

The Merlin Magic Wand Children's Charity

Trustee's Report and Charity Accounts

Financial year ended
28 December 2024

Registered Charity Number: 1124081

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Trustee's Report

Report of the Trustee for the year ended 28 December 2024

The Trustee is pleased to present the annual report together with the financial statements of The Merlin's Magic Wand Children's Charity for the financial year ended 28 December 2024. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the Charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Objectives and activities for the public benefit

Merlin's Magic Wand supports children facing challenges of serious illness, disability, or adversity. The Charity believes that every child deserves to laugh, enjoy, and cherish memorable experiences and its mission is to enable them to access the magic of Merlin. The Charity makes this fun accessible to children with three magic spells:

- **Spell 1: Magical Days Out**

Through our Magical Days Out programme, families have a chance to create long-lasting memories and take valuable time out of their stressful daily routines. The Charity provides tickets and funds travel grants, to allow families to enjoy their day at a Merlin attraction.

Success is measured by the number of tickets distributed.

- **Spell 2: Merlin's Magic on Tour**

Working with our local communities at hospitals, schools and hospices, Merlin's Magic on Tour enables the attraction teams to bring some of the Merlin magic to children wherever they are.

Success is measured by the number of visits made and the number of children reached through these activities.

- **Spell 3: Merlin's Magic Spaces**

By designing and creating amazing projects in hospitals, orphanages, learning centres and more, Merlin's Magic Spaces ensure that local children who are prevented from visiting the attractions due to severe illness, physical disability or other exceptional circumstances still have the opportunity to experience the unique magic of Merlin.

Success is measured by the number of projects successfully installed.

The Trustee confirms that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities and setting the grant-making policy for the year.

Achievements and Performance

Magical Days Out

The letters of thanks we receive serve only to remind us of the impact a Magical Day Out can have:

"Thank you so much for your generous support of our little family! This is a joy beyond belief and alleviates a little bit of hardship that comes with a child on the spectrum that has a tough time communicating. A smile is happiness in any language, and I know that is what this gift will bring my little guy. Thank you!"

"I wanted to send a quick email to say a huge thank you. Thanks to the Alton Towers you arranged for my son Lawson, our whole family enjoyed a lovely break away and had an amazing day at Alton Towers during our October school break. Again, thank you. These memories would not have been made without your help."

Trustee's Report (continued)

Tickets for Magical Days Out were offered to 83,708 children, their families, and carers during the year (2023: 49,747).

The tickets for these days out continue to be provided by Merlin and Merlin's Magic Wand offers all applicants optional financial support towards their travel costs. Grants totalling £152,456 (2023: £77,864) were awarded this year as well as £188 (2023: £ 402) worth of enhancement initiatives - mainly in the form of gifts or goody bags - for those families where the child or parent has a life-limiting condition, to make their day out more special and memorable.

Merlin's Magic Spaces

While several of the scheduled Merlin's Magic Spaces projects continued to be paused as the focus of the programmes team was largely on processing existing applications, the Programmes Team did successfully launch one new project in 2024: a SEA LIFE-themed sensory space at The Blackpool Teaching Hospital, in partnership with the charity Dreams Come True. Although the space was officially launched on June 4, PR announcements were under embargo until July 9 due to the 2024 UK general election.

There has been no movement with the building of the Bradley Lowery Foundation's home in 2023, however the building works are now scheduled for mid-2025, so we expect to have completed this project by the end of 2025.

The magic spaces we currently have planned are:

Country	Location	Type
Scarborough, UK	Bradley Lowery Foundation	Playrooms
London, UK	St. Ann's School (Ealing)	Playground
Beijing, China	Women's Federation of Dongcheng	Playrooms

The impact of our Magic Spaces projects continues to be significant for the families that use the spaces within our charity partner facilities. The charity team took the opportunity to complete an audit of previously completed projects to check whether any repairs or maintenance were required. Most repairs and maintenance have subsequently been completed or scheduled for the projects that required it and an annual check-in will continue in the 2nd quarter of each year.

Trustee's Report (continued)

Rosy Hume, Head Teacher of Rowanfield School where one of our 2018 projects was completed, commented:

"The soft play continues to be the best thing that has ever happened to Rf and during the pandemic pretty sure we were the only one in the country still open for business. We managed to get special permission to keep running it as it is such a benefit for our pupils. Since your last visit, our population has grown to 48, we now have 2 different classes of more complex communication needs, a large percentage of the classes are non-verbal.

All the classes continue to use and love the soft play, the more complex needs class use it on an individual basis with what is called 'Intensive Communication' 1:1 with an adult – the use of such an amazing space has been instrumental in improving their eye contact, communication, and happiness. We have also opened the use to help 3 schools in our learning community – 2 schools rotate time on a Friday morning with groups of very disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils and another school is using it once a week with a child who is very much struggling with home and school life after the pandemic."

We are grateful for the continued enthusiasm and commitment shown by Merlin and our suppliers in providing goods and services either free of charge or at a reduced cost to allow us to maximise the impact our investment in these projects has.

Merlin's Magic on Tour

The aim of this programme is not only to give children the opportunity to experience some 'Merlin Magic' but also to give Merlin employees the opportunity to experience first-hand the difficulties that some children are facing and the difference these visits can make to their lives.

In 2024, demand for this program decreased, resulting in just over half the number of visits compared to the prior year. Our thanks go to many of the attractions who support this programme without requesting support grants, providing their time and equipment as a donated service.

The Charity's key performance indicators are summarised below:

		Outcome 2024	Outcome 2023
Magical Days Out	Tickets	83,708	49,747
Merlin's Magic Spaces	Projects	99,806	76,482
Merlin's Magic on Tour	Visits	16	30
Merlin's Magic on Tour	Children	2,579	4,558

We are proud to confirm that, since the Charity's conception up until the end of 2024, the Charity has reached over 520,000 children through Merlin's Magic Spaces, over 903,000 children and families through Magical Days Out and over 53,000 children through Magic on Tour, resulting in an overall reach of over 1,476,000 children and families globally in the 15-year period since the Charity launched in 2008.

Trustee's Report (continued)

Financial Review

Total income for the period was £2,442,343 (2023: £1,704,771) an increase of £737,572 (43%) compared to last year. Merlin Attractions continued to support the Charity fundraising throughout this time and donations marginally increased to £591,333 from £542,634 in 2023.

Total income from donated goods and services was £1,848,070 (2023: £1,157,685). We are grateful to Merlin for its continuing support of our activities. In 2024 100% (2023: 100%) of the donated goods and services in the period, totalling £1,848,070 (2023: £1,157,685), were from Merlin and its subsidiaries. As well as the support for Magical Days Out, Merlin's Magic Spaces and Merlin's Magic on Tour, the fundraising events are delivered at a discounted rate, a proportion of the salaries of the Charity's employees are covered by Merlin and office space for the Charity's employees is provided at no cost.

The Charity follows sector best practice and guidelines, as set out in the Code of Fundraising Practice, and requests that those fundraising on its behalf do so as well. Merlin attractions report to the Charity regularly to allow monitoring of fundraising activities and behaviour. The Charity does not use professional fundraisers or commercial participators. No complaints have been received by the Charity regarding its fundraising activity. The Charity does not, nor do those acting on its behalf, undertake fundraising activities that puts vulnerable people and others at risk of unreasonable intrusion on a person's privacy, unreasonable persistent approaches, or undue pressure to give.

Total expenditure on charitable activities rose by 60% to £2,412,045 (2023: £1,506,952). The percentage of total expenditure on charitable activities to 97%, compared to 94% in 2023. The proportion of expenditure on Magical Days Out this year remained at 91% of total charitable expenditure (2023: 91%). The proportion of expenditure on Merlin's Magic Spaces remained at 8% (2023: 8%). Merlin's Magic on Tour accounted for the remaining 1% (2023: 1%) of expenditure.

The net reduction in funds in the year was £62,620 (2023: increase £92,980). Closing reserves remain well above the policy level, however it is recognised that ongoing expenditure needs to be carefully budgeted and monitored to ensure the reserves policy continues to be met.

Risk Management

The Charity recognises that risk management is an essential part of good business practice and has developed a robust Risk Register which provides a comprehensive overview of the identified risks in all aspects of its work, outlines the actions required to mitigate those risks and states the timescales in which the actions are expected to be implemented. Processes for strategic and operational planning, performance management, decision making, and project management are being developed as part of the action planning. Risk management is the responsibility of the Trustee supported by the directors and officers of the Trustee Company.

The Charity benefits from the broad-ranging professional skills of the directors and officers of the Trustee Company, the members of the Management Committee and, as required, draws on the skills of other Merlin employees and advisors, who have considerable experience in business and risk management and who apply these skills to ensure that risk exposure to the Charity is both minimised and, where retained, is managed effectively.

Trustee's Report (continued)

The process to identify and document the major risks to which the Charity is exposed was ongoing during the year. Regular review and assessment of these risks will take place ensuring systems are established to mitigate the identified risks.

Reserves Policy

The Charity has established a healthy reserve and it is the Trustee's intention and responsibility to ensure that it continues to work within its means. However, the Trustee is also confident in committing to the planned strategy and programme of activities because of the current level of reserves. At the end of 2024 free reserves total £455,665 (2023: £504,877).

The Charity targets having sufficient reserves to meet all budgeted expenditures for a period of 9 months. The level of free reserves is reviewed quarterly considering planned expenditures over the upcoming 3 months. The Charity has had no issues meeting its reserves policy during the period or at period-end.

If reserves were to fall below £100,000 then the Trustee will consider other sources of fundraising to maintain this level, which would include consulting with our principle stakeholder, Merlin Entertainments. Reserves above this target level will be considered for investment in line with the investment policy.

Investment Policy

At the present time, there are no investments, and all funds are held in a current cash account. The Trustee will be looking to establish suitable financial facilities so that an appropriate return is made on any funds not required for short-term operational and grant provision requirements.

Plans for Future Periods

It is Merlin's Magic Wand's continuing desire to have a positive impact on the lives of children facing challenges of serious illness, disability, or adversity in the locality of every single Merlin attraction and its strategic direction remains ensuring the maximum number of children have access to the fun that the Charity can offer through its three magic spells.

Trustee's Report (continued)

Three key focus areas are:

- Working to streamline the Magical Days Out ticketing and travel grant process to improve beneficiary experience
- Exploring how we can evolve Magic on Tour for children and families unable to visit a Merlin attraction
- Diversifying income streams with online fundraising opportunities

We will continue to evolve and adapt to ensure that we focus our efforts to bring the magic to children and families in a more efficient way than before.

Reference and administrative details

Charity Name	The Merlin Magic Wand Children's Charity
Also known as	Merlin's Magic Wand
Charity Number	1124081
Principal office	Link House, 25 West Street, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1LD
Auditor	Forvis Mazars LLP, Floor 5, Merck House, Seldown Lane, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1TW
Banker	HSBC Bank plc, Customer Service Centre, BX8 1HB

The Board of Trustees

The Trustee serving during the year and since the year-end was Merlin's Magic Wand Trustees Limited, a company incorporated in England with company number 6511344 and having its registered address at 16th Floor Arbor Building, 255 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 9AX.

The directors and officers of the Trustee Company during this period and as at the date of this report were as follows:

Directors Matthew Jowett
Robert Martin

Secretary Fiona Rose (resigned 14 January 2025)
Amy Bailey (appointed 14 January 2025)

The Trustee delegated day-to-day management of the Charity to the Charity Manager (Erin Scoular) until the commencement of her maternity leave on October 1, 2024. After that date, delegation shifted to the Global Head of Merlin's Magic Wand (Alyson Barber). At the date of this report, the Global Head of Merlin's Magic Wand reports into Claire Lawson, who is seconded into the role of Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Director for Merlin Entertainments Limited.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Merlin Magic Wand Children's Charity is a registered Charity (registered number 1124081). The Charity was established under a Trust Deed dated 25 February 2008. The governing document is the Trust Deed. The Trustee was appointed pursuant to the Trust Deed with effect from 25 February 2008.

Trustee induction and training

The Trustee and the directors and officers of the Trustee Company are aware of their legal obligations under charity law, the content of the Charity's governing document, the Charity Governance Code, the committee and decision-making processes, the Charity's plan, and recent financial performance of the Charity. They are all encouraged to keep fully up to date with the latest Charity Commission directives.

Trustee's Report (continued)

Organisation

The Trustee is responsible for ensuring the Charity is managed in accordance with the Trust Deed and charitable purposes. The Trustee directors meet at least twice per year to take a report from the Charity Manager and/or the Global Head of Merlin's Magic Wand to review the progress and performance of the Charity. This review covers all aspects of the Charity, including numbers of applications for support, numbers of children assisted, fundraising and financial performance.

The Trustee is supported by a Management Committee who oversees the day-to-day management of the Charity and the implementation of the Charity Business Plan. The Management Committee members during this period and as at the date of this report were:

Chairman

Matthew Jowett	Director, Merlin's Magic Wand Trustees Limited
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Members

Fru Hazlitt	Independent member
Mark Fisher	Independent member
Sheilitha Williams	Independent member
Robert Martin	Director, Merlin's Magic Wand Trustees Limited
Emma Pankhurst	Director, Merlin Entertainments Limited

The Management Committee members were supported during this period and as of the date of this report by:

Sandra Sheahan	Head of Being a Force for Good (maternity leave commenced May 31, 2024)
Claire Lawson	Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Director (secondment for Sandra Sheahan)
Erin Scoular	Charity Manager, Merlin's Magic Wand (maternity leave commenced October 1, 2024)
Alyson Barber	Global Head of Merlin's Magic Wand (secondment for Erin Scoular)
Fleur Walton	Charities Finance Director, Merlin's Magic Wand (resigned 13 July 2025)

In November 2017 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Merlin's Magic Wand Foundation a 501(c)(3) registered California Public Benefit Corporation agreeing that collaborative working is potentially in the best interest of each party and to facilitate this a Joint Management Committee would be established. The Chairman and members of this joint committee are the Chairman and members of Merlin's Magic Wand Management Committee plus a representative from Merlin's Magic Wand Foundation. During the year, the representative for Merlin's Magic Wand Foundation is Scott Maupin, Board Chairman of Merlin's Magic Wand Foundation.

The Charity Manager and/or Global Head of Merlin's Magic Wand is responsible for day-to-day operations and decision-making.

The Trustee considers the members of the Management Committee as comprising the key management personnel of the charity. Only the Charity Manager, Global Head of Merlin's Magic Wand, and the Charities Finance Director receive any remuneration from the Charity; the other members of the Management Committee give of their time freely. The remuneration is reviewed annually in line with Merlin's remuneration procedures and is usually increased in line with the cost of living. It is also benchmarked against industry standards to ensure that the remuneration set is fair and not out of line with that generally paid for similar roles.

Trustee's Report (continued)

Related parties

The directors and officers of the Trustee Company, the members of the Management Committee and the Charity staff are all employees or directors of companies within Merlin, apart from Fru Hazlitt, Mark Fisher and Sheilitha Williams, but always act only in the interests of the Charity. In line with the Trust Deed, any potential conflict of interest in relation to any matters for discussion or decisions of the Trustee must be declared and if required, the person with the conflict takes no part in the discussion of the matter in question and may not vote on that matter. All trustees and members have signed a declaration of interest document.

Going concern

In determining whether the Charity's financial statements can be prepared on a going concern basis, the Trustee and the members of the Management Committee considered the Charity's planned charitable activities, together with the factors likely to affect its future development, performance, and position; these are set out in the 'Plans for Future Periods' section above.

The Charity expects that Merlin will continue to provide tickets for Magical Days Out as a gift-in-kind. The Charity undertakes fundraising to provide the Magical Days Out travel grants and support Merlin Magic Spaces.

The Charity's current forecasts and projections, taking account of reasonably possible changes in operating performance, show that the Charity should be able to continue within the level of its current cash resources.

As at the date of this report, the Trustee has a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue operating for the foreseeable future. Thus, the Charity continues to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the annual financial statements.

Post balance sheet events

There are no post-balance sheet events.

Disclosure of information to auditor

The Trustee Directors who held office at the date of approval of this Trustee's report confirms that, so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Charity's auditor is unaware; and the Trustee Directors have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a Trustee Director to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charity's auditor is aware of that information.

On behalf of Merlin's Magic Wand Trustees Limited on 26/09/2025



[RAFMartin \(Sep 26, 2025 17:06:00 GMT+1\)](#)

Robert Martin

Director
Link House
25 West Street
Poole
Dorset
BH15 1LD

Statement of Trustee's Responsibilities

The Charities Act 2011 requires Trustees to prepare their Report and financial statements in accordance with UK Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practices). Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied these give a true and fair view of the Charity's affairs, incoming resources and the application of those resources. In preparing these financial statements, Trustees have complied with these requirements.

Trustees are also responsible for keeping adequate accounting records, which are sufficient to show and explain the Charity's transactions; disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the Charity's financial position and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the Trust Deed.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the Charity's assets, and hence for taking reasonable steps to prevent or detect fraud and other irregularities. Trustees have complied with these provisions. The Charity received an unqualified audit in 2024.

Independent auditor's report to the Trustee of The Merlin Magic Wand Children's Charity

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Merlin Magic Wand Children's Charity (the 'charity') for the year ended 28 December 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet and the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Charity's affairs as at 28 December 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

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

Independent auditor's report to the Trustee of The Merlin Magic Wand Children's Charity (continued)

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the Charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustee's Report.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustee's remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustee's responsibilities statement, the Trustee is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustee is responsible for assessing the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustee either intends to liquidate the Charity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

The extent to which our procedures can detect irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

Independent auditor's report to the Trustee of The Merlin Magic Wand Children's Charity (continued)

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

Based on our understanding of the Charity and its industry, we considered that non-compliance with the following laws and regulations might have a material effect on the financial statements: employment regulation, health and safety regulation, anti-money laundering regulation.

To help us identify instances of non-compliance with these laws and regulations, and in identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect to non-compliance, our procedures included, but were not limited to:

- Inquiring of management and, where appropriate, those charged with governance, as to whether the Charity is in compliance with laws and regulations, and discussing their policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations;
- Inspecting correspondence, if any, with relevant licensing or regulatory authorities;
- Communicating identified laws and regulations to the engagement team and remaining alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout our audit; and
- Considering the risk of acts by the Charity which were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the preparation of the financial statements, such as tax legislation, pension legislation, the Charities Act 2011.

In addition, we evaluated the trustee and management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements, including the risk of management override of controls, and determined that the principal risks related to posting manual journal entries to manipulate financial performance, management bias through judgements and assumptions in significant accounting estimates, in particular in relation to revenue recognition (which we pinpointed to the cut off assertion) and significant one-off or unusual transactions.

Our audit procedures in relation to fraud included but were not limited to:

- Making enquiries of the Trustee and management on whether they had knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- Gaining an understanding of the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud;
- Discussing amongst the engagement team the risks of fraud; and
- Addressing the risks of fraud through management override of controls by performing journal entry testing.

Independent auditor's report to the Trustee of The Merlin Magic Wand Children's Charity (continued)

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of irregularities including fraud rests with management. As with any audit, there remained a risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal controls.

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

Use of the audit report

This report is made solely to the Charity's Trustee as a body in accordance with section 144 of the Charities Act 2011. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Charity's Trustee those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Charity and the Charity's Trustee as a body for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Stephen Mills

[Stephen Mills \(Sep 26, 2025 19:36:30 GMT+1\)](#)

Forvis Mazars LLP, Statutory Auditor
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
5th Floor, Merck House
Seldown Lane
Poole BH15 1TW

Date: 26/09/2025

Statement of financial activities

Year ended 28 December 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2024 £	Restricted Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Income and endowments from							
Donations	2	623,591	1,815,812	2,439,403	594,873	1,105,446	1,700,319
Other trading activities	2	2,940	-	2,940	4,452	-	4,452
Total income	2	626,531	1,815,812	2,442,343	599,325	1,105,446	1,704,771
Expenditure on Raising Funds							
Donations	3	53,212	-	53,212	57,707	-	57,707
Other trading activities	3	28,309	-	28,309	42,395	-	42,395
	3	81,521	-	81,521	100,102	-	100,102
Charitable activities							
Magical Days Out	3	419,316	1,787,711	2,207,027	267,074	1,104,896	1,371,970
Merlin's Magic Spaces	3	150,469	41,499	191,968	77,402	39,868	117,270
Merlin's Magic on Tour	3	13,050	-	13,050	13,320	4,392	17,712
	3	582,835	1,829,210	2,412,045	357,796	1,149,156	1,506,952
Total expenditure	3	664,356	1,829,210	2,493,566	457,898	1,149,156	1,607,054
Net income / (expenditure)		(37,825)	(13,398)	(51,223)	141,427	(43,710)	97,717
Other recognised (losses) / gains							
Other recognised (losses) / gains		(11,397)	-	(11,397)	(4,737)	-	(4,737)
Net Movement in Funds		(49,222)	(13,398)	(62,620)	136,690	(43,710)	92,980
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		504,887	19,948	524,835	368,197	63,658	431,855
Total funds carried forward		455,665	6,550	462,215	504,887	19,948	524,835

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the period.

Income and resulting net movement in funds each period arise from continuing operations.

Balance sheet

As at 28 December 2024

		2024 £	2023 £
	Notes		
Fixed Assets			
Tangible assets	10	2,644	4,635
Current assets			
Debtors	11	222,418	242,176
Cash at bank and in hand		713,069	561,314
Total current assets		935,487	803,490
Liabilities			
Creditors falling due within one year	12	(475,916)	(283,290)
Net current assets		459,571	520,200
Total net assets		462,215	524,835
The funds of the charity			
Restricted income funds	13	6,550	19,948
Unrestricted funds	13	455,665	504,887
Total charity funds	13	462,215	524,835

Apart from £6,550 restricted cash relating to Merlin Magic Spaces (£5,000 for the Bradley Lowery Centre and £550 for Turkey) and Magical Days Out (£1,000 for Alton Towers visits) all other balance sheet items and reserves for 2024 form part of the unrestricted funds.

Notes on pages 17 to 28 form part of the financial statements.

These accounts were approved by the Trustee on 26/09/2025 and are signed on its behalf by:

RAFMartin

[RAFMartin \(Sep 26, 2025 17:06:00 GMT+1\)](#)

Robert Martin
Director

Statement of cash flows

Year ended 28 December 2024

		Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
	Notes		
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash generated / (utilised) from operating activities	14	151,754	(73,359)
Cash flows provided by investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		-	(6,004)
Net cash provided by investing activities		-	(6,004)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		151,754	(79,363)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		561,314	640,677
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		713,068	561,314

Notes (forming part of the accounts)

1 Accounting policies

a. Basis of preparation of accounts

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

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

The Trustee considers there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The Charity expects that Merlin will continue to provide tickets for Magical Days Out as a gift-in-kind. The Charity undertakes fundraising to provide the Magical Days Out travel grants and support Merlin Magic Spaces.

b. Income recognition

Recognition of income	Income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Charity becomes entitled to the income it is probable that the charity will receive the income; and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably
Income with related expenditure	Where income has related expenditure (as with fundraising or contract income) the income and related expenditure are reported gross in the SoFA.
Grants and donations	Grants and donations are only included in the SoFA when the Charity has unconditional entitlement to the resources.
Tax reclaims on donations and gifts	Income from tax reclaims are included in the SoFA at the same time as the gift to which they relate.
Contractual income and performance related grants	This is only included in the SoFA once the related goods or services have been delivered.
Gift in kind tickets	The gift in kind value is provided by Merlin Entertainments who provide the tickets. The tickets are valued based on an average of the annual yields. The Trustee of the charity review the yields provided on a regular basis and consider the yields to be accurate.
Gifts in kind	Gifts in kind are accounted for at a reasonable estimate of their value to the Charity or the amount actually realised. Gifts in kind for use by the Charity are included in the SoFA as incoming resources when receivable.
Donated services and facilities	These are only included in income (with an equivalent amount in expenditure) where the benefit to the charity is reasonably quantifiable, measurable and material. The value placed on these resources is the estimated value to the Charity of the service or facility received.

Notes (continued)

1 Accounting policies (continued)

c. Expenditure and liabilities

Liability recognition	Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Tickets and grants for travel costs are recognised once the Charity has approved the application and requested the tickets from the attraction.
Expenditure recognition	All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. More information on this is given in note (i) below.
Grants with performance conditions	Where the Charity gives a grant with conditions for its payment being a specific level of service or output to be provided, such grants are only recognised in the SoFA once the recipient of the grant has provided the specified service or output.
Grants payable without performance conditions	These are only recognised in the accounts when a commitment has been made and there are no conditions to be met relating to the grant which remain in the control of the Charity.
Financial Instruments	The charity only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially measured at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

d. Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and in hand. Where the cash balances are in a currency other than the presentation currency, they are translated at the exchange rate at the end of the reporting period.

e. Foreign currency transactions

Foreign currency transactions are recorded in the accounts using the exchange rate applicable at the date of initial recognition. At the end of the reporting period:

- monetary items are translated using the closing rate
- non-monetary items measured in terms of historical costs are translated using the exchange rate at the date of the transaction
- non-monetary items that are measured at fair value are translated at the date when the fair value was determined

Exchange differences arising from translating items at a different rate to that at initial recognition are recognised in the period they arise.

f. Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs have been allocated between governance costs and other support costs.

Notes (continued)

1 Accounting policies (continued)

Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the Charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice. These costs include costs related to statutory audit and legal fees together with an apportionment of overhead and support costs.

Governance costs and support costs relating to charitable activities have been apportioned based on the staff time taken on carrying out these activities. The allocation of support and governance costs is analysed in note 4.

g. Assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets for use by Charity - These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year, and cost at least £500. They are valued at cost or a reasonable value on receipt.

IT equipment - Is depreciated over 3 years.

h. Debtors

Debtors are measured at their recoverable amounts. Where debts are in a currency other than the presentation currency, they are translated at the exchange rate at the end of the reporting period.

i. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds comprise those funds which the trustee is free to use for any purpose in furtherance of the charitable objectives. Unrestricted funds include designated funds where the trustee, at their discretion, has created a fund for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by the donor or trust deed. Restricted funds are separately identified in the Statement of Financial Activities.

The Gift in Kind of both donated tickets and goods and services relating to outreach projects and fundraising events are treated as restricted funds as they are given for specific projects rather than for the Charity's aims as a whole.

j. Key judgements and estimates

In the preparation of the 2024 financial statements, it is the responsibility of both the Trustee and officers to make informed judgements and estimates in the provision of liabilities and expenses.

The Merlin Magic Wand Children's Charity acknowledges the requirements of this disclosure. As such the members and officers can clarify the key assumptions concerning the future, and other sources of estimation of uncertainty at the reporting date of 28 December 2024:

- **Gift in kind valuation** - Details of the gift in kind valuation method is shown within note 2 of the financial statements

Notes (continued)

2 Analysis of income

	Unrestricted Funds 2024 £	Restricted Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Income and endowments from						
Donations						
Donations	577,833	13,500	591,333	542,084	550	542,634
Donated Goods and Services	45,758	1,802,312	1,848,070	52,789	1,104,896	1,157,685
	623,591	1,815,812	2,439,403	594,873	1,105,446	1,700,319
Other Trading Activities						
Fundraising Events	2,940	-	2,940	4,452	-	4,452
Donated Goods and Services	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2,940	-	2,940	4,452	-	4,452
Total Income	626,531	1,815,812	2,442,343	599,325	1,105,446	1,704,771

Merlin and its subsidiaries support the Charity in a variety of ways, gift in kind and donated services donations totalling £1,848,070 (2023: £1,157,685) were made in 2024. No cash donation was made to the Charity (2023: £nil).

Tickets for Magical Days Out were granted to successful applicants of 83,708 children, their families and carers during the year (2023: 49,747) from all the Merlin attractions that hosted Magical Days Out for the Charity are recognised as a gift in kind donation and corresponding grant. This donation is estimated to be worth £1,802,312 (2023: £1,104,896) based on the average admission revenue per guest at each attraction.

Gift in kind and donated services from Merlin have also been recognised as a result of their support of some of the salary costs of £30,000 (2023: £32,400) as well as office costs of £15,758 (2023: £20,389) estimated as Merlin office costs per employee multiplied by the number of Merlin's Magic Wand employees working from Merlin offices. Merlin also provides various other services such as IT support, postage, and stationery. As it is difficult to reliably quantify these costs and the value is considered immaterial, they are not included in these accounts.

Notes (continued)

3 Analysis of expenditure on activities undertaken directly

	Activities Undertaken Directly 2024 £	Support and Governance Costs 2024 £	Total Expenditure on Charitable Activities 2024 £	Activities Undertaken Directly 2023 £	Support and Governance Costs 2023 £	Total Expenditure on Charitable Activities 2023 £
Raising Funds	14,540	38,672	53,212	17,603	40,104	57,707
Fundraising Events	1,558	26,751	28,309	12,808	29,587	42,395
	16,098	65,423	81,521	30,411	69,691	100,102
Magical Days Out	2,073,460	133,567	2,207,027	1,262,714	109,256	1,371,970
Merlin's Magic Spaces	127,989	63,979	191,968	39,868	77,402	117,270
Merlin's Magic on Tour	383	12,667	13,050	5,762	11,950	17,712
	2,201,832	210,213	2,412,045	1,308,344	198,608	1,506,952
Total	2,217,930	275,636	2,493,566	1,338,755	268,299	1,607,054

In total, 27% or £664,356 (2023: 28% or £457,898) of expenditure on activities undertaken directly was from unrestricted funds and 73% or £1,829,210 (2023: 72% or £1,149,156) from restricted funds.

Notes (continued)

4 Allocation of governance and support costs

Governance and support cost are allocated based on an analysis of the amount of time staff spent on these activities. The Trustee has decided to meet all governance costs from unrestricted funds.

The breakdown of support costs and how these were allocated between governance and other support costs is as follows:

	Raising Funds	Other Trading Activities	Magical Days Out	Merlin's Magic Spaces	Merlin's Magic on Tour	Total
	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Salaries and other wages	29,723	20,562	102,661	49,175	9,735	211,856
Other Staff Costs	1,883	1,302	6,503	3,115	617	13,420
Office Costs	3,392	2,347	11,716	5,612	1,111	24,178
Operational Costs	867	599	2,993	1,434	284	6,177
Legal Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Audit Fees	2,807	1,941	9,694	4,643	919	20,004
Total	38,672	26,751	133,567	63,979	12,666	275,635

	Raising Funds	Other Trading Activities	Magical Days Out	Merlin's Magic Spaces	Merlin's Magic on Tour	Total
	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Salaries and other wages	30,021	22,147	81,785	57,940	8,946	200,839
Other Staff Costs	2,615	1,930	7,125	5,048	779	17,497
Office Costs	3,364	2,482	9,164	6,492	1,002	22,504
Operational Costs	1,254	925	3,417	2,421	374	8,391
Legal Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Audit Fees	2,850	2,103	7,765	5,501	849	19,068
Total	40,104	29,587	109,256	77,402	11,950	268,299

Notes (continued)

5 Analysis of staff costs and key management personnel remuneration

Merlin employed 13 people (2023: 11 people) who worked for the Charity during the period. A proportion of these costs are then invoiced to the Charity. The average full time equivalent (FTE) per month across the year is 7.5 (2023: 7.6)

The costs of those employed are allocated directly to the relevant activities.

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and Salaries	298,513	225,597
Social Security Costs	30,295	23,334
Pension Costs	12,241	8,854
Other Benefits	-	-
Total	341,049	257,785

The staff members responsible for managing Magical Days Out applications, and the delivery of Magic Spaces projects, do so for both the Charity and the Merlin's Magic Wand Foundation, a US-based 501(c)(3) registered non-profit organization. The staff costs are allocated to each entity based on the number of applications received each year. The finance staff also support both the Charity and the Merlin's Magic Wand Foundation, and their staff costs are allocated to each entity based on the amount of time spent working on each. This ensures that the financial statements reflect accurately the expenditure on charitable activities and support.

Staff costs include a VAT charge of £53,307 (2023: £57,777) resulting from the invoicing process between Merlin and the Charity.

The Trustee considers the members of the Management Committee as comprising the key management personnel of the Charity. Only the Charity Manager, Head of the Charity and the Charities Finance Director receive any remuneration from the Charity. The other members of the Management Committee give their time freely. The total employment benefits of the key management personnel were £101,398 (2023: £83,053) these include a VAT charge, resulting from the invoicing process between Merlin and the Charity of £15,466 (2023: £12,375).

One employee had employee benefits within the range of £60,000 to £69,999 (2023: None)

Merlin funded £30,000 (2023: £32,400) in staff costs as a donated service.

6 Trustee remuneration

The Trustee did not receive any remuneration or reimbursement of expenses in the period (2023: £nil).

Notes (continued)

7 Transactions with related parties

The Charity was set up by Merlin and the directors and officers of the Trustee Company, the Management Committee and the Charity staff are all directors or employees of Merlin or its subsidiaries, excluding Fru Hazlitt, Mark Fisher and Sheilitha Williams, who are now independent members of the Management Committee.

Merlin did not make a cash donation to the Charity in 2024 (2023: £nil) but the company and its subsidiaries made gift in kind and donated services donations totalling £1,848,070 (2023: £1,157,685).

At the reporting date the outstanding amount owed by related parties is £233,815 (2023: £214,412).

Merlin's Magic Wand Foundation, a 501(c) (3) registered California Public Benefit Corporation, owed £59,908 (2023: £62,123) for activities paid for by the Charity on their behalf.

Accrued income representing the donations pledged by Merlin subsidiaries not received at period-end was £173,907 (2023: £149,961). Merlin subsidiaries owe £nil (2023: £nil) in relation to amounts invoiced not yet paid

At the reporting date the amount owed by the Charity to related parties is £410,425 (2023: £256,612). Some of this balance relates to amounts within accruals, which are yet to be invoiced. The Charity owes to Merlin £399,717 (2023: £239,441) for the reimbursement of salary and other operational costs paid for on behalf of the Charity. There were no amounts owed in respect of costs incurred on Merlin's Magic Spaces projects (2023: £nil). The SEA LIFE TRUST was owed £2,285 (2023: £32) in respect of cost recharges not yet invoiced.

8 Auditor's remuneration

The audit fee for the period was £20,004 (including VAT) (2023: £19,068). No other fees were payable to the auditor.

9 Taxation

The Merlin Magic Wand Children's Charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable trust for UK income tax purposes. Accordingly, the Charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Part 10 Income Tax Act 2007 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Notes (continued)

10 Tangible Fixed Assets

	Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment	Total
	£	£
Cost		
At 31 December 2023	15,795	15,795
Additions	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 28 December 2024	15,795	15,795
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Depreciation		
At 31 December 2023	11,160	11,160
Charge for the year	1,991	1,991
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 28 December 2024	13,151	13,151
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Book Value		
At 31 December 2023	4,635	4,635
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 28 December 2024	2,644	2,644
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Notes (continued)

11 Analysis of debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Accrued Income	186,778	173,909
Sundry Debtors	27,895	64,016
Prepayments	7,745	4,251
	222,418	242,176

Accrued income on 28 December 2024 of £186,778 (2023: £173,909) represents donations pledged by subsidiaries of Merlin and third parties, not received at period-end

There is no accrued income for unused Magical Days Out tickets in 2024 (2023: nil).

All 2024 period-end debtors are unrestricted in nature (2023: unrestricted)

12 Analysis of creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade Creditors	358,918	3,578
Sundry Creditors	16,413	-
Accruals	100,585	279,712
	475,916	283,290

Trade creditor amounts include £346,912 owed to other Merlin entities (2023: £4,814).

Accruals include £36,013 (2023: £239,441) due to Merlin for the reimbursement of salary and other operational costs paid for on behalf of the Charity. There are no accruals for unused Magical Days Out tickets in 2024. (£2023: £nil). All 2024 period-end creditors are unrestricted in nature.

Notes (continued)

13 Summary of Fund Movements

Designated funds are planned for use on Merlin's Magic Spaces projects on which design has already commenced.

For details of the restricted funds above, please see the descriptions on page one of the Trustees report for more information.

	Fund Balances Brought Forward 2024 £	Income 2024 £	Expenditure 2024 £	Transfers 2024 £	Gains and Losses 2024 £	Fund Balances Carried Forward 2024 £
Restricted Funds						
Magical Days Out	-	1,787,711	(1,787,711)	-	-	-
Merlin's Magic Spaces	19,948	28,101	(41,499)	-	-	6,550
Merlin's Magic on Tour	-	-	-	-	-	-
	19,948	1,815,812	(1,829,210)	-	-	6,550
Unrestricted Funds						
Designated	100,000	-	-	-	-	100,000
General	404,887	626,531	(664,356)	-	(11,397)	355,665
	504,887	626,531	(664,356)	-	(11,397)	455,665
Total Funds	524,835	2,442,343	(2,493,566)	-	(11,397)	462,215

Notes (continued)

14 Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow provided by operating activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Net (expenditure) / income for the reporting period	(62,620)	92,980
Adjustments for		
Depreciation charges	1,991	1,369
Fixed asset disposal	-	-
Decrease / (increase) in debtors	19,758	(145,445)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	192,625	(22,263)
Net cash generated / (utilised) in operating activities	151,754	(73,359)