<u>364,244</u>	<u>10,117</u>	<u>354,127</u>

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

14. CONTROLLING PARTY

There is no controlling party.

15. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year the company indemnified the trustees against any liability by taking out insurance costing £2,331 (2022 - £2,245) on their behalf.

Accounts

Registered number: 06389120
Charity number: 1123023

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS
UNAUDITED
TRUSTEES REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Trustees

Daniel Kulp, Chair
Nancy Chescheir (Vice-Chair)
Tara Lee Hoke, Secretary
Michael Wise, Treasurer
Deborah Poff (Resigned 1 September 2022)
Caroline Porter
Deborah Kahn
Suzanne Farley (Resigned 1 September 2022)
Simon Linacre (Resigned 1 August 2023)
Tim Kersjes (Appointed 6 September 2022)
Dr Howard Browman (Appointed 10 September 2022)
Trevor Lane (Appointed 2 October 2022)
Susan Garfinkel (Appointed 7 August 2023)

Company registered number

06389120

Charity registered number

1123023

Registered office

New Kings Court, Tollgate, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO53 3LG

Company secretary

Natalie Ridgeway, Executive Officer

Independent Examiner

Matthew Bather, ACA, Moore (South) LLP, Priory House, Pilgrims Court, Sydenham Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3RX

Bankers

Co-operative Bank plc, PO Box 250, Delf House, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

Solicitors

Blake Morgan, New Kings Court, Tollgate, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO53 3LG

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

The Trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their annual report together with the financial statements of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (the company) for the year ended 31 December 2022. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS102) second edition.

Structure, governance and management

- **Constitution**

The company is registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee and was set up by a Memorandum of Association on 3 October 2007 as amended by Special Resolutions dated 18 February 2008, 3 May 2011, 22 March 2013, 17 April 2015, 9 September 2015 and 12 December 2019, and is a registered charity number 1123023.

The Trustee Board and Council are the constitutional members of COPE.

The principal objects of the company are the promotion for the public benefit of ethical standards of conduct in research and ethical standards in the publication of scholarly journals.

- **Method of appointment or election of Trustees**

The Trustee Board (maximum of 12) consists of the Officers, namely: Chair; Vice-chair; Secretary; Treasurer; Immediate Past Chair, elected members, and those who are co-opted. Officers and the Trustee Board are elected by the full Constitutional Members (Trustees and Council Members). The Trustee Board also appoint a Chair-elect from within the Constitutional Membership who serves for 12 months before taking on the role of Chair. Up to four Trustees may be co-opted by the Trustee Board between general meetings.

- **Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees**

Upon appointment Trustees are provided with a copy of the Articles of Association and the Regulations of COPE; they are also provided with a briefing session, and a written document outlining the responsibilities entailed 'On being a Trustee of COPE'. Additionally, they are required to access an 'eLearning' module which outlines COPE processes and procedures. This introduction to COPE is usually conducted by one or more of the current Officers or by the Executive Officer. Each Trustee is also required to complete a Conflict of Interest form which is updated annually and posted on the COPE website.

Subsequent training is provided as needed. In addition, we nominate a current Trustee or Council member to be a mentor to each new Trustee. Ad hoc training is carried out as and when necessary to ensure that Trustees are kept abreast of developments with regard to the legal and other obligations of COPE as a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee and any of the resultant obligations of the Trustees.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

● Organisational structure and decision making

The Trustee Board (<http://publicationethics.org/about/trustees>) is ultimately responsible for the financial, legal and business operations of COPE as a charitable business and it gives authority to the Executive Officer and the COPE team (<http://publicationethics.org/cope-staff>) to manage the day to day affairs of the organization. The Trustees of the charity are also the directors of the limited company.

Day-to-day operational activities of the business are managed by COPE's full time Executive Officer. The administration of the business activities of COPE are carried out by a freelance Administrator. Managing the bank account and all financial transactions is the responsibility of the Executive Officer with oversight by the Treasurer and Finance subcommittee. The COPE website is managed by a freelance Web Manager, who is contracted to work for COPE for up to 21 hours per week. A full-time Membership Administrator is employed to review and administer the applications from potential new members. A full time Administrative Assistant assists with all administration support. A freelance Facilitation & Integrity Officer administers the COPE complaints process.

● Risk management

The principal risks identified with regard to COPE and its operations, and their mitigation, are as follows:

(i) Litigation arising from advice, guidance or recommendations offered to authors, editors, publishers and publishing staff and others with regard to ethical issues raised in connection with published academic (learned) journals. Full insurance cover for professional indemnity is provided at COPE's expense for Trustees and Council members and for the Executive Officer and Administrator acting for and on behalf of COPE. The risk is graded as low-to-medium on the basis that COPE specifically does not offer adjudication or judgements with regard to cases involving ethical issues brought to its attention.

(ii) Loss of subscription income. COPE will regularly review subscription income to ensure it is providing value for members, that the subscriptions are in line with industry expectations, and that any changes ensure broadly the same income year on year. Two policies are in place to support a level of financial stability: 1) increasing subscription fees by the Retail Price Index (RPI) each year when it is prudent to do so; and 2) diversifying our income streams by seeking new members in underrepresented disciplines and countries within the COPE membership. The Finance subcommittee, led by the Treasurer, is in charge of managing this policy. In 2021, we implemented a new fee structure for individual journal members and individual associate members to ensure subscription fees are proportionate and fair and this is reviewed every three years.

(iii) Loss of data. Data relating to COPE's business and financial affairs are retained by the Executive Officer and held in a secure location in two places; (1) hard copies (where appropriate) are held in a locked filing cabinet at the Executive Officer's accommodation and (2) electronic copies are held in the 'cloud' on Google Drive and two online management systems: Basecamp and Monday.com. No electronic files are held on computer hard drives by the Executive Officer or any members of the team. In addition, the database of COPE Members is retained on the COPE website which is managed separately under contract by the company responsible for general maintenance and development of the COPE website. This company provides for automatic back-up of COPE data. The risk of loss of irrecoverable data is regarded as low-to-medium.

(iv) Physical assets. COPE has no substantial physical assets.

(v) COPE continually reviews its constitution to ensure good governance and oversight which is now the sole province of the Trustee Board.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Objectives and Activities

- **Activities for achieving objectives and acting for public benefit**

In planning our activities for the year we have kept in mind the Charity Commissioners guidance on public benefit. COPE was established to provide a range of services and products aimed primarily, but not exclusively, at editors and publishers of learned journals and designed to provide advice and guidance on best practice for dealing with ethical issues in journal publishing.

Ethical issues covered by COPE include:

- Plagiarism
- Fabrication
- Falsification
- Redundant publication
- Selective reporting
- Unethical research
- Authorship issues
- Peer review misconduct
- Editor misconduct
- Conflicts of interest

COPE holds a Forum meeting, four times a year (all are virtual), at which members can raise and discuss particular and general ethical issues. COPE then undertakes to publish written summaries of these Forum discussions (suitably edited and anonymised to ensure that identifiable details such as names of individuals, journals and institutions are removed) on the COPE website with free, unhindered access for anyone visiting the website. A classification hierarchy is used to allow all interested users of the website to find cases on specific issues more easily. The Forum reports thus form part of a developing database of 'case law' relating to ethical issues in journal publishing and hence a valuable and valued resource for those involved with ethical matters, COPE members and non-members alike. Member queries or cases that are unable to wait for Forum, or where they would prefer them to be discussed in confidence, are responded to internally via Council.

COPE has developed a journal audit which many of its members have used to check that their publications or operations are following best practice. This audit was completely updated and revised during 2018 and republished as the "COPE Journal Audit". COPE has also published a Spanish version of the Journal Audit and is planning more translations, specifically Chinese and Portuguese. COPE's recommendations are also available in the form of flowcharts and infographics, which are used in many editorial offices and have been translated into several languages. The flowcharts and infographics have been restyled to ensure consistency across all versions and were released in 2021.

COPE also produces specific guidance and discussion documents on a number of issues. During 2022 the following were developed or updated:

- A full revision and update was conducted on the 'Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing'. This guidance has been written in collaboration with DOAJ, OASPA and WAME.
- 'Ethics toolkit for a successful editorial office': a comprehensive toolkit that explains expected ethical practices in scholarly publishing, and highlights resources for editorial offices to develop their codes of ethical conduct and practice. This is aimed primarily at non-members.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

- Extensive update to the 'Systematic manipulation of the publication process' flowchart.
- Revision to the 'General approach to publication ethics for the editorial office' flowchart.
- Full revision of the 'COPE Membership Handbook'

During 2023, resources published include:

- Supplemental guidance for addressing concerns about systematic manipulation of the publication process
- Best practices for guest edited collections
- Dealing with concerns about the integrity of published research
- 8 flowcharts on issues regarding data sharing published in collaboration with Force 11.

Initial work has also begun by COPE Members on creating new or updating existing and includes:

- A discussion document on the issue of 'Watchlists'
- A New flowchart on 'Guidance for when institutions are contacted by journals'
- New discussion document on Name and identity changes
- New guidelines on Expressions of concern
- Revised discussion documents: "What constitutes plagiarism" and "Text recycling"
- Full revision of the 'Sharing of information among editors' to take into account GDPR issues
- An update to the 'Retraction Guidelines'
- Revision to the 'Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research integrity cases'
- A new discussion document on 'Historical offensive content'
- A new flowchart on 'Dealing with concurrent submissions'

Additional guidelines or discussion document that COPE offers, includes:

- 'Journals' Best Practices for Ensuring Consent for Publishing Medical Case Reports'
- 'Short Guide to Ethical Editing for New Editors'
- 'Ethical guidelines for peer reviewers'
- Editors' relations with learned societies', which was revised and renamed as 'Guidelines for management relationships between society-owned journals, their society and publishers'.

The COPE website underwent a major refresh during 2018/19 to enable easier discoverability of resources and guidance and the new site was launched in 2019. As websites continually evolve, and owing to the need to move its content management system in 2022 owing to the existing version reaching end of life, it has been agreed that we would retender for a new website partner in 2022. This extensive and intensive process culminated in COPE contracting with CTI Digital who are currently supporting us in the developing a new website for launch in 2024.

Internal work we have conducted to improve the existing website includes: consistency of content across the site; a clear archiving policy for old content; full html pages for all guidance (in addition to pdfs); changes to tagging and URL creation to ensure improved SEO.

The website is also kept updated with news about ethical issues and publications likely to be of interest to editors and publishers. In 2022, COPE launched a new initiative in our monthly newsletters seeking opinion pieces or invited guest editorials for publication in the newsletters. COPE also has a presence on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter with an active membership. COPE publishes a monthly eNewsletter, *COPE Digest*, available to members and non-members which contains COPE updates, an analysis of publication ethics in the news, and educational material.

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COPE usually holds annual seminars across the world. Owing to the global pandemic all in-person events during 2020 and 2021 were cancelled. As an alternative, and in addition to the Forums, COPE developed a significant online webinar and workshop program. In May 2022 we held an online seminar celebrating COPE's 25th anniversary and the launch of a new membership category for universities and research institutes. An initiative nearly five years in the making, this is a significant activity for COPE and is intended to educate universities and research institutes on issues relating to publication ethics as well as facilitate a dialogue between universities and publishers. While seminars are a members only benefit, all seminar sessions are recorded and made available to non-members after the event via our website. In 2023, we will hold a week long virtual seminar consisting of topics: Handling a case of misconduct, image manipulation, post-publication corrections, post-publication critiques, AI in peer review, ethical concerns in publishing on urbanisation and inclusive language. We are also holding an introduction to publication ethics workshop which is open to both members and non-members.

In collaboration with STM, COPE undertook a piece of research into the issue of paper mills. Of interest to publishers, universities and funders this piece of research (published in June 2022) aimed to understand the scale of the problem of paper mills as well as provide some recommended next steps.

COPE worked with the UK Research & Innovation committee (UKRI) where we co-chaired a working on information sharing on research misconduct. Organised by UKRI, this workshop was one of three workshops (aimed at publishers, research integrity officers and funders) to discuss the issues around sharing of information between the relevant parties. Next steps are being considered by UKRI.

COPE had a significant presence at the World Congress in Research Integrity (WCRI) in June 2022. The WCRI is an important audience for COPE. This was been postponed from 2021 to 2022 as an in-person meeting, but there were virtual presentations during 2021 which COPE presented at. COPE will also be present at the next WCRI in 2024.

COPE's strategic plan covering the period 2020-2023 develops the previous strategic objectives further by confirming that universities will be allowed to apply for COPE membership after a successful pilot period; COPE's commitment to developing resources for underrepresented disciplines; as well as supporting members, and increasing its membership, from China, India and South America. To further these objectives during 2020-2021: (i) for university membership, a RFP was circulated externally in December 2020, inviting applicants to tender for the preparation and writing of the first module for an online learning course specifically aimed at universities. After review, Cambridge University Press were appointed and they have been developing the module content through 2021. COPE launched its university and research institute category in May 2022 to a small group of selected universities. (ii) Supporting underrepresented disciplines and regions: COPE has an ongoing programme of translation of materials and has published an ethics toolkit which was launched in January 2022. The handbook is aimed specifically at non-members and will support them in understanding how to become a member of COPE. COPE is also currently working to understand the needs of books publishers in terms of ethics issues and working to increase resources for its arts, humanities and social sciences journals.

COPE has issued three position statements over the past two years: (1) published in 2021, COPE confirmed its position on the issue of 'the protection of vulnerable groups and individuals' and, (2) in 2022, we reaffirmed our 2013 position on 'geopolitical intrusions on editorial decisions' owing to the war in Ukraine. Thus year we issued a statement on Authorship and AI tools were we reiterated that AI tools cannot be considered an author.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Achievements and performance

- **Review of activities**

During the period under review, that is the calendar year ended 31 December 2022, COPE continued to attract and recruit new journal and publisher members. At the end of 2022 just over 14,000 journal editors were members of COPE. Nearly all major publishers have agreed to sign up their journals as members of COPE by paying a subscription; however, COPE is reliant on the publishers to provide details of their journals, and to inform COPE of any changes. It is therefore not always possible to give an exact figure of the number of COPE members at any specific date as there is often a delay before the publisher updates its records.

The launch of COPE's university and research institutes membership in May 2022 saw eleven universities agree to become members. At the time of writing COPE has just launched a second phase drive for new university and research institute members before opening it up more widely in 2024.

Financial review

The overall result for 2022 was positive and has resulted in an increase in total reserves:

(i)	Opening balance, reserves at 01 January 2022	£317,659
(ii)	Closing balance, reserves at 31 December 2022	£354,127

The year end surplus of £36,468 represents a decrease from a surplus in 2021 of £59,765. Operating costs increased from 2021 to 2022:

(i)	Total costs 2021	£401,354
(ii)	Total costs 2022	£488,274

The increase in costs from 2021 to 2022 was £86,920. The main reasons for the rise in costs in 2022 relate to:

- COPE created the new position of Operations Manager to support all COPE activities and operations. A full time, salaried role, this position commenced on the 1 July 2022.
- As discussed earlier in the report, COPE moved to a new digital agency, CTI Digital, which saw the process for the development of a new website commence. Half of the increase in costs seen in 2022 come from this project commencing. This project will continue in 2023 and all the way through into 2025.
- COPE held its first in-person retreat since 2019. This saw all Trustees, Council Members, Staff and freelance support meeting in the UK for a four-day meeting. Travel expenses were minimal but the cost of the conference venue account for 25% of the increase in costs.
- COPE supported the postponed World Conference on Research Integrity where we covered the attendance of two speakers at the event, and we also participated in a joint research activity with STM (formerly STM Association), conducted by an external research agency, looking at the issue of paper mills.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

- **Investment policy and performance**

COPE is committed to the adoption and implementation of ethical policies with regard to its financial investments. As such its banking arrangements reviewed to ensure that any monies held by COPE are secure. COPE has since opened an additional savings account with the Nationwide to hold some of its reserves to spread the risk in case of a banking issue.

- **Reserves policy**

It has been agreed by the Council that it is appropriate for COPE to maintain strategic financial reserves sufficient to accommodate unavoidable operating costs for a period of 12 months in the event that the decision were to be made to close COPE and cease activities.

The Council has agreed that the amount for the strategic reserve should be at least £225,000 - this amount to be reviewed and agreed annually. The figure has been set largely to accommodate the costs of the Executive Officer, Operations Manager, Senior Membership Administrator, Administrator and freelance staff (Engagement & Outreach Officer, Website Manager, Designer, and Facilitation & Integrity Officer); COPE does not incur significant overhead costs such as office accommodation or capital assets. To the period ending 2022, the actual reserves were higher than the £225,000 agreed. To return the reserve closer to the agreed level during 2023 the Trustees have:

- Committed to a large project which will transform our digital offering for our members. As mentioned elsewhere, we are in phase one of a three-year project to upgrade and transform our website, offering a better experience for our members. We will also be implementing a CRM (Customer Relationship Management system) which will allow us to more effectively communicate with our members as well as our members engage more easily with COPE. This is a significant project, with a significant budget attached, which will be paid for out of the surplus we have accrued.

Plans for the future

- **Future developments**

COPE will continue to investigate and, where appropriate, develop and make available, relevant new services and resources for its Members and others. Amongst those planned for 2022-2023 are:

- Second phase of University & Research Institutes membership to be launched in Q3 of 2023 with it being opened up for applications more generally in 2024.
- Continuing in 2023, COPE is undertaking a significant project to redesign and rebuild our website for the launch of a brand new website in 2024. In addition, we will also be commencing a project to implement a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database. This will help COPE to support its members better with more targeted resources and events.
- Further collaboration with its partner organisations, including STM, DOAJ, WAME, UKRI etc.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Trustees Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Committee on Publication Ethics for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the 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 2019 (FRS 102);
- make judgements and 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that 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 charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities, and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 section 1A for Smaller Entities.

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

This report was approved by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf, by:



Daniel Kulp, Chair

Dated: October 18, 2023

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Committee on Publication Ethics

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2022 which are set out on pages 11 to 20.

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

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a 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 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:



Dated: 23 October 2023

Matthew Bather, ACA

Moore (South) LLP
Priory House
Pilgrims Court
Sydenham Road
Guildford
GU1 3RX

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(incorporating income and expenditure account)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £
INCOMING RESOURCES			
Other trading activities	2	524,742	461,119
Investment income		-	-
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		524,742	461,119
RESOURCES EXPENDED			
Charitable activities	3	481,143	393,788
Other	4	7,131	7,566
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		488,274	401,354
MOVEMENT IN TOTAL FUNDS FOR THE YEAR – NET SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		36,468	59,765
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:			
<i>Total funds at 1 January 2022</i>		317,659	257,894
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022		<u>354,127</u>	<u>317,659</u>

The results for the year derive from continuing activities and there are no gains or losses other than those shown above.

The notes on pages 13 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 06389120

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	Note	£	2021	£	£	2020	£
CURRENT ASSETS							
Debtors	8		3,952			2,049	
Cash at bank			<u>360,292</u>			<u>323,299</u>	
			364,244			325,348	
LIABILITIES							
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	9		<u>(10,117)</u>			<u>(7,689)</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS				354,127			317,659
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES				354,127			317,659
CHARITY FUNDS							
Unrestricted funds	12			<u>354,127</u>			<u>317,659</u>

For the financial year ended 31 December 2022 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the 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 the preparation of financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and the charities Statement of Recommended Practice and Financial Reporting Standard 102 section 1A.

The financial statements were approved by the Directors on and signed on their behalf, by:


Daniel Kulp, Chair

Dated: *October 18, 2023*

The notes on pages 13 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 Company Status

The company is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The company is incorporated in England & Wales. The company is governed by its association of articles completed on 3 October 2007, and subsequent amends as noted on page 2. The company was registered with the Charity Commission on 29 February 2008, registered number 1123023. The address of the registered office is given in the Reference and Administrative Details given on page 1 of these financial statements. The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the company. The nature of the charities operations and principal activities are explained in the Trustees Report.

The company constitutes a public benefit as defined by FRS102.

1.2 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, SORP (FRS102) (second edition), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) section 1A and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention. The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency, and have been rounded to the nearest pound.

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

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption not to produce a cash flow under FRS102 Section 1A and SORP 2019.

1.3 Going concern

At the time of approving the accounts, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the company has adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future. The Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.4 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income, the amount can be reliably measured and it is probable that the income will be received.

Subscriptions are raised from the date of acceptance to 31 December each year. They are recorded in full when receivable. Any subscriptions that are waived in the year are included as subscription income and as a grant payable.

Interest receivable is accounted for on an accruals basis.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

1.5 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the obligation can be measured reliably.

The charity's seminar costs are allocated to direct charitable expenditure.

Expenditure on charitable activities includes grants with relevant support costs and governance costs.

- Grants are charged in the year they are approved for payment. No grants are deferred.

Other expenditure includes all expenditure that is neither related to raising funds for the charity nor part of its expenditure on charitable activities.

1.6 Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity, but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include salaries and administrative expenses. These costs have all been allocated to charitable activities as there is only one activity undertaken by the charity.

1.7 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

1.8 Cash at Bank and in Hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.9 Creditors

Creditors are recognised when the charity has a present obligation resulting from past events and can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are recognised at their settlement amounts.

1.10 Pension Costs

The charitable company pays contributions into a defined contribution scheme for its employees and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the charitable company in respect of the year. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company in an independently administered fund.

1.11 Financial instruments

The company 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.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

1.12 Foreign currencies

Foreign currency transactions are initially recognised by applying to the foreign currency amount the spot exchange rate between the functional currency and the foreign currency at the date of the transaction.

Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in a foreign currency at the balance sheet date are translated using the closing rate.

1.13 Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds are subscriptions and incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

1.14 Judgements and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

In the application of the charitable company's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

The Trustees do not believe that there are any judgements or estimates that affect these accounts.

2. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Total funds 2022 £	<i>Total funds 2021 £</i>
Subscriptions	467,743	409,478
Subscriptions waived	56,999	51,641
	524,742	461,119

All income from other trading activities for 2022 and 2021 was unrestricted.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

3. RESOURCES EXPENDED ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Total funds 2022 £	Total funds 2021 £
Grants Payable (Note 5)	56,999	51,641
Seminar costs	32,868	1,433
Website costs	117,965	74,402
Council / forum expenses	-	-
Support costs (see below)	273,311	266,309
	481,143	393,788

All expenditure on charitable activities for 2022 and 2021 was unrestricted.

ALLOCATION OF SUPPORT COSTS

	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
General administration	23,693	16,440
Administration	205,606	210,907
Research	5,337	-
Insurance	2,245	2,091
Meeting costs	708	-
PR & Marketing	28,459	27,589
Personal development and training	-	282
Sponsorship	850	5,800
University membership and administration	5,931	3,200
Bad debts	482	-
	273,311	266,309

All support costs are directly attributable to the Charitable Activities.

4. OTHER

	Total Funds 2022 £	Total funds 2021 £
Independent examiner's fees	2,265	2,160
Accountancy and bookkeeping	3,356	2,718
Legal and professional fees	840	2,688
Governance costs	670	-
	7,131	7,566

All expenditure on other costs for 2022 and 2021 was unrestricted.

Included in the above are governance costs totalling £5,163 (2021 - £5,088).

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

5. ANALYSIS OF GRANTS PAYABLE

	2022 £	2021 £
Individuals		
Subscriptions waived	56,999	51,641

The subscriptions waived relate to 240 members (2021 - 235) receiving grants of various amounts, depending upon the number of journals published.

6. TRUSTEES

During the year, no Trustees received any benefits in kind (2021 - £Nil).

2 (2021 – none) trustees received reimbursement of expenses of £192.60 (2021 - £Nil) in respect of travel and subsistence costs for attendance at council meetings and seminars.

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Trustees may be paid all reasonable and proper expenses incurred by them in connection with their attendance at meetings and in discharge of their duties.

7. STAFF COSTS

Staff costs were as follows:

	31 December 2022 £	31 December 2021 £
Wages and salaries	123,713	119,082
Social security costs	14,361	12,780
Employers allowance	(5,000)	(4,000)
Pension costs	2,283	2,332
	135,357	130,194

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

	31 December 2022 No.	31 December 2021 No.
Operational staff	3	3

1 employee (2021 – 1) received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) amounting to between £80,000 and £90,000 during the year (2021 between £70,000 and £80,000).

The total amount of remuneration, including Employers NIC and pension, paid to key management personnel in the year was £83,555 (2021 - £81,222).

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

8. DEBTORS

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	3,188	1,285
Prepayments and accrued income	764	764
	<u>3,952</u>	<u>2,049</u>

**9. CREDITORS:
Amounts falling due within one year**

	2022 £	2021 £
Accruals and deferred income	3,839	3,838
Trade creditors	-	-
Other creditors	1,268	506
Taxation and social security	5,010	3,345
	<u>10,117</u>	<u>7,689</u>

10. DEFERRED INCOME

	2022 £	2021 £
At 1 January	171	171
Additions in year	-	-
Released in year	-	-
At 31 December	<u>171</u>	<u>171</u>

11. PENSIONS

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund.

At 31 December 2022 £1,268 (2021 - £506) was included in creditors.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

12. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Carried Forward £
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	<u>317,659</u>	<u>524,742</u>	<u>(488,274)</u>	<u>354,127</u>

Unrestricted funds for year ended 31 December 2021

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Carried Forward £
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	<u>257,894</u>	<u>461,119</u>	<u>(401,354)</u>	<u>317,659</u>

13. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Current Assets £	Liabilities £	Total £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	<u>364,244</u>	<u>10,117</u>	<u>354,127</u>

Unrestricted funds for year ended 31 December 2021

	Current Assets £	Liabilities £	Total £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	<u>325,348</u>	<u>7,689</u>	<u>317,659</u>

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

14. CONTROLLING PARTY

There is no controlling party.

15. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year the company indemnified the trustees against any liability by taking out insurance costing £2,245 (2021 - £2,091) on their behalf.

Accounts

Registered number: 06389120
Charity number: 1123023

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS
UNAUDITED
TRUSTEES REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

Trustees

Daniel Kulp, Chair
Tara Lee Hoke, Secretary
Michael Wise, Treasurer
Deborah Poff (Resigned 1 September 2022)
Caroline Porter
Deborah Kahn
Nancy Chescheir (Vice-Chair)
Suzanne Farley (Resigned 1 September 2022)
Simon Linacre
Tim Kersjes (Appointed 6 September 2022)
Dr Howard Browman (Appointed 10 September 2022)

Company registered number

06389120

Charity registered number

1123023

Registered office

New Kings Court, Tollgate, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO53 3LG

Company secretary

Natalie Ridgeway, Executive Officer

Independent Examiner

Danielle Griffin, FCA, Moore (South) LLP, Priory House, Pilgrims Court, Sydenham Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3RX

Bankers

Co-operative Bank plc, PO Box 250, Delf House, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

Solicitors

Blake Morgan, New Kings Court, Tollgate, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO53 3LG

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

The Trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their annual report together with the financial statements of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (the company) for the year ended 31 December 2021. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS102) second edition.

Structure, governance and management

- **Constitution**

The company is registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee and was set up by a Memorandum of Association on 3 October 2007 as amended by Special Resolutions dated 18 February 2008, 3 May 2011, 22 March 2013, 17 April 2015, 9 September 2015 and 12 December 2019, and is a registered charity number 1123023.

The Trustee Board and Council are the constitutional members of COPE.

The principal objects of the company are the promotion for the public benefit of ethical standards of conduct in research and ethical standards in the publication of scholarly journals.

- **Method of appointment or election of Trustees**

The Trustee Board (maximum of 12) consists of the Officers, namely: Chair; Vice-chair; Secretary; Treasurer; Immediate Past Chair, elected members, and those who are co-opted. Officers and the Trustee Board are elected by the full Constitutional Members (Trustees and Council Members). The Trustee Board also appoint a Chair-elect from within the Constitutional Membership who serves for 12 months before taking on the role of Chair. Up to four Trustees may be co-opted by the Trustee Board between general meetings.

- **Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees**

Upon appointment Trustees are provided with a copy of the Articles of Association and the Regulations of COPE; they are also provided with a briefing session, and a written document outlining the responsibilities entailed 'On being a Trustee of COPE'. Additionally, they are required to access an 'eLearning' module which outlines COPE processes and procedures. This introduction to COPE is usually conducted by one or more of the current Officers or by the Executive Officer. Each Trustee is also required to complete a Conflict of Interest form which is updated annually and posted on the COPE website.

Subsequent training is provided as needed. In addition, we nominate a current Trustee or Council member to be a mentor to each new Trustee. Ad hoc training is carried out as and when necessary to ensure that Trustees are kept abreast of developments with regard to the legal and other obligations of COPE as a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee and any of the resultant obligations of the Trustees.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

• Organisational structure and decision making

The Trustee Board (<http://publicationethics.org/about/trustees>) is ultimately responsible for the financial, legal and business operations of COPE as a charitable business and it gives authority to the Executive Officer and the COPE team (<http://publicationethics.org/cope-staff>) to manage the day to day affairs of the organization. The Trustees of the charity are also the directors of the limited company.

Day-to-day operational activities of the business are managed by COPE's full time Executive Officer. The administration of the business activities of COPE are carried out by a freelance Administrator. Managing the bank account and all financial transactions is the responsibility of the Executive Officer with oversight by the Treasurer and Finance subcommittee. The COPE website is managed by a freelance Web Manager, who is contracted to work for COPE for up to 21 hours per week. A full-time Membership Administrator is employed to review and administer the applications from potential new members. A full time Administrative Assistant assists with all administration support. A freelance Facilitation & Integrity Officer administers the COPE complaints process.

• Risk management

The principal risks identified with regard to COPE and its operations, and their mitigation, are as follows:

(i) Litigation arising from advice, guidance or recommendations offered to authors, editors, publishers and publishing staff and others with regard to ethical issues raised in connection with published academic (learned) journals. Full insurance cover for professional indemnity is provided at COPE's expense for Trustees and Council members and for the Executive Officer and Administrator acting for and on behalf of COPE. The risk is graded as low-to-medium on the basis that COPE specifically does not offer adjudication or judgements with regard to cases involving ethical issues brought to its attention.

(ii) Loss of subscription income. COPE will regularly review subscription income to ensure it is providing value for members, that the subscriptions are in line with industry expectations, and that any changes ensure broadly the same income year on year. Two policies are in place to support a level of financial stability: 1) increasing subscription fees by the Retail Price Index (RPI) each year when it is prudent to do so; and 2) diversifying our income streams by seeking new members in underrepresented disciplines and countries within the COPE membership. The Finance subcommittee, led by the Treasurer, is in charge of managing this policy. In 2021, we implemented a new fee structure for individual journal members and individual associate members to ensure subscription fees are proportionate and fair.

(iii) Loss of data. Data relating to COPE's business and financial affairs are retained by the Executive Officer and held in a secure location in two places; (1) hard copies (where appropriate) are held in a locked filing cabinet at the Executive Officer's accommodation and (2) electronic copies are held in the 'cloud' on Google Drive and two online management systems: Basecamp and Monday.com. No electronic files are held on computer hard drives by the Executive Officer or any members of the team. In addition, the database of COPE Members is retained on the COPE website which is managed separately under contract by the company responsible for general maintenance and development of the COPE website. This company provides for automatic back-up of COPE data. The risk of loss of irrecoverable data is regarded as low-to-medium.

(iv) Physical assets. COPE has no substantial physical assets.

(v) COPE continually reviews its constitution to ensure good governance and oversight which is now the sole province of the Trustee Board.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

Objectives and Activities

- **Activities for achieving objectives and acting for public benefit**

In planning our activities for the year we have kept in mind the Charity Commissioners guidance on public benefit. COPE was established to provide a range of services and products aimed primarily, but not exclusively, at editors and publishers of learned journals and designed to provide advice and guidance on best practice for dealing with ethical issues in journal publishing.

Ethical issues covered by COPE include:

- Plagiarism
- Fabrication
- Falsification
- Redundant publication
- Selective reporting
- Unethical research
- Authorship issues
- Peer review misconduct
- Editor misconduct
- Conflicts of interest

COPE holds a Forum meeting, four times a year (all are virtual), at which members can raise and discuss particular and general ethical issues. COPE then undertakes to publish written summaries of these Forum discussions (suitably edited and anonymised to ensure that identifiable details such as names of individuals, journals and institutions are removed) on the COPE website with free, unhindered access for anyone visiting the website. A classification hierarchy is used to allow all interested users of the website to find cases on specific issues more easily. The Forum reports thus form part of a developing database of 'case law' relating to ethical issues in journal publishing and hence a valuable and valued resource for those involved with ethical matters, COPE members and non-members alike. Member queries or cases that are unable to wait for Forum, or where they would prefer them to be discussed in confidence, are responded to internally via Council.

COPE has developed a journal audit which many of its members have used to check that their publications or operations are following best practice. This audit was completely updated and revised during 2018 and republished as the "COPE Journal Audit". COPE has also published a Spanish version of the Journal Audit and is planning more translations, specifically Chinese and Portuguese. COPE's recommendations are also available in the form of flowcharts and infographics, which are used in many editorial offices and have been translated into several languages. The flowcharts and infographics have been restyled to ensure consistency across all versions and were released in 2021.

COPE also produces specific guidance and discussion documents on a number of issues. During 2021 the following were developed or revised and updated:

- New guidelines for the 'Editing of reviewer comments' were published in 2021 following a discussion held at the Forum, and a follow-up survey from COPE.
- A new discussion document on the use of 'Artificial intelligence (AI) in decision making' was published in 2021.
- A new discussion document on Diversity and Inclusion was published in 2021.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

- A new flowchart on 'Handling post-publication critiques has been drafted in collaboration with Wiley and was published in 2021.

Additionally, new resources published so far during 2022 include:

- 'Ethics toolkit for a successful editorial office': a comprehensive toolkit that explains expected ethical practices in scholarly publishing, and highlights resources for editorial offices to develop their codes of ethical conduct and practice. This is aimed primarily at non-members.
- Extensive update to the 'Systematic manipulation of the publication process' flowchart.
- Revision to the 'General approach to publication ethics for the editorial office' flowchart.
- Full revision of the 'COPE Membership Handbook'

Initial work has also begun by COPE Members on creating new or updating existing and includes:

- New discussion document on Name and identity changes
- New guidelines on Expressions of concern
- Revised discussion documents: "What constitutes plagiarism" and "Text recycling"
- Revision to the Preprints discussion document.
- Resources to support publishers with issues arising from 'paper mills'.

Additional guidelines or discussion document that COPE offers, includes:

- 'Journals' Best Practices for Ensuring Consent for Publishing Medical Case Reports'
- 'Short Guide to Ethical Editing for New Editors'
- 'Sharing of information among Editors-in-Chief regarding possible misconduct'
- 'Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research integrity cases'
- 'Ethical guidelines for peer reviewers'
- Editors' relations with learned societies', which was revised and renamed as 'Guidelines for management relationships between society-owned journals, their society and publishers'.

The COPE website underwent a major refresh during 2018/19 to enable easier discoverability of resources and guidance and the new site was launched in 2019. As websites continually evolve, and owing to the need to move its content management system in 2022 owing to the existing version reaching end of life, it has been agreed that we will retender for a possible new website partner in 2022 and this is currently in process.

Internal work we have conducted to improve the existing website includes: consistency of content across the site; a clear archiving policy for old content; full html pages for all guidance (in addition to pdfs); changes to tagging and URL creation to ensure improved SEO.

The website is also kept updated with news about ethical issues and publications likely to be of interest to editors and publishers. In 2022, COPE launched a new initiative in our monthly newsletters seeking opinion pieces or invited guest editorials for publication in the newsletters. COPE also has a presence on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter with an active membership. COPE publishes a bi-monthly eNewsletter, *COPE Digest*, available to members and non-members which contains COPE updates, an analysis of publication ethics in the news, and educational material. From April 2021, we started publishing *Member Insight*, a bi-monthly newsletter aimed specifically at members. This contains similar material to *Digest* while looking at topics of interest to our members in more depth.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

COPE usually holds annual seminars across the world. Owing to the global pandemic all in-person events during 2020 and 2021 were cancelled. As an alternative, and in addition to the Forums, COPE developed a significant online webinar and workshop program. In 2021 we held four workshops: discussing cases around authors and publication ethics themes arising from our facilitation & integrity process. A week long virtual seminar, taking place at the end of September 2021, scheduled nine sessions covering different publication ethics topics. The seminar topics were extremely well received with over 300 registrations. In May 2022 we held an online seminar celebrating COPE's 25th anniversary and the launch of a new membership category for universities and research institutes. An initiative nearly five years in the making, this is a significant activity for COPE and is intended to educate universities and research institutes on issues relating to publication ethics as well as facilitate a dialogue between universities and publishers. While seminars are a members only benefit, all seminar sessions are recorded and made available to non-members after the event via our website.

In collaboration with STM (previously STM Association), COPE has undertaken a piece of research into the issue of paper mills. Of interest to publishers, universities and funders this piece of research (published in June 2022) aimed to understand the scale of the problem of paper mills as well as provide some recommended next steps. A series of events to further discuss, determine next actions, and to education our audience will take place in September 2022.

COPE worked with the UK Research & Innovation committee (UKRI) where we co-chaired a working on information sharing on research misconduct. Organised by UKRI, this workshop was one of three workshops (aimed at publishers, research integrity officers and funders) to discuss the issues around sharing of information between the relevant parties. Next steps are being considered by UKRI.

COPE had a significant presence at the World Congress in Research Integrity (WCRI) in June 2022. The WCRI is an important audience for COPE. This was postponed from 2021 to 2022 as an in-person meeting, but there were virtual presentations during 2021 which COPE presented at.

COPE's strategic plan covering the period 2020-2023 develops the previous strategic objectives further by confirming that universities will be allowed to apply for COPE membership after a successful pilot period; COPE's commitment to developing resources for underrepresented disciplines; as well as supporting members, and increasing its membership, from China, India and South America. To further these objectives during 2020-2021: (i) for university membership, a RFP was circulated externally in December 2020, inviting applicants to tender for the preparation and writing of the first module for an online learning course specifically aimed at universities. After review, Cambridge University Press were appointed and they have been developing the module content through 2021. COPE launched its university and research institute category in May 2022 to a small group of selected universities. (ii) Supporting underrepresented disciplines and regions: COPE has an ongoing programme of translation of materials and has published an ethics toolkit which was launched in January 2022. The handbook is aimed specifically at non-members and will support them in understanding how to become a member of COPE. COPE is also currently working to understand the needs of books publishers in terms of ethics issues and working to increase resources for its arts, humanities and social sciences journals.

COPE has issued two position statements: (1) published in 2021, COPE confirmed its position on the issue of 'the protection of vulnerable groups and individuals' and, (2) in 2022, we reaffirmed our 2013 position on 'geopolitical intrusions on editorial decisions' owing to the war in Ukraine.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

Achievements and performance

- Review of activities

During the period under review, that is the calendar year ended 31 December 2021, COPE continued to attract and recruit new journal and publisher members. At the end of 2021 nearly 14,000 journal editors were members of COPE. Nearly all major publishers have agreed to sign up their journals as members of COPE by paying a corporate subscription; however COPE is reliant on the publishers to provide details of their journals, and to inform COPE of any changes. It is therefore not always possible to give an exact figure of the number of COPE members at any specific date as there is often a delay before the publisher updates its records.

The launch of COPE's university and research institutes membership in May 2022 has also seen six universities agree to become members and, at the time of writing, these are in the process of being reviewed.

Financial review

The overall result for 2021 was positive and has resulted in an increase in total reserves:

(i)	Opening balance, reserves at 01 January 2021	£257,894
(ii)	Closing balance, reserves at 31 December 2021	£317,659

The year end surplus of £59,765 represents an increase from a surplus in 2020 of £53,025. Operating costs increased from 2020 to 2021:

(i)	Total costs 2020	£396,988
(ii)	Total costs 2021	£401,354

The increase in costs from 2020 to 2021 was £4,366. The main reasons for the rise in costs in 2021 relate to:

- We appraised the job description and associated salary level of the administrative assistant during 2021. This saw an increase in salary costs.
- We implemented a new database to manage membership applications. This required additional costs owing to support time, plus additional software which have associated monthly costs.

- Investment policy and performance

COPE is committed to the adoption and implementation of ethical policies with regard to its financial investments. As such its banking arrangements reviewed to ensure that any monies held by COPE are secure. COPE has since opened an additional savings account with the Nationwide to hold some of its reserves to spread the risk in case of a banking issue.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

• Reserves policy

It has been agreed by the Council that it is appropriate for COPE to maintain strategic financial reserves sufficient to accommodate unavoidable operating costs for a period of 12 months in the event that the decision were to be made to close COPE and cease activities.

The Council has agreed that the amount for the strategic reserve should be at least £225,000 - this amount to be reviewed and agreed annually. The figure has been set largely to accommodate the costs of the Executive Officer, Membership Administrator, Administrative Assistant and freelance staff (Administrator, Marketing & Communications Officer, Website Manager, and Facilitation & Integrity Officer): COPE does not incur significant overhead costs such as office accommodation or capital assets. To the period ending 2021, the actual reserves were higher than the £225,000 agreed. This was owing to:

- An increase in incoming resource;
- An increase in cash held in bank account. This is partly owing to the continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic and lack of in-person meetings;
- A reduction in accruals and deferred income.

Plans for the future

• Future developments

COPE will continue to investigate and, where appropriate, develop and make available, relevant new services and products for its Members and others. Amongst those planned for 2021-2022 are:

Universities and research institute membership was launched in May 2022. Open to a selected group of universities and institutes for the first year, the membership category will be opened for general application in 2023.

Webinars, with invited speakers, on specially selected topics. COPE is planning to hold a series of events to launch a joint COPE-STM project on paper mills in 2022.

Continual development of the website, in particular work on its membership database, to ensure it meets the needs of our members. During 2022, COPE undertook a significant project to retender for its website partners which will lead to a brand new website in 2023.

A relaunch of its e-learning for new editors and packaging existing content on this topic to support new journal editors.

Further expansion of the virtual COPE seminars and Fora internationally. A virtual seminar took place at the end of September 2021 and in May 2022 where we launched university and research institute membership as well as celebrate COPE's 25th anniversary.

Continuing to develop and strength relations with related organisations such as the Council of Science Editors, European Association of Science Editors, International Society of Managing and Technical Editors, World Association of Medical Editors and STM Association; as well as collaborative projects with other organisations such as the UK Research & Innovation committee, UK Research Integrity Office, and others.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

Providing speakers at academic and publishing meetings (virtual) to raise awareness about publication ethics and promote good practice and the COPE guidelines and resources.

Covid-19

The impact of Covid-19 on COPE during 2021 continued in the same way as seen in 2020. This was primarily seen in the cancellation of all our in person events and meetings. Nonetheless, as a virtual organisation, COPE has good systems in place to provide resources and events electronically. However, there are some events we hold each year which are in person and, as a consequence of Covid-19, COPE has begun to introduce a series of virtual events to replace these in person meetings and to continue to offer member benefit. During 2021, we held a series of case workshops, and in addition, we developed a virtual seminar programme over the course of one week at the end of September 2021 and an online seminar in May 2022. This first virtual peer review workshop take place at the beginning of October 2020 which was extremely successful. Consequently the same event was run at the end of November 2020 aimed at the Australian time zone. Similar workshops, on different topics, were conducted during 2021. In addition, to provide an offering to replace our larger, face to face seminars, we developed a virtual seminar programme over the course of one week at the end of September 2021 and an online seminar in May 2022.

Trustees Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Committee on Publication Ethics for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the 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 2019 (FRS 102);
- make judgements and 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that 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 charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities, and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 section 1A for Smaller Entities.

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

This report was approved by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf, by:


Daniel Kulp, Chair

Dated: 27 October 2022

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Committee on Publication Ethics

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2021 which are set out on pages 11 to 20.

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

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a 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 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: 

Dated: 28 October 2022

Danielle Griffin FCA

Moore (South) LLP
Priory House
Pilgrims Court
Sydenham Road
Guildford
GU1 3RX

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS**(A company limited by guarantee)**

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(incorporating income and expenditure account)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Unrestricted funds 2020 £
INCOMING RESOURCES			
Other trading activities	2	461,119	449,361
Investment income		-	652
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		461,119	450,013
RESOURCES EXPENDED			
Charitable activities	3	393,788	390,418
Other	4	7,566	6,570
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		401,354	396,988
MOVEMENT IN TOTAL FUNDS FOR THE YEAR – NET SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		59,765	53,025
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:			
<i>Total funds at 1 January 2021</i>		257,894	204,869
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021		317,659	257,894

The results for the year derive from continuing activities and there are no gains or losses other than those shown above.

The notes on pages 14 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 06389120

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021**

	Note	£	2021	£	£	2020	£
CURRENT ASSETS							
Debtors	8		2,049			849	
Cash at bank			<u>323,299</u>			<u>271,039</u>	
			325,348			271,888	
LIABILITIES							
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	9		<u>(7,689)</u>			<u>(13,994)</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS				317,659			257,894
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES				317,659			257,894
CHARITY FUNDS							
Unrestricted funds	12			<u>317,659</u>			<u>257,894</u>

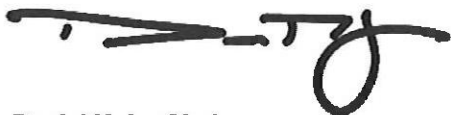
For the financial year ended 31 December 2021 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

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 the preparation of financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and the charities Statement of Recommended Practice and Financial Reporting Standard 102 section 1A.

The financial statements were approved by the Directors on and signed on their behalf, by:



Daniel Kulp, Chair

Dated: 27 October 2022

The notes on pages 14 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 Company Status

The company is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The company is incorporated in England & Wales. The company is governed by its association of articles completed on 3 October 2007, and subsequent amends as noted on page 2. The company was registered with the Charity Commission on 29 February 2008, registered number 1123023. The address of the registered office is given in the Reference and Administrative Details given on page 1 of these financial statements. The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the company. The nature of the charities operations and principal activities are explained in the Trustees Report.

The company constitutes a public benefit as defined by FRS102.

1.2 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, SORP (FRS102) (second edition), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) section 1A and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention. The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency, and have been rounded to the nearest pound.

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

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption not to produce a cash flow under FRS102 Section 1A and SORP 2019.

1.3 Going concern

At the time of approving the accounts, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the company has adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future. The Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.4 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income, the amount can be reliably measured and it is probable that the income will be received.

Subscriptions are raised from the date of acceptance to 31 December each year. They are recorded in full when receivable. Any subscriptions that are waived in the year are included as subscription income and as a grant payable.

Interest receivable is accounted for on an accruals basis.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

1.5 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the obligation can be measured reliably.

The charity's seminar costs are allocated to direct charitable expenditure.

Expenditure on charitable activities includes grants with relevant support costs and governance costs.

- Grants are charged in the year they are approved for payment. No grants are deferred.

Other expenditure includes all expenditure that is neither related to raising funds for the charity nor part of its expenditure on charitable activities.

1.6 Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity, but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include salaries and administrative expenses. These costs have all been allocated to charitable activities as there is only one activity undertaken by the charity.

1.7 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

1.8 Cash at Bank and in Hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.9 Creditors

Creditors are recognised when the charity has a present obligation resulting from past events and can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are recognised at their settlement amounts.

1.10 Pension Costs

The charitable company pays contributions into a defined contribution scheme for its employees and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the charitable company in respect of the year. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company in an independently administered fund.

1.11 Financial instruments

The company 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.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

1.12 Foreign currencies

Foreign currency transactions are initially recognised by applying to the foreign currency amount the spot exchange rate between the functional currency and the foreign currency at the date of the transaction.

Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in a foreign currency at the balance sheet date are translated using the closing rate.

1.13 Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds are subscriptions and incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

1.14 Judgements and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

In the application of the charitable company's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

The Trustees do not believe that there are any judgements or estimates that affect these accounts.

2. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Subscriptions	409,478	400,048
Subscriptions waived	51,641	49,313
	461,119	449,361

All income from other trading activities for 2021 and 2020 was unrestricted.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

3. RESOURCES EXPENDED ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Grants Payable (Note 5)	51,641	49,313
Seminar costs	1,433	-
Website costs	74,402	74,308
Council / forum expenses	-	6,061
Support costs (see below)	266,309	260,736
	393,788	390,418

All expenditure on charitable activities for 2021 and 2020 was unrestricted.

ALLOCATION OF SUPPORT COSTS

	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
General administration	16,440	18,470
Administration	210,907	199,608
Research	-	8,400
Insurance	2,091	2,127
Meeting costs	-	3,494
PR & Marketing	27,589	24,739
Flowcharts	-	1,975
Personal development and training	282	323
Sponsorship	5,800	1,600
University membership	3,200	-
	266,309	260,736

All support costs are directly attributable to the Charitable Activities.

4. OTHER

	Total Funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Independent examiner's fees	2,160	2,160
Accountancy and bookkeeping	2,718	3,552
Legal and professional fees	2,688	858
	7,566	6,570

All expenditure on other costs for 2021 and 2020 was unrestricted.

Included in the above are governance costs totalling £5,088 (2020 - £5,922).

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

5. ANALYSIS OF GRANTS PAYABLE

	2021 £	2020 £
Individuals		
Subscriptions waived	<u>51,641</u>	<u>49,313</u>

The subscriptions waived relate to 235 members (2020 - 219) receiving grants of various amounts, depending upon the number of journals published.

6. TRUSTEES

During the year, no Trustees received any benefits in kind (2020 - £Nil).

No (2020 – none) trustees received reimbursement of expenses (2020 - £Nil) in respect of travel and subsistence costs for attendance at council meetings and seminars.

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Trustees may be paid all reasonable and proper expenses incurred by them in connection with their attendance at meetings and in discharge of their duties.

7. STAFF COSTS

Staff costs were as follows:

	31 December 2021 £	31 December 2020 £
Wages and salaries	119,082	105,269
Social security costs	12,780	10,843
Employers allowance	(4,000)	(4,000)
Pension costs	2,332	2,096
	<u>130,194</u>	<u>114,208</u>

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

	31 December 2021 No.	31 December 2020 No.
Operational staff	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>

1 employee (2020 – 1) received remuneration amounting to between £70,000 and £80,000 during the year (2021 between £60,000 and £70,000).

The total amounts of remuneration, including Employers NIC and pension, paid to key management personnel in the year was £81,222 (2020 - £75,522).

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

8. DEBTORS

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade debtors	1,285	85
Prepayments and accrued income	764	764
	<u>2,049</u>	<u>849</u>

**9. CREDITORS:
Amounts falling due within one year**

	2021 £	2020 £
Accruals and deferred income	3,838	12,163
Trade creditors	-	343
Other creditors	506	465
Taxation and social security	3,345	1,023
	<u>7,689</u>	<u>13,994</u>

10. DEFERRED INCOME

	2021 £	2020 £
At 1 January	171	2,239
Additions in year	-	171
Released in year	-	(2,239)
At 31 December	<u>171</u>	<u>171</u>

11. PENSIONS

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund.

At 31 December 2021 £506 (2020 - £465) was included in creditors.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

12. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Carried Forward £
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	<u>257,894</u>	<u>461,119</u>	<u>(401,354)</u>	<u>317,659</u>

Unrestricted funds for year ended 31 December 2020

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Carried Forward £
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	<u>204,869</u>	<u>450,013</u>	<u>(396,988)</u>	<u>257,894</u>

13. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Current Assets £	Liabilities £	Total £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	<u>325,348</u>	<u>7,689</u>	<u>317,659</u>

Unrestricted funds for year ended 31 December 2020

	Current Assets £	Liabilities £	Total £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	<u>271,888</u>	<u>(13,994)</u>	<u>257,894</u>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

14. CONTROLLING PARTY

There is no controlling party.

15. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year the company indemnified the trustees against any liability by taking out insurance costing £2,091 (2020 - £2,127) on their behalf.

Accounts

Registered number: 06389120
Charity number: 1123023

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS
UNAUDITED
TRUSTEES REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

Trustees

Daniel Kulp (appointed Chair elect 1 May 2020)
Deborah Poff (Chair until 30 April 2021)
Tara Lee Hoke, Secretary
Michael Wise, Treasurer
Caroline Porter
Deborah Kahn
Nancy Chescheir (appointed 1 February 2020)
Suzanne Farley (appointed 14 July 2020)
Simon Linacre (appointed 3 August 2020)
Christopher Graf (resigned 1 May 2020)
Geraldine Pearson (resigned 1 May 2020)

Company registered number

06389120

Charity registered number

1123023

Registered office

New Kings Court, Tollgate, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO53 3LG

Company secretary

Natalie Ridgeway, Executive Officer

Independent Examiner

Danielle Griffin, FCA, Moore (South) LLP, Priory House, Pilgrims Court, Sydenham Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3RX

Bankers

Co-operative Bank plc, PO Box 250, Delf House, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

Solicitors

Blake Morgan, New Kings Court, Tollgate, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO53 3LG

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

The Trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their annual report together with the financial statements of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (the company) for the year ended 31 December 2020. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS102) second edition.

Structure, governance and management

• Constitution

The company is registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee and was set up by a Memorandum of Association on 3 October 2007 as amended by Special Resolutions dated 18 February 2008, 3 May 2011, 22 March 2013, 17 April 2015, 9 September 2015 and 12 December 2019, and is a registered charity number 1123023.

The Trustee Board and Council are the constitutional members of COPE.

The principal objects of the company are the promotion for the public benefit of ethical standards of conduct in research and ethical standards in the publication of scholarly journals.

• Method of appointment or election of Trustees

The Trustee Board (maximum of 12) consists of the Officers, namely: Chair; Vice-chair; Secretary; Treasurer; Immediate Past Chair, elected members of Council, and those who are co-opted. Officers and the Trustee Board are elected by the full Constitutional Members (Trustees and Council Members). The Trustee Board also appoint a Chair-elect from within the Constitutional Membership who serves for 12 months before taking on the role of Chair. Up to four Trustees may be co-opted by the Trustee Board between general meetings.

• Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees

Upon appointment Trustees are provided with a copy of the Articles of Association and the Regulations of COPE; they are also provided with a briefing session, and a written document outlining the responsibilities entailed 'On being a Trustee of COPE'. Additionally, they are required to access an 'eLearning' module which outlines COPE processes and procedures. This introduction to COPE is usually conducted by one or more of the current Officers or by the Executive Officer. Each Trustee is also required to complete a Conflict of Interest form which is updated annually and posted on the COPE website.

Subsequent training is provided as needed. In addition, we nominate a current Council member to be a mentor to each new Trustee. Ad hoc training is carried out as and when necessary to ensure that Trustees are kept abreast of developments with regard to the legal and other obligations of COPE as a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee and any of the resultant obligations of the Trustees.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

• Organisational structure and decision making

The Trustee Board (<http://publicationethics.org/about/trustees>) is ultimately responsible for the financial, legal and business operations of COPE as a charitable business and it gives authority to the Executive Officer and the COPE team (<http://publicationethics.org/cope-staff>) to manage the day to day affairs of the organization. The Trustees of the charity are also the directors of the limited company.

Day-to-day operational activities of the business are managed by COPE's full time Executive Officer. The administration of the business activities of COPE are carried out by a freelance Administrator. Managing the bank account and all financial transactions is the responsibility of the Executive Officer with oversight by the Treasurer and Finance subcommittee. The COPE website is managed by a freelance Web Content Manager, who is contracted to work for COPE for up to 21 hours per week. A full-time Membership Administrator is employed to review and administer the applications from potential new members. A full time Administrative Assistant assists with all administration support. A freelance Facilitation & Integrity Officer administers the COPE complaints process.

• Risk management

The principal risks identified with regard to COPE and its operations, and their mitigation, are as follows:

(i) Litigation arising from advice, guidance or recommendations offered to authors, editors, publishers and publishing staff and others with regard to ethical issues raised in connection with published academic (learned) journals. Full insurance cover for professional indemnity is provided at COPE's expense for Trustees and Council members and for the Executive Officer and Administrator acting for and on behalf of COPE. The risk is graded as low-to-medium on the basis that COPE specifically does not offer adjudication or judgements with regard to cases involving ethical issues brought to its attention.

(ii) Loss of subscription income. COPE will regularly review subscription income to ensure it is providing value for members, that the subscriptions are in line with industry expectations, and that any changes ensure broadly the same income year on year. Two policies are in place to support a level of financial stability: 1) increasing subscription fees by the Retail Price Index (RPI) each year when it is prudent to do so; and 2) diversifying our income streams by seeking new members in underrepresented disciplines and countries within the COPE membership. The Finance subcommittee, led by the Treasurer, is in charge of managing this policy. In 2020, we reviewed our subscription costs for individual journals members and individual associate members to ensure subscription fees are proportionate and fair and this was implemented in 2021.

(iii) Loss of data. Data relating to COPE's business and financial affairs are retained by the Executive Officer and held in a secure location in two places; (1) hard copies (where appropriate) are held in a locked filing cabinet at the Executive Officer's accommodation and (2) electronic copies are held in the 'cloud' on Google Drive and an online management system: Monday.com. No electronic files are held on computer hard drives by the Executive Officer or any members of the team. In addition, the database of COPE Members is retained on the COPE website which is managed separately under contract by the company responsible for general maintenance and development of the COPE website. This company provides for automatic back-up of COPE data. The risk of loss of irrecoverable data is regarded as low-to-medium.

(iv) Physical assets. COPE has no substantial physical assets.

(v) COPE continually reviews its constitution to ensure good governance and oversight which is now the sole province of the Trustee Board.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

Objectives and Activities

- **Activities for achieving objectives and acting for public benefit**

In planning our activities for the year we have kept in mind the Charity Commissioners guidance on public benefit. COPE was established to provide a range of services and products aimed primarily, but not exclusively, at editors and publishers of learned journals and designed to provide advice and guidance on best practice for dealing with ethical issues in journal publishing.

Ethical issues covered by COPE include:

- Plagiarism
- Fabrication
- Falsification
- Redundant publication
- Selective reporting
- Unethical research
- Authorship issues
- Peer review misconduct
- Editor misconduct
- Conflicts of interest

COPE holds a Forum meeting, four times a year (all are virtual), at which members can raise and discuss particular and general ethical issues. COPE then undertakes to publish written summaries of these Forum discussions (suitably edited and anonymised to ensure that identifiable details such as names of individuals, journals and institutions are removed) on the COPE website with free, unhindered access for anyone visiting the website. A classification hierarchy is used to allow all interested users of the website to find cases on specific issues more easily. The Forum reports thus form part of a developing database of 'case law' relating to ethical issues in journal publishing and hence a valuable and valued resource for those involved with ethical matters, COPE members and non-members alike. Member queries or cases that are unable to wait for Forum, or where they would prefer them to be discussed in confidence, are responded to internally via Council.

COPE has developed a journal audit which many of its members have used to check that their publications or operations are following best practice. This audit was completely updated and revised during 2018 and republished as the "COPE Journal Audit". COPE is currently developing a Spanish version of the Journal Audit. COPE's recommendations are also available in the form of flowcharts and infographics, which are used in many editorial offices and have been translated into several languages. The flowcharts and infographics have been restyled to ensure consistency across all versions and were released in 2021.

COPE also produces specific guidance and discussion documents on a number of issues. During 2020 and 2021 the following were developed or revised and updated:

- New guidelines for the 'Editing of reviewer comments' were published in 2021 following a discussion held at the Forum, and a follow-up survey from COPE.
- A new discussion document on the use of 'Artificial Intelligence (AI) in decision making' was published in 2021.
- A new discussion document on Diversity and Inclusion was published in 2021.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

- A new flowchart on 'Handling post-publication critiques has been drafted in collaboration with Wiley and was published in 2021.
- The 'Systematic manipulation of the publication process' flowchart has been extensively updated and will be published in January 2022.

Initial work has also begun by COPE Members on creating new or updating existing and includes:

- New discussion document on Name and identity changes
- New discussion document on Data sharing
- New guidelines on Expressions of concern
- Revised discussion documents: "What constitutes plagiarism" and "Text recycling"
- Revision to the Preprints discussion document.
- Resources to support publishers with issues arising from 'paper mills'.

Additional guidelines or discussion document that COPE offers, includes:

- 'Journals' Best Practices for Ensuring Consent for Publishing Medical Case Reports'
- 'Short Guide to Ethical Editing for New Editors'
- 'Sharing of information among Editors-in-Chief regarding possible misconduct'
- 'Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research integrity cases'
- 'Ethical guidelines for peer reviewers'
- Editors' relations with learned societies', which was revised and renamed as 'Guidelines for management relationships between society-owned journals, their society and publishers'.

The COPE website underwent a major refresh during 2018/19 to enable easier discoverability of resources and guidance and the new site was launched in 2019. As websites continually evolve, and owing to the need to move its content management system in 2022 owing to the existing version reaching end of life, it has been agreed that we will tender for a possible new website partner in 2022. Internal work we have conducted to improve the existing website includes: consistency of content across the site; a clear archiving policy for old content; full html pages for all guidance (in addition to pdfs); changes to tagging and URL creation to ensure improved SEO. The website is also kept updated with news about ethical issues and publications likely to be of interest to editors and publishers. COPE also has a presence on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter with an active membership. COPE publishes a bi-monthly eNewsletter, *COPE Digest*, available to members and non-members which contains COPE updates, an analysis of publication ethics in the news, and educational material. From January 2021, we started publishing *Member Insight*, a bi-monthly newsletter aimed specifically at members. This contains similar material to *Digest* while looking at topics of interest to our members in more depth.

COPE usually holds annual seminars across the world. Owing to the global pandemic all in-person events during 2020 and 2021 were cancelled. As an alternative, and in addition to the Forums, COPE developed a significant online webinar and workshop program. During 2020-2021 we held webinars looking at text recycling; and diversity, equity and inclusion in scholarly research and publishing. The first virtual workshop took place during Peer Review Week (September 2020) where we discussed peer review cases. Owing to the success of the workshop we repeated the event two months later. In 2021 we held four workshops: discussing cases around authors and publication ethics themes arising from our facilitation & integrity process. A week long virtual seminar, taking place at the end of September 2021, scheduled nine sessions covering different publication ethics topics. The seminar topics were extremely well received with over 300 registrations. While the seminar event is a members only benefit, all seminar sessions are recorded and made available to non-members after the event via our website.

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COPE's strategic plan covering the period 2020-2023 develops the previous strategic objectives further by confirming that universities will be allowed to apply for COPE membership after a successful pilot period; COPE's commitment to developing resources for underrepresented disciplines; as well as supporting members, and increasing its membership, from China, India and South America. To further these objectives during 2020-2021, for university membership, a RFP was circulated externally in December 2020, inviting applicants to tender for the preparation and writing of the first module for an online learning course specifically aimed at universities. After review, Cambridge University Press were appointed and they have been developing the module content through 2021 with the intention of launching it to universities in 2022. Supporting underrepresented disciplines and regions: COPE has an ongoing programme of translation of materials as well as the development of an ethics handbook which will be launched in January 2022. The handbook will be specifically aimed at non-members and will support them in understanding how to become a member of COPE. COPE is also currently working to understand the needs of books publishers in terms of ethics issues and working to increase resources for its arts, humanities and social sciences journals.

Achievements and performance

• Review of activities

During the period under review, that is the calendar year ended 31 December 2020, COPE continued to attract and recruit new members. At the end of 2020 nearly 13,000 journal editors were members of COPE (a smaller increase since the end of 2019, however, work undertaken to ensure the accuracy of the COPE database has seen a more accurate figure be presented). Nearly all major publishers have agreed to sign up their journals as members of COPE by paying a corporate subscription; however COPE is reliant on the publishers to provide details of their journals, and to inform COPE of any changes. It is therefore not always possible to give an exact figure of the number of COPE members at any specific date as there is often a delay before the publisher updates its records.

Financial review

The overall result for 2020 was positive and has resulted in an increase in total reserves:

(i)	Opening balance, reserves at 01 January 2020	£204,869
(ii)	Closing balance, reserves at 31 December 2020	£257,894

The year end surplus of £53,025 represents an increase from a deficit in 2019 of £104,779. Operating costs decreased from 2019 to 2020:

(i)	Total costs 2019	£530,778
(ii)	Total costs 2020	£396,988

The decrease in costs from 2019 to 2020 was £133,790 (27%). The main reasons for the fall in costs in 2020 relate to:

- a) 2020 saw the cancellation of all COPE in person events owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically we saw the cancellation of a North American seminar as well as COPE's 'annual retreat' – an in person meeting for Trustees and Council Members to discuss COPE activities and plans.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

- b) In January 2020, we saw the loss of one of COPE's salaried positions, the Membership Officer role. This was originally appointed on a 12 month fixed term contract in October 2018 and it was confirmed in November 2019 that the role would be discontinued, partly to cement the financial stability of the organisation.
- c) We did not conduct any research during 2020 and our website costs were slightly lower.

- **Investment policy and performance**

COPE is committed to the adoption and implementation of ethical policies with regard to its financial investments. As such its banking arrangements reviewed to ensure that any monies held by COPE are secure. COPE has since opened an additional savings account with the Nationwide to hold some of its reserves to spread the risk in case of a banking issue.

- **Reserves policy**

It has been agreed by the Council that it is appropriate for COPE to maintain strategic financial reserves sufficient to accommodate unavoidable operating costs for a period of 12 months in the event that the decision were to be made to close COPE and cease activities.

The Council has agreed that the amount for the strategic reserve should be at least £225,000 - this amount to be reviewed and agreed annually. The figure has been set largely to accommodate the costs of the Executive Officer, Membership Administrator, Administrative Assistant and freelance staff (Administrator, Marketing & Communications Officer, Website Manager, and Facilitation & Integrity Officer); COPE does not incur significant overhead costs such as office accommodation or capital assets. To the period ending 2020, the actual reserves were slightly higher than the £225,000 agreed. To return the reserve to the agreed level during 2020, after it fell below the agreed level during 2019, the Trustees have:

- discontinued the Membership Officer role. This was originally appointed on a 12 month fixed term contract in October 2018 and it was confirmed in November 2019 that the role would be discontinued, partly to cement the financial stability of the organisation;
- agreed at the end of 2019 to allow universities and research institutions to become members of COPE. We expect to see some revenue from this in 2021 and, while we initially expect this to be small, this opens up a large revenue stream for COPE;
- conducted research in 2020 to conduct a targeted campaign throughout 2021 to increase membership among publishers and journals currently underrepresented within COPE (among regions and disciplines);
- reduced the number of in person meetings that we hold, moving more online throughout 2021. This is partly owing to the pandemic of 2020 but also to increase our reserves.
- removed the three year membership contract deal which saw members agree to commit to COPE for three years and, in return, their membership subscription fees remained the same for each year of the three year deal. Most of these deals expire at the end of 2021 and we have taken the decision to not renew these contracts.

Plans for the future

- **Future developments**

COPE will continue to investigate and, where appropriate, develop and make available, relevant new services and products for its Members and others. Amongst those planned for 2021-2022 are:

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

A significant COPE presence at the World Congress in Research Integrity (WCRI). The WCRI is an important audience for COPE. This has been postponed from 2021 to 2022 as an in-person meeting, but there were virtual presentations during 2021 which COPE presented at.

It was confirmed by the Constitutional Members of COPE that universities should become members of COPE. Work has begun during 2021 on developing resources for university research integrity officer's and a RFP was circulated and an organisation appointed to produce the for this.

Webinars, with invited speakers, on specially selected topics. Owing to the difficulties caused by the Covid pandemic during 2020 we held one webinar on the topic of text-recycling, presented by members of the Text Recycling Research Project (funded by a NIH grant). A webinar on Diversity, equity and inclusivity was held during 2021 and more are in the process of being planned for 2022.

Continual development of the website, in particular work on its membership database, to ensure it meets the needs of our members. During 2022, COPE will undertake a significant project to retender for its website partners in preparation of a brand new website.

Further expansion of the virtual COPE seminars and Fora internationally. A virtual seminar took place at the end of September 2021 over the course of a week. At this time, we are planning for an in-person UK seminar to take place during 2022 to launch university membership as well as celebrate COPE's 25h anniversary. The viability of this will be monitored according to any restrictions in place according to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Continuing to develop and strength relations with related organisations such as the Council of Science Editors, European Association of Science Editors, International Society of Managing and Technical Editors, World Association of Medical Editors and STM Association; as well as foster new relations with other organisations such as the UK Research & Innovation committee, UK Research Integrity Office, and others.

Providing speakers at academic and publishing meetings (virtual) to raise awareness about publication ethics and promote good practice and the COPE guidelines and resources.

Covid-19

The impact of Covid-19 on COPE during 2020 and in to 2021 was primarily seen in the cancellation of all our in person events and meetings. Nonetheless, as a virtual organisation, COPE has good systems in place to provide resources and events electronically. However, there are some events we hold each year which are in person and, as a consequence of Covid-19, COPE has begun to introduce a series of virtual events to replace these in person meetings and to continue to offer member benefit. This saw the first virtual peer review workshop take place at the beginning of October 2020 which was extremely successful. Consequently the same event was run at the end of November 2020 aimed at the Australian time zone. Similar workshops, on different topics, were conducted during 2021. In addition, to provide an offering to replace our larger, face to face seminars, we developed a virtual seminar programme over the course of one week at the end of September 2021. Financially, we have frozen our membership subscription fees for 2021 to help existing and potential members manage their budgets.

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Trustees Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Committee on Publication Ethics for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the 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 2019 (FRS 102);
- make judgements and 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that 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 charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities, and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 section 1A for Smaller Entities.

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

This report was approved by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf, by:



Daniel Kulp, Chair

Dated: 20 December 2021

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Committee on Publication Ethics

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2020 which are set out on pages 11 to 20.

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

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a 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 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:

Danielle Griffin

Dated:

20 December 2021

Danielle Griffin FCA

Moore (South) LLP
Priory House
Pilgrims Court
Sydenham Road
Guildford
GU1 3RX

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS**(A company limited by guarantee)**

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(incorporating income and expenditure account)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Unrestricted funds 2019 £
INCOMING RESOURCES			
Other trading activities	2	449,361	425,411
Investment income		652	588
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		450,013	425,999
RESOURCES EXPENDED			
Charitable activities	3	390,418	523,453
Other	4	6,570	7,325
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		396,988	530,778
MOVEMENT IN TOTAL FUNDS FOR THE YEAR – NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR		53,025	(104,779)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:			
<i>Total funds at 1 January 2020</i>		204,869	309,648
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020		257,894	204,869

The results for the year derive from continuing activities and there are no gains or losses other than those shown above.

The notes on pages 13 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 06389120

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020**

	Note	2020 £	2019 £
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	8	849	3,437
Cash at bank		<u>271,039</u>	<u>217,025</u>
		271,888	220,462
LIABILITIES			
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	9	<u>(13,994)</u>	<u>(15,593)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>257,894</u>	<u>204,869</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>257,894</u>	<u>204,869</u>
CHARITY FUNDS			
Unrestricted funds	12	<u>257,894</u>	<u>204,869</u>

For the financial year ended 31 December 2020 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the 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 the preparation of financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and the charities Statement of Recommended Practice and Financial Reporting Standard 102 section 1A.

The financial statements were approved by the Directors on and signed on their behalf, by:


Daniel Kulp, Chair

Dated: 20 December 2021

The notes on pages 13 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 Company Status

The company is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The company is incorporated in England & Wales. The company is governed by its association of articles completed on 3 October 2007, and subsequent amendments as noted on page 2. The company was registered with the Charity Commission on 29 February 2008, registered number 1123023. The address of the registered office is given in the Reference and Administrative Details given on page 1 of these financial statements. The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the company. The nature of the charities operations and principal activities are explained in the Trustees Report.

The company constitutes a public benefit as defined by FRS102.

1.2 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, SORP (FRS102) (second edition), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) section 1A and the Charities Act 2011.

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

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

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption not to produce a cash flow under FRS102 Section 1A and SORP 2019.

1.3 Going concern

At the time of approving the accounts, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the company has adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future. The Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.4 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income, the amount can be reliably measured and it is probable that the income will be received.

Subscriptions are raised from the date of acceptance to 31 December each year. They are recorded in full when receivable. Any subscriptions that are waived in the year are included as subscription income and as a grant payable.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

1.4 Incoming resources (continued)

Income for seminars from non-members is recorded in the year the seminar takes place.

Interest receivable is accounted for on an accruals basis.

1.5 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the obligation can be measured reliably.

The charity's seminar costs are allocated to direct charitable expenditure.

Expenditure on charitable activities includes grants with relevant support costs and governance costs.

- Grants are charged in the year they are approved for payment. No grants are deferred.

Other expenditure includes all expenditure that is neither related to raising funds for the charity nor part of its expenditure on charitable activities.

1.6 Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity, but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include salaries and administrative expenses. These costs have all been allocated to charitable activities as there is only one activity undertaken by the charity.

1.7 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

1.8 Cash at Bank and in Hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.9 Creditors

Creditors are recognised when the charity has a present obligation resulting from past events and can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are recognised at their settlement amounts.

1.10 Pension Costs

The charitable company pays contributions into a defined contribution scheme for its employees and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the charitable company in respect of the year. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company in an independently administered fund.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

1.11 Financial instruments

The company 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.

1.12 Foreign currencies

Foreign currency transactions are initially recognised by applying to the foreign currency amount the spot exchange rate between the functional currency and the foreign currency at the date of the transaction.

Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in a foreign currency at the balance sheet date are translated using the closing rate.

1.13 Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds are subscriptions and incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

1.14 Judgements and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

In the application of the charitable company's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

The Trustees do not believe that there are any judgements or estimates that affect these accounts.

2. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Total funds 2020 £	Total funds 2019 £
Subscriptions	400,048	378,573
Subscriptions waived	49,313	45,938
Seminar income	-	900
	449,361	425,411

All income from other trading activities for 2020 and 2019 was unrestricted

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

3. RESOURCES EXPENDED ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Total funds 2020 £	Total funds 2019 £
Grants Payable (Note 5)	49,313	45,938
Seminar costs	-	52,480
Website costs	74,308	98,449
Council / forum expenses	6,061	48,592
Support costs (see below)	260,736	277,994
	390,418	523,453

All expenditure on charitable activities for 2020 and 2019 was unrestricted.

ALLOCATION OF SUPPORT COSTS

	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
General administration	18,470	18,038
Administration	199,608	190,967
Research	8,400	29,315
Insurance	2,127	1,759
Meeting costs	3,494	6,927
PR & Marketing	24,739	23,092
Flowcharts	1,975	6,836
Personal development and training	323	1,060
Sponsorship	1,600	-
	260,736	277,994

All support costs are directly attributable to the Charitable Activities.

4. OTHER

	Total Funds 2020 £	Total funds 2019 £
Independent examiner's fees	3,050	3,000
Accountancy and bookkeeping	2,662	2,249
Legal and professional fees	858	2,076
	6,570	7,325

All expenditure on other costs for 2020 and 2019 was unrestricted.

Included in the above are governance costs totalling £5,712 (2019 - £5,249).

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

5. ANALYSIS OF GRANTS PAYABLE

	2020	2019
	£	£
Individuals		
Subscriptions waived	49,313	45,938
	49,313	45,938

The subscriptions waived relate to 219 members (2019 - 208) receiving grants of various amounts, depending upon the number of journals published.

6. TRUSTEES

During the year, no Trustees received any benefits in kind (2019 - £Nil).

No (2019 - 7) trustees received reimbursement of expenses amounting to £Nil (2019 - £19,827) in respect of travel and subsistence costs for attendance at council meetings and seminars.

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Trustees may be paid all reasonable and proper expenses incurred by them in connection with their attendance at meetings and in discharge of their duties.

7. STAFF COSTS

Staff costs were as follows:

	31 December 2020	31 December 2019
	£	£
Wages and salaries	105,269	129,590
Social security costs	10,843	10,150
Employers allowance	(4,000)	(3,000)
Pension costs	2,096	2,440
	114,208	139,180

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

	31 December 2020	31 December 2019
	No.	No.
Operational staff	3	4

1 employee (2019 - 1) received remuneration amounting to between £60,000 and £70,000 during the year.

The total amounts of remuneration, including Employers NIC and pension, paid to key management personnel in the year was £75,522 (2019 - £74,818).

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

8. DEBTORS

	2020 £	2019 £
Trade debtors	85	2,837
Prepayments and accrued income	764	600
	<u>849</u>	<u>3,437</u>

**9. CREDITORS:
Amounts falling due within one year**

	2020 £	2019 £
Accruals and deferred income	12,163	5,593
Trade creditors	343	5,760
Other creditors	465	820
Taxation and social security	1,023	3,420
	<u>13,994</u>	<u>15,593</u>

10. DEFERRED INCOME

	2020 £	2019 £
At 1 January	2,239	1,165
Additions in year	171	2,239
Released in year	(2,239)	(1,165)
At 31 December	<u>171</u>	<u>2,239</u>

11. PENSIONS

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund.

At 31 December 2020 £465 (2019 - £820) was included in creditors.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

12. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Carried Forward £
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	<u>204,869</u>	<u>450,013</u>	<u>(396,988)</u>	<u>257,894</u>

Unrestricted funds for year ended 31 December 2019

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Carried Forward £
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	<u>309,648</u>	<u>425,999</u>	<u>(530,778)</u>	<u>204,869</u>

13. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Current Assets £	Liabilities £	Total £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	<u>271,888</u>	<u>(13,994)</u>	<u>257,894</u>

Unrestricted funds for year ended 31 December 2019

	Current Assets £	Liabilities £	Total £
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	<u>220,462</u>	<u>(14,363)</u>	<u>206,099</u>

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

14. CONTROLLING PARTY

There is no controlling party.

15. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year the company indemnified the trustees against any liability by taking out insurance costing £2,127 (2019 - £1,759) on their behalf.