

Annual Report

2024 / 2025

 **the Link**
visiting scheme



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Introduction

At The Link Visiting Scheme, we believe that no one should feel forgotten. Our mission to reduce loneliness and social isolation among older people has never been more urgent—or more inspiring.

And this year, we're proud to say: we've made a difference.

We are thrilled to share that we were named Charity of the Year at the Thames Valley Business and Community Awards—a powerful recognition of the dedication, innovation, and heart that define our work. But the real reward? The thousands of moments of joy, comfort, and connection shared between our volunteers and Link Friends across Wokingham Borough.

"Without her, I don't know where I'd be. I look forward to her so much—it's the one thing I rely on." - Barbara, 92

Loneliness is more than a feeling—it's a public health crisis. Nationally, nearly one in three older people report feeling lonely often or always. Locally, in Wokingham's ageing population, the need for companionship is growing rapidly. According to [Age UK's 2024 report](#), loneliness is

linked to increased risks of heart disease, stroke, dementia, and depression. [The Centre for Social Justice](#) estimates that the cost to health and social care for each severely lonely older person exceeds £6,000 per year.

In the face of this challenge, our volunteers and supporters have stepped up - not just with time, but with genuine friendship. Together, we've built a network of support that brings friendship into the lives of those who might otherwise feel invisible.

This report is a tribute to the compassionate actions of our community, and a roadmap for the future we're building—one where every older person feels seen, supported, and valued.

As Coretta Scott King once said: "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

We invite you to read on, be inspired, and join us in creating a world where no one grows old alone.



What we do and why it matters

The Link Visiting Scheme is a charity working to reduce loneliness and isolation among older people in Wokingham Borough. We believe that everyone deserves to feel connected, valued, and part of a community - especially in later life, when social circles often shrink due to bereavement, health issues, or mobility challenges.

We match older people with volunteers for regular contact through one-to-one visits and/or phone calls, building meaningful friendships that make a real difference. This year, we have 212 active partnerships or 'link-ups', where each volunteer is matched with a client.

Alongside this, we run a lively programme of weekly and monthly activities—each one designed and improved based on feedback from our Link Friends.

They include:

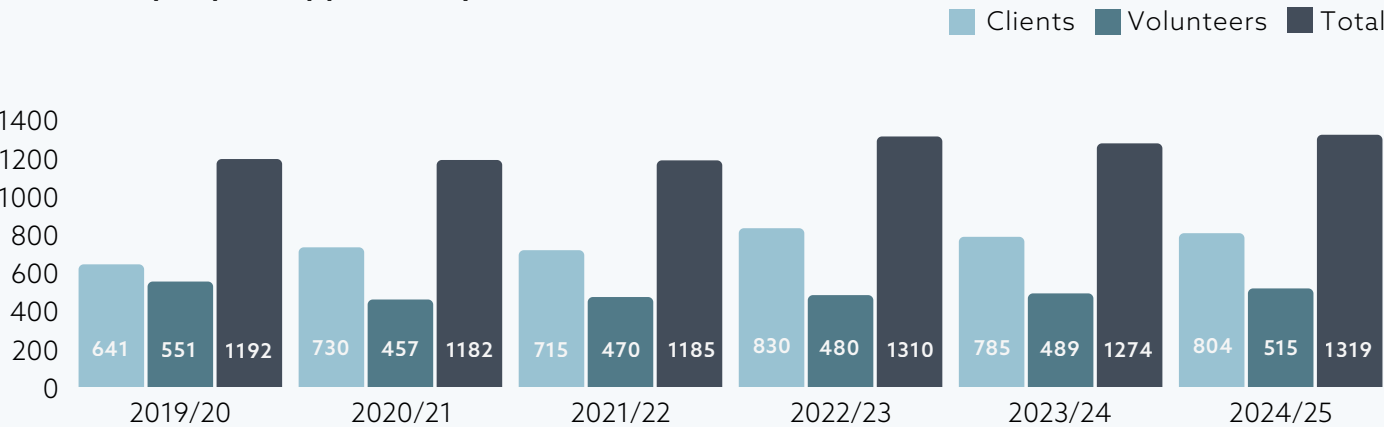
- Weekly 'Pie and Pint' club
- Monthly singalong club
- Monthly craft sessions

- Monthly quiz and games sessions
- Weekly and seasonal indoor and outdoor bowls
- 'Active Minds' for those living with dementia
- Monthly Sunday 'Community Kitchen'
- Weekly community pop-up café
- Seasonal parties and various one-off events and celebrations

Our mission extends beyond mere companionship; it's about rebuilding confidence, uplifting spirits, enhancing well-being, and fostering a sense of belonging. All of this aims to help individuals maintain their independence longer and minimise delays, ultimately reducing the need for statutory care services.

During 2024/25, we ran 180 regular weekly or monthly activity sessions, with over 2,350 attendances. This doesn't include our parties, one-off events, special outings and our Christmas programme! We are thrilled that 35% of Link Friends attend our activities. Those who are more independent are referred to local community groups that match their interests and are located nearby.

Total no. people supported by The Link:



Feedback

This year, the heart of our work has been reflected in the voices of those we serve and those who serve alongside us. From volunteers finding renewed purpose to clients rediscovering joy and companionship, the stories shared with us are a testament to the impact of meaningful connection.

We enjoy hearing how regular visits and calls have transformed daily lives. Link Friend Roy told us his volunteer "helps a tremendous amount and I enjoy her visits". Link Friend Anna shared, "It was a great morning today...we were roaring with laughter. It's such a tonic."

Marcia

Diagnosed with dementia, Marcia felt isolated and overwhelmed. Through Active Minds, she found a space where she felt understood and supported. "I didn't feel I had any friends," she shared. Now, she's part of a group that brings her joy and connection.

Joe

After losing his wife, Joe struggled with digital tasks. With patient support from a trained Link

Online volunteer, he's now learning to navigate technology and reclaim independence in daily life.

Queenie and Jean

At 82, Queenie thought she might be too old to volunteer. But her visits to Jean, a 93-year-old who is bedbound, have blossomed into a cherished friendship. "It's given me some joy and purpose back in my life," Queenie reflected.

*Names changed to protect anonymity

Volunteer reflections

Volunteers continue to be the lifeblood of our organisation. Their feedback reveals not only the value they bring to others but also the fulfilment they gain themselves.

Maria O, a volunteer at our weekly pop-up cafe, told us: "It's my thing that fits into my life and allows me to still feel the structure and friendship I miss from working."

Another volunteer shared: "We have a wonderful time—we go shopping, have lunch, and even visit the pub. The staff know us so well, they save our favourite spot by the fire."



Highlights of 2024/25

While one-to-one friendship remains at the heart of what we do, this year has demonstrated the breadth of our offerings. From community events and fundraisers to group activities, special trips, and celebrations, we've created numerous ways for people to connect. It's been a busy and rewarding year, with improvements in our use of technology enabling us to work more efficiently and giving us more time to those who need our support.

Active Minds

We ran five 8-week courses for people living with dementia, offering connection, stimulation, and support in small groups. With 100% positive feedback, the programme won the Wokingham Community Award for Project of the Year. Guests, including yoga teacher Richard Welch and Sing For Yourself's Soph Tarttlin, helped participants build confidence and join wider community activities.

We also continued our commitment to Dementia Friendly Wokingham, part of the Dementia Partnership along with Age UK Berkshire and Understanding Dementia, and trained volunteers

who visit those with dementia. As one participant shared, "Beth and her team are great at what they do – so friendly and focused," while another said, "I love the social interaction and meeting new people. I've had great fun."

Transport

It might not be the most high-profile part of our work, but transport is absolutely essential to everything we do at Link Visiting. We arranged over 1,300 journeys - 819 through community providers and 500+ by volunteers - ensuring no one missed out due to lack of a lift. This practical support is essential, though it comes with financial costs we must continue to fundraise for.

Keeping in Touch

With the addition of Fiona Rycraft, a retired social worker, we strengthened our support for Link Friends with emerging needs. Fiona worked with 53 individuals, resulting in 1,250 contacts and over 400 timely referrals to services, which helped people stay independent by preventing crises from developing. The project also reduces the pressure on statutory services, which, in turn, has marked reduction in costs for a wide range of stakeholders.



Community Café at All Saints Church

Our weekly café has grown in popularity and become a vibrant hub, a safe haven each week where anyone in the community can just turn up with a guarantee of a warm welcome.

This year, we also hosted a Friendship Day celebration for all supporters and members, featuring intergenerational visits from local childminders and interactive sessions with Creative Mojo and Blandy & Blandy solicitors.

Additionally, we partnered with the church to open up conversations around death and dying, and continued to offer our Chair Yoga course, along with other creative ways to manage loneliness.

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

We were proud to participate in Wokingham's Pride Festival, an opportunity to affirm our wholehearted support for the LGBTQIA+ community and their right to live with dignity, joy, and equality.

We also took practical steps to make our services more accessible by translating key materials into Cantonese and Urdu, reflecting the rich diversity of our local community. Our commitment to inclusion continues through growing relationships with local faith groups, including the Gurdwara and the Wokingham Muslim Community Connect Group, where we've joined in celebratory events and strengthened meaningful connections.

These actions, along with our membership of Wokingham Borough Voice of Inclusion and Equality (ViNe) group, are part of our ongoing effort to ensure that everyone, regardless of background, identity, or belief, feels welcome, seen, and supported at Link Visiting.

Link to Nature

This project brings people together through a shared appreciation of the natural world, whether it's birdsong, flowers, growing vegetables, or simply walking outdoors. It's designed to boost wellbeing and strengthen friendships through gentle, nature-based activities.

One standout story is Anna, a Link Friend who joined in early 2024. Living with kidney disease, she embraced every opportunity, from growing her first sunflower (which reached over 2.5 metres!) to gifting homegrown tomatoes to neighbours and enjoying peaceful walks at Dinton Pastures. She told us she often replays those walks in her mind before bed because they bring her so much joy. Even more special, Anna formed a new friendship through the project. They now meet weekly, something she hadn't expected at this stage in life. "I find it very uplifting. I always come home happy - that helps a lot at my age."



A place at the table

Community Kitchen is a cherished monthly gathering where Link Friends and volunteers come together to cook, eat, and enjoy entertainment, easing Sunday loneliness with shared friendship and connection. Expertly led by Fiona Wright and supported by over 25 dedicated volunteers, it's a highlight of the month for many.

One attendee told us: "Being on my own, I just find it's not worth cooking for myself, so I really look forward to coming. I think the new venue feels like a treat, especially the comfy chairs! Everyone works so hard making it all look lovely, and the table hosts encourage even the quiet ones to talk. When I see all the smiling faces, it makes my day."

Christmas 2024

Our festive programme brought warmth and connection to many. We hosted 130 guests at Loddon Hall, with gifts donated by the community.

Our Link to Nature group made decorations and enjoyed a seasonal shopping trip. We had festive Pie and Pint Clubs along with our usual weekly activities and sixth formers at St Crispin's School hosted a musical afternoon tea. Over 150 people attended our Christmas Special at All Saints Church, featuring St Sebastian's Brass Band and reflections from the vicar.

On Christmas Day, we cooked and delivered over 160 meals—some shared at a venue, others delivered to homes. Our Kindness Tree initiative, in partnership with 19 local businesses, ensured everyone received a gift. Together, we made Christmas feel a little less lonely. A volunteer told us: "I'm very proud to be a small part of this amazing charity!"

A Link Friend told us: "I never truly feel alone when part of The Link and can't thank you enough for all you do. You have really helped me, and the people of Wokingham would be lost without you."



Fundraising

We were fortunate to receive generous donations from various organisations in 2024/25. The Statement of Financial Activities at the end of this report provides a full list of all those who have supported us financially.

Our local MP, Rt Hon Clive Jones

"The Link Visiting Scheme are a critical support within our community that provides a vital and caring service to those who are most vulnerable in Wokingham. In November, I had the good fortune of joining Link for their Christmas craft activity, as part of their Link to Nature project. On this occasion, and many others, I was able to see the positive impact made by the Link Visiting Scheme and its volunteers firsthand. I look forward to joining Link again soon at one of their projects, to help support this important charity."

Shanly Foundation

"The Shanly Foundation is delighted to support the Link Visiting Scheme, recognising its vital work in combating loneliness and fostering meaningful connections. By funding this initiative, we help bring companionship and support to those who need it most."

Helen Bushell, Head of Regional Funding for London, the South East and East of England at The National Lottery Community Fund

"Thanks to National Lottery players, our funding supports communities to be more inclusive and environmentally sustainable, including improving people's access to nature. The Link to Nature project is a great example of how access to nature goes hand in hand with bringing communities together through inclusive spaces and activities, and improving their wellbeing. It's great to see this project continuing to go from strength to strength

and help people live healthier, more fulfilling lives."

David Cliff Estate Agents

"We just love being and feeling part of this incredible charity. The job of 'caring' is so easy to talk about but hard to do, we're all guilty sometimes, so to have people like the Link team is amazing and we intend to continue to support them as much as we can."

Ascot Racecourse

"We are delighted to champion the work of The Link Visiting Scheme which brings so much joy to so many isolated individuals. Our Ascot Racecourse Supports programme is focused on supporting charities who are tackling our county's most vital causes of which loneliness and isolation amongst the elderly is one."



We diversified our income streams and benefited from a number of fundraising events, including:

- A **Charity Golf Day**, held at East Berkshire Golf Club and organised by Easthampstead Rotary Club, had 19 teams participate, including Blandy & Blandy Solicitors and AspenTech.
- A **Curry Night**, held and sponsored by The Tamarind Tree restaurant in Wokingham, raised £1,134 for our Christmas Appeal.
- A **Paint & Sip Party** fundraiser sponsored by R Young Art Gallery and K J Smith Solicitors raised £1,130.
- **Skydive Day**, where three people, including our chair of trustees, raised vital sponsorship.
- An **Afternoon Tea**, hosted by Cllr Caroline Smith, the Mayor of Earley, raised £896. A special guest was Alexander Barfield, the High Sheriff of Berkshire.
- A **Swimathon** organised by Wokingham Lions Club saw our team swim 2,300 metres in 50 minutes, raising £825.
- Our regular quizzes are always very popular with our volunteers.
- We launched the **Link Lottery**, where players are given a chance to win a weekly cash prize and the £25,000 jackpot every week. Plus, tickets are entered into the monthly Super Draw for an extra prize.
- We have benefited from being the chosen 'Charity of the Year' with East Berkshire Golf Club, Wokingham Catenians, Shinfield Players, and the Inner Wheel Club of Reading Maiden Erlegh.

- We are thrilled to share that **East Berkshire Golf Club** has raised an incredible £23,500 during the 2024/25 Captaincy year! A huge thank you to Marcus Swanston, Club Captain, and Jayne Matthey, Ladies Captain, for choosing us as their joint charity. This support means the world to us and will make a significant impact on our work. Marcus commented, "It has been great fun raising funds for the charity over the past year, and working with the Link members has been our pleasure. Jayne and I are immensely proud to have led the fundraising of such a wonderful amount, which we are sure will help the charity and its community. We are so very grateful to the members of the East Berkshire Golf Club for their generosity and support. We're also delighted that some golf club members, inspired by our mission, have signed up to become volunteers.

Anyone who wants to donate to The Link can do so at www.linkvisiting.org/donations. Every donation enables us to continue to transform lives with friendship and is massively appreciated, thank you.





Legacies

We truly value the bequests we receive - gifts left to The Link Visiting Scheme in supporters' wills. These thoughtful and generous contributions help us plan for the future with confidence and stability. Bequests allow us to invest in long-term projects, expand our reach to more isolated older people, and strengthen the foundations of our befriending services.

Every legacy gift, no matter the size, is a powerful act of kindness that helps ensure no one in our community has to face loneliness alone. We treat each gift with careful thought and respect. If there is a Link service or activity that holds special meaning for the person who left the gift, we will honour any request to use their legacy for that specific purpose. It's a lasting legacy of friendship, connection, and care. For more information, visit www.linkvisiting.org/legacy.

A special thank you to Cicely Siemssen

We are deeply grateful to Cicely Siemssen for her generous legacy gift. Cicely was a fiercely independent woman who, in her 90s, referred herself to our scheme via our online form, seeking companionship over the Christmas period. She was soon matched with Lynn, a wonderful volunteer, and the two formed a close and lasting friendship. Cicely often shared how much it meant to talk with Lynn about her worries and anxieties, especially in her later years. She also delighted us with stories of her adventurous life, including rally car racing with her husband in the 1950s and 60s, where she was the skilled navigator.

Cicely's legacy will help sustain our weekly Community Café and support special outings and events for those with mobility challenges. We are honoured to publicly thank Cicely for her kindness, generosity, and the lasting impact of her gift.



Cicely Siemssen
14.12.1924 - 16.9.2023



Awards and recognition

This year has been one of celebration and recognition for Link Visiting, as our work across the community has been honoured with several prestigious awards, each one a reflection of the dedication, compassion, and commitment of our volunteers, staff, and supporters.

Charity of the Year

Thames Valley Business and Community Awards

We were absolutely thrilled to be named Charity of the Year 2024, standing out among a large field of inspiring organisations across the Thames Valley. We were also shortlisted as one of the final three for the Community Impact Award, a huge achievement and a proud moment.

Wokingham Community Award

Our Active Minds course, which supports people living with dementia, was recognised with a Wokingham Community Award in association with Wokingham Today and Wokingham Borough Council. The award is a testament to the programme's impact on wellbeing, connection, and quality of life.

It's Your Neighbourhood Award

For the third consecutive year, our Link to Nature project has received recognition from the Royal Horticultural Society and Thames & Chilterns in Bloom, celebrating our creative approach to enhancing wellbeing through nature, gardening, and outdoor connection.

Mayor's Honour Awards

We were also proud to see individual members of our community recognised for their outstanding contributions at the Wokingham Borough Council's Mayor's Honour Awards:

- John Mallaghan, our Chair of Trustees, received a Mayor's Honour Award for his long-standing service and leadership.
- Andy Jones, one of our dedicated volunteers, was honoured for his volunteering and fundraising efforts, which have made a real difference both within Link Visiting and across the wider community.

These awards are more than just accolades; they serve as a powerful reminder of the impact we're making together.



Working in partnership

The Link Visiting works in partnership with a variety of local organisations to address the complex needs of the Borough's older population. We are also members of the NCVO and the Befriending Networks. Together, we offer a more comprehensive, safe and holistic approach to care and support.

Josie Obo-Mends, Locum Social Worker, East Social Care Team

The Link Visiting Scheme is "a great service that has helped numerous of my clients in relation to their social inclusion and daily living activities. Their team members are creative and proactive. Link Visiting is the difference between being a good company and a great company."

Amanda Cracknell, Social Prescriber

"I am truly grateful to be able to refer some of our lovely patients to your exceptional befriending service. I know once I send in a referral, the client will be contacted in a timely manner by a friendly member of your team. From then on, they will feel very much a part of the Link Visiting community. The way you get to know your clients and match them with a volunteer is evidently well thought through, as it seems from the feedback I receive, you pretty much get it spot on! Our patients feel an improvement in their wellbeing due to the social interaction with their befriender, especially as many don't see anyone else for a proper conversation. The Christmas lunch and gift delivery on Christmas Day is awe-inspiring and shows those who may be feeling lonely that people in their community really do care. You all do a wonderful job, thank you!"

We are part of several important initiatives in Wokingham:

The Friendship Alliance

Led by the Link Visiting, the Friendship Alliance is a dynamic partnership between Involve Community Services, Age UK Berkshire, and the Wokingham Volunteer Centre. United by a shared mission to reduce loneliness and social isolation across Wokingham Borough, the Alliance has made significant strides this year, thanks to the continued support of Wokingham Borough Council.

Together, we are building a more connected, compassionate community through:

- Friendship-based activities that foster meaningful relationships
- Accessible information and support for those who need it most
- One-to-one digital coaching through our Link Online programme
- Empowering local organisations to sustain and grow their services
- Inclusive community events that bring people together

Each partner brings unique strengths, working in harmony to create lasting impact.



Spreading the word

Friendship Alliance

Under the leadership of Project Manager, Jayne Streak, our bi-weekly newsletter showcases over 755 local activities, reaching 532 subscribers, a 23.43% increase from last year. This growth reflects the community's deepening engagement and the increasing value placed on staying connected.

Friendship Tables

Friendship Alliance

One of our proudest achievements is the expansion of Friendship Tables, a network of 65 welcoming venues across the borough where anyone can drop in, enjoy refreshments, and connect with others. Available every day of the week, these tables ensure that no one has to feel alone. Our Friendship Table calendar is now a vital tool used by Adult Social Care, social prescribers, and health professionals to prevent the serious effects of loneliness. It stands as a shining example of a preventative, community-led approach to wellbeing.

Friendship Champions

Friendship Alliance

At the core of our work within the Friendship Alliance are 105 dedicated Friendship Champions, local volunteers who actively foster community spirit in the organisations and areas they participate in and build bridges between people. 92 of these ambassadors participate in quarterly forums, sharing insights and helping us identify and address service gaps.

Tackling social isolation and loneliness

We are proud to be active members of the Public Health-led Social Isolation and Loneliness (SiL) Action Group, a collaborative initiative uniting council departments and trusted voluntary sector

partners. Together, we address the complex and evolving challenges of social isolation, particularly among underrepresented groups such as men, LGBTQAI+ and individuals in residential care or sheltered housing.

Each partner brings unique expertise to the table, enabling us to share insights, co-design solutions, and implement targeted interventions that make a real difference in people's lives. This collective approach ensures that no one is left behind in our mission to build a more connected and compassionate community.

Strengthening the voluntary sector

We also play a key role in the Voluntary Sector Action Group, a strategic alliance formed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Led by Director of Public Health Dr. Ingrid Slade, this group brings together influential leaders and decision-makers from the voluntary sector and Wokingham Borough Council.

What began as a crisis response has evolved into a powerful platform for long-term collaboration, innovation, and advocacy. Together, we continue to shape policies and services that support the wellbeing of our residents and strengthen the fabric of our community.

We are proud to contribute to the Ageing Well Subgroup of the BOB Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Wokingham Borough Carers Strategy Group, and to have formally pledged our support to Community Vision 2035, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to a thriving, inclusive future for all.

Volunteers

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of everything we do. They bring warmth, companionship, and joy to the lives of isolated older people across Wokingham Borough. Whether it's sharing a cup of tea, reminiscing about the past, or simply being a friendly face, our volunteers create meaningful moments that transform lives.

Volunteer Claire told us: "Becoming a Link befriending volunteer has been joyful. I love visiting my Link Friend and always come away feeling happy that I've done something worthwhile. It's not just a one-way thing - my Link Friend has genuinely made a difference to my life too - we just love being together for a cup of tea and a chat! Giving a little of my time is such a small thing to do, and yet I feel it has made a big difference for us both. It is wonderful!"

By the numbers

(April 2024 - March 2025)

- 104 new volunteers completed induction training
- 97 new volunteer applications received

- 174 volunteers completed safeguarding training
- 265 volunteer pack requests received
- 39% application return rate (up from 30% in 2023/24)
- 10% of new applicants were from ethnically diverse backgrounds

This year, we also introduced a new automated volunteer application system, which streamlines the process and increases engagement. Our induction, safeguarding, and dementia awareness training ensure that every volunteer is confident and well-prepared to support their Link Friends.

Our volunteers consistently tell us how enriching and life-affirming their experiences are. One volunteer told us, "Despite my Link Friend's Alzheimer's, she always gives me a big hug. She remembers her siblings and loves making me tea. She's a happy soul, and I enjoy every visit."

Another said, "Volunteering with Link Visiting has changed my life in more ways than I expected. I'm now pursuing a career in social care."



Corporate volunteering

This year, we launched a new initiative to make it easier for employees to use their corporate charity days with us. Through a simple online form, volunteers can now:

1. Register their interest in using a charity day
2. Access a calendar of upcoming events and activities
3. Choose a volunteering opportunity that suits their schedule and interests

This streamlined process has opened the door for more professionals to engage with our mission, bringing fresh energy and skills to our events and activities. Paul Corcoran, Business Volunteers, shared feedback after his team got involved, "Love your passion and enthusiasm - you made us all so very welcome. We really enjoyed getting involved and spending time with the people you support. We'd definitely like to return again. Keep up the brilliant work you do and hope to see you again in 2025."

A community of care

From one-off visits to long-term friendships, our volunteers are supported every step of the way. Regular check-ins, peer catch-ups, and responsive staff ensure that every volunteer feels valued and empowered. One volunteer shared, "You provide amazing support—I can't think of a way you could do it better!", whilst another told us, "The Link Visiting is unique in how they care for everyone—clients and volunteers alike."

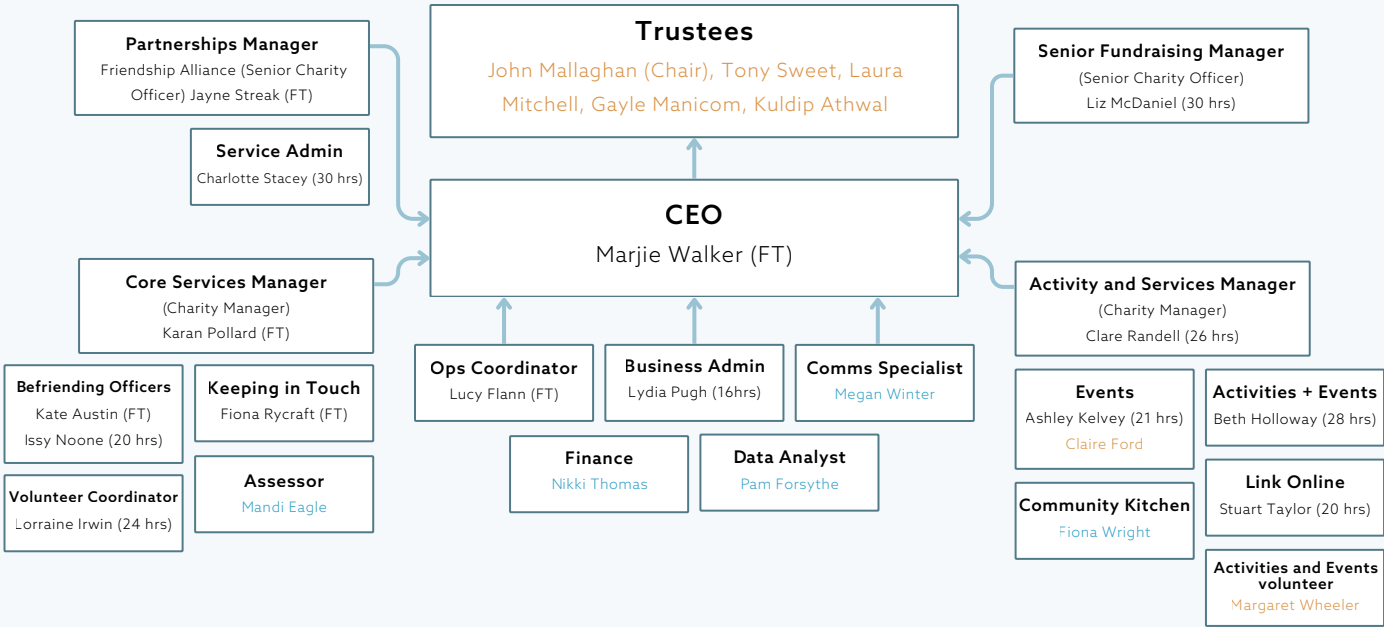
Looking ahead

As we continue to grow, we remain committed to nurturing our volunteer community. With new training programmes, inclusive recruitment efforts, and expanded corporate partnerships, we're building a future where no one in our community feels alone.



Organisational chart 2025

Our team consists of 15 staff (12 F.T.E), 5 contractors and 7 volunteers.



A culture of care and connection

We believe that a supported team is an empowered team. As a proud Real Living Wage employer, we are committed to ensuring every member of our staff feels valued, respected, and cared for. Our twice-yearly team away days, quarterly yoga sessions, wellbeing lunches, pub socials, and our much-loved Christmas dinner dance are just a few of the ways we foster connection and celebrate our collective efforts.

Our latest staff wellbeing survey revealed that team members feel positive about their mental health, supported by their managers, and comfortable being themselves at work. They appreciate the open communication, strong peer

relationships, and the balance they're able to maintain between work and personal life. Many have taken up new hobbies, improved their wellbeing routines, and feel equipped to manage stress and bounce back from challenges.

Our team told us:

- "I love working for the Link. I love our team".
- "I truly appreciate how much support I receive from everyone. I feel very fortunate, and it is a privilege to be part of the Link".
- "Thank you for making me feel so welcome, you are all so lovely and friendly. I'm grateful that you hired me, and I work for The Link".

We are proud of the strong, unified team we've built, committed to delivering compassionate, person-centred services to our community.

Looking ahead

As we look to the year ahead, our vision remains clear: to deepen our impact by supporting the people who make our work possible, our incredible volunteers, and to continue evolving to meet the changing needs of our community.

We are seeing a shift in our volunteer demographic, with more individuals joining us while still in employment. In response, we are exploring new ways to offer flexible, meaningful support that fits around busy lives. Our volunteers are our most valuable asset, and we are committed to ensuring they feel empowered, appreciated, and equipped.

We are also embracing technology to streamline our internal processes, freeing up more time for what matters most: building relationships. By simplifying administration, we can focus even more on the human connections at the heart of our mission.

We will proudly launch our Extra Support Project, a pioneering initiative designed to provide enhanced care for Link Friends who have no family or next of kin. This project will ensure they are not only supported emotionally and socially, but also practically, helping them prepare for later life with legal safeguards such as Power of Attorney and regular, proactive contact to prevent crises. This initiative will also reduce the emotional burden on volunteers, ensuring they are not left to navigate complex situations alone.

We also recognise the emotional toll that loss can take. As part of our holistic approach, we will be placing greater emphasis on grief support for both volunteers and staff when a Link Friend passes away. We will also create safe and compassionate

spaces for Link Friends to talk about death, share their wishes, and feel heard.

Throughout all of this, we remain committed to co-producing our services with the people who use them. We will continue to involve our Link Friends and volunteers in shaping our work, listening to their voices, and ensuring their experiences guide our progress.

We are excited for what lies ahead. With innovation, compassion, and community at our core, we are building a future where no one feels alone—and where every person, at every stage of life, feels seen, supported, and valued.



A message from our Chairman

2024/5 has been a positive year for the charity. Our consistently outstanding outcomes have been widely recognised – we were named the Thames Valley Charity of the Year! With Active Minds picking up Project of the Year at the Wokingham Community Awards and Link to Nature being recognised by the Royal Horticultural Society for the third consecutive year, it is fantastic to see the team receive the recognition they deserve. I was personally the proud recipient of a WBC Mayor's Honour Award, which I see as further recognition of the whole Link family.

My second skydive to raise money for the charity at my tender age was possibly my biggest – or craziest – achievement of the year!

I also want to highlight the improvements made in an area that underpins so much of what we do – transport. A huge logistical and expensive task for a small charity, ensuring people are safely transported to and from our wide range of activities is crucial.

The demand for our services is expected to continue growing in the years ahead. Although this will remain our biggest challenge, we are determined to maintain service quality and ensure costs do not spiral out of control. We are already seeing encouraging results:

- Smart use of technology and AI to minimise administration
- Effective partnerships like Friendship Alliance and Dementia Alliance broaden our reach and increase our impact
- Developing new longer-term income channels.

We have always involved Link Friends and volunteers in service design. We will go even further next year, ensuring the voices of our Link Friends and volunteers are heard loud and clear, listened to and acted on at all levels, including trustees. End-to-end co-production will ensure our services evolve with maximum impact.

For the last 26 years we have helped thousands of Link Friends reduce, delay or completely avoid the need for much more expensive health and social care, and in so doing saved families and the taxpayer many millions of pounds. As chair, and an active volunteer I am constantly inspired, and humbled, by how much our Link Friends appreciate what we do for them, and to see first-hand the smiles and laughter we spread around the local community every day – saving money by spreading some joy!

Staff and volunteers often tell us how much they gain from working with us, but the nature of our services and the close bonds that can develop with Link Friends can add significant emotional stress. Our recently launched "Extra Support Project" will provide enhanced practical help, working with partners, for those with no family or support network, as well as support to volunteers who sometimes have to navigate complex situations.

On behalf of the trustees, I want to offer huge thanks to the entire Link family - our CEO Marjie Walker, our staff team and fantastic volunteers and supporters from the people who really matter – our Link Friends. I would like to extend my gratitude to Gayle Manicom who stepped down after 7 years as a Trustee, although happily she will remain as a volunteer.

I feel it is a privilege to be part of this charity, trying to create a community where no-one in Wokingham Borough should have to grow old alone. Maya Angelou once talked about the need for kindness and empathy, and she could have been describing anyone in the Link family: "Try to bring a rainbow to someone's cloud".



John Mallaghan
Chair of Trustees



Financial review

Overview

During the year to 31 March 2025, we have seen continued increase in demand for our services and, as a result, the cost of our charitable activities further increased last year. Our total expenditure for 2024-25 was £534,774, an increase of 10% compared to £484,904 in the previous year.

Our income last year was £544,141, an increase of 12% over the comparable figure of £483,985 in 2023/24. This figure for 2023/24 excludes the Edward Gostling Fund endowment of £100,000. There was a surplus last year of £9,367 compared to a small deficit in 2023/24 (again, excluding the Edward Gostling Fund endowment) and our closing reserves at 31 March 2025 reflect an overall satisfactory financial position despite the pressures felt by all in the current uncertain environment.

Income

Total income for the year, excluding amounts we received on behalf of and for onward payment to other organisations, was £544,141 (2024: £483,985) as follows:

	2025	2024
Donations and legacies	£112,349	£ 32,427
Grants	£395,762	£426,065
Fundraising activities	£ 25,328	£ 20,186
Interest income and other	£ 10,702	£ 5,307
Total	£544,141	£483,985

We work very closely with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) in providing our services to local residents. WBC continued to be our largest single source of funding, contributing around 60% of our income from donations and grants.

We received donations and grants from a further 54 organisations (2024: 53 organisations) which reflects the significant efforts of our team to meet our fundraising target. We are most grateful for every single donation

received, all of which go towards enabling us to continue our work. A list of donors can be found in Note 4. Our own fundraising events and activities contributed £25,328 (2024: £20,186).

The majority of our income continues to be classified as restricted, i.e. income which the donor directs should be applied to specific activities. This is particularly the case for most of our grant income. However, our donors identify so completely with the aims of the Link Visiting Scheme that in practice any restrictions can be accommodated within our core activities.

Expenditure

As has been a feature of recent years the increase in expenditure is dominated by staff costs which rose by 20% to £417,520 from £347,953 in the previous year.

Although the number of employees is virtually unchanged from last year, we have recognised and rewarded the increased experience and seniority of our team. This includes ensuring that they are paid market rates for their work, as well as taking account of regulatory increases in the national living wage.

We were able to make savings in a number of other cost categories, notwithstanding the inflationary pressures on general services, which partly offset the increase in staff costs.

Financial position and reserves

Net assets increased from £541,357 on 31st March 2024 to £550,724 on 31st March 2025. Cash resources at the end of our financial year decreased from £570,176 to £544,079; however, we were owed £41,098 at the end of March which was paid in April.

The assets of the charity are currently held in current and deposit bank accounts. Should other opportunities arise to invest surplus funds then the trustees would consider these, and this matter remains under review. At the present time longer term investment is inappropriate.

The charity had a net operational surplus for the year of £9,367 which has been added to total funds.

In February 2024 the charity received by deed of gift an endowment of £100,000 from The Edward Gostling Fund. Under the terms of the endowment:

- the charity may use the endowment to meet operating costs which support its charitable activities
- the amount it may apply from the income and capital of the endowment in any accounting year shall be limited to the amount (if any) by which its total annual expenditure would otherwise cause its level of reserves to fall beneath six months' operating costs.

This restriction on use of the endowment is effective for the period of five years from receipt of the amount; thereafter the charity may use the income and remaining capital of the endowment for any purpose that furthers its charitable objects.

This amount is included in the charity's reserves as The Edward Gostling Fund in the amount of £103,221 being the amount of the original endowment increased by interest income earned during the year ended 31 March 2025; the charity has made no transfer from this fund to its other reserves.

Unrestricted funds at 31 March 2025 are £435,238 (31 March 2024: £425,173); these amounts include £106,921 (31 March 2024: £101,252) classified as Designated Funds. The trustees have resolved that legacies granted in the wills of Link Friends and volunteers should be included in this category and used for investment in new services and/or for projects which may, for example, exceed one year (the charity's normal measurement period) and may not recur.

At the beginning of last year, £75,000 of the opening balance of £101,252 had not been approved to be spent, but during last year the trustees authorised use of this amount for specific projects of an enduring nature. In the year ended 31 March 2025 £50,786 was spent on such relevant projects, and in July 2024 a legacy was received from a Link Friend in the amount of £56,455 which is included in the closing balance at 31 March 2025.

The trustees continue to monitor the charity's requirements for reserves considering the main risks to

the organisation, recognising the need to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of income and to provide a contingency for emergencies and other unforeseen expenditure.

To help mitigate the risks faced from rapid growth in demand and costs, and the prevailing uncertainties in the economic outlook, trustees have resolved that our target is to maintain unrestricted reserves of 50% of our current annual budget; this may be varied if circumstances indicate it is appropriate to do so.

At 31 March 2025, general funds were £328,317 which equates to 68% of expenditure incurred in the year then ended (excluding amounts incurred from the designated funds) and a similar proportion of our expenditure plans for 2025/26. This is higher than the trustees' ongoing policy target of 50% but that policy also recognises that the actual level of reserves will be subject to short term fluctuation according to circumstances. The trustees are satisfied that this level of funds is sufficient and appropriate to meet the charity's on-going activities for the time being.

Risk management

The trustees are responsible for ensuring that the Link Visiting Scheme has in place a process to identify risks to which the charity is exposed, that those risks have been assessed and that there are systems in place to address those risks. The principal risks which the Link Visiting Scheme has to manage relate to continuity of funding, the availability of staff and volunteers to enable it to meet its objectives, and control of expenditure.

The trustees have given consideration to the major risks to which the charity is exposed and satisfied themselves that procedures are established in order to manage those risks.

Trustees' report

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law applicable to charities in England and Wales 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 of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent; 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 proper accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and 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 Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the Trust Deed.

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.

This report was approved by the trustees on 15 October 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



John Mallaghan
Trustee



Antony Sweet
Trustee

Reference and administrative details

Governing document

Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 18 August 2010.

Principal activities

The Company's principal activity is the provision of a befriending service for lonely, isolated, primarily elderly people who benefit from a regular home visit from one of the Company's volunteers.

The Company assesses those clients that are referred to it from doctors, families and other care agencies, then recruits, DBS checks and trains volunteers from the Wokingham Borough and surrounding area, and matches up a volunteer (Befriender) and client (Link Friend), based on location, common interests and hobbies. A regular programme of reassessment is also undertaken.

Over 1,000 Link Friends have benefited from our services since the charity was established. We aim to give their lives more purpose and joy, enabling them to integrate into the community and build new, lasting friendships.

Public benefit

All our activities focus on combating social isolation in the Wokingham Borough and surrounding area, and are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit.

The outcomes that the Company aims to deliver through its services to benefit individuals, our communities, and the civic purse are to:

- Improve activity and mobility for clients

- Prevent depression and achieve improved mental health
- Delay or postpone need to enter residential care homes
- Delay or postpone need for provision of care at home
- Improve self-confidence and self-esteem, supporting independent living
- Improve volunteer social involvement and engagement
- Indirectly support carers and statutory services.

Our trustees

- Mr John Mallaghan – Chairman (Appointed 16 June 2021)
- Mrs A. Gayle Manicom (Appointed June 2018, resigned 29 April 2025)
- Ms Laura Mitchell (Appointed 9 December 2020)
- Mr Kuldip Athwal (Appointed 23 October 2022)
- Mr Antony Sweet (Appointed 1 April 2023)
- Mrs Pamela Forsythe (Appointed 1 August 2025)
- Mr Geraint Hayter (Appointed 1 September 2025)

A trustee is also a director of the company. Appointments and resignations of the above persons have been registered at Companies House and with the Charity Commission as appropriate.

The trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the Company comply with the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011, the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS 102), FRS102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and the Company's Memorandum of Association.

Other information

Link Visiting Scheme Limited is a company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales number 07349468.

Registered charity number - 1139248

The Company's registered office and correspondence address is: Link Visiting Scheme, The Charity and Community Hub, Waterford House, Erftstadt Court, Wokingham, RG40 2YF

Independent examiner

K Gomes MAAT FCIE, Independent Examiners Limited, Unit 2 The Broadfields Business Centre, Delling Lane, Bosham, PO18 8NF

Company Secretary

Mr Kuldeep Athwal

Bankers

The Co-operative Bank Plc, PO Box 200, Skelmersdale, WN8 6DG

The Charity Bank Limited, Fosse House, 182 High Street, Tonbridge, TN9 1BE.

Independent Examiner's report

Year ended 31st March 2025

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Link Visiting Scheme for the year ended 31st March 2025 set out on pages 27 to 34.

Respective responsibilities of trustees (directors) and examiner

As the trustees of The Link Visiting Scheme (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

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

Independent Examiner's statement

Since the Link Visiting Scheme gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a fellow member of the Association of Charity Independent Examiners, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in

connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of The Link Visiting Scheme as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. The accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. The accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

K Gomes MAAT FCIE

Independent Examiners Limited
Unit 2, The Broadfields Business Centre
Delling Lane
Bosham
PO18 8NF

Signed: 

Date: 30.10.2025

THE LINK VISITNG SCHEME

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and Legacies	2a	145,423	362,688	508,111	558,492
Charitable Activities	2b	25,328	-	25,328	20,186
Investments	2c	10,702	-	10,702	5,307
		181,453	362,688	544,141	583,985
Funding for Other Charities	2a(1)	-	55,182	55,182	51,843
TOTAL		181,453	417,870	599,323	635,828
Expenditure on:					
Direct Costs	3a	102,531	366,607	469,138	404,122
Charitable Activities	3b	65,636	-	65,636	80,782
		168,167	366,607	534,774	484,904
Funding Transferred to Other Charities	3a(1)	-	55,182	55,182	51,843
TOTAL		168,167	421,789	589,956	536,747
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		13,286	(3,919)	9,367	99,081
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		13,286	(3,919)	9,367	99,081
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:					
Total Funds Brought Forward		525,173	16,184	541,357	442,276
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		538,459	12,265	550,724	541,357

All of the organisation's operations are classed as continuing.

The notes on pages 29 to 34 form part of these financial statements.

THE LINK VISITING SCHEME

BALANCE SHEET

Company Registration Number :07349468

AS AT 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	31-Mar-25 Total £	31-Mar-24 Total £
Fixed Assets					
Tangible assets	8	-	-	-	-
Current Assets					
Debtors	9	41,098	-	41,098	-
Cash at bank and in hand	10	531,814	12,265	544,079	570,176
Total Current Assets		572,912	12,265	585,177	570,176
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	34,453	-	34,453	28,819
NET CURRENT ASSETS		538,459	12,265	550,724	541,357
TOTAL ASSETS less current liabilities		538,459	12,265	550,724	541,357
NET ASSETS		538,459	12,265	550,724	541,357
Funds					
General Funds	5.3	328,317	-	328,317	323,921
Restricted Funds	5.4	-	12,265	12,265	16,184
Designated Funds	5.1	106,921	-	106,921	101,252
Endowment Fund	5.2	103,221	-	103,221	100,000
Total Funds		538,459	12,265	550,724	541,357

The company's financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The Trustees consider that the company is entitled to exemption from the requirement to have an audit under the provisions of section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 ("the Act") and members have not required the company to obtain an audit for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Act.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on signed on their behalf, by:

Print Name : **ANTONY SWEET**

Date : **15 OCTOBER 2025**

Signed on their behalf by Director

ASweet

THE LINK VISITING SCHEME
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1.ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102). They also comply with the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011.

Basis of preparation

The Link Visiting Scheme meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern nor any significant areas of uncertainty that affect the carrying value of assets held by the charity.

Income and endowments

All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charity before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Legacy gifts are recognised on a case by case basis following the grant of probate when the administrator/executor for the estate has communicated in writing both the amount and settlement date. In the event that the gift is in the form of an asset other than cash or a financial asset traded on a recognised stock exchange, recognition is subject to the value of the gift being reliably measurable with a degree of reasonable accuracy and the title to the asset having been transferred to the charity.

Deferred income

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

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

Gift aid

Incoming resources from tax reclaims are included in the Statement of Financial Activities at the same time as the gift to which they relate.

Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

Expenditure

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category.

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Taxation

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

THE LINK VISITING SCHEME

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Tangible fixed assets

The company does not currently have any fixed assets.

Debtors

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

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the Balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the company anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

Pensions and other post retirement

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charity has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

2. ANALYSIS OF INCOME		Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
a) Donations and Legacies					
Donations and Legacies		112,349	-	112,349	32,427
Grants	4	33,074	362,688	395,762	426,065
The Edward Gostling Endowment Fund	5.2	-	-	-	100,000
		<u>145,423</u>	<u>362,688</u>	<u>508,111</u>	<u>558,492</u>
a1) Grant Funding for Other Charities					
Funding transferred to Other Charities	5.4	-	55,182	55,182	51,843
		<u>145,423</u>	<u>417,870</u>	<u>563,293</u>	<u>610,335</u>
b) Charitable Activities					
Events		11,553	-	11,553	9,394
Fundraising		13,775	-	13,775	10,792
		<u>25,328</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>25,328</u>	<u>20,186</u>
c) Investment Income					
Interest Received		10,702	-	10,702	5,307
		<u>10,702</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,702</u>	<u>5,307</u>

THE LINK VISITING SCHEME

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

3. ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
a) Direct Costs					
Cost of Fund Generation - Fund Raising		3,954	-	3,954	3,023
Cost of Providing Charitable Activities	5.4	15,692	31,972	47,664	53,146
Staff Costs	6	82,885	334,635	417,520	347,953
		102,531	366,607	469,138	404,122
a1) Direct Costs					
Funding transferred to Other Charities	5.4	-	55,182	55,182	51,843
		102,531	421,789	524,320	455,965
b) Charitable Activities					
	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
Accountancy and Consultancy Fees		4,400	-	4,400	13,856
DBS Checks		678	-	678	769
Independent examiner's fee		2,130	-	2,130	2,400
Insurance		2,511	-	2,511	2,202
Marketing costs		6,690	-	6,690	8,174
Office ,Computer Equipment & IT		22,698	-	22,698	20,579
Payroll Services		873	-	873	588
Post & stationery		7,539	-	7,539	6,836
Professional Memberships		8,354	-	8,354	188
Rent, Electricity & Cleaning		6,738	-	6,738	5,952
Social Events and Activities		-	-	-	2,695
Staff Training		-	-	-	3,512
Sundry Expenses		1,592	-	1,592	2,415
Travel & subsistence		1,229	-	1,229	8,159
Volunteer Training/Expenses		204	-	204	2,457
		65,636	-	65,636	80,782

THE LINK VISITING SCHEME

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

4. Income from Grants and Donations

We acknowledge and extend a heartfelt thanks to the following organisations who kindly supported The Link Visiting Scheme during the year ended March 2025 :

52 Lives
Arborfield and Newland Parish Council
Arnold Clark Community Fund
Barkham Ladies Social Club
Barkham Parish Council
Blandy & Blandy Solicitors
Charvil Parish Council
Co-op Local Community Fund
Crowthorne Parish Council
David Brownlow Charitable Foundation
Edward Gostling Fund
Earley Town Council
East Berkshire Golf Club
Eight to the Fore
Englefield Charitable Trust
Field Seymour Parkes Foundation
Finchampstead Parish Council
Garfield Weston Foundation
Grace Trust
Helen Robertson Charitable Trust
Hurst Parish Council
Inner Wheel Club Reading Maiden Erlegh
Invesco Cares Foundation
Kings Church Wokingham
National Lottery Community Fund
Newbury Building Society
Rotary Club of Easthampstead
Rotary Club of Reading Maiden Erlegh
Ruscombe Parish Council
R Young Art Gallery Wokingham
Shanly Foundation
Shinfield Parish Council
Shinfield Studios Ltd
Swallowfield Horticultural Society
Swallowfield Parish Council
St. Nicolas Church Earley
Syder Foundation
Tesco
Twyford Parish Council
Wargrave Parish Council
Waitrose Twyford
Waitrose Wokingham
Wates Family Enterprise Trust
Winnersh Parish Council
WG Edwards Charitable Foundation
Wokingham Lions
Wokingham Borough Council
Wokingham Catenians
Wokingham Town Council
Wokingham United Charities
Wokingham Without Parish Council
Woodley Town Council
Woodroffe Benton Foundation
Woosehill Community Church

We would also like to thank our individual supporters and our supporters in-kind for their valuable contributions this year.

THE LINK VISITNG SCHEME

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

5. Fund Summary

Current year

5.1 Designated Funds

	Balance 1.4.24 £	Income £	Expenditure £	General Transfer £	Balance 31.3.25 £
Designated Funds	101,252	56,455	50,786	-	106,921
	<u>101,252</u>	<u>56,455</u>	<u>50,786</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>106,921</u>

For the year ended 31 March 2025, the Trustees approved the allocation of a bequest of £56,455 to the designated fund for specific projects. Expenditure of £50,786 was incurred from this fund during the year, and the Trustees have further authorised the utilisation of £50,466 from the designated reserves in the year ending 31 March 2026.

5.2 Endowment Fund

	Balance 1.4.24 £	Income £	Expenditure £	General Transfer £	Balance 31.3.25 £
The Edward Gostling Fund	100,000	3,221	-	-	103,221
	<u>100,000</u>	<u>3,221</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>103,221</u>

In 2024 the charity received by deed of gift an endowment of £100,000 from The Edward Gostling Foundation. Under the terms of the endowment the charity may:

- use the endowment to meet operating costs which support the its charitable activities, and
- the amount it may apply from the income and capital of the endowment in any accounting year shall be limited to the amount (if any) by which its total annual expenditure would otherwise cause its level of reserves to fall beneath 6 months' operating costs.

5.3 General Funds

	Balance 1.4.24 £	Income £	Expenditure £	General Transfer £	Balance 31.3.25 £
General Funds	323,921	121,777	117,381	-	328,317
	<u>323,921</u>	<u>121,777</u>	<u>117,381</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>328,317</u>
Total Unrestricted	525,173	181,453	168,167	-	538,459

5.4 Restricted Funds

	Balance 1.4.24 £	Income £	Expenditure £	General Transfer £	Balance 31.3.25 £
Christmas	7,002	15,258	17,430	-	4,830
Activities & Events	450	8,848	6,451	-	2,847
Community Kitchen	2,012	5,000	5,295	-	1,717
Link to Nature	-	22,976	22,976	-	-
Winter	-	750	750	-	-
Chair Yoga	-	3,000	3,000	-	-
Befriending	6,720	132,486	136,335	-	2,871
Friendship Alliance	-	190,880	190,880	-	-
Active Minds	-	22,697	22,697	-	-
Keeping in Touch	-	15,975	15,975	-	-
Total Restricted Funds	16,184	417,870	421,789	-	12,265
Total Funds 2025	541,357	599,323	589,956	-	550,724

THE LINK VISITING SCHEME

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

Prior Year	Balance 1.4.23 £	Income £	Expenditure £	General Transfer £	Balance 31.3.24 £
Designated Funds	150,000	-	48,748	-	101,252
Endowment Fund	-	100,000	-	-	100,000
General Funds	272,061	184,869	133,009	-	323,921
Total Unrestricted	422,061	284,869	181,757	-	425,173
Restricted Funds	20,215	350,959	354,990	-	16,184
Total Funds 2024	442,276	635,828	536,747	-	541,357

6. STAFF COSTS AND NUMBERS

	2025 £	2024 £
Gross Wages and Salaries	383,877	314,170
Employer's National Insurance Costs	24,975	26,262
Pension Contributions	8,669	7,521
	417,520	347,953

The average number of persons employed during the year was as follows: 15 16

7. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

No trustee received any remuneration or fees in the current or preceding year. The daughter of the CEO received consultancy fees of £6,690 (2024: £8,174) for work in relation to website design, communications and marketing.

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

There are no tangible fixed assets. The Company expenses all individual capital items under £1000 in the period of purchase.

9. DEBTORS AND PREPAYMENTS

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Prepayments	744	-	744	-
Debtors	40,354	-	40,354	-
	41,098	-	41,098	-

10. CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Cash at bank and on hand	531,814	12,265	544,079	570,176
Total	531,814	12,265	544,079	570,176

11. CREDITORS AND ACCRUALS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Deferred Income	25,667	-	25,667	20,371
Independent Exam	2,130	-	2,130	2,100
Other Taxation and Social Security	6,656	-	6,656	6,348
	34,453	-	34,453	28,819

