



## **The Life Project (Bath)**

### **Report and Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

Registered Charity No. 1142459  
Company No. 07573284

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## **The Life Project (Bath)**

### **Report of the Board of Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024**

The Management Committee presents its directors' report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

## **1. Reference and Administrative Information**

Charity Name: The Life Project (Bath)

Charity Registration Number: 1142459

Company registration number: 7573284

### **Registered Office and Operational Address:**

The Old Acorn Barn  
Englishcombe  
Bath  
BA2 9DU

### **Board of Trustees**

Ben Stokes (Chair)  
Clive Brooks (Company Secretary)  
Dave Twine (Resigned 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023)  
Duncan Nash (Resigned 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023)  
Kay Labate (Appointed 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023)  
Kenny Nelson (Appointed 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023)  
Paul Bright (Appointed 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023)  
Pip Philips (Appointed 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023)  
Richard Penwell (Appointed 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023)  
Rob Appleyard (Appointed 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023)  
Rob Trickey (Appointed 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023)  
Tony Russell (Resigned 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023)

### **Senior Management**

Rich Blake-Lobb, Chief Executive

### **Independent Examiner:**

Colin Goater, 102 Freeview Road, Bath, BA2 1DZ

### **Banks**

The Co-operative Bank Plc, PO Box 250, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT  
Triodos Bank UK Ltd, Deanery Road, Bristol, BS1 5AS

## 2. Our Aims and Objectives

### 2.1. Purposes and Aims

Our charity's purposes as set out in the objects contained in the company's memorandum of association are:

"The Charity's objects ("Objects") are for the public benefit to promote and protect the health and well-being of persons with learning difficulties or other mental or physical disabilities in Bath and in such other parts of the United Kingdom as the Trustees may from time to time think fit according to Christian principles particularly but not exclusively by the provision of accommodation and other facilities to enable them to live within communities and to fulfil their individual potential."

**Our Vision** is for an inclusive world in which people with learning disabilities know they belong.

**Our Mission** is to create and model supportive community for people with learning disabilities, their families, and carers.

**Our Objectives** are to provide purposeful activities which value the holistic needs and well-being of each individual and the community; to create an environment that promotes social development and nurtures healthy relationships; and to offer platforms for people to express their uniqueness to the world around them and opportunities for those who want, to develop their faith.

#### Our Ethos

The values of The Life Project (Bath) are at the heart of who we are and what we do – they are guided by a Christian ethos. These values have strong roots in the Christian teaching and practice, whilst also being accessible and meaningful for all – regardless of background. We believe that every person is unique – fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:4) – and is a valuable gift to the world and our community.

#### Our Values

The Life Project (Bath) has four key values – Creative, Inclusive, Enabling, Community – which are detailed below:

- **Creative:** We refer to those who come along to our sessions at the Old Acorn Barn as 'Makers' to emphasise their role to come and be meaningfully, purposefully, and creatively engaged. *For Christians this name also has the added significance that we remember the first revelation of God in the Bible was as a Creator, a Maker.*
- **Inclusive:** We recognise the intrinsic value of each individual and welcome into our Life Project community adults with learning disabilities as well as family,

friends and carers from all backgrounds, all faiths and none. *Christians believe that all of humankind are made in the image of God.*

- **Enabling:** For us inclusion means enabling all people to have choices, to participate, and to undertake tasks whether these are considered ordinary or extraordinary. *Christians understand that God does not dictate our actions but offers us the choice to participate in the kingdom of God.*
- **Community:** We believe we share the responsibility to support one another through community. We understand our true selves and reach our full potential when we share life with others – respecting and celebrating differences through healthy relationships. *Christians believe in one God in three divine persons (Father, Son and Spirit), a living example of community. Although we are each unique individuals, humans are created for living together in community – one body with many parts.*

## 2.2. Ensuring Our Work Delivers Our Aims

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This review looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work in the previous 12 months. The review looks at the success of each key activity and the benefits they have brought to those groups of people we are set up to help.

The review also helps us ensure our aim, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes. We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aim and objectives and in planning our future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.

## 2.3. The Focus of Our Work

Our main objectives for 2023-2024 continued to be to promote and protect the health and well-being of persons with learning difficulties through:

- Becoming an increasingly robust organisation
- Developing a business plan that will result in becoming a financially sustainable charity.
- Continuing to improve involvement of Members and Service Users in decision making processes.
- Launching at least one new session of Day Service.

The strategies we used to meet these objectives included:

- Providing Day Services for adults with Learning Disabilities which are reflective of relevant quality standards and the ethos and values of The Life Project (Bath).
- Offering support to Parent Carers and signposting to other organisations.
- Facilitating Christian fellowship and worship for adults with learning disabilities.
- Examining options for diversifying and increasing income streams, including the potential for a charity shop.

- Reviewing the structures, systems, policies and procedures throughout the charity.

### 3. How Our Activities Deliver Public Benefit

Our main activities and who we try to help are described below. All our charitable activities focus on promoting and protecting the health and well-being of persons with learning difficulties and are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit.

In England, in 2021, 9.8 million people (or 17.7% of the population) were disabled<sup>1</sup> with 15% of working aged disabled adults reporting a learning disability<sup>2</sup> (a percentage of the population that has altered little over the past decade). “A *learning disability* is a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities – for example household tasks, socialising or managing money – which affects someone for their whole life. People with a learning disability tend to take longer to learn and may need support to develop new skills, understand complicated information and interact with other people.”<sup>3</sup> The Life Project (Bath) seeks to support and provide community for adults with learning disabilities in and around Bath. Our current Day Service provisions are concentrated on those who are typically labelled as having severe or profound learning disabilities (some people use the terms multiple and complex learning disabilities). This group of people contribute to the 6% of disabled people living in Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) whose day to day activities are limited a lot, as defined by the equality act.<sup>4</sup> In Springs we continue to include those with severe or profound needs, but we also include those with mild and moderate learning disabilities.

Those who are more severely disabled, who report being limited a lot in their day-to-day activities, are more than twice as likely to report feeling lonely “often or always” as those who said they were limited a little (25.5% and 10.5% respectively).<sup>5</sup> When it comes to learning disabilities the percentage of those living with chronic loneliness increases to 50%.<sup>6</sup> The vision of the Life Project (Bath) is to provide purposeful activities which value the holistic needs and well-being of each individual and the community, contributing the positive well being of our service users through the purposeful activities they engage with and the community we model and support.

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<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), (2023) *Disability, England and Wales: Census 2021*, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/disabilityenglandandwales/census2021>.

<sup>2</sup> Esme Kirk-Wade (2023), *UK disability statistics: Prevalence and Life Experiences*, (House of Commons Library) p.10, <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9602/CBP-9602.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Mencap, *What is a learning disability?*, <https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/what-learning-disability>.

<sup>4</sup> Rachel Harker (2023), *Constituency data: Disability, 2021 census*, (House of Commons Library), [https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/constituency-data-disability-2021-census/#single\\_constituency](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/constituency-data-disability-2021-census/#single_constituency).

<sup>5</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), *Outcomes for disabled people in the UK: 2021, Disability and loneliness dataset*, Table 2, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/outcomesfordisabledpeopleintheuk/2021>.

<sup>6</sup> Public Health England (2023), *Learning disability - applying All Our Health*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/learning-disability-applying-all-our-health/learning-disabilities-applying-all-our-health>.

Whilst 19.2% of disabled people are more likely to live with their parents than their non-disabled counterparts (16.4%) this figure rises to 65.9% for people with severe or specific learning difficulties.<sup>7</sup> At the Life Project (Bath) we are aware of the challenges presented for parent carers and hope to offer appropriate and meaningful support to the parent carers of adults with learning disabilities. This is also behind the long-term objective of the Life Project to aid with the provision of adequate housing for adults with learning disabilities.

Research demonstrates people with learning disabilities and the stories they tell that spirituality is important to them, people with learning disabilities have rich spiritual lives and want people to take this seriously as a vital dimension of the care and support they receive. People with profound and complex needs have expressed the importance of spirituality for their lives and their desire to have this acknowledged. "People with learning disabilities require access to appropriate teaching and learning materials that will enable them to participate effectively and fully in their religious tradition. People with learning disabilities should be consulted about their content."<sup>8</sup> The Life Project (Bath)'s Springs fellowship group has been meeting this need for adults with learning disabilities who express or are interested in Christian spirituality for more than 20 years in BANES. We aim to play our part in supporting local faith communities to work with people with learning disabilities, to examine whether their community and faith practices are accessible for people with different needs.

### 3.1. Day Services

**Maker's Involvement:** Maker's have fully engaged and enjoyed the variety of activities that have been inspired by the following termly themes.

- Our Summer term theme was 'People in our World.'
- Our Autumn term theme was 'Blessings; Being a blessing and being blessed.'
- Our Spring term theme was 'Working together.'

Tuesday's Makers have enjoyed developing their woodwork skills and made signs for the allotment, bird boxes, a hedgehog house, and a bug hotel. Makers have continued to have opportunities to be involved in Art, Kitchen and Productivity Sessions which they were assigned to for three consecutive weeks during the Wednesday and Thursday sessions. Additionally, movement, music and drama sessions have seen some fantastic productions; a video tribute to Englishcombe, a Christmas puppet show, an Easter re-enactment and our Makers creating their own drama around the theme of Working together.

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<sup>7</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2021), *Outcomes for Disabled People in the UK:2021*, 'Chapter 6: Housing', <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/outcomesfordisabledpeopleintheuk/2021>

<sup>8</sup> John Swinton and Elaine Powrie (2001), *Why Are We? Here Meeting the spiritual needs of people with learning disabilities* (The University of Aberdeen) [https://www.abdn.ac.uk/sdhp/content-images/Spirituality\\_and\\_the\\_Lives\\_of\\_People\\_with\\_Learning\\_Disabilities.pdf](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/sdhp/content-images/Spirituality_and_the_Lives_of_People_with_Learning_Disabilities.pdf)

Sessions at the allotment ceased between October and April. We benefitted from saving seeds from our harvest and planting them up during the Spring term. Especially exciting was to plant seeds for our annual pumpkin competition saved from last year's winner.

### **Highlights:**

- We held our first open day at the Old Acorn Barn which was well attended and all our visitors actively engaged in the various activities with our Makers.
- During the summer we were able to offer an increased number of days and variety of activities to date. We hosted a thanksgiving lunch at the barn for our neighbours in Englishcombe using produce that we had grown. We had a special LP memorial service in the village led by the Rev. Martin Blewett with contributions from our Makers. Including a poppy wreath made by Tuesday Makers.
- The Life Project Christmas Carol Service held at the village church was an opportunity to draw people together and celebrate Jesus being the Light of the World.
- Partnering with Kingswood school students. Being invited to their school for lunch and the opportunity to help them plant some fruit trees.

### **Challenges:**

- **Staffing:**  
The Spring and Summer terms saw staff working extra hard as we were one member of staff down and the position was not filled until the Autumn term when a new Cooking and Nutrition Activity Leader was appointed.  
The Day Services Coordinator has for the best part of this period worked a third day as overtime responding to staffing needs and demands of the job especially in times of staff absences.  
Staff have appreciated more contact and open communication with the trustees. They continue to be keen to encourage trustees to visit the Barn and/or the allotment.
- **Volunteers:**  
During this period of time we welcomed 4 new volunteers however we also lost two and saw a reduction in volunteering hours that pre-existing volunteers gave to the Life Project. We do really appreciate the time and input that volunteers give but as a project we should highlight that it is difficult to deliver the standard of sessions that we have been giving, without them. We shouldn't be in a position where we depend on them for our sessions to run effectively. We are down significantly on volunteers especially at the allotment.
- **Maker Changes:**  
The significant fee increase last year was of concern to a couple of our Makers who personally fund their places. A bursary supported one Maker to continue which was much appreciated. We had numerous enquiries from potential new Makers, the majority we had to sadly turn away as we were not able to meet their



physical needs or our environment at the barn was not accessible for them (sensory and/ or environmentally). In this past year we have had three new Makers and some movement of a Maker from one day to another which has brought us up to full capacity on each of the barn session days.

**Prayer points:**

- Give thanks for staff, volunteers and Makers and for the people the Lord has brought along our paths to partner and build relationships with.
- For wisdom and provisions as we plan future activities with our Makers and consider how to develop new sessions.
- That all the glory for what God has provided for the Life Project be given to Him. That we will be good stewards and managers of what He has given to us so that we will be able to continue supporting Adults with Learning Disabilities in and around Bath.

~ Esmé Zárate, Day Services Coordinator

It has been the desire of the trustees to increase the number of Day Service sessions delivered each week for the past few years. It was hoped that this would finally come to pass during the reporting period or early in the next period. Whilst the possibility of new sessions eases closer the work to become an increasingly robust organisation has identified areas for improvement within the charity's structures, systems, policies, and practices which trustees wish to address before committing to additional sessions.

### **3.2.     Springs**

In April 2023, our Springs fellowship group was full of excitement and expectation, looking forward to the King's Coronation. Springs was invited by the then Mayor of Bath, Rob Appleyard, to a Charles III Community Coronation. Our theme became "What is a King?" Members and volunteers made and designed bunting, with prayers, bible verses, and kingly qualities written on each flag. They reflected on the true King of Kings - our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. All their efforts were displayed and admired by the whole community and on 6th May they joined in the celebrations and enjoyed sharing afternoon tea with the Mayor himself, who has now become a Trustee of Life Project (Bath)!

It was also a joy for Springs members to celebrate with 'No Limits', another like-minded fellowship group in Trowbridge, when in April 2023 they celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In June, Springs volunteers started meeting together regularly to pray. We pray for Springs, and the wider Life Project, inviting Jesus to be front and centre in all we do, seeking His inspiration and guidance. As an offshoot of this it was agreed with members to hold a special Springs session of extended prayer and worship, made even more special when Sarah Couchman, who first established Springs, joined us virtually and shared a beautiful message for us all.

Our summer social was held at the Life Project's Old Acorn Barn in Englishcombe. It was a fantastic evening, blessed by good weather, delicious barbecue food, and karaoke! We were joined by Rev Kenny Nelson, pastor of the Elim church, Bath. He enjoyed the company of our lovely members so much that he too has become a Trustee and has now felt called to become our new Life Project Chaplain!

In late summer some of our Springs members had the joy of going to Lourdes with Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust (HCPT). It was an amazing week of fellowship, worship, fun, friendship, and lots of new experiences. God's presence was tangible, it was an unforgettable experience.

During the autumn term our chosen theme was "blessings". We prayed, worshipped, and discussed the many ways that the Lord has showered His blessings upon us. Springs members came up with creative and generous ideas for reaching out and blessing others. To put this into action, Springs members held a Christmas service in a nearby Care Home. One of our members prepared a short talk and another sang a solo. We all sang Christmas carols, and prayers by one of our members were enjoyed and appreciated. Beautiful handmade Christmas cards were presented to residents by our members. Over 30 residents and staff joined in the celebration. The evening ended perfectly by watching a film (produced by one of our member's parents), of all of Springs singing and signing a song known as "The Blessing". It was a great way for residents to meet members who unfortunately were unable to be present due to lack of space. Those absent didn't miss out though as there was a parallel Springs session held at the cricket club with a big surprise - none other than our well-loved Sarah Couchman led the session and then whole group came together again for some reflective conversation and well-earned refreshment.

No sooner had we sung our hearts out at the Care Home, than we started preparing for Life Project Christmas Carol Service, led by Kenny, our new Chaplain, and held at St Peter's church, Englishcombe. Our Springs members were fully involved, and the church was filled to capacity. Our last Spring's session of the year was celebrated in party style with a fabulous bring and share Christmas supper. Our CEO, joined us and kept us amused by leading Christmas bingo with lots of his jokes thrown in!

At the beginning of the year we welcomed a local student to Springs who journeyed with us for several months as he chose to fulfil his volunteering challenge for his Duke of Edinburgh award through volunteering with us. Thank you, it was great having you as part of the Springs family.

For the Spring term we chose to cover the "I am" statements of Jesus. We have been steadily working through these and they have produced some incredible reflections and statements by many of our members. Members were asked to choose their favourite worship songs and lead a session, ably assisted by a volunteer. They have produced some incredible art and craft work and some serious and genuine reflection has ensued. We are particularly grateful to Paul Bright, another Life Project Trustee who has visited us on several occasions and has recently stepped in at the last minute to lead worship

on the keyboard. Speaking of Trustees, we are delighted that our very own Kay has also become a Trustee of the Life Project.

Alongside our usual Springs evenings, our members have greatly enjoyed The Life Project socials - the ever-popular curry evening, St Philips pantomime, zoom quiz night, Mexican Barn dance and auction of promises. One of our members, has even made and sold her craft at some of these events to raise funds for the Life Project. The next exciting event with Springs participation is abseiling down St John's Tower in Keynsham ... but you'll have to wait for the next Report to hear all about that!

Springs is led by a wonderful team of volunteers. If you're interested in volunteering, please do get in touch, you won't regret it!

~ Elizabeth Riley & Kay Labate, Springs Co-Facilitators.

Having reached capacity last year, this reporting period has been an opportunity to learn and reflect on the potential ways forward. There continues to be interest from new members who we are currently unable to accommodate, and we hope that the next reporting period will new opportunities open up without losing the essence of what Springs is all about.

### **3.3. Family Support**

It was with a sense of sadness that we have had to bring our Parent Carer Drop-In's to a close. For six years we had offered Drop-In sessions for Parent Carers at the Weston Hub, Bath and from March to July 2023 we were able to pilot a similar drop-in at Radstock Baptist Church.

The reason for this work coming to a close was three-fold:

- A lack of ongoing funding.
- The numbers attending the Bath Drop-In didn't ever really recover following the covid pandemic and so the group was not cost—effective to run.
- The majority of the parent carers attending were of young children with neurodiverse needs rather than learning disabilities.

A few comments from parents who have been supported over the years include:

"It has been an absolute lifeline over the years and I'm so grateful for everyone's kind support."

"The support we received was incredible and we will always be thankful for the group."

"This group was my saviour place. It got me out of the house and my isolation and depression... it has been such a wonderful group."

In bringing this work to a close the trustees knew that it would be difficult for the parents who had been benefitting from the support offered and we have sought to direct them to

the provision of BaNES [Carers Centre](http://www.banescarerscentre.org.uk) which offers support for the friends and families helping their loved ones get the best out of life.

The Carers Centre website states, “Looking after a partner, friend or family member due to old age, illness, disability, mental health difficulties or an addiction can be very rewarding. However, without the right support in place it can take a toll on our physical and mental wellbeing. We’re here to help people stay happy and healthy in their caring role.”

- Website: [www.banescarerscentre.org.uk](http://www.banescarerscentre.org.uk)
- Freephone Support Line: **0800 0388 885** (Monday – Friday, 9am – 1pm)
- Email: [support@banescarerscentre.org.uk](mailto:support@banescarerscentre.org.uk)

However, as a charity we remain committed to supporting parent carers and the wider family of those with learning disabilities.

Retreats and Socials continue to be organised for parent carers throughout the year and we are planning to survey the parent carers of those who access our Day Services and Springs to understand the needs of Parent Carers at this stage in their life’s journey – when their children are in adulthood and housing and care needs change.

### **3.4. Socials & Events**

Throughout the year as part of our aim to create an environment that promotes social development and nurtures healthy relationships we organise socials and special events. Some of these double as fundraising initiatives or are organised by outside agencies for the enjoyment of the Life Project Community.

During this reporting year service users and supporters enjoyed the annual Curry Night at Manvers Street Baptist Church and Virtual Quiz Night. One of our new trustees, Kay Labate, organised a wonderful Mexican Fiesta with Barn Dance and Auction of Talents with the support of Lucis Choir.

Members of All Saints Church, Weston, organised a fantastic art sale and exhibition, with local artists and also included art works produced by Parent Carers and some of our Makers.

We held a Carol Service in St Peters Church, Englishcombe, bringing together members of the local community and our Life Project community as Makers and members of Springs led an amazing puppet show, carol singing and prayer.

And, it has now become something of a tradition for a group from the Life Project to attend the Pantomime performed at St Philip and St James Church, Bath to the enjoyment of everyone involved.

### **3.5. Resourcing Team**

With a significant change of trustees during the reporting period the Grant Writing Team and Fundraising Team lost several key members. In response a new Resourcing Team has been formed with a view to coordinating the fundraising and grant applications for the Life Project.

Terms of References have been drafted and the first applications for this newly formed team have been submitted.

The team are working to develop a fundraising strategy and diary of events alongside focussed grant applications for specific needs and projects.

Having met a few times it is recognised that there are key skills that would be beneficial to the team and they hope to recruit these in the coming months, having a team of five volunteers (including at least one trustee) to oversee the resourcing of the Life Project.

### **3.6. Structures and Systems**

For the Life Project (Bath) to become an increasingly robust organisation work has been underway to improve structures and systems.

In the region of 70 policies have been identified for review or development with approximately half of these completed within the past year. Priorities include Safeguarding, Health and Safety, and Human Resources and where necessary steps are being taken to improve practices (including training and information sessions), this includes the planning for a Health and Safety Roadmap.

Life Project Members have met periodically during the year, appointing a chairperson and raising points of interest and ideas with trustees, responding to trustee enquiries, and praying for the Life Project.

The Fundraising Team and Grant Team concluded with the retirement of members/trustees in July 2023. A new group has formed, The Resource Team, as of Autumn 2023, that encompasses both community fundraising and grant applications. The team has already supported some successful fundraising events and made an application for funding. It is hoped the team will grow and bring in some specialist knowledge in the coming year.

All staff and trustees now have access to the tools available through Microsoft 365 – improving file sharing and access, as well as data protection. The roll out of all the features that will benefit the Life Project is an ongoing process.

## **4. Financial Review**

### **4.1. Principal Funding Sources**

The main source of income for the year was from fees charged for Day Services activities (£58,617, an increase of around £17.5k from the previous year, reflecting higher sessional fees as agreed in March 2023). Fees have been increased again in 2024, and so Day Services should continue to be broadly self-sufficient over the coming year.

Donation income was also up on the previous year, from £20,694 to £37,867 – this includes accrued income of £10,000 (a legacy payment, due in the early autumn) – but also reflects an overall increase of around £3.5k in both regular and one-off donations.

Fund-raising income has remained fairly constant at around £9k, and looking ahead, it seems that this figure reflects the capacity within the charity for fund-raising activity.

Grant funding was limited to £1500 from Gardening with Disabilities towards the development of the allotment; however, since the end of financial year, we have received a grant of £10,000 from Garfield Weston towards core costs, and with other applications in process we should be in a strong position to continue work on the allotment, as well as moving towards expanding our weekly provision at the Barn and consolidating the Springs ministry.

### **4.2. Investment Policy**

The Life Project holds funds in an instant access Deposit Account as well as a 90-day notice Treasurer's Reserve Account, in order to gain interest on funds held. Both accounts are with Triodos Bank, which has a strong ethical investments policy. We may be in a position to move further funds from our current account into the Reserve Account as the year progresses.

### **4.3. Reserves Policy**

The Trustees have agreed that we should continue to hold three months of operating costs (currently around £25,000) in reserve, as a contingency should unrestricted income decrease unexpectedly.

## **5. Plans for Future Periods**

The trustees maintain their commitment for the Life Project to meet its Vision, Mission and Objectives through Day Services, the Springs Fellowship Group, Family Support, and Homes.

Our main objectives for 2023-2024 continued to be to promote and protect the health and well-being of persons with learning difficulties through:

- Becoming an increasingly robust organisation
- Developing a business plan that will result in becoming a financially sustainable charity.
- Continuing to improve involvement of Members and Service Users in decision making processes.
- Launching at least one new session of Day Service.

With a view to becoming an increasingly robust organisation an HR Review was commissioned to evaluate current roles and conduct a comprehensive salary analysis to ensure fair compensation and effective job descriptions within the organisation. A review of policies and procedures has resulted in an Health and Safety Road Map which is ready for implementation. The adoption of improved IT systems is ongoing, with time and training required to bring all staff and volunteers to the required standards and understanding, as well as now recognising additional tools (e.g. Customer Relationships Management (CRM)) that will bring improved productivity and record keeping.

Springs has reached capacity and there is a now a need to support the volunteer team and members of Springs to consider carefully any next steps, to understand preferences and possibilities for growing the group further. It might be necessary for the group to consider meeting in alternative ways and places to continue to meet needs of members, those who are unable to attend due to capacity, and to ensure a healthy and well-supported team.

The Life Project remains committed to Family Support, and following the closure of the Parent Carer Drop-In sessions the trustees are keen to understand the needs of Parent Carers, and other family members, supporting adults with learning disabilities (ie. The parent carers of Makers and Members of Springs). Before investing anew into Family Support the Life Project needs to understand the needs and the support that exists locally.

The trustees have the following objectives for 2024-2025:

- **Day Services: A Year of Consolidation**  
This will include - maintaining the excellent service and community we offer for adults with learning disabilities; reviewing and implementing recommendations from the HR Review; implementing the Health and Safety Roadmap; training and equipping staff with the necessary IT tools; producing a clear plan for the development of the Barn and Allotment; review Maker transport needs.
- **Springs: Planning for Growth**  
This will include – continuing to equip and resource volunteers and Members to make decisions and lead sessions; supporting the team to evaluate options for growth and to plan a way forward; improving management/ supervision support to the Springs team.
- **Family Support: Researching Needs**  
This will include – offering periodic socials and/or retreats through to at least the end of the calendar year to meet with parent carers and other family members

informally; commissioning a survey of Parent Carers of our service users to understand their needs and existing support provision.

- **Homes: No Actions**

The trustees remain interested in homes and would explore options if an opportunity were to present itself. However, it is agreed priorities lie in other work areas and there is no objective to take forward Homes this year.

- **Resourcing: Recruitment & Strategy**

This will include – recruiting to the Resourcing Team; a calendar of fundraising initiatives and events; fundraising strategy.

## **6. Structure, Governance and Management**

### **6.1. Governing Document**

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. The company was incorporated on 22 March 2011. The company was registered as a charity on 17 June 2011.

### **6.2. Recruitment and Appointment of Board of Trustees**

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law.

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as members of the Board of Trustees. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association the members of the Board of Trustees are elected to serve for a period of three years after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting.

All members of the Board of Trustees give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 4 to the accounts.

The Board of Trustees seeks to ensure that the needs people with learning disabilities are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. Due to the nature of learning disabilities this representation typically comes through parent carers sitting on the board. Of the current 9 trustees, 2 are parent carers of adults with learning disabilities.

The board represents a broad mix of skills identified as beneficial to the trustees. In an effort to maintain this broad skill mix, members of the Board of Trustees are requested to provide a list of their skills (and update it each year) and in the event of new skills being identified as necessary or particular skills being lost due to retirements, individuals are approached to offer themselves for election to the Board of Trustees.



### **6.3. Trustee Induction and Training**

Induction is seen as a key element in retaining and supporting trustees. New trustees are invited to visit Life Project activities, sessions and events to become familiar with the work of the charity. All trustees are encouraged to make a project visit at least once per calendar year.

The chair and CEO have been reviewing the information and training provided to new trustees with a view to improving Trustee Induction.

New Trustees will be provided with a Trustee Induction Checklist, which outlines:

- Assigning a mentor
- Training and Compliance
- IT and Login Information
- Essential Information and Documents (inc. Memorandum and Articles, Obligations of Trustees, Current Financial Position & latest published accounts, Policies, Future plans and objectives).

The Life Project (Bath) is a member of the local third sector network 3SG and access to the training, support and guidance is available to trustees.

### **6.4. Risk Management**

The Board of Trustees takes seriously the potential risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register has been established, is reviewed at each trustee meeting and is updated at least annually. Each risk is assigned to trustee as a lead responsibility. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers, service users and visitors. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity.

### **6.5. Organisational Structure**

The Life Project (Bath) has a Board of Trustees who meet at least four times per year and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. At present the Committee has nine members from a variety of professional backgrounds relevant to the work of the charity.

A scheme of delegation is in place and day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rest with the Chief Executive along with the Day Services Coordinator. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met. The Day Services Coordinator has responsibility for the day to day operational management of the Day Services, individual supervision of the staff team and also ensuring that the team continue to develop their skills and working practices in line with good practice.

## **6.6. Related Parties**

In so far as it is complimentary to the charity's objects, the charity is guided by both local and national policy.

## **7. Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees**

Company law requires the Board of Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the Board of Trustees should follow best practice and:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is not appropriate to assume that the company will continue on that basis.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for maintaining 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 1985. The Board of Trustees is 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.

### **7.1. Members of the Board of Trustees**

Members of the Board of Trustees, who are directors for the purpose of company law and trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out on page 3.

In accordance with company law, as the company's directors, we certify that:

- So far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's Independent Examiners are unaware; and
- as the directors of the company, we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's Independent Examiners are aware of that information.

## **8. Independent Examiner**

Colin Goater was re-appointed as the charitable company's auditors during the year and has expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity. This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (issued in March 2005) and in accordance with the special provisions of Part VII of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small entities.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on *11<sup>th</sup> September 2024* and signed on its behalf by:



**Ben Stokes (Chair)**

## 9. Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of The Life Project (Bath)

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2024.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your 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**

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:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 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.

Name: COLIN MICHAEL GOATER

Signed:

Colin M Goater

Address: **102 Freeview Road, Bath BA2 1DZ**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

<b>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE</b>		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds	Total Funds
		Funds	Funds	2024	2023
<b>INCOME</b>	Note	£	£	£	£
Donations		37,867	0	37,867	20,694
Gift aid on donations		1,235	0	1,235	1,472
Grants receivable		0	1500	1,500	20,000
Contributions towards activities		58,587	30	58,617	41,173
Fundraising income		8,976	0	8,976	8,688
Interest on bank		777	0	777	322
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>107,444</b>	<b>1,530</b>	<b>108,974</b>	<b>92,349</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
<b>Fundraising costs</b>		<b>901</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>1157</b>
<b>Charitable Activities</b>					
Staff costs		76,048	2,738	78,786	81,640
Staff expenses		1,101	0	1,101	2,749
Staff training & development		25	0	25	
Day Services running costs		11,916	0	11,916	10,238
Family Support running costs		0	922	922	3,750
Allotment		178	216	394	39
Springs / Mini Springs Costs		0	293	293	314
Administration		2,558	0	2,558	3,250
Insurance		616	0	616	772
Professional fees		355	0	355	384
Accountancy costs		250	0	250	250
		93,047	4,169	97,216	103,385
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>93,948</b>	<b>4,169</b>	<b>98,117</b>	<b>104,542</b>
Net (expenditure)/income for the year	3	13,496	(2,638)	10,856	(12,193)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April		55,689	4,905	60,594	72,787
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March		69,185	2,264	71,449	60,594

All of the charity's operations are classed as continuing.  
The notes on pages 22 to 26 form part of these accounts.  
See Note 2 for fund accounting comparative figures.

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors – Gift Aid + fees		2,146	1,472
Prepayments		1,201	1,152
Accrued income		10,595	186
Cash at bank		59,429	62,060
		<hr/> 73,371	<hr/> 64,869
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>			
Accruals and deferred income	5	1,922	4,276
		<hr/> 71,449	<hr/> 60,594
<b>Net Current Assets</b>			
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>			
Restricted	6	2,264	4,905
Unrestricted	7	69,185	55,689
		<hr/> 71,449	<hr/> 60,594
<b>Total Charity Funds</b>			

The Trustees are satisfied that the company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477, and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- (i) ensuring that the company keeps adequate accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act, and
- (ii) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006. These accounts have been delivered in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Trustees on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and signed on their behalf by



Name: ..... (Ben Stokes)  
September 2024

Date: 11<sup>th</sup>

**COMPANY NO. 07573284** The notes on pages 22 to 26 form part of these accounts.

## **NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

### **Note 1: Accounting Policies**

#### *Basis of preparation*

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 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006. Life Project (Bath) 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 note(s).

#### *Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis*

The trustees have considered the immediate future of the charity for the next 12 to 18 months and consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

#### *Income recognition*

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.

Income is deferred only when the charity has to fulfil conditions before becoming entitled to it or where the donor has specified that the income is to be expended in a future period.

Grants and donations are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which they are receivable and are allocated to the appropriate fund.

Investment income is included when receivable.

#### *Expenditure recognition and irrecoverable VAT*

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accrual basis in the year in which the expenditure is incurred.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. As the charity has only one activity, all costs are allocated against the charitable activity. They include attributable VAT which cannot be recovered.

#### *Fund accounting*

Funds held by the charity are:

- Unrestricted general funds – these are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees.
- Restricted funds – these are funds that can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

## **NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (continued)**

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the accounts.

### **Note 2: Prior Year Comparatives**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023
<b>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE</b>	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>			
Donations	20,694	0	20,694
Gift aid on donations	1,472	0	1,472
Grants receivable	10,000	10,000	20,000
Contributions towards activities	40,701	472	41,173
Fundraising income	8,688	0	8,688
Interest on bank	322	0	322
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>81,877</b>	<b>10,472</b>	<b>92,349</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
<b>Fundraising costs</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,157</b>
<b>Charitable Activities</b>			
Staff costs	64,165	17,474	81,640
Staff expenses	2,509	240	2,749
Day Services running costs	10,213	25	10,238
Family Support running costs	0	3,750	3,750
Allotment	11	28	39
Springs / Mini Springs Costs	0	314	314
Administration	3,250	0	3,250
Insurance	772	0	772
Professional fees	384	0	384
Accountancy costs	250	0	250
	81,553	21,832	103,385
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>82,710</b>	<b>21,832</b>	<b>104,542</b>
Net (expenditure)/income for the year	(833)	(11,360)	(12,193)





**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (continued)**

**Note 3: Net Income/(Expenditure) for the year**

This is stated after charging:	2024 £	2023 £	
Independent examiner's remuneration		250	250

**Note 4: Staff Costs and Related Party Transactions**

	<b>2024 Total</b>	<b>2023 Total</b>
Gross wages and salaries	75,789	78,318
Pension contributions	2,996	3,321
	<u>78,785</u>	<u>81,640</u>

**Note**

None of the Trustees receive fees or reimbursed expenses in respect of their trusteeship.

The value of waived expenses were not considered significant. There are no other related party transactions that require disclosure in the accounts.

The aggregate value of donations received from Trustees and related parties was £715.  
(2023 - £1,050).

The Trustees considers its key management personnel is the Chief Executive who received total employment benefits of £28,343. No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000.

	2024 Number	2023 Number
The average number of persons employed as full-time or full-time equivalents by the charity during the year is detailed below.		
Management	1.0	1.0
Carers / other	1.6	1.6
	<u>2.6</u>	<u>2.6</u>

The average headcount during the year was 7.3 (2023 – 7.5).

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (continued)

### Note 5: Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
HMRC liabilities	762	1,896
Other accruals	853	2,380
Deferred income	307	0
	<u>1922</u>	<u>4,276</u>

### Note 6: Restricted Funds

	Spring s	Barn activities & allotment	Family support t	Totals
b/f 1 April 2023	1,273	0	3,630	4,903
Income	0	1500	30	1530
Expenditure	293	216	3660	4169
c/f 31 Mar 2024	<u>980</u>	<u>1284</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2264</u>

#### *Purpose of Funds:*

**Springs** - Springs caters for adults with learning disabilities which meets twice a month in the evening, supported by volunteers.

**Barn Activities and Allotment** - Grant to improve and develop the allotment.

**Family Support** - project closed down during the year, remaining funds used for running costs and salary.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (continued)**

**Note 7: Unrestricted Funds**

	<b>Balance at 1 April 2023</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expendit ure</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2024</b>
	£	£	£	£
General Fund	55,689	107,444	93,948	69,185
Total	55,689	107,444	93,948	69,185

**Note 8: Analysis of Net Assets between Funds**

	<b>General Funds £</b>	<b>Restricted Funds £</b>	<b>Total Funds £</b>
Current assets + debtors	13,942	0	13,942
Cash at bank	57,165	2,264	59,429
Current liabilities	1922	0	1922
TOTAL	69,185	2,264	71,449

**Note 9: Bank Balances 31 March 2024**

	£
Petty Cash	0
Current Account	28,140
Deposit Account	10,281
Treasurer's Account	21,008
TOTAL	59,429