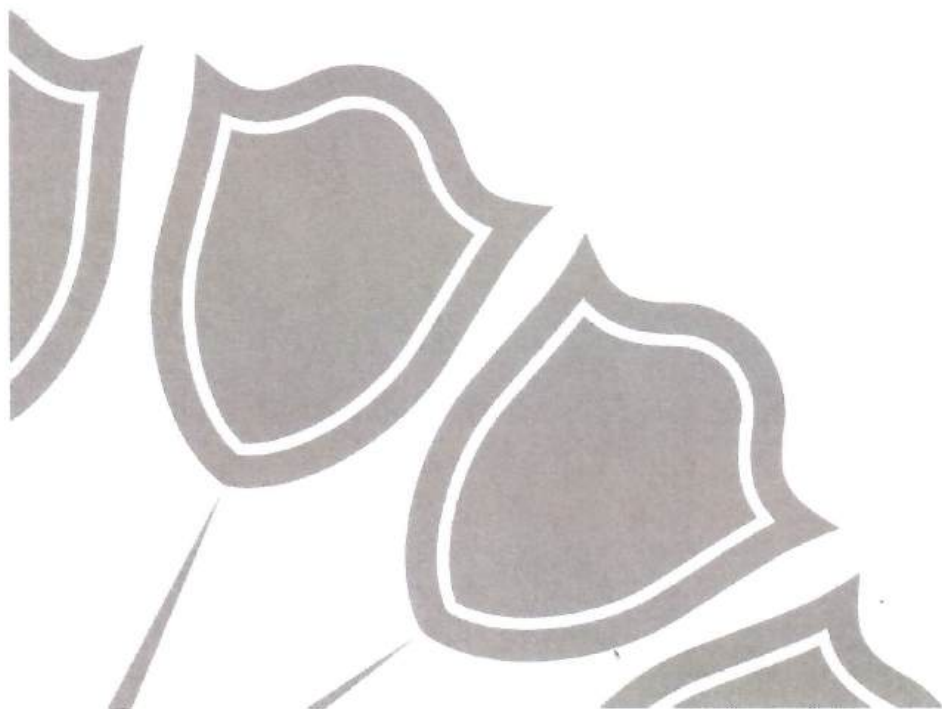




**ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2025  
OPENSTORYTELLERS LIMITED  
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**COMPANY NUMBER 06829975  
CHARITY NUMBER 1130148**





### Our Objectives

The Trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. The structure and content of this report is designed to reflect the requirement to explain how the charity has operated within that guidance.

### The objects of the charity are

**To advance the education for the public benefit and preserve and protect the health of persons who have learning and communication disabilities, their families and carers by providing opportunities to develop stories and storytelling.**

**To advance the education of the public in the knowledge of the art, practice and value of oral storytelling and in knowledge of the form and content of the oral tradition of people and cultures.**



## Message from the Chair



It is a pleasure to write my first message to you as the new Chair of the Trustees. And I must start by paying tribute to Sarah Talbot-Williams, who stepped down in January of this year – for much of this reporting period she was at the helm!

Sarah's departure after 4 years amazing service rounded off a year of change with our board of trustees. We bade a deeply fond farewell to Jane Flood who has long been an important fellow storyteller carrying the torch for this artform amongst other board members for many years. Claire Edgar and Jackie Lucas also stepped down as their careers took impressive upturns with Jackie making a welcome return to the workplace and Claire taking up a senior position at Surrey council – our loss is their gain. I am delighted to introduce Emma Mee who we welcomed in January and will be supporting the leadership team with her extensive experience of project management and delivery for the National Trust. We are indebted to existing trustees; Ben Banks for stepping into the treasurer role and Elanor Steele for taking on a safeguarding lead. Trustees are the unsung heroes of all charities and we are grateful for their time and expertise so freely given.

You will see from the image I've chosen for this message that our National Lottery Heritage Fund funded project, Through the Front Door, has been a key focus this year. Fellow Fromies will recognise the iconic Memorial Theatre yellow posters that we see around our town. It was a touching moment when artists arrived at the theatre for rehearsals and saw this. More than a few audible gulps were heard! This was the most ambitious project we have ever delivered – a show and a film researched, devised and performed across all our

companies of artists, including those who had never met until performance day. It was a scale of ambition merited by the extraordinary, forgotten stories we uncovered.

Despite the sheer amount of work that went into this project – our year has also been full of other accomplishments as well as a tentative venture into a whole new area of work. It was a year where we challenged ourselves to be better as an organization – innovating our inclusive governance processes, building on inclusive employment and co-creating our new 5-year strategy alongside all our artists and other stakeholders.

As ever, I send a huge vote of thanks to our funders and donors who have supported us to deliver these outstanding projects and continue to partner with us to deliver our vision of a world where every voice is heard. In particular, I want to acknowledge and thank The Edward Gostling Foundation for choosing us as a legacy partner earlier this year. We are thrilled to have their continued support.

It has been an exciting time to jump aboard and I look forward to what the coming years will hold.



Sally Davenport



## Table of Contents

Message from the Chair .....	3
Arts and Expression .....	6
Through the Front Door – research, devising and production.....	6
South West Learning disability theatre network .....	10
Frome Festival .....	10
Pigeon Productions .....	11
Vaccines films – your choice: .....	11
Supported Internship film: .....	11
Other Pigeon projects: .....	11
An all round Hullabaloo – Green and Healthy Frome .....	12
OST & Me .....	17
Self-Advocacy and Camerados: .....	20
Hugo & Co.....	22
Where are we now? .....	22
What next? .....	22
Directors and Trustees .....	22
Structure, Governance and Management .....	23
Financial Review .....	23
Reserves Policy and Risk Management .....	24
Transactions and Financial Position .....	24
Trustees' responsibilities in relation to financial statements .....	24

## Arts and Expression

Creative arts and expression are the 'engine room' of what happens at OpenStoryTellers. Each week, 4 companies of artists (about 30 people each week) and a Wellbeing company (about 8 people) come together to create and to connect artistically at our base in Frome.

Here are some words and pictures to give you a flavour of that work in 2024-2025.

### Through the Front Door – research, devising and production



The purpose of this major National Lottery Heritage Fund funded project was to raise awareness of people with learning disabilities in the local area, to preserve the heritage of stories and places belonging to that community, and promote inclusion and diversity. We shared hidden histories and stories were created and told **about** people with a learning disability **by** people with a learning disability.

The creative phase was underpinned by a research board created by our small inclusive research team that could be accessed by all everyone. It included tactile and visual resources to help bring the fragments of history to life.

27 artists explored common themes of language, community and place, investigating the relationship between the past and the present and how understanding the past can help us change attitudes today.

We displayed the information we had gathered following the timeline of learning disability history and then looked at the national level at laws and care acts that influenced people's





lives, and at a local level what was happening in our chosen areas of Bristol, Wells, Taunton and Frome.

We looked at every aspect of the research from the places we found that people with learning disabilities lived in, the clothes they wore, the food they ate and the laws which governed their lives during the period.

The next phase was taking this research and working inclusively and creatively with our groups

to devise a theatre performance with original score and a film. There were 30 devisers and 27 cast members.



Artists worked with our musical director to create an original body of work inspired by the research. This has now been recorded to provide a legacy of their work together. Each artist now has a cd with all the music created and devised by themselves for the performance and original artwork. Each song title was taken from the 'record of entertainments' - books which we found in the SouthWest Heritage archives.



The artists worked with costumer Dulcie Best on historically accurate clothing, which included hand-crocheted collars lovingly made by our community volunteers, a nod to the collars worn by the woman in the asylums who were allowed that small bit of personalisation into their uniform.

The artists also collaborated on props, stage sets, programmes and posters as activity and rehearsals ramped up ahead of our theatre performance.

### **Performance and Sharing**

In January 2025 the results of everyone's hard work came together in a one night only performance at the Frome Memorial Theatre for an audience of 305 people. 26 staff, volunteers and supporters of OpenStoryTellers were working on the night in addition to theatre staff to ensure, the wellbeing and access needs of our cast were met. The cast included 27 people with learning disabilities who delivered a truly original and inspirational performance.

*"Entertaining, informative, powerful, creative, inspiring, ambitious and really impressive."*  
Audience feedback.

The show was followed by a 'meet the cast' event and an exhibition of the research that inspired the performance. We were also able to showcase some of our amazing project partners at the event including Bath Spa University's 'We are the People' project and the wonderful work of the Mendip Cemetery Volunteers.

We worked with Suited and Booted Originals (filmmakers) to capture the parts of the live show that would be used in our film. We then shot additional material on location in the buildings and places we had researched. This beautiful, unique piece of art is now available for everyone to view and has been submitted to the Oska Bright film festival. Click on the picture below to watch the film:



<https://vimeo.com/1095657776>

We also worked with local friend and filmmaker, Julian Hight, to document the behind-the-scenes process of our research and creative phase of the project. This accessible film is an important part of the digital journal we have created throughout the project which includes podcasts, blogs, photos and film. Click on the picture below to watch the film:



<https://vimeo.com/1060814236>

We have forged new and ongoing working relationships, throughout this project, including:





- Frome Museum
- Bath Spa university
- Mendip Hospital cemetery volunteers
- Wells and Mendip Museum
- Frome Memorial theatre

... all new partnerships which are already bringing richness and new ideas. Special thanks to the team of volunteers at the Memorial Theatre who responded with energy and creativity as artists grappled with the newness of stage lights and a less than accessible old beautiful building, not to mention a surprisingly steep rake on the stage which tested the strength of wheelchair brakes! The generosity of their time and their passion for making our show work was a testament to their commitment to the

power of theatre made by and for the community.

Our local MP, Anna Sabine came to see the show and took the time to write to us. In her letter she said:

**"I am so glad I was able to see the performance, to find out about what you all think about the history of how we treat people with mental illness or learning disabilities. It gave me a lot to think about."**



### **After the show...**

In early February we celebrated with each other. Each day, artists talked about the show and shared their experiences through conversation, voice recordings, on-camera interviews, artwork and movement. We were even sent an Oscar(!) from the custodians of Mendip Hospital Cemetery. Every artist presented and received the Oscar naming and valuing what they saw in each other.

Artistically, *Through The Front Door* elevated OpenStoryTellers to a new established "basecamp" from which future work can be created at a variety of scales.

New understandings and vocabulary entered our world. Having had lived and vivid experiences of chorus work, devising, ensemble, these practices have become even more readily available in people's repertoires.

After a period of reflection (which would be picked up again in March) we continued to create day to day work. Artists have been creating original work – individually and collaboratively - which has seen fruition daily:

- We have explored such themes from outer space to the longing for the forest from the finding of fossils
- An original devised piece on the subject of story itself called Psamathe (a goddess of stories invented by the group).
- We play music together and continue to explore improvisation (with one artist designing and leading two workshops on spontaneity).
- On the 27<sup>th</sup> March Joe and Simon attended an event at Frome Town Hall by invitation from Anna Sabine and hosted by her team. This was a round table meeting with other local arts organisations and the Arts Council officer for the South West.

### South-West Learning Disability Theatre Network

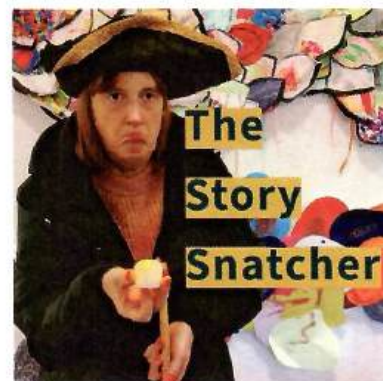
In March, Simon, Alex, Meghan and Corrie met 5 other southwest theatre / creative organisations and artists at an event at the Watershed. It was convened by Blue Apple (Winchester) on behalf of Arts Council England to explore whether working together more would be a good idea. Other groups were:

- Firebird (Bristol)
- TwoCan (Cheltenham)
- Blue Apple (Winchester)
- Shallal (Cornwall)
- Reach Inclusive Arts (Swindon)

It is very early days but it was clear immediately that artists and performers are very keen to meet up more often and share work with each other. Organisationally, we are working out the best way forward and we have enthusiastically agreed to stay part of this collaboration while we all work that out.

### Frome Festival

We continued our new tradition of premiering a new devised piece, performed at our base at RISE. This year we showed The Story Snatchers and welcomed over 40 people to watch these performances.





## Pigeon Productions

Pigeon productions is the social enterprise wing of our organisation. We take on commissions from external clients which in turn allow us to provide jobs for any artist who comes to OpenStoryTellers. We started Pigeon productions to help raise money for OpenStoryTellers, but over the years this has changed. Pigeon productions is now an important way we tackle social inequalities facing people with a learning disability. This has clearest impact in the area of employment with 8 artists working as creative consultants, 1 who chooses to volunteer as a creative consultant, and 1 freelance artist – Robin Meader. But the topics we work on also address inequality in health, employment and other areas. Here's a selection of our work from this year.

**Vaccines films – your choice:** A commission from Somerset NHS for films to help people decide about vaccines. Click on the picture to play one of the films:



**Supported Internship film:** Pigeon consultants worked with Devon Council to create a film promoting supported internships. Click on the picture to play the film:



## Other Pigeon projects:

**Southampton University:** We ran consultancy sessions for the university on the topic of Artificial Intelligence and its impact on easy read materials.

**A2I:** We continue to support A2I by consulting and checking their easy read materials.

**Go Easy Read:** Our partnership with Katy Brickly at Go Easy Read continued this year with a range of projects. 2 of these projects required some particularly careful thought as the topics covered serious safeguarding issues. This raised some important ethical issues and our work on separate projects with Bath Spa Uni helped us to navigate this, with the outcome that each consultant had from a wellbeing session run by Becky Abiyah, our extraordinary wellbeing coordinator.

**Hate and Mate Crime:** Following Pigeon's films from last year, we have run 4 workshops using the films to raise awareness and answer questions in colleges and gateway clubs, Frome Police station and other learning disability services.

**Frome Town Council:** We are supporting them with a small piece of work to help explain their new engagement strategy. This was part of a larger, really useful conversation where the engagement lead expressed real interest in working with us an engagement experts for the town. We will keep developing this working relationship.

### **An all-round Hullabaloo – Green and Healthy Frome**

*A "Hullabaloo" – a noise or fuss made by people who are angry or excited about something.*



Sometimes our Pigeon work allows for larger scale artistic projects across OpenStoryTellers. In collaboration with Green & Healthy Frome, we bought together four local creative practitioners to work alongside our collective of talented artists with learning disabilities, to explore how the changing environment impacts on their world.

In November 2024, we took over the Black Swan Gallery in Frome for an exhibition telling the story our community alongside the anxiety and anger evoked by waste and global warming. Over 500 people visited the exhibition.

There were 5 parts to the project, each led by an external local artist.



**We Return to Earth - Becky Abhaya with Elani, Hannah, Fiona, Andrew & Paula** We shared how being in nature makes us feel and explored the cycles of life; birth, life, aging, decaying, death and again life. We created art at Heaven's Gate, Welshmill River Walk and in OpenStoryTellers over the following months, using both plants and waste rubbish and recording how all that we created slowly returned to the earth.

We emphasised the importance of our connection to nature. We offer a gentle reminder of the impact that microplastics are having.



**The Wool Influencers - Jade Ogden with Peter, Stuart, Lucy, Megan, Ellie, Jacob, Mark, Lauren & Paul** We looked at locally grown fibres and how we could use them for fashion. We explored the issues around fast fashion and plastic based clothing and how we could make something different and good for the planet. Wool fleece is playful and it inspires creativity because of its shape and the way it feels. We talked about the story of the Emperor's New Clothes and thought about how they could become 'influencers' in their local community by making locally grown, biodegradable accessories.



**Joyful Feast - Mel Day with Charlotte, Sarah, Alice, Brandon, Dan, Clemma, Fiona, Jacob, Ellie, Robin & Tim**

The making of Joyful Feast certainly made us happy. Food brings people together, it gives us comfort when we are sad and weary. We show we care by making food, giving to strangers and loved ones alike. While we made the food for our joyful feast we shared our happy food memories, everyone had a story. Some came out almost as verse, ready to pass on to you.





**Journeys Through Time and Climate - Howard Vause with Tim, Clemma, Robin & Charlotte** We explored how the everyday can become extraordinary when seen through the lens of nature, climate, and time. What might seem like a routine bus trip becomes something far more—an exploration of how climate change will impact future travel, and how nature shapes their experience through the changing seasons. Stories were woven into every ride, where the mundane is magical, where the journey is more than just a destination





**The Story of a Stone Thrown in the River – OpenStorytellers' creative facilitators and artists: Kat, Dora, Kate, Dan, Hayley, Ellie, Stuart, Ruth, Robert, William, M, A, C** This piece is a creative response to the river Frome; a place that we often frequent, appreciating the flow and the ripples created as we go. We explored our relationship with the river from blue skies and whistling birds to deep below where the bubbles burst. We are inviting you to listen and see the water from a new perspective.





## OST & Me

The National Lottery Community Fund is supporting us to take a deep dive into our own practice and governance to explore what it truly means to be a 'user-led' organisation where everyone has a voice when not all of us use words to speak.

What we did:

- Inclusive team and board away day
- Created a new accessible feedback tool called a Thoughts board and held 4 feedback sessions at team meetings
- New Articles of association embedding the views of artists into Trustee decision making
- 4 new Artist Advocate roles - they will be each company's link person with a named trustee - 4 meetings have already happened
- New inclusive strategy (vision, mission, values and strategic outcomes)
- The new strategy has been the subject of a creative audit led by Terrestrial CIC
- New theory of change, impact indicators and measures
- Inclusive employment resources shared with 3 national learning disability organisations
- Inclusive governance learning shared with 4 other learning disability arts organisations

How we changed what we do:

- Our 2 supported interns are now permanent positions
- People with a learning disability are now a core part of team meetings, away days and staff messaging
- We work across all of Somerset (the OurSelf Advocacy project), expanding our potential impact to the more than 3000 people who have a learning disability.
- We are a key partner with Somerset Council in re-establishing their partnership boards
- A fully inclusive creative survey about how well our building works for people - leading to new refurbishment plans and design
- A new, updated website with a strong focus on active allyship
- Trustees building relationships with artists and staff to support their decision making and bringing us closer to a 'user-led' ideal.

How it has changed how we will work in the future

- New 5 year plan, visionary, co-produced, evaluated and bold!
- Framework for inclusive governance that embeds voices of OST learning disabled artists at every level of the organisation - a truly inclusive form of a 'user led' organisation.
- A board of trustees more embedded into day-to-day business and the lives and voices of LD artists.

See our website and our learning for fuller expression of our commitment to active allyship and why that is such a crucial part of being as 'user-led' as we can be.

[Donate](#)[Home](#) [About](#) [Pigeon Productions](#) [Video](#) [Take Part](#) [Gallery](#) [News](#) [Support Us](#) [Contact](#)[For Help Explaining This Page Watch Our Explainer Video](#)[Watch Now](#)

The team strategy day highlighted impact on inclusive governance of having employees with a learning disability. Whilst employment will not be for everyone, it is another essential strand in ensuring that we elevate people's voices at all levels of decision making.

As this project nears its end, we found a truly unique and creative way to end exactly where we began - with the views of our artists. We partnered with local community arts organisation, Terrestrial and they had a residency with us for 4 weeks. Here is an excerpt of their report:

*Terrestrial artists spent time with Open Storytellers over the course of four weeks in Spring 2025. We each visited on a different day of the week so that between us we could collaborate with all the current regular Open Storytellers artists.*

*Our approach was rooted in being 'active listeners and observers'. The goal was to discover and explore from within the groups of Open Storytellers artists, rather than sitting outside the activities. So we didn't bring any pre-determined questions or provocations to the group – we simply joined in as fellow artists with the day-to-day creative work.*

*Over the course of our time working with Open Storytellers, each Terrestrial artist became involved in supporting a distinct small creative project – these emerged organically from conversations and explorations amongst the groups.*





- Still from Thursday group's film, which can be seen at OST

At several points during the residency, Terrestrial artists gathered to reflect on our experiences – and we were in regular communication with the Open Storytellers staff team about the best ways to support the groups. We were fortunate that two public Open Storytellers events also took place within this period: a screening of OST regular Robin Meader's latest professionally produced artist film, and the premiere of 'Through the Front Door' (the film version of OST's major theatre production from earlier this year). Attending these events allowed us to consider the wider impact of the organisation's work.

...

Open Storytellers Artists evidently feel deeply connected to the organisation. Every conversation we witnessed was threaded with references to previous projects, memories of fellow artists past and present, experiences shared as a group.

While they are united as Open Storytellers and sometimes come together for specific projects – such as their recent large-scale theatre piece 'Through the Front Door' – a different collection of artists attends each day of the week. Some people have been involved for many years and contribute greatly as artistic elders; others are relatively new to OST.



- 'Baby Dragons', an audio adventure, is available to listen to at Open Storytellers.

*Within each group there are hugely varied artistic interests: some people love noisy group work – big dances, acting and singing – while others prefer gentler solitary tasks such as research and crafts. There are also very different communication styles, physical needs and sensitivities amongst the groups. We all noticed how readily the artists made space for one another – listening carefully, adjusting their activities to include anyone who wanted to join.*

*OpenStorytellers Staff are incredibly skilful at combining bold creative provocations with flexibility and care. Time and again through our time with OST, Terrestrial's artists marvelled at the myriad levels of communication at play in the room and the Lead Creative Facilitators' ability to stay in the loop with all of them. In any given moment, a staff member might be addressing the group, giving space to an individual who needs to interrupt, and simultaneously gesturing to a colleague. This allows for each artist's interests and needs to be met while the group remains in a creative flow.*

All this, and more in their report, assures us that our new strategy and purpose reflects the priorities of the artists who come here – whether those artists use words to speak or not. By approaching this final phase in a creative, non-linear way, we have put out learning into practice about how to approach our whole community in an equal and engaging way.

### **Self-Advocacy and Camerados:**

The project's purpose is to research and reinvigorate self-advocacy in Somerset. Since July 2024 we have been exploring, networking and learning about what is already happening, where we have gaps and how it works in other parts of the country.

Somerset Community Foundation funded this project. Click on this link to find out more.  
<https://vimeo.com/1072180961>





We want to make sure people can speak up **but** we also want to make sure they are heard. We have plans to work with the 'audiences' in Somerset too – especially the statutory bodies and providers.

So far we have mapped over 40 Somerset organisations and are now heading out on visits to encourage groups and individuals to come together and speak up together.

Good mental health and young people with learning disabilities: We also had success with a £10,000 grant from Frome Town Council. This grant is aimed towards supporting the mental health of young people with a learning disability in Frome. Clemma supported Alex with our presentation to the communities' team at the council. Our proposal includes the Camerados model of pop-up community living rooms. You can find out more about the Camerados approach by following this link and watching the wonderful short animation on their homepage. <https://camerados.org>

Ben, Joe and Ellie (and supported by Clemma) are driving both these projects forward.

## Hugo & Co

In 2023, a Frome family approached OpenStoryTellers to ask for help. They wanted to find a place like OpenStoryTellers where their son could carry on with education when he left school. We could not find a place that would be right for him. We decided to test out whether we could become an education and care provider. At the beginning of this year, the board of trustees approved a pilot project to research and develop a brand-new area of work for OpenStoryTellers.

With other families also coming to us and articulating problems with further education and support services, we think there could be a better way of providing care and support and further education. We think we could be the right people to do it.

### Where are we now?

Hugo now has a personal budget for his education and funding for his care and support. This is being managed like an individual service fund so that there is transparency and control over how the money is spent.

We are partnering with Beyond Limits in Plymouth to employ a team of 4, specifically for Hugo (support staff and team leader). Beyond Limits have huge expertise around CQC registration and are supporting the development of our service – we would be lost without their support and knowledge.

We have engaged 4 people to work as specialist tutors. All 4 have particular skills in areas that matter to Hugo (music, performance, movement, nature) and they have begun teaching on a weekly basis in various community locations.

### What next?

We plan to set up a new company called The Allyship. It will be a trading arm for OpenStoryTellers. It will need to be CQC registered – we have more research to do before we know exactly what the new company will look like. Solicitors are helping us with the legal trading agreement between OpenStoryTellers and The Allyship.

We will need to secure some social investment funding to set up our new company. We have learned that we need more infrastructure than we thought to do this properly and well for more people than Hugo.

For Hugo – we need to find more warm and welcoming places where his tutoring can happen. Hugo teaches us lots every single day. It has been a lot of new stuff all very quickly for him. We need to give him time to get used to his new reality.

## Directors and Trustees

The directors of the charitable company ("the charity") are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees. The



trustees who served during the period and up to the date the accounts were approved are as follows:

Sally Davenport (joined June 20<sup>th</sup> 2024, elected chair from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2025)  
Benjamin Banks (Treasurer)  
Elanor Steel (Safeguarding lead)  
Emma Mee (joined January 27<sup>th</sup> 2025)  
Sarah Talbot-Williams (Chair – stepped down 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2025)  
Jane Flood (stepped down – 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2025)  
Claire Edgar (stepped down – 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2024)  
Jackie Lucas (stepped down – 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2025)

Four trustees stepped down this year, two new trustees were appointed.

The registered office is RISE, Whittox Lane, Frome BA11 3BY.  
The bankers are HSBC plc, 24 Market Place, Frome BA11 1AJ  
The Independent Examiner is Tim Green  
The patrons are Nick Hennessey, Storyteller and Taffy Thomas MBE.  
The full name of the Charity is Openstorytellers Limited. Charity number 1130148, Company number 0682997

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The Charity was incorporated on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009 as a Company Limited by Guarantee. It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Charity registered with the Charity Commission on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

The Directors of the charitable company ("the charity") are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees. The Board meets four times a year. The three longest serving trustees retire each year but are subject to re-election.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for determining the overall policy direction of the charity, for fixing and reviewing its annual budget, and for approving annual accounts. The Charity Director is responsible for day-to-day management in accordance with determined policies.

## **Financial Review**

The Trustees are pleased to present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Reference and administrative details set out on pages 23 & 24 form part of this report. For financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

## **Reserves Policy and Risk Management**

The charity's reserves policy aims to maintain a level of free reserves that will provide a buffer against unexpected events, bridge gaps in funding and will enable the charity to respond to new opportunities. It also covers our key liabilities should the charity no longer be able to continue.

The reserve policy has been reviewed and in response to the current unpredictable economic, political and fundraising climate, the trustees have agreed a free reserves target of £72,223 which is equivalent to six months' core operating expenditure.

At the end of the reporting period, the charity held £149,184 in total funds, of which £34,447 was restricted, £54,737 was unrestricted, and £60,000 was designated as an endowment. After accounting for these, the charity's free reserves were £50,205. The Trustees are confident that the long-term financial plans generate sufficient free reserves to satisfy its reserves policy over the coming 12 months and beyond.

The Trustees have examined and addressed the financial risks to which the Charity is exposed and in association with its insurers, has mitigated those risks to the best of its ability.

## **Transactions and Financial Position**

During the year the Charity incurred total expenditure of £341,060 of which £307,237 was directly charitable.

Over the year the Charity received income of £406,762 leading to an overall surplus of £65,702. The Balance sheet shows total reserves on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 of £149,184.

## **Trustees' responsibilities in relation to financial statements**

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the Company's state of affairs at the end of the financial year and of its income and expenditure for that year. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to:


- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply these consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charitable Company and



to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

  
SALLY E DAVENPORT

**OPENSTORYTELLERS LTD**  
**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES**

I report on the accounts of the company for the 12 months ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 which are set out on pages 27 to 32

**RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER**

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to an audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to;

- Examine the accounts under Section 145 of the 2011 Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act, and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention

**BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**


My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes a consideration of any unusual issues or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements

- To keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
- To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice; Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met.

No other matter has come to my attention in accordance with my examination to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Timothy Green FCMA

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025



**OPENSTORYTELLERS LTD**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES**  
**FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDING 31st MARCH 2025**  
**(INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)**

	Notes	Unrestricted £	Endowment £	Restricted £	2025 £	2024 £
<b>INCOME &amp; ENDOWMENTS FROM;</b>						
Donations & Legacies	2 & 3	2,984	60,000	61,824	124,808	68,088
Charitable Activities	4	174,366	-	104,247	278,613	184,912
Other Trading	5	3,341	-	-	3,341	907
Investments		-	-	-	-	-
Other Income		-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL INCOME &amp; ENDOWMENTS</b>		<b>180,691</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>166,071</b>	<b>406,762</b>	<b>253,907</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON;</b>						
Raising Funds		33,823	-	-	33,823	20,196
Charitable Activities	6 & 7	158,442	-	148,795	307,237	208,576
Other Expenditure		-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>192,265</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>148,795</b>	<b>341,060</b>	<b>228,772</b>
<b>NET EXPENDITURE BEFORE TRANSFERS</b>		<b>(11,574)</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>17,276</b>	<b>65,702</b>	<b>25,135</b>
Gross Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		<b>(11,574)</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>17,276</b>	<b>65,702</b>	<b>25,135</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARDS</b>		<b>66,311</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17,171</b>	<b>83,482</b>	<b>58,347</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARDS</b>	9	<b>54,737</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>34,447</b>	<b>149,184</b>	<b>83,482</b>

All activities derive from continuing operations  
The notes on pages 29 to 32 form part of the financial statements

**OPENSTORYTELLERS LTD**  
**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT 31st MARCH 2025**

	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Tangible Assets	11		4,532		6,275
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Debtors	12	26,112		16,289	
Cash at bank and in hand		135,839		95,842	
		<u>161,951</u>		<u>112,131</u>	
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Amounts falling due within one year	13	17,299		34,924	
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>			<u>144,652</u>		<u>77,207</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>			<u>149,184</u>		<u>83,482</u>
<b>FUNDS</b>					
Unrestricted funds			54,737		66,311
Restricted funds			34,447		17,171
Endowment funds			60,000		-
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>			<u>149,184</u>		<u>83,482</u>

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies, and with the Financial Reporting Standard 102

The company has taken advantage of the exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the 12 months ended 31st March 2025

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit for the 12 months ended 31st March 2024 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for;

ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with Section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006; and

preparing Accounts which give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs at the end of the financial year and of its surplus or deficit for the year in accordance with the requirement of Section 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to accounts, so far as applicable to the company.

These accounts were approved by the trustees on 21/8/25 and signed on their behalf by:

Trustee  

The notes on pages 29 to 32 form part of these accounts



**OPENSTORYTELLERS LTD**  
**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDING 31st MARCH 2025**

**1 Accounting Policies**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and following the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities and are in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (effective January 2015 and updated by Bulletin 1 effective February 2016) and the Companies Act 2006

**a Going Concern**

The accounts have been prepared on the going concern basis. There are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue.

**b The Charity**

The Charity is a public benefit entity.

**c Income**

Income from donations, grants and subscriptions is taken to the Statement of Financial Activity on receipt unless there is a Service Level Agreement or Contract in which case it is taken into account in the period to which it relates.

**d Resources Expended**

Resources expended are accounted for on an accruals basis. Costs are allocated on the basis of usage on each project..

**e Operating Leases**

The costs of operating leases are charged as they accrue.

**f Tangible Fixed Assets**

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life;

Equipment (including IT items) 20% pa straight line

**g Funds**

Fund designations are formally approved and minuted by the Trustees. Separate accounting records are kept for restricted funds.

<b>2 Income from Donations &amp; Legacies</b>			<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
			<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Donations			2,984	3,357
Other Grants			-	500
Endowments			60,000	-
Restricted Grants			61,824	64,231
			<b>124,808</b>	<b>68,088</b>
<b>3 Analysis of Donations</b>			<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
			<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Monetary Donations			2,984	3,357
			<b>2,984</b>	<b>3,357</b>
<b>4 Income from Charitable Activities</b>	<b>Fee for Service</b>	<b>Restricted Grant</b>	<b>Total 2025</b>	<b>Total 2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Fee for Service				
Day Services	119,369	-	119,369	115,764
Pigeon Productions	36,193	1,728	37,921	19,485
Herbie & Co	18,285	9,303	27,588	-
Community Hub	6	12,211	12,217	23,413
Advocacy	-	21,768	21,768	-
Camarados	-	8,388	8,388	-
Bookclubs	450	-	450	5,102
Heritage Project	-	47,649	47,649	12,558
Wellbeing	14	3,200	3,214	8,590
Other	49	-	49	-
	<b>174,366</b>	<b>104,247</b>	<b>278,613</b>	<b>184,912</b>
<b>5 Income from Other Trading</b>			<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
			<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Room hire			120	226
Merchandise sales			-	248
Other trading			3,221	433
			<b>3,341</b>	<b>907</b>

6	Expenditure on Charitable Activities	Direct Costs £	Support Costs £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
	Day Services	120,032	25,447	145,479	125,996
	Pigeon Productions	41,798	5,106	46,904	31,561
	Herbie & Co	14,409	2,127	16,536	-
	Community Hub	18,484	3,435	21,919	28,020
	Advocacy	15,795	2,662	18,457	-
	Camarados	7,639	1,396	9,035	-
	Bookclubs	139	-	139	2,925
	Heritage Project	40,124	3,396	43,520	14,262
	Wellbeing	5,248	-	5,248	5,685
	Other	-	-	-	127
		<u>263,668</u>	<u>43,569</u>	<u>307,237</u>	<u>208,576</u>

7	Allocation of Support Costs	Staff Costs £	Office Costs £	Total 2025 £	Total 2025 £
	Day Services	15,045	10,402	25,447	22,955
	Pigeon Productions	3,019	2,087	5,106	5,864
	Herbie & Co	1,258	869	2,127	-
	Community Hub	2,031	1,404	3,435	4,624
	Advocacy	1,574	1,088	2,662	-
	Camarados	825	571	1,396	-
	Bookclubs	-	-	-	235
	Heritage Project	2,008	1,388	3,396	1,150
	Fundraising	3,875	2,679	6,554	4,099
	Wellbeing	-	-	-	77
	Other	-	-	-	-
		<u>29,635</u>	<u>20,488</u>	<u>50,123</u>	<u>39,004</u>

Staff Costs have been allocated on Actual Hours spent

Office Costs have been allocated based on specific project contributions and the remainder on Total Staff and Freelance Cost

#### 8 Trustees Remuneration & Benefits

During the year no trustee received expenses in respect of delivering courses (2024 - £0).

During the year no trustee donated services (2024 - £0)

There were no related party transactions with trustees in the year

#### 9 Independent Examination

The independent examiner was paid £800 (2024 - £800) to prepare and examine these accounts

10	Staff Costs	2025 £	2024 £
	Wages & Salaries	223,363	168,505
	Social Security Payments	9,898	5,350
	Employer Pension Contributions	4,484	2,946
		<u>237,745</u>	<u>176,801</u>

The average number of employees during the year was 27 (2024 - 17)

No employee received remuneration of over £60,000

11	Tangible Fixed Assets	Equipment £	Total £
	<b>Cost</b>		
	As at 1 March 2024	18,507	18,507
	Additions	-	-
	As at 31st March 2025	<u>18,507</u>	<u>18,507</u>
	<b>Depreciation</b>		
	As at 1 March 2024	12,232	12,232
	Charge for the period	1,743	1,743
	As at 31st March 2025	<u>13,975</u>	<u>13,975</u>
	<b>Net Book Value</b>		
	As at 1 March 2024	6,275	6,275
	As at 31st March 2025	<u>4,532</u>	<u>4,532</u>

12	Debtors	2025 £	2024 £
	Trade Debtors	22,037	10,843
	Other Debtors	2,933	2,933
	Prepayments & Accrued Income	1,142	2,513
		<u>26,112</u>	<u>16,289</u>



13	Creditors	2025 £	2024 £
	Trade Creditors	-	-
	Accruals	1,781	1,475
	PAYE/NI	2,730	922
	Other Creditors	1,138	548
	Deferred Income	11,850	31,981
		<u>17,299</u>	<u>34,924</u>

Deferred Income relates to the The Weinstock Fund, The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, The Garfield Weston Foundation and Somerset Community Foundation all of which extend into the 2024-25 financial year.

14	Fund Accounts	Opening Balance £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfers £	Closing Balance £
	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	66,311	180,691	192,265	-	54,737
	<b>Restricted Funds</b>					
	Day Services - D'Oyly Carte Trust	-	2,000	2,000	-	-
	Day Services - Music For All	1,410	7,303	8,713	-	-
	Heritage - Historic England	-	47,649	37,952	-	9,697
	Bookclubs - D'Oyly Carte Trust	1,701	-	1,701	-	-
	Bookclubs - Leonard Laity Stoaie Trust	800	-	800	-	-
	Community Hub - National Lottery Community Fund Awards for All	-	6,666	6,666	-	-
	Community Hub - Weinstock Foundation	-	250	250	-	-
	Community Hub - SCF	-	5,295	5,295	-	-
	Community Hub - National Grid	1,315	-	1,315	-	-
	Pigeon Productions - National Lottery Heritage Fund	-	1,728	228	-	1,500
	Pigeon Productions - Bailey Thomas	2,450	-	2,450	-	-
	Wellbeing - Souter Charitable Trust	-	2,200	2,200	-	-
	Wellbeing - HDH Will Charitable Trust	-	1,000	1,000	-	-
	Wellbeing - Frome Town Council	1,995	-	1,995	-	-
	Advocacy - SCF	-	21,768	14,104	-	7,664
	Camarados - Frome Town Council	-	8,388	6,752	-	1,636
	Core - Frome Town Council	-	555	555	-	-
	Core - SCF	-	3,232	3,232	-	-
	Core - Boshier Hinton Foundation	-	1,950	1,950	-	-
	Core - Garfield Weston	7,500	7,500	15,000	-	-
	Core - National Lottery Community Fund	-	23,798	21,068	-	2,730
	Core - National Heritage	-	1,569	1,569	-	-
	Core - Sir Jules Thom Trust	-	2,000	2,000	-	-
	Core - Reach Fund	-	11,220	-	-	11,220
	Core - Will Charitable Trust	-	10,000	10,000	-	-
	<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<u>17,171</u>	<u>166,071</u>	<u>148,795</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,447</u>
	Edward Gostling Foundation	-	60,000	-	-	60,000
	<b>Total Endowment Funds</b>	<u>-</u>	<u>60,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>60,000</u>
	<b>Total Funds</b>	<u>83,482</u>	<u>406,762</u>	<u>341,060</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>149,184</u>

#### Fund Purposes

Day Services - A commissioned service providing arts based, progressive day service support  
Heritage Project - A creative research project exploring the hidden histories of people with learning difficulties  
Bookclubs - Sensori storytelling for people with learning difficulties and complex needs  
Community Hub - No cost, social and community focussed activities, accessible to all  
Pigeon Productions - Our creative enterprise producing accessible resources for and by people with learning difficulties  
Wellbeing - Gently therapeutic sessions supporting positive mental and physical wellbeing  
Advocacy - Introducing self-advocacy by adults with learning difficulties and autism  
Camarados - Community living room to support mental health in young people  
Core - Supporting the core charity operations

Edward Gostling Foundation - An expendable endowment to support the charity

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Tangible Assets	4,532	-	0	4,532	5,144
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Debtors	26,112	-	0	26,112	16,289
Bank	29,742	46,097	60,000	135,839	95,842
	<u>55,854</u>	<u>46,097</u>	<u>60,000</u>	<u>161,951</u>	<u>82,626</u>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>					
Creditors	5,649	11,650	0	17,299	34,924
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<u>50,205</u>	<u>34,447</u>	<u>60,000</u>	<u>144,652</u>	<u>55,087</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<u>54,737</u>	<u>34,447</u>	<u>60,000</u>	<u>149,184</u>	<u>59,057</u>

**15 Members' Liability**

The charity is a private company limited by guarantee and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the members is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation. As at the 31st March 2025 there were 15 members.

**16 Controlling entity**

The charity is controlled by the trustees who are all directors of the company.