

Charity registration number 1126806 (England and Wales)

Charity registration number SC043054 (Scotland)

Company registration number 06607389

THE READER ORGANISATION
ANNUAL REPORT AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025



THE READER ORGANISATION

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Mrs S Fletcher Mr P K Sood Mr H Biddell Dr R M Hussey CB,OBE,DL Mrs A S Marsland MBE (Chair) Dr H Willows Mr O Alake Mr NI Atkinson
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Secretary	Ms J Martin
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Managing Director Director of Literature Director of Finance, Governance & Commercial Planning	Ms J Guerrier Ms K Clarke Ms V Hopton
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Charity number (England and Wales)	1126806
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Charity number (Scotland)	SC043054
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Company number	06607389
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Registered office	The Mansion House Calderstones Park Liverpool Merseyside L18 3JB
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Auditor	Xeinadin Audit Limited 46 Hamilton Square Birkenhead Wirral CH41 5AR
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Bankers	Santander UK Plc Bridle Road Bootle Merseyside L30 4GB
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THE READER ORGANISATION

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1. Welcome to The Reader

The Reader's mission is to bring about a reading revolution, ensuring that literature becomes part of the fabric of life, and that Shared Reading groups are widely available, bringing people and books together in welcoming places. In this report, we are proud to share the story of The Reader's year - a year in which we have increased our impact in a number of areas to deliver this mission.

This report highlights growth in participation in our Shared Reading groups across the UK; an increase in visits from children and families to the Storybarn; an expansion of our Reading Heroes programme for care experienced children and an increase in visits to the Home of Shared Reading in Calderstones, Liverpool. There are many highlights in this report, with numbers, projects and stories, but it is hard to encapsulate the thousands of small moments and small acts that make up this impact, like a wondrous kaleidoscope. 96% of Shared Reading group members said they had conversations that matter in their groups this year. This is no small thing. Human connection is the foundation for living well but it takes lots of small moments to create. A warm welcome. An open door. Some quiet encouragement. A wondrous piece of literature, prepared and shared, with care. We are so grateful to all our volunteers and staff for all they do and are delighted to share some stories from our Shared Reading community in this report.

It could be easy to feel overwhelmed by the scale of The Reader's mission, especially in these turbulent times when feelings of division and disconnection are felt by so many. The need for strong social infrastructure is clear and that is what The Reader provides – communities based on Shared Reading, welcoming spaces and meaningful connections. In the UK and beyond, we are faced with discouraging statistics about the decline in reading habits which challenges The Reader to be bold in how we seek to engage new communities and work alongside others.

Like many other charities and arts organisations, it has been a year of challenge as well as impact. The economic environment doesn't just affect our finances, it affects our people – our staff and volunteers - as well as many of our partners and it has required us to make hard choices about our resources. We thank all of our people and our amazing supporters for their dedication and commitment over the last year, without which we wouldn't be able to achieve the deep and meaningful impact outlined in this report.

Jemma Guerrier, Managing Director & Anita Marsland, Chair of Trustees

A need at times to be together and talk -

And then the finding we can walk

More firmly through dark narrow places

A need to reach out sometimes hand to hand -

And then find Earth less like an alien land...

A need at times of each for each

Direct as the need of throat and tongue for speech

From *Not Love Perhaps*, by A.S.J Tessimond

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2. What is Shared Reading?

Each week, The Reader brings people together at Shared Reading groups across the UK. These groups are free, and for everyone.

At Shared Reading groups, a trained Reader Leader selects stories and poems to read aloud together. Everyone is welcome to share how the words make them feel, as well as their thoughts, ideas and memories. There is no pressure to talk or read aloud.

Everyone experiences what is read in their own way, but the shared language found in literature can help us to understand ourselves – and others – better.



Watch our video about Shared Reading [here](#)

3. Delia's Reader Story

Retired nurse Delia Cartlidge and husband Stuart, a former aeronautical engineer, have been married for 52 years. Delia became Stuart's carer after he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease in 2020.

The couple, who are both 76, joined The Reader's dementia friendly Shared Reading group at Liverpool Central Library last October. Sadly, Stuart's condition deteriorated. Delia continues to go to the group by herself...

"Listening to someone read aloud is very therapeutic, it takes you into another world or time, and you can forget any problems or troubles in your own life, if only for a short time.

Speaking for Stuart and myself, that hour every Wednesday was like a port in a storm where we could forget about dementia and relax. For me especially, it lightened the load of being a carer, and so helped me to cope with an increasingly difficult situation.

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Now that Stuart can no longer attend the group, that hour every Wednesday has become even more beneficial to me. I just love it! It's the highlight of my week. We have all sorts of people dropping into the group of all ages which is also good."

4. How Shared Reading Helps

*Below the surface stream, shallow and light,
Of what we say we feel—below the stream,
As light, of what we think we feel—there flows
With noiseless current strong, obscure and deep,
The central stream of what we feel indeed.'*

Matthew Arnold

We live in a time of rising concern over the impact of increasing digitisation and links to anxiety and loss of real human connection. A recent UK study by Campaign to End Loneliness reported 26 million people (This equates to nearly 50% of all adults across the country) feeling lonely occasionally, sometimes, often or always. Shared Reading can help. Our most recent feedback week responses showed that 74% of group members feel that Shared Reading helps them to connect with others in a deeper way, to reach 'below the surface stream' to what we 'feel indeed'.

Shared Reading groups don't only bring people together around the table (either in person or online) they use great literature – the most powerful human connection tool in existence, to uncover connections between people and invite people into mental places where they can uncover lost or buried connections within themselves.

'Some of the words I'm coming out with - I think to myself, you know, I've not said that before, or thought to say that before'

Donald, Shared Reading group member

For The Reader, the meaning of 'great' is not dependent on whether a text has been sanctioned by history or public opinion. For us the term 'great' is about what the literature **does**. In Shared Reading groups we use it to help us share experiences and create space for finding and naming thoughts and feelings. We relate to the characters on the page as well as the other people in the group. We meet people with very different experiences as we travel across time and space and cross cultural divides through insight into the inner experience of individual humans. And through the experience we learn more about them, and also about ourselves.

'When human problems don't have a shape or language they become impossible to navigate and therefore very painful... You can see the impact on [someone] when they recognise a word that makes sense of what they are feeling. This is what the literature is doing in a Shared Reading group – providing a language for experience.'

Alison Liebling from the Prisons Research Centre, University of Cambridge.

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5. Year at a Glance

Please note, percentages indicate year on year increases.

515 (+4%) active adult Shared Reading groups in the UK

639 (+2%) active Volunteers in the UK

24,372 (+17%) Shared Reading participants in the UK

61% increase in attendance at Shared Reading groups in our home in Calderstones Park

International Shared Reading now in **19 countries** with **360 (+20%)** trained Reader Leaders

93 active Reading Heroes volunteers in the UK

18,629 (+11%) visits to the Storybarn, our magical multi-purpose play space for children

Launched new partnerships with **YMCA RISE recovery services, Tower Hamlets Virtual School and Mersey Forest.**

Criminal Justice contract continued to deliver Shared Reading in **28 PIPEs** (Psychologically Informed Planned Environments), including the first groups in PIPE settings that house residents with additional needs. Additionally, we were recommissioned to deliver in three other CJ settings and secured a brand new contract, meaning we now deliver Shared Reading in a total of 32 CJ settings in the UK

1410 (+7%) people attended our Christmas Story Trail.

Sold **11,912** tickets **(+4%)** generating **£144,227 (+20%)** in ticket income.

139,617 active website users **(+12%)**

1491 (+15%) children attended heritage school trips.

Launched our second **Christmas Appeal**, raising **£9,566,84 (+11.8%)** to support our Shared Reading groups for people living with dementia.

146% increase in media coverage

We now recycle more of our waste than goes to landfill. **100%** of our waste was diverted from landfill. **370 meals** saved on food waste reduction app Too Good to Go (that's **999kg** of CO2 avoided). **1,342** kWh of solar energy generated.

Served **44,167 (+32%)** cups of tea, **140,528 (123%)** cups of coffee and **88,890 (+33%)** scoops of ice cream.

Delivered **199 (+81%)** events, from weddings to wakes, and christenings to corporate away days.

Operated a welcoming public building seven days a week attracting over **440,000 (+11%)** visits.

Published **40** new episodes of The Reader podcast.

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6. Our Reading Heroes project

What do you think about reading now?

“Relaxing, cool, easier”

Reading Heroes Participant

Since 2016, we've been successfully promoting the benefits of reading for pleasure for Care Experienced children aged two to 15 year through our national Reading Heroes and Liverpool based Tiny Heroes programme.

We match our Reading Heroes with a highly trained volunteer to enjoy the magic of reading aloud together; Tiny Heroes focusses on volunteer led home visits to preschool age children, bringing to life the wonder of story sharing, singing and nursery rhymes.

We know that Reading Heroes has a profound impact on the lives of the young people we read with; we're ambitious and proud of the work we're doing to ensure that as many Care Experienced young people as possible can experience Shared Reading. This year we have expanded our training and delivery model, enabling us to read with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children, as well as those children growing up in Kinship Care arrangements.

In 2024/2025 we have been delighted to expand Reading Heroes into new Local Authority areas, including Tower Hamlets, Bury and Oldham, whilst also investing in our understanding of the changes required to process and infrastructure in order to effectively scale project delivery in a way that matches our bold ambitions for growth.

James' Reader Story

James was twelve when a referral was made to Reading Heroes by his Virtual School. It was noted in James' referral form that he was socially isolated and would benefit from the one-to-one interaction Reading Heroes provides. James was working at a lower reading age at the time of his referral, and though he had some enjoyment of reading, he often struggled with comprehension. The Reading Heroes team paired James with Helen, and the two began reading together online on a weekly basis.

During the course of James and Helen's reading placement, James was in three foster care settings. On two occasions when James was moved to a different home, The Reading Heroes team, working with James' social worker and the referrer at Sefton Virtual Schools were able to reestablish the reading placement, allowing Helen to be a constant person in James' life during a time of immense change:

“It was SO GOOD to see James back after several months, and change of accomodation.” Helen wrote “We had fun reading different poems - he's got a real ear for rhythm and now goes back to correct himself if the rhythm is lost or if he gets a word wrong.”

Poetry became a regular feature in their reading sessions, from Spike Milligan's 'On The Ning Nang Nong' and 'Today I saw a little worm' to 'Double Double Toil and Trouble' from Macbeth, Benjamin Zephaniah and discussions about Haiku poetry.

Reading Heroes had evidently had a positive impact on James' confidence and overall wellbeing, which Helen had noticed:

“His reading is so much better than it was - he self corrects and really takes time to work out words he doesn't recognise. But more than that he's more personable.”

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James agreed. In a follow-up survey taken at the end of their Reading Heroes placement, when asked 'Do you feel differently about reading since starting Reading Heroes? What's changed for you?' He simply responded "**more confident**". James said that he is now reading every day and was in agreement that he 'enjoyed taking part in Reading Heroes', that he 'found it relaxing', that it was 'good to talk about his thoughts and feelings' and that he 'liked reading with other people.' When James' current carer was asked of the changes in James' confidence and self-esteem that could be linked to Reading Heroes, they commented 'can express himself',

Through all the changes that James experienced over their time reading together, the connection between James and his reading buddy Helen has been consistent. On their last reading placement, James had been awarded certificates for English and Maths, and had achieved great marks in his reading, spelling and comprehension tests. Helen wrote:

"He is enjoying reading and read beautifully today - and knew he had - and asked for my opinion. I loved that he loved what he'd done. A real sense of self confidence that I've not seen ... I told him he was brilliant, and I asked him did he know that? And he replied 'I am. I didn't know that before, but I am'

I asked him if it was ok to share - he said yes and that it was ok for me to be proud, which of course I am, very."

7. Reading with Early Years

59,825 children reached by the First Page project since 2018.

Our First Page Project brings the joy of story sharing and reading for pleasure to families across the North West, through collaboration with a network of trusted partner organisations. Our partners include children's centres, health providers and third sector organisations, such as Homestart, The Greenhouse Project and Kinship Carers.

This year, working closely with those community partners we welcomed **339 individuals** to **14 Family Fun Days**, allowing families to immerse themselves in our magical playspace The Storybarn, unleash their imaginations and explore nature.

We continued to deliver our Sharing Stories in the Early Years training, equipping **28 partner staff and volunteers** to deliver quality story times as part of their own provision and shared hints and tips to support **207 new parents** with Shared Reading as part of our 'Books & Babies' outreach sessions, hosted in community settings across the North West.

We provided ongoing support to our partners to deliver **38 weekly** community story times or 1:1 story sharing interventions.

"My absolute favourite activity this summer by far was The Storybarn, it was also thoroughly enjoyed by my little boy too. I nearly cried when I saw the upstairs for the first time it felt so special and magical, it was exactly the kind of thing that I wanted my little boy to be able to experience and to enjoy with him and if it hadn't been for Homestart I'm not sure if we ever would have made it but now I have the confidence to take him myself into the future and enjoy the magic again!"

Parent visiting First Page The Storybarn Family Fun Day with Homestart Southport

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8. A Year at The Storybarn

"A truly joyous experience for the kids and adults alike."

Storybarn attendee

This year at The Storybarn has been marked by exciting achievements and growth. We engaged with **18,629** individuals (+**11%** on last year) across a diverse range of programmes, with standout successes including **four weeks** of fully sold-out Holiday Club. During these sessions, **24 children** joined us each weekday to explore the joys of reading for pleasure alongside creative arts and crafts activities

We were also thrilled to host our first-ever Brunch with Mrs Claus, a new collaboration between Storybarn and Events. Both sessions sold out quickly, and the celebration provided families with a magical and innovative way to enjoy the festive season together.

In addition, we enhanced our catering by introducing hot party food, which has been well received by families (and children!). Our parties continue to be highly personalised, designed around the interests of each child, ensuring every celebration is both memorable and unique.

"Wonderful, well organised, great value for money and the staff were friendly, approachable and helpful"

Storybarn attendee

9. Criminal Justice

It's one of the only times during the week when I have that openness, touching with that deeper part of myself – even for an hour – it takes you out of that jail mindset. I feel like the group has helped me recognise some very real parts of myself.

Daniel, Young Offender Institution resident

Our team of Criminal Justice Group Leads have been busy running Shared Reading in **28 Prisons and Approved Premises** through our national contract for the delivery of Shared Reading in PIPEs (Psychologically Informed Planned Environments). This year we were asked to start the first groups in PIPE settings that house residents with additional needs.

PIPEs are designed to have a particular focus on the environment in which they operate and actively recognise the importance and quality of relationships and interactions. Shared Reading forms part of the enrichment programme and one of the structured activities on offer.

We are also privately funded to deliver Shared Reading by three individual units, including a maximum security prison, a female prison unit and a Secure Children's Home for residents aged 10 to 17 years. In addition to these groups, in March 2025 we secured a new contract to set up Shared Reading groups at Opening the Box, a service at HMP Channings Wood that supports prisoners with personality disorders, neurodivergent needs, or learning difficulties, providing therapeutic and educational support.

Our network of community Shared Reading groups offer huge potential for those progressing through the OPD (Offender Personality Disorder) pathway and we aim to grow pathways, developing links between 'closed' settings The Reader works in (such as prisons), intermediary services (such as probation), and our community-based activity to enable people to access Shared Reading at any stage in their journey.

It's different from other groups. It has brought sensitivity and depth out of some people you wouldn't see it come out of – they speak about things you wouldn't hear on the wing. If you struggle reading it's fine, no one is going to judge, or knock you down. Sometimes I can't get words out so this is freeing. How a piece of writing is able to get people to open up the way they do is incredible.

Daniel, Young Offender Institution resident

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Ben's Reader Story

The Reader has Shared Reading groups in community and Criminal Justice settings across the country. This Reader Story is from Ben, who has been living in an Approved Premises (previously called a Probation Hostel) for the last two months, following some time in prison. The setting's Shared Reading group has become an important part of his week.

I've been attending Shared Reading for about two months now, since the first week of moving into the Approved Premises. I came because when I arrived the Regime Lead of the house wanted me to go along and try something new, he said it would be a good way to get to know different people's views and opinions.

I enjoyed it and still enjoy it because it makes you think about the story, about what's being read, in ways you wouldn't normally. The author has their idea of what they're describing but you make the story your own when you imagine it. So everyone will have a different experience when reading or hearing it.

Shared Reading is a good way of switching off from what's going on with you, and escaping off into another world, but then when we stop and talk about the story you see where other people are actually coming from and the insights of what everyone else feels or sees is really interesting. It's also a relaxed place to be for an hour and a bit!

I remember when we read *Invictus**, yeah that stands out to me, because it was true and it was dark and deep, it didn't make me feel bad or good, but it made me think. Those two lines at the end I think about a lot.* When I said it takes you away, I mean after the session too, you might hear something that makes you think about the poem again and you escape again.

To someone who hasn't attended before I would say to them give it a few weeks, sit back and listen to the story, and then go away and think about what you've heard. Give it a chance. They will look at their life, not in story form, but as a way of reflecting. The group is non-judgmental, we focus on the story and everyone comes into the group the same. It's relaxed and you can go anywhere when listening to a story.

*Invictus by W.E. Henley

I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul.

10. Our commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

'I left feeling a little softer towards the world.'

Feedback from Project Participants

Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work, including our commitment to addressing racism and racial diversity, covers all aspects of our organisation and focuses on how we ensure that:

- Our ways of working treat people fairly and enable everyone to participate.
- We can be more representative of our communities – considering our Board, staff, volunteers and participants in our work.
- Everyone coming to The Reader feels that they belong.
- Great literature from writers with diverse backgrounds and experiences is enjoyed across our Shared Reading and programming.

We recognise that creating meaningful and lasting change is ongoing and complex work, which raises questions and requires us to have conversations that feel difficult for many of us. We have miles to travel in terms of learning and in order to expand the racial diversity of our workforce and some of our Shared Reading communities. But this will not deter us from our commitment to building a diverse and inclusive Shared Reading movement, and ensuring that all our employees, volunteers and participants feel welcome and safe.

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Progress in 2024/25 towards achieving these goals include:

- Following on from our 'Just Us' staff Shared Reading project, we rolled out new guidance and workshops for Reader Leaders on how to address race and racism in Shared Reading through their practice.
- We shared a new 'Just Us' anthology of tried and tested pieces that have been used and worked well to open up conversations in Shared Reading
- We set up new Monthly 'Just Us' Shared Reading Group for staff and Reader Leaders to open up and share this anthology
- Continued to focus on diversity in the literature we read, using our annual Bookshelf, anthologies and volunteer support sessions to promote use of diverse texts.
- Continued expansion of inclusive recruitment practices, including anonymising applications at shortlisting stage.

Regularly monitoring the diversity of our people and participants is a crucial part of our EDI work to help us understand who we are reaching, and how that changes over time.

We surveyed our volunteer community in Spring 2025 which showed 8% of our volunteers are of an ethnicity other than White, down 2% from the previous year. 86% of our volunteers are female. 18% identified as a D/deaf or disabled person, or had a long term health condition (up from 16% in the previous year). 5% identified with a sexuality other than heterosexual or straight (up from 3% in FY23/24).

We continue to monitor the diversity of our **workforce**, both during recruitment and on an annual basis. In Spring 2025, 17% of our staff members employed through the charity identified as D/deaf, disabled or living with a long-term health condition 3% of charity staff and 8% of job applicants were of an ethnicity other than White.

20% of our charity staff identified with a sexuality other than heterosexual or straight, an increase on the previous year's figure of 14%.

31% of charity staff in 2025 identified as neurodivergent, compared to 28% in March 2024.

This year we partnered with The University of Nottingham on a project researching neurodivergence in relation to literature, aiming to help us ensure that our Shared Reading groups are truly open and accessible to everyone.

This AHRC-funded project began with a focus on the impact of 'invisible disability', and an interest in how this might currently manifest within Shared Reading.

The Reader team worked with the University of Nottingham to design and deliver three workshops for Reader Staff, Reader Leaders and researchers and professionals outside of The Reader who are interested in this work.

Feedback from the workshops documents the positive impact of this research collaboration on Reader Leaders' awareness of issues around neurodivergence; accessibility needs in Shared Reading; the need to identify particular texts and disseminate more specific 'Scenarios' and 'Reader Stories' centering experiences of neurodivergence for use in future training and support for Reader Leaders.

11. Mental Health

We continue to deliver Shared Reading on wards and in recovery settings across a range of in patient facilities throughout 2024/25, with an increase of 91 new active groups across the North West and South East. Our mean group size has also increased from 5.9 (Apr-Jun 2024) to 6.3 (1 Jan - 30 April 2025).

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Our priority remains to cement referral routes between hospitals, recovery settings and communities by mapping different channels and engaging with key staff, ensuring those receiving treatment can access consistent Shared Reading support wherever they are based and at whatever stage of their recovery journey.

Throughout this year, we have continued to deliver four weekly Shared Reading groups at Prospect Park Hospital in Reading, Berkshire, where Shared Reading continues to be considered an essential part of treatment by the Occupational Therapy staff.

These groups reach across the range of need from acute mental health difficulties to older adults and those living with dementia. Our two Berkshire community Shared Reading community groups continue to offer Prospect Park group members the opportunity to attend a community Shared Reading group once they are discharged from acute care.

"I want to feedback that this week's session was the best session of Shared Reading in the 10 years that I have worked here. There was a sense of psychological realism to the poem that all the group related to with the complexities around separation. Patients shared what the poem meant to them; overall it was exemplary in terms of therapeutic experience and engagement for patients."

Peter - Occupational Therapy Assistant & trained Reader Leader

Anna's Reader Story

Anna* is a patient at Prospect Park Hospital on Orchid Ward, and she has been coming along to the Shared Reading group for about four months.

It's my favourite group! I've been here at long time and my son was worried that I was spending too much time alone - you ruminate alone in your room.

If I'm here, I like to look for an activity; [Shared Reading] makes me think, it makes me reflect and it helps me to feel not alone.

It just feels such a safe space to be. I haven't talked much about the loss of one of my sons - but [in this group] I would be able to. It feels secure. It feels united. It feels connected. And also I have respect and admiration for those who don't feel confident to read. It gives space.

To find out more about our long-standing Shared Reading delivery at Prospect Park, listen to our special Podcast episode where we meet staff and participants and hear their stories.

[Hear the Podcast](#)

**This story has been anonymised*

12. English for Speakers of other languages

'I've just arrived and I don't know what awaits me, what path I have to take, and it's as if this poem has shown me myself'.

Group member at Our Liverpool ESOL Shared Reading Group at Calderstones

Our Shared Reading groups for speakers of other languages have grown this year. We now have 15 ESOL Shared Reading groups across the movement. Groups are taking place in libraries, at Calderstones and with partner organisations such as New Horizons, Dolphin Women's Centre in Birmingham, Borderlands Bristol and Changing Lives Doncaster.

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Findings from 2024's Evaluation revealed high engagement. 93% of ESOL group members agreed that Shared Reading lifted their mood, 89% said hearing other people's thoughts gave them a new way of seeing things and 78% said Shared Reading helped them to connect with others in a deeper way. They were also more likely to say they felt it had a positive impact on their lives outside the group with 59% saying they felt more confident.

Our ESOL support sessions bring Reader Leaders delivering in this area together to share learning and best practice. This year we have produced a list of recommended literature for reading with people with English as an additional language as we continue to develop and strengthen our practice in this area.

"Our group is very nice. All are kind and helpful. All the poems we've read are giving some emotions. We can explore more things we haven't known yet. I feel thankful to you, Shared Reading. It is fantastic."

Nataliia's Reader Story

Former recruitment manager Nataliia, relocated to the UK from Ukraine in January 2023. Her home city of Polohy in the Zaporizhzhia region has been under Russian occupation since 2022.

While living in Skelmersdale, Lancs, she joined one of The Reader's Shared Reading group for speakers of other languages (ESOL). In November 2024 Nataliia moved to Liverpool where she now works for Refugee Women Connect as an outreach worker with new mums. She has also just completed her Reader Leader training and hopes to help run an ESOL Shared Reading group herself.

"For me the Shared Reading group was always my safe place where you are always welcome. Everyone really cares about you and supports you. It's the place where I started to feel able to speak more confidently in English. When I moved to Skelmersdale I did not have the Ukrainian community around me and I was too shy to speak as I did not want to make any mistakes. I had studied English at school, and my written English was good, but I had not used it for more than 10 years.

I first heard about The Reader's ESOL Shared Reading group in Skelmersdale from a community which supports refugees. To say that the Skelmersdale group is great is an understatement. They've become like family to me. I never missed a single week.

Sometimes we would discuss one line in a poem for 20 minutes and everyone would find something to say and share their ideas. Although we are all from different places, we have so many similarities and shared our thoughts with each other and discussed things happening in our own lives. We all really connected through the poems.

Some members of the group were from Iran, Iraq, Ethiopia, Egypt, Kurdistan, Sudan and other countries and many could not speak much English in the beginning. It was really nice you could see their progress week by week – putting all these English words in a sentence, it was so incredible. It really helped everyone.

I also went to ESOL classes at college but feel I learnt more from Shared Reading group as I felt it was more practical and useful.

I started volunteering with Refugee Women Connect and my job role came about so quickly. I moved to Liverpool last November and now work part-time as an Outreach Worker – working with peri-natal women. It's what I always wanted to do and sounds like a miracle. It's really magic.

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13. People living with dementia

"I couldn't tell you what I did yesterday, but I'm alright with a book – I'd go to the group every day if I could."
Barbara, Shared Reading Group Member

The Reader deliver Shared Reading groups for people living with dementia and their carers from the earliest stages of diagnosis through to advanced treatment and acute care. We do this in a number of ways: By training and placing volunteers to lead Shared Reading within an identified setting, such as public libraries and community centres, providing accessible dementia support and ensuring that those living independently can access meaningful activity which improves wellbeing. Within care home or day care settings, we coordinate volunteers or train partner staff to deliver Shared Reading activities. Our work has shown that reading together with those living with dementia and their carers and family positively supports well being for both parties, offering respite and the opportunity for powerful, meaningful connection.

Of those attending a Dementia Friendly Shared Reading Group:

96% enjoy being part of their group

100% feel safe and welcome in their group

85% say 'this activity makes me feel better'

84% agree 'this activity gives me something different to think about'

This year has seen continued growth in our dementia-focused Shared Reading, with exciting new developments across the Liverpool City Region. We launched a new Shared Reading group at The Lighthouse Nursing Home in New Brighton, Wirral, averaging **10** people per session. Newly established partnerships with care home providers mean that new groups in Southport and St Helens are in the pipeline, as well as partnership with Liverpool City Region Library Services that will see four new dementia friendly Shared Reading groups established in Halton, Knowsley and St Helens community libraries. These additions build on the strong foundations laid in previous years, allowing us to reach even more people living with dementia in both residential and community settings. We're proud of the momentum we've built and look forward to further demonstrating the impact of this work.

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Reader Stories from our dementia focussed groups

Watch our video about some of The Reader's Shared Reading groups for people living with dementia and their friends and family.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgGyitmzk60>



14. The Reader Bookshelf 24/25: Wonder

The theme for our annual Reader Bookshelf was 'Wonder' and it led to a year of exciting new literary discoveries and partnerships. From April '24 to September '25 over **1,100** Shared Reading sessions have taken place using a poem, story, extract, or working through whole novels from our Bookshelf. Claire Keegan's short novel *Foster*, Lucia Berlin's short stories and the essays of Kathleen Jamie (a recommendation from volunteer Reader leaders) found hundreds of new readers. The popularity with SR groups of Marghanita Laski's post-war novel *Little Boy Lost* with groups helped cement a partnership with the book's publisher, Persephone, who returned for a sold-out event at the Mansion and hosted a day of Shared Reading at their Bristol shop.

We formed a World Book Day partnership with Liverpool One, who purchased copies of the complete Reader Bookshelf for display in several locations in the shopping centre, as well as supporting a day of Shared Reading taster sessions. The benefit of the Bookshelf was expressed by one North West Reader Leader whose group (like several others) read the whole of *Frankenstein*: 'The group is still filled with "wonder" that the enjoyment reading this book together has brought.'

15. Our Volunteers

"I love walking into the room and seeing how ready the members are - especially when they're alert and eager to be transported somewhere new with the literature as their only vehicle. Hearing their thoughts and interpretations is incredibly gratifying. Everyone's contribution is valid, and it brings me joy to know they feel that too."

Christine, Volunteer Reader Leader

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Our volunteers are at the heart of our national Shared Reading movement, giving time to choose, prepare and share great literature week in, week out. The rich and meaningful impact outlined in this report simply wouldn't be possible without their dedication, commitment and care.

At our home in Calderstones Park, our volunteers provide a warm welcome seven days a week, as they open the door to a programme of weekly Shared Reading groups, upcycling, and heritage tours and take care of our gardens – inviting everyone to come and explore what we have on offer.

We're delighted to share that in January we were re-awarded the [Investing in Volunteers](#) (liV) Kitemark – the UK's gold standard for excellence in volunteer management. First awarded to us in 2020, this renewed recognition is a testament to our ongoing commitment to creating a supportive, welcoming and rewarding environment for all our volunteers.

Achieving the Kitemark was no small feat – it took 18 months of hard work and diligence from our volunteers. A special mention goes to the 50 volunteers who took part in interviews and shared their valuable insights to help us meet the rigorous assessment criteria.

We're proud to have met all six quality areas of the liV standard, with particular commendations for:

The passion and dedication of our wonderful volunteers
How deeply embedded volunteering is in everything we do
Our welcoming culture and diverse volunteer opportunities
The high quality training and induction we provide

We're always looking to grow and improve; the assessment gave us valuable feedback on ways we can enhance our volunteer experience even further and we're committed to making those improvements part of our plans for the year ahead.

In 2024-2025 we supported:

144 (-15%) new Volunteers
488 (17.5%) active Volunteer Reader Leaders
93 (127%) active Reading Heroes Volunteers
179 (-25%) active Volunteers based at Calderstones

Irene's Reader Story

Irene is a volunteer Reader Leader at Swan Women's centre in Sefton which provides mental health support for women through counselling, group support, befriending and group activities.

When I got involved I knew that I had not made reading a priority in my own life. Researching literature and delivering Shared Reading has certainly helped me to turn this around. The experience has been good for my own mental health and learning - and I thoroughly enjoy promoting and sharing these benefits with other women.

I find exploring literature together creates a 'level playing field' for participants with different life experiences. The discussions that emerge can go in any direction, and each week I get quite excited at the prospect of where we might end up with these.

As we review what we have read in the group, I am just so enthralled by the knowledge, views and life experiences that the women bring to this, as well as their willingness to share these during our discussions. I have learnt so much from our conversations and feel privileged to be part of these.

It is also lovely to hear members of the group say how beneficial Shared Reading is to them and how it is a 'haven' from the other stresses and strains in their lives. It is for me too!

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16. Our Home

Our home in Liverpool's Calderstones Park is a warm and welcoming community celebrating stories, creativity and nature.

Our work here delivers The Reader's mission by;

- Improving wellbeing through a creative community and the power of Shared Reading.
- Demonstrating how a creative model of health improves social connection and wellbeing.
- Generate income to support The Reader and provide opportunities for meaningful jobs and volunteering.

We are open 354 days a year and our estimated number of visits is **440,000** – an **11%** increase on the year before. This year we hosted **689 public events** including sessions in our magical play space The Storybarn for new parents and their babies, open air theatre, literary Deep Reads and masterclasses, themed dinners and ceilidhs and makers markets celebrating our local creative community. As the home of Shared Reading, we have sessions running daily alongside other free wellbeing activities such as Knit & Natter, gardening groups and upcycling workshops.

This year, we saw significant increases in footfall to our thriving Community Interest Company venues including our cafes and ice cream parlour and sold **88,890 scoops of ice cream** – a **33%** increase on the year before. The opening of a new cafe in our independent Bookshop helped us welcome even more customers and we made **140,528 cups of coffee** – a **123%** increase.



[Watch our Winter season video](#)



[Watch our Summer season video](#)

Barbara's Reader Story

Barbara volunteers at the Reader's independent Bookshop in the heart of Calderstones Park.

It was with some trepidation that I approached my first day in the wonderful Reader Bookshop. I knew I wanted to be there but was less certain that they would want me.

Then I met Reuben who was to become my shop mate. Reuben is 24 years old and has been volunteering at **The Reader** for four years – both in the bookshop and on the Welcome Desk. His encyclopaedic knowledge of subjects about which I know nothing and his incisive approach to technology, about which I know even less, was utterly reassuring. I immediately knew that his assets would fill in some of the gaps in my sluggish brain and that we could become a team. Even now I dread customers bearing book tokens but with Reuben at my side, I have nothing to fear. We will cope.

My volunteer experience has become an added dimension in my life and I would highly recommend the experience to anyone who may have doubts about their abilities.

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17. Environment / Sustainability

The Reader recognises that its activities impact upon the environment through its routine internal operations, its infrastructure development, and through its influence and effects on the wider community. We take seriously our responsibility for, and our commitment to, protection of the environment at all levels.

As we work towards a net-zero strategy, in 2024-2025, some key achievements were:

- Switching our Recycling Waste Management contract, enabling us to receive detailed Recycling Reports every month and better take responsibility for improving contamination levels through data analysis. Extra recycling bins were also provided on-site.
- 100% of our waste was successfully diverted from landfill. Any waste that was unable to be recycled, was turned into sustainable energy through the RDF process.
- Invested in better food waste bins for all our kitchens, both staff and commercial, separating out waste that can be composted using our on-site hot composting facilities, and food waste to be composted off-site.
- 370 meals were saved using the food waste reduction app “Too Good To Go”, avoiding 999kg of CO2e being generated.
- 1,342 kWh of solar energy generated since December 2024.
- Greatly improved our knowledge of a realistic carbon journey through Net-zero Consultancy, allowing us to create a set of actions to work towards and highlighting our major carbon contributors.
- Attending Sustainability Network meetings to share and build knowledge across a number of departments in the organisation
- Adapting our menus to use local seasonal ingredients to highlight local produce and reduce imported food miles.
- New flowerbeds installed in the grounds to encourage biodiversity and pollination habitats.
- Took part in “No Mow May” across the site.
- Our Upcycling Group received the ‘Zero Waste Community Fund’ from Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority for 24/25. The group gives new life to furniture that was otherwise headed to landfill.
- Our Litter Picking Group was launched, bringing staff, volunteers and members of the community together once a month to help clean up the park.
- Plant sales were at £3,558.40 for 24/25, with the money made going back into the gardening group to improve and maintain the space.

18. Looking ahead

Over the course of FY25/26, the team and Board will be starting to develop a new strategy for The Reader which will start in 2026.

Over the next year, we will continue to deliver four strategic goals, with some of our priorities listed below:

Goal 1) Develop Shared Reading for those who need it most

Objective: Meet Shared Reading delivery outcomes and build referral routes into adult Shared Reading community groups with a focus on pathways from inpatient settings in the South East and North West and pathways into Calderstones groups.

Priorities:

- Develop more direct referral routes into Shared Reading with a focus on social prescribing pathways and sustain at least 420 adult Shared Reading groups.
- Successful delivery of Reading Heroes programme and PIPES contract in justice.
- Secure new commissions from the NHS for Adult Shared Reading and for Reading Heroes expansion.

Goal 2) Open the treasure house of great literature to all.

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Objective: Increase engagement of staff and volunteers with The Reader's reading resources and volunteer support and deliver a high quality, varied Calderstones public programme

Priorities:

- Ensure a robust and high-quality community of SR Practitioners through the Teaching Associate Pathway, the Reader Leader pathway, quality assurance framework and increase engagement with Support Sessions and Reading Records.
- Reach Storybarn and Calderstones programme engagement and financial targets.
- Ensure there is a high quality 7 day a week Shared Reading offer at Calderstones.
- Use our data to better understand our audiences of literary resources and our visitors at Calderstones.

Goal 3) Understand and talk about the impact of literature and Shared Reading.

Objective: By end of 25/26, all staff members and Calderstones volunteers will be able to confidently and authentically talk about Shared Reading and The Reader

Priorities:

- Create refreshed shared language and tools for staff and volunteers.
- Continue to develop and deliver our annual Year of Stories plan, highlighting areas of work.
- Conduct our bi-annual evaluation data collection across our Shared reading communities.

Goal 4) Strong Foundations

Objective: To improve the connectedness of our people (to our mission, our impact, our progress, our finances and each other) in order to work more effectively together to meet our targets and champion the work of The Reader.

Priorities include:

- Continued delivery of our EDI work, aiming to meet 3 year targets
- Implement new staff communications plan
- Deliver our digital priorities including contracting a new CRM partner
- Ensure strong governance, including inducting new board members across both CIC and Charity Boards
- Continue to deliver our financial strategy of increasing unrestricted revenue through our Community Interest Company and trading income streams.

20. Financial Review

The total income in FY2024/25 was **£4,586,647**, an increase from £4,354,896 in 2023/24 brought about by an increase in trading income. Calderstones Mansion House CIC realised a net profit of £46,205 during 2024/25.

The net expenditure for the year was **£296,422**, an improvement on 2023/24 which incurred net expenditure of £627,237.

In respect of the £296,422 net expenditure in 2024/25, the charity incurred depreciation costs of £250,187 in relation to the Storybarn and Mansion House, and the associated movements from restricted and designated funds to free reserves resulted in a deficit on charitable activities of **£46,235**, an improvement on 2023/24 which incurred a deficit on charitable activities of £361,042.

In these challenging times and following on from the previous year, trustees and the Directors Group had to make some difficult decisions to reduce expenditure in 2024/25 in order to secure the long-term financial sustainability of the charity, whilst looking to retain the

high level of impact The Reader's work achieves. These decisions have led to an improvement in the year end net result.

THE READER ORGANISATION

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Principal income sources

During 2024/25 The Reader Organisation's income was split across the following sources:

29% grants and donations for core activities

25% grants and commissions for delivery of Shared Reading (our principal charitable activity) and training of individuals to undertake Shared Reading

42% trading income, principally from our subsidiary, Calderstones Mansion House Community Interest Company and

4% event income from the Storybarn and programmed activity

<1% Investment income

Reserves

The Reserves now stand at **£4,935,028**.

Reserves include **£4,413,702** of restricted funds relating to Calderstones Mansion House which is reduced by an associated depreciation charge each year and will transfer to a designated fund upon satisfaction of restrictions within the grants.

The Group unrestricted funds total **£521,326**. This includes £215,100 of designated funds.

The remaining **£306,226** general unrestricted funds represents our free reserves.

Designated funds include:

- **£40,079** that represents expenditure on the Storybarn building which is being released over a 10-year period (the useful economic life of the refurbishments undertaken within the building)
- **£85,583** of designated funds that represents expenditure on the Mansion House building which is being released over 50 years (the useful economic life of the refurbishments undertaken within the building)
- **£89,437** Calderstones Mansion House sinking fund, a provision for future major repairs to the building

Reserves policy

The charity's reserves policy is to build up unrestricted reserves sufficient to enable the charity's core running costs to be continued for a period of three months, but where possible six months, should regular funding becoming unobtainable. Three months core running costs equates to around £298,374. As of 31 March 2025 the level of unrestricted, undesignated reserves amounts to £306,226 which equates to three months core running costs.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document (Memorandum and Articles of Association), the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) 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) (effective 1 January 2019)".

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21. Funders & Commissioners

Arts Council England
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Bury Virtual School
Camden Substance Misuse Services
City of Doncaster Council Public Health
Conwy Public Libraries
Duchy of Lancaster Benevolent Fund
DWF Foundation
Garfield Weston Foundation
Hammersmith & Fulham Libraries and Archives Service
Hemby Charitable Trust
Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
HMP Frankland Westgate
HMP Channings Wood
JD Foundation
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Liverpool Virtual School
Livr Housing
Masonic Charitable Foundation
Medicash Foundation
Mersey Forest
Mind in Croydon
Oldham Virtual School
Our Halton
Players of People's Postcode Lottery
Queen's University Belfast
Rayne Foundation
Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospital Trust
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust
Sefton Virtual School
Segelman Trust
St Helens Library Service
The Leathersellers' Foundation
The Limbourne Trust
The Louis Nicholas Residuary Charitable Trust
The National Lottery Community Fund
The Rainford Trust
Tower Hamlets Virtual School
University of Bristol
West Lancashire Freemasons
Well Doncaster
YMCA Liverpool

Individuals and Groups:
Knit and Natter at Calderstones

Thanks to our community of individual donors for their vital support in helping to make Shared Reading accessible to all.

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22. Structure, Governance & Management

The Reader Organisation is a registered charity and also a company limited by guarantee. It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association that were updated and adopted on 13 November 2017.

The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees which must be made up of between three and twelve individuals. The board meets four times a year.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mrs A S Marsland MBE (Chair)
Mr H Biddell (Vice Chair until retirement on 30th August 2024)
Mr P L Davies (Vice Chair from 30th August and retired from Board on 6th June 2025)
Dr R M Hussey OBE (Vice Chair from 6th June 2025 onwards)
Mr P K Sood
Mrs S Fletcher
Mr N Atkinson
Dr H Willows
Ms P Hughes (appointed 21st November 2024)

The company secretary is Ms J Martin.

None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute the sum not exceeding £10 in the event of a winding up.

Trustees Recruitment, Induction and Training

When a trustee vacancy arises a recruitment process including advertisement, application and interview as necessary is overseen by the nominations committee in line with good practice guidance. The Reader has designed a comprehensive induction for new Trustees that includes but is not limited to:

- A briefing from the Chair
- Meeting with other Trustees
- Meeting with each of the Directors' Group
- Shared Reading with Directors' Group
- Meeting as many Reader staff as possible at the first opportunity

This programme of meetings is accompanied by an induction pack that includes useful papers such as:

- The Reader's Business Plan
- Copies of previous Board minutes
- The Reader's Memorandum and Articles of Association
- Charity Commission guidance 'Being a Trustee' and 'The Essential Trustee: What you need to know'
- A welcome letter from the Chair
- Trustee role description
- Latest annual report and financial accounts
- Vision, mission and key facts
- Information on conflict of interests

A Committee structure is in place to support the Trustees in ensuring good governance. During the financial year there have been two Committees in operation: (i) the Audit Committee, which oversees governance and risk (ii) the Nominations Committee which oversees Trustee appointments.

THE READER ORGANISATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025 (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Calderstones Mansion House CIC has its own Board of Directors. As of 31 March 2025 there were eight Directors on the Calderstones Mansion House CIC Board, four of whom were also members of The Reader Board of Trustees. Minutes of the Calderstones Mansion House CIC Board are submitted to and approved by The Reader Board as parent company. The Audit Committee oversees the work of Calderstones Mansion House CIC as well as The Reader.

The Trustees have appointed a Managing Director and Director of Literature to manage the day-to-day operations of the charity.

Objects of the charity

The charity's objects are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of citizens and inhabitants of the United Kingdom and other countries, in particular the advancement of education, the furtherance of health, the relief of poverty, distress and sickness, the promotion of social inclusion and furtherance of community especially through reading and literature based activities.

Senior Staff Remuneration

The Reader pays salaries according to a salary band system. Banding is based on the responsibilities attached to roles. No members of staff received remuneration over £60,000 in the financial year.

Staff and Volunteers

The trustees acknowledge the commitment and dedication of the charity's staff and volunteers which has been critical to the success of the organisation over the course of the year. Without the generosity of these people, who regularly go above and beyond what is asked of them, The Reader would not have reached as many people or helped change as many lives.

Investment Power and Policy

Under the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the charity has the power to invest in any lawful way the trustees wish, after having obtained such advice from a financial expert as the trustees consider necessary having regard to the suitability of investments and the need for diversification. All reserves are held in deposit accounts and no investments were made during the year.

Risk Review

The Reader is committed to sound business practice and the embedding of risk management into the organisation's culture. Both the Reader and Calderstones Mansion House CIC have risk registers that are used to gain a comprehensive view of the work of the organisations and reveal strengths and opportunities as well as weaknesses and threats. Risk assessments involve staff from across the organisation and the formal risk registers are reviewed by the Audit Committee at each meeting, with high level risks being reviewed by the Reader Board of Trustees and Calderstones Mansion House CIC Board of Directors. The risk register details the steps and procedures in place to manage and mitigate the risks.

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

THE READER ORGANISATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025 (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) *FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025*

Payment of creditors

The company's current policy concerning the payment of trade creditors is to follow the CBI's Prompt Payers Code (copies are available from the CBI, Centre Point, 103 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DU). The company's current policy concerning the payment of trade creditors is to:

- settle the terms of payment with suppliers when agreeing the terms of each transaction;
- ensure that suppliers are made aware of the terms of payment by inclusion of the relevant terms in contracts; and
- pay in accordance with the company's contractual and other legal obligations.

Trade creditors of the company at the year end were equivalent to 56 day's purchases, based on the average daily amount invoiced by suppliers during the year.

Auditor

At the Annual General Meeting in November 2016 it was agreed that a tender exercise should be undertaken for the appointment of Auditors to ensure value for money was being achieved for the Charity. This resulted in McLintocks being appointed by special resolution of the Board of Directors in May 2017. The Board undertook a further tender exercise in 2021 which resulted in McLintocks being re-appointed at the meeting in September 2021 for a three year period with review by the Audit Committee each year and option to extend to a five year period. The Board approved the contract extension for the fourth year, with the fifth year to be reviewed in November 2025.

Disclosure of information to auditor

Each of the trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

THE READER ORGANISATION

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The trustees, who are also the directors of The Reader Organisation for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' 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 charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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 charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

THE READER ORGANISATION

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE READER ORGANISATION

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Reader Organisation (the 'charity') and its subsidiary for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the consolidated statement of financial activities, the consolidated and charity balance sheet, the consolidated statement of cash flows and the 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 Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of our report. We are independent of the 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 Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

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

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

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

THE READER ORGANISATION

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE READER ORGANISATION

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

the directors' report included within the Trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

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

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of Trustees' responsibilities, the trustees, who are also the directors of the charity for the purpose of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group and 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 trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

THE READER ORGANISATION

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED) TO THE MEMBERS OF THE READER ORGANISATION

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

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

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the group through discussions with trustees and other management, and from our knowledge and experience of charity sector;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the group, including the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, data protection, anti-bribery, employment, food hygiene and health and safety legislation;
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management team and inspecting legal correspondence; and identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

We assessed the susceptibility of the group's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management team as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims; and
- reviewing correspondence with HMRC and relevant regulators.

THE READER ORGANISATION

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED) TO THE MEMBERS OF THE READER ORGANISATION

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the directors and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, and to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members and trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company, the charitable company's members as a body and the charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Helen Furlong FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of Xeinadin Audit Limited, Statutory Auditor

Chartered Accountants

46 Hamilton Square

Birkenhead

Wirral

Merseyside

CH41 5AR

13 November 2025

THE READER ORGANISATION

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Income and endowments from:							
Donations and legacies	3	1,365,288	-	1,365,288	1,209,165	8,646	1,217,811
<u>Charitable activities</u>							-
Shared Reading	4	946,494	253,397	1,199,891	845,058	381,170	1,226,228
Storybarn	4	117,300	-	117,300	102,073	-	102,073
Other trading activities	5	1,897,650	-	1,897,650	1,800,694	-	1,800,694
Investments	6	6,518	-	6,518	7,410	-	7,410
Other income	7	-	-	-	680	-	680
Total income		<u>4,333,250</u>	<u>253,397</u>	<u>4,586,647</u>	<u>3,965,080</u>	<u>389,816</u>	<u>4,354,896</u>
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	8	1,797,561	-	1,797,561	1,750,563	-	1,750,563
<u>Charitable activities</u>							
Shared Reading	9	2,573,371	253,397	2,826,768	2,596,749	389,816	2,986,565
Storybarn	9	258,740	-	258,740	245,006	-	245,006
Total charitable expenditure		<u>2,832,111</u>	<u>253,397</u>	<u>3,085,508</u>	<u>2,841,755</u>	<u>389,816</u>	<u>3,231,571</u>
Total expenditure		<u>4,629,672</u>	<u>253,397</u>	<u>4,883,069</u>	<u>4,592,318</u>	<u>389,816</u>	<u>4,982,134</u>
Net expenditure		(296,422)	-	(296,422)	(627,238)	-	(627,238)
Transfers between funds		205,660	(205,660)	-	205,660	(205,660)	-
Net movement in funds		(90,762)	(205,660)	(296,422)	(421,578)	(205,660)	(627,238)
Reconciliation of funds:							
Fund balances at 1 April 2024		612,088	4,619,362	5,231,450	1,033,666	4,825,022	5,858,688
Fund balances at 31 March 2025		<u>521,326</u>	<u>4,413,702</u>	<u>4,935,028</u>	<u>612,088</u>	<u>4,619,362</u>	<u>5,231,450</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

THE READER ORGANISATION

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

		2025		2024	
	Notes	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	15		4,542,882		4,795,067
Current assets					
Stocks	17	28,265		29,085	
Debtors	18	297,351		292,545	
Cash at bank and in hand		688,717		1,113,776	
		1,014,333		1,435,406	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	20	(622,187)		(999,023)	
Net current assets			392,146		436,383
Total assets less current liabilities			4,935,028		5,231,450
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds	25	4,413,702		4,619,362	
Unrestricted funds	26	521,326		612,088	
		4,935,028		5,231,450	

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 13 November 2025

Mrs A S Marsland MBE (Chair)

Company registration number 06607389 (England and Wales)

THE READER ORGANISATION

CHARITY BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

		2025		2024	
	Notes	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	15		4,542,882		4,795,067
Investments	16		1		1
			<u>4,542,883</u>		<u>4,795,068</u>
Current assets					
Debtors	19	324,701		266,693	
Cash at bank and in hand		394,246		973,742	
		<u>718,947</u>		<u>1,240,435</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	21	(326,802)		(757,847)	
Net current assets			<u>392,145</u>		<u>482,588</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>4,935,028</u>		<u>5,277,656</u>
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds	25		4,413,702		4,619,362
Unrestricted funds	27		521,326		658,294
			<u>4,935,028</u>		<u>5,277,656</u>

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 13 November 2025

Mrs A S Marsland MBE (Chair)

Company registration number 06607389 (England and Wales)

THE READER ORGANISATION

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash absorbed by operations	33		(409,562)		(84,853)
Investing activities					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(22,015)		(9,542)	
Proceeds from disposal of tangible fixed assets		-		4,515	
Investment income received		6,518		7,410	
Net cash (used in)/generated from investing activities			(15,497)		2,383
Net cash generated from financing activities			-		-
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents			(425,059)		(82,470)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			1,113,776		1,196,246
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			688,717		1,113,776

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

The Reader Organisation is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is The Mansion House, Calderstones Park, Liverpool, Merseyside, L18 3JB.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "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)" (effective 1 January 2019). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

The charitable company is a qualifying entity for the purposes of FRS 102, being a member of a group where the parent of that group prepares publicly available consolidated financial statements, including this company, which are intended to give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the group. The charitable company has therefore taken advantage of exemptions from the following disclosure requirements for parent company information presented within the consolidated financial statements:

- Section 7 'Statement of Cash Flows': Presentation of a statement of cash flow and related notes and disclosures;
- Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instrument Issues': Carrying amounts, interest income/expense and net gains/losses for each category of financial instrument; basis of determining fair values; details of collateral, loan defaults or breaches, details of hedges, hedging fair value changes recognised in profit or loss and in other comprehensive income ;
- Section 33 'Related Party Disclosures': Compensation for key management personnel.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the accounts.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Voluntary income include donations which are accounted for as received by the charity.

These items are recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting years; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional settlement.

Investment income relates to bank interest receivable.

Income from charitable activities includes income received under contract or where entitlement to grant funding is subject to specific performance conditions and is recognised as earned as the related goods or services are provided. Grant income included within this category provides funding to advance the education of the public in reading and the appreciation of literature.

Grants received in advance of the period in which the funder requires the expenditure to be applied will be reflected in deferred income within the balance sheet.

Income from the trading subsidiary turnover represents amounts received and receivable for goods supplied (excluding value added tax and voluntary gratuities left by customers for the benefit of employees) and is recognised at the point of sale.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred.

Charitable activities expenditure includes both direct costs and support costs relating to these activities.

Governance costs include those incurred in the governance of the charity and its assets and are primarily associated with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Leasehold improvements	Over a period of 10 years. Mansion house refurbishment over 50 years
Fixtures and fittings	Over a period of 3 years. Leasehold fit out over 10 years
Computers	Over a period of 3 years

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

All assets costing more than £1,500 are capitalised at cost.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items.

Net realisable value is the estimated selling price less all estimated costs of completion and costs to be incurred in marketing, selling and distribution.

1.9 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.10 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.11 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.12 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

1.13 Consolidation

The group financial statements consolidate the financial statements of The Reader Organisation and its subsidiary Calderstones Mansion House CIC, drawn up to 31 March 2025. The results of the subsidiary are consolidated for the period from the date on which control passed.

Business combinations are accounted for under the purchase method. Where necessary, adjustments are made to the financial statements of the subsidiary to bring the accounting policies used into line with those used by the parent charitable company. All intra-group transactions, balances, income and expenses are eliminated on consolidation.

Advantage is being taken of Section 408 of the Companies Act 2006 not to present the Parent Company's Statement of Financial Activities including Income and Expenditure Account.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity'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 in 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 READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Donations and gifts	62,068	-	62,068	30,945	8,646	39,591
Grants	1,303,220	-	1,303,220	1,178,220	-	1,178,220
	<u>1,365,288</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,365,288</u>	<u>1,209,165</u>	<u>8,646</u>	<u>1,217,811</u>
Grants						
Arts Council England						
National Portfolio Office	178,220	-	178,220	178,220	-	178,220
Peoples Postcode Lottery	1,125,000	-	1,125,000	1,000,000	-	1,000,000
	<u>1,303,220</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,303,220</u>	<u>1,178,220</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,178,220</u>

4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Shared Reading						
Commissions & Training	885,881	-	885,881	816,883	-	816,883
Grants	-	253,397	253,397	-	381,170	381,170
Events income	60,613	-	60,613	28,175	-	28,175
Storybarn						
Events income	117,300	-	117,300	102,073	-	102,073
	<u>1,063,794</u>	<u>253,397</u>	<u>1,317,191</u>	<u>947,131</u>	<u>381,170</u>	<u>1,328,301</u>

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

4 Income from charitable activities (Continued)

Grants related to charitable activities

	Shared reading 2025 £	Shared reading 2024 £
The Garfield Weston Foundation	50,000	45,833
Knowsley CCG	18,355	18,355
National Lottery Community Fund	38,330	25,000
National Lottery Heritage Fund		103,460
Reading Retreat	-	4,895
Swire Charitable Trust	25,831	
Cheshire West & Cheshire UK Shared Prosperity Fund	11,913	15,966
The Rayne Foundation	13,125	17,500
Steve Morgan Foundation and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport	-	6,666
Segelman Trust	36,200	-
Somerset County Council	-	24,371
Masonic Charitable Foundation	19,529	11,199
Unwin Charitable Trust	-	60,000
WBC - Wirral Borough of Culture	15,000	-
Other	25,114	47,925
	<u>253,397</u>	<u>381,170</u>

5 Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Cafe, ice-cream parlour and other income	<u>1,897,650</u>	<u>1,800,694</u>

6 Income from investments

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Interest receivable	<u>6,518</u>	<u>7,410</u>

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

7 Other income

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Net gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets	-	680

8 Expenditure on raising funds

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Trading costs		
Operating costs	802,928	800,135
Other staff costs	2,215	1,323
Staff costs	992,418	949,105
	<u>1,797,561</u>	<u>1,750,563</u>

9 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Shared reading 2025 £	Storybarn 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Shared Reading 2024 £	Storybarn 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Direct costs						
Staff costs	1,626,083	114,522	1,740,605	1,834,393	110,750	1,945,143
Depreciation and impairment	-	44,528	44,528	-	44,527	44,527
Other expenditure	367,084	18,111	385,195	375,505	22,791	398,296
	<u>1,993,167</u>	<u>177,161</u>	<u>2,170,328</u>	<u>2,209,898</u>	<u>178,068</u>	<u>2,387,966</u>
Share of support and governance costs (see note 10)						
Support	813,728	80,478	894,206	759,416	66,036	825,452
Governance	19,873	1,101	20,974	17,251	902	18,153
	<u>2,826,768</u>	<u>258,740</u>	<u>3,085,508</u>	<u>2,986,565</u>	<u>245,006</u>	<u>3,231,571</u>
Analysis by fund						
Unrestricted funds	2,573,371	258,740	2,832,111	2,596,749	245,006	2,841,755
Restricted funds	253,397	-	253,397	389,816	-	389,816
	<u>2,826,768</u>	<u>258,740</u>	<u>3,085,508</u>	<u>2,986,565</u>	<u>245,006</u>	<u>3,231,571</u>

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

10 Support costs allocated to activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Staff costs	388,969	345,447
Depreciation	229,673	247,467
Other costs	275,564	232,538
Governance costs	20,974	18,153
	<u>915,180</u>	<u>843,605</u>
Analysed between:		
Shared Reading	833,601	776,667
Storybarn	81,579	66,938
	<u>915,180</u>	<u>843,605</u>

11 Trustees

None of the trustees received any remuneration during either the current or previous year, and trustees were reimbursed £233 for travelling expenses (2024: £465).

12 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
Shared Reading	86	97
Support Services	11	10
Storybarn	13	13
Calderstones Mansion House CIC	65	61
	<u>175</u>	<u>181</u>

Employment costs

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	2,838,637	2,910,578
Social security costs	169,772	194,076
Other pension costs	113,583	135,041
	<u>3,121,992</u>	<u>3,239,695</u>

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

12 Employees

(Continued)

Retirement benefit schemes

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

The charge to the statement of financial activities in respect of defined contribution schemes was £113,584 (2024: £135,041).

There were outstanding contributions in respect of defined contribution schemes at 31 March 2025 of £14,483 (2024 18,596).

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

Remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Aggregate compensation	291,194	381,570

13 Calderstones Mansion House CIC

A summary of the results of the subsidiary is shown below:

	2025 £	2024 £
Income	1,852,507	1,732,339
Expenditure	(1,806,302)	(1,755,148)
	46,205	(22,809)

Aggregate assets and liabilities

Current assets	410,651	268,178
Current liabilities	(410,651)	(314,382)
	-	(46,204)

14 Taxation

The charity is exempt from taxation on its activities because all its income is applied for charitable purposes.

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

15 Tangible fixed assets - Group and Company

	Leasehold improvements £	Fixtures and fittings £	Computers £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 April 2024	4,915,912	1,331,216	31,476	6,278,604
Additions	-	19,628	2,387	22,015
At 31 March 2025	4,915,912	1,350,844	33,863	6,300,619
Depreciation and impairment				
At 1 April 2024	779,237	677,130	27,168	1,483,535
Depreciation charged in the year	134,143	137,402	2,657	274,202
At 31 March 2025	913,380	814,532	29,825	1,757,737
Carrying amount				
At 31 March 2025	4,002,532	536,312	4,038	4,542,882
At 31 March 2024	4,136,675	654,084	4,308	4,795,067

16 Fixed asset investments - Group undertakings

The charity owns the whole of the issued share capital of the following subsidiary undertaking which is registered in England and has the same registered office as the charity.

<u>Subsidiary</u>	<u>Principal activity</u>
Calderstones Mansion House CIC	Restaurants and cafes

The carrying value of the investment in the financial statements is £1 (2024:£1).

17 Stocks - Group

	2025 £	2024 £
Finished goods and goods for resale	28,265	29,085

18 Debtors - Group

	2025 £	2024 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	102,368	117,121
Other debtors	73,942	53,378
Prepayments and accrued income	121,041	122,046
	297,351	292,545

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

19 Debtors - Charity

	2025 £	2024 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	33,963	44,432
Amounts owed by subsidiary undertakings	115,265	73,206
Other debtors	54,670	34,106
Prepayments and accrued income	120,803	114,949
	<u>324,701</u>	<u>266,693</u>

20 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year - Group

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Other taxation and social security		93,128	100,321
Deferred income	22	367,747	735,801
Trade creditors		103,366	101,990
Other creditors		18,988	23,004
Accruals		38,958	37,907
		<u>622,187</u>	<u>999,023</u>

21 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year - Charity

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Other taxation and social security		34,696	50,305
Deferred income	23	185,278	599,730
Trade creditors		65,381	68,423
Other creditors		16,866	20,545
Accruals		24,581	18,844
		<u>326,802</u>	<u>757,847</u>

22 Deferred income - Group

	2025 £	2024 £
Other deferred income	<u>367,747</u>	<u>735,801</u>

Deferred income is included in the financial statements as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Deferred income is included within:		
Current liabilities	<u>367,747</u>	<u>735,801</u>

Movements in the year:

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

22	Deferred income - Group	(Continued)	
	Deferred income at 1 April 2024	735,801	561,809
	Released from previous periods	1,502,728	2,276,187
	Resources deferred in the year	(1,870,782)	(2,102,195)
		<u>367,747</u>	<u>735,801</u>
	Deferred income at 31 March 2025	<u>367,747</u>	<u>735,801</u>

23	Deferred income - Charity	2025 £	2024 £
	Other deferred income	<u>185,278</u>	<u>599,730</u>

Deferred income is included in the financial statements as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Deferred income is included within:		
Current liabilities	<u>185,278</u>	<u>599,730</u>
Movements in the year:		
Deferred income at 1 April 2024	599,730	433,334
Released from previous periods	1,178,023	2,008,193
Resources deferred in the year	(1,592,475)	(1,841,797)
Deferred income at 31 March 2025	<u>185,278</u>	<u>599,730</u>

24	Retirement benefit schemes	2025 £	2024 £
	Defined contribution schemes		
	Charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution schemes	<u>113,583</u>	<u>135,041</u>

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

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

25 Restricted funds - Group & Charity

The restricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

	At 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2025 £
Shared Reading	-	253,397	(253,397)	-	-
Calderstones Mansion House	4,619,362	-	-	(205,660)	4,413,702
	<u>4,619,362</u>	<u>253,397</u>	<u>(253,397)</u>	<u>(205,660)</u>	<u>4,413,702</u>
Previous year:	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2024 £
Shared Reading	-	389,816	(389,816)	-	-
Calderstones Mansion House	4,825,022	-	-	(205,660)	4,619,362
	<u>4,825,022</u>	<u>389,816</u>	<u>(389,816)</u>	<u>(205,660)</u>	<u>4,619,362</u>

Shared Reading

Shared Reading includes our core work of delivering shared reading groups. This is funded through grants and commissions (please refer to notes 3 and 4 for further information).

Calderstones Mansion House

The Calderstones Mansion House is the charities headquarters based at our site within Calderstones Park. Grants have been received from Heritage Lottery, Liverpool City Council, Tudor Trust and other funders to refurbish the building. The money for this project has been split between restricted funds and a designated unrestricted fund depending on the nature of the income received. Following the completion of the building works and satisfaction of the restrictions within the grants, the restricted fund will be transferred to the designated unrestricted fund where it will be reduced by an associated depreciation charge each year.

26 Unrestricted funds - Group

The unrestricted funds of the charity also include the following designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes:

	At 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2025 £
General unrestricted	355,005	4,333,250	(4,585,145)	203,115	306,225
Storybarn Building	84,608	-	(44,527)	-	40,081
Calderstones Mansion House	85,583	-	-	-	85,583
Calderstones Mansion House sinking fund	86,892	-	-	2,545	89,437
	<u>612,088</u>	<u>4,333,250</u>	<u>(4,629,672)</u>	<u>205,660</u>	<u>521,326</u>

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

26 Unrestricted funds - Group

(Continued)

Previous year:	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2024 £
General unrestricted	739,528	3,965,080	(4,531,783)	182,180	355,005
Storybarn Building	129,135	-	(44,527)	-	84,608
Calderstones Mansion House	85,583	-	-	-	85,583
Grant funded fixtures	16,008	-	(16,008)	-	-
Calderstones Mansion House sinking fund	63,412	-	-	23,480	86,892
	<u>1,033,666</u>	<u>3,965,080</u>	<u>(4,592,318)</u>	<u>205,660</u>	<u>612,088</u>

Storybarn Building

The Storybarn represents the capital cost of the building. This fund will be reduced by the associated depreciation charge each year.

Calderstones Mansion House

The Calderstones Mansion House is the charities headquarters based at our site within Calderstones Park. Grants have been received from Heritage Lottery, Liverpool City Council, Tudor Trust and other funders to refurbish the building. The money for this project has been split between restricted funds and a designated unrestricted fund depending on the nature of the income received. Following the completion of the building works and satisfaction of the restrictions within the grants, the restricted fund will be transferred to the designated unrestricted fund where it will be reduced by an associated depreciation charge each year.

Grant Funded Fixtures

Included in the grants received for the refurbishment of Calderstones Mansion House was an element spent on fixtures and fittings. These were fully depreciated in the year to 31 March 2024.

Calderstones Mansion House sinking fund

The sinking fund is set up to provide a provision for future major repairs to Calderstones Mansion House. The agreed amount to be transferred each year from the general reserves is in the region of £21,000.

27 Unrestricted funds - Charity

The unrestricted funds of the charity also include the following designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes:

	At 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2025 £
General unrestricted	401,211	2,480,741	(2,778,842)	203,115	306,225
Storybarn Building	84,608	-	(44,527)	-	40,081
Calderstones Mansion House	85,583	-	-	-	85,583
Calderstones Mansion House sinking fund	86,892	-	-	2,545	89,437
	<u>658,294</u>	<u>2,480,741</u>	<u>(2,823,369)</u>	<u>205,660</u>	<u>521,326</u>

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

27 Unrestricted funds - Charity

(Continued)

Previous year:	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2024 £
General unrestricted	762,924	2,230,451	(2,774,344)	182,180	401,211
Storybarn Building	129,135	-	(44,527)	-	84,608
Calderstones Mansion House	85,583	-	-	-	85,583
Grant funded fixtures	16,008	-	(16,008)	-	-
Calderstones Mansion House sinking fund	63,412	-	-	23,480	86,892
	<u>1,057,062</u>	<u>2,230,451</u>	<u>(2,834,879)</u>	<u>205,660</u>	<u>658,294</u>

Storybarn Building

The Storybarn represents the capital cost of the building. This fund will be reduced by the associated depreciation charge each year.

Calderstones Mansion House

The Calderstones Mansion House is the charities headquarters based at our site within Calderstones Park. Grants have been received from Heritage Lottery, Liverpool City Council, Tudor Trust and other funders to refurbish the building. The money for this project has been split between restricted funds and a designated unrestricted fund depending on the nature of the income received. Following the completion of the building works and satisfaction of the restrictions within the grants, the restricted fund will be transferred to the designated unrestricted fund where it will be reduced by an associated depreciation charge each year.

Grant Funded Fixtures

Included in the grants received for the refurbishment of Calderstones Mansion House was an element spent on fixtures and fittings. These were fully depreciated in the year to 31 March 2024.

Calderstones Mansion House sinking fund

The sinking fund is set up to provide a provision for future major repairs to Calderstones Mansion House. The agreed amount to be transferred each year from the general reserves is in the region of £21,000.

28 Analysis of net assets between funds - Group

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
At 31 March 2025:			
Tangible assets	129,180	4,413,702	4,542,882
Current assets/(liabilities)	392,146	-	392,146
	<u>521,326</u>	<u>4,413,702</u>	<u>4,935,028</u>

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

28 Analysis of net assets between funds - Group

(Continued)

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
At 31 March 2024:			
Tangible assets	175,705	4,619,362	4,795,067
Current assets/(liabilities)	436,383	-	436,383
	<u>612,088</u>	<u>4,619,362</u>	<u>5,231,450</u>

29 Analysis of net assets between funds - Charity

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
At 31 March 2025:			
Tangible assets	175,385	4,413,702	4,542,882
Investments	1	-	1
Current assets/(liabilities)	345,940	-	392,145
	<u>521,326</u>	<u>4,413,702</u>	<u>4,935,028</u>

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
At 31 March 2024:			
Tangible assets	175,705	4,619,362	4,795,067
Investments	1	-	1
Current assets/(liabilities)	482,588	-	482,588
	<u>658,294</u>	<u>4,619,362</u>	<u>5,277,656</u>

THE READER ORGANISATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

30 Operating lease commitments

Lessee

At the reporting end date the charity had outstanding commitments for future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases, which fall due as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Within one year	27,642	27,642
Between two and five years	110,568	110,568
In over five years	3,151,188	3,178,830
	<u>3,289,398</u>	<u>3,317,040</u>

31 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2024 - £1,600).

32 Company limited by guarantee

The charitable company is limited by guarantee and has no share capital. Every member of the charity undertakes to contribute to the assets of the charity in the event of being wound up while he or she is a member or within one year of ceasing to be a member for debts and liabilities of the charity contracted before he or she ceases to be a member, such amounts as may be required not exceeding £10.

33 Cash absorbed by operations

	2025 £	2024 £
Deficit for the year	(296,422)	(627,237)
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(6,518)	(7,410)
Gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets	-	(680)
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	274,200	291,995
Movements in working capital:		
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	820	(858)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(4,806)	34,574
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(8,782)	50,771
(Decrease)/increase in deferred income	(368,054)	173,992
Cash absorbed by operations	<u>(409,562)</u>	<u>(84,853)</u>

34 Analysis of changes in net funds

The charity had no material debt during the year.