

Company no. 07956732
Charity no. 1146165

West of England Rural Network
Report and Unaudited Financial
Statements
31 March 2024

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The Rural Community Council for the West of England

West of England Rural Network

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Company number	07956732	
Charity number	1146165	
Registered office	5th Floor, Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD	
Correspondence address	PO Box 1237 Bristol BS40 8WJ	
Trustees	Trustees, who are also directors under company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:	
	Georgina Bigg	
	Laura Penny	
	Samantha Ross	
	Frances Tyson	resigned 30 July 2023
	Peter Tyzack	
	Edith Whittingham	appointed 14 December 2023
	Jane Wildblood	appointed 14 December 2023
Executive director	Chris Head	until June 2024
Company secretary	Chris Head Richard Whittington	resigned 17 June 2024 appointed 17 June 2024
Bankers	Cambridge & Counties Bank Charnwood Court 5b New Walk Leicester LE1 6TE	Monmouthshire Building Society Monmouthshire House John Frost Square Newport South Wales NP20 1PX
	The Co-operative Bank PO Box 250 Delf House Skelmersdale WN8 6WT	Redwood Bank The Nexus Building Broadway Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3TA
Independent examiners	Godfrey Wilson Limited Chartered accountants and statutory auditors 5th Floor, Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD	

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities (effective from January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

West of England Rural Network's objects are:

To promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community in the West of England (being areas of North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire) and in particular that of the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage, the advancement of citizenship or community development, the advancement of education or by pursuing any other charitable purposes.

West of England Rural Network's aims and intended impacts:

The aim of the West of England Rural Network is to work with communities, organisations, groups and individuals across the West of England to improve the quality of life for local communities, particularly in the rural areas, by understanding their needs, working with them towards improving services to achieve a sustainable and viable future.

The West of England Rural Network champions the goal of sustainable communities, and acts as "rural and community advocate" within the area, as part of the wider family of Rural Community Councils and Local VCSE Infrastructure Organisations. Our strategic principles and aims are:

- Supporting and encouraging community-led action and strong local governance;
- Increasing long-term sustainability of local community life; and
- Influencing policies and services to achieve equity for communities, especially in rural areas.

Public benefit statement

The trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when establishing and reviewing its aims and objectives, and for planning future activities.

In line with guidance from the Charity Commission, the trustees are satisfied that the West of England Rural Network continues to have significant charitable purpose, and delivers very tangible public benefit through its involvement in the following areas of its activities:

1. **Strategic support** - we have supported, influenced and informed other organisations and bodies where specialist infrastructure expertise is required in order to achieve equity for people living in rural communities;
2. **Broadband and digital** – our focus is working with communities to provide encouragement and basic training for people who find it difficult to engage with IT and are therefore at risk of becoming increasingly disadvantaged and isolated;
3. **Access to services and community transport** – we continue to support communities in the development of local services and to identify and analyse access to local services. We have supported community transport groups across the West of England, who in turn assist vulnerable and isolated individuals;
4. **Fuel poverty** - we support measures to combat and improve awareness of fuel poverty in communities which will seek to relieve those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage;

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Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2024

5. **Village halls and community assets** – we understand and value the importance to communities of their own assets. Through the facilitation and support of communities we have assisted in proactive engagement and action planning to create sustainable communities, helping them maintain and run these assets on a voluntary basis;
6. **Village agents** - by focusing on the needs of isolated and vulnerable people who have not in the past asked for assistance, the Village Agents have identified and linked people with organisations and services who are able to support and help; and
7. **Social enterprise support and funding advice** - through providing business planning support, training and funding advice for projects in rural areas, we support community based social enterprises to become sustainable economically.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

WERN has maintained a wide portfolio of activities and has built on its active role in the voluntary and community sector throughout the West of England. Our small organisation is well networked and highly regarded by partners. We have continued to maintain and develop our role as a community focused organisation with a deep understanding of rural issues.

Partnership and collaboration

We work both formally and informally with other VCSE organisations across the West of England to increase our reach and delivery for the benefit of all our communities.

Working with communities

Our aim of supporting, facilitating and encouraging community led action and strong local governance is key to our organisational purpose. Over the years we have been able to support communities to find, create and deliver their own solutions through information, advice and guidance. We use an asset-based community development approach, building on what works well to ensure solutions are sustainable.

Volunteering

We support community organisations that rely on volunteers to make them work - such as village halls, community shops and community transport schemes.

The key achievements in the period of this report include:

- Our Village Agents in Bath and North East Somerset now serve the whole rural area, the towns of Midsomer Norton and Radstock, and parts of Bath. The project is jointly funded by HCRG Care Group as part of the adult social care commission with B&NES Council;
- The Rural Moves project provided opportunity for contact and support with the older isolated people in the Chew and Somer Valleys in the rural part of Bath & North East Somerset who had been participants in the Rural Links programme to increase their mobility and activity levels. We are grateful to Wesport and Quartet for their support;
- Working with Curo, our Village Agents operating across rural North Somerset as part of the district wide Community Connect project continued to provide a critical link for rurally isolated and vulnerable older people, and demand for their services continues to increase;
- We continued to facilitate community development in North Somerset, supported by three- year funding from St Monica's Trust. We were able to continue our successful 'Tea and Tech' programme thanks to funding from North Somerset Community Partnership and Wessex Water in conjunction with Quartet Community Foundation;

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Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2024

- We also helped to run two programmes in North Somerset through Government's 'Shared Prosperity Fund' – one working across the county to develop social activities such as craft and cookery classes encouraging greater participation and involvement, and one under the 'Power to Pill' banner working to encourage positive community development at village level;
- In partnership with South Gloucestershire Council we continued to develop our Village Agent service in the more rural part of the authority, working with the community at 'hyper-local' level through four area based 'Steering Groups';
- In partnership with Voscur, we continued to convene and lead the Community Transport Network, providing groups to share common problems and develop solutions where necessary. Locally we continued to support three CT schemes at committee level;
- Village halls are a vital community owned asset across the West of England. We helped halls with a variety of issues from constitutional matters to fundraising, including helping three halls apply to ACRE's Platinum Jubilee Village Hall fund;
- Our Community Oil Buying Scheme has 170 members and last year helped members order nearly 300,000 litres of heating oil collectively saving them some £25,000. Building on previous years' partnership with Quartet Community Foundation we were again able to offer free membership to the Community Oil Buying Scheme to people over 70; and
- We continued to work with our voluntary sector infrastructure partners under the umbrella of the West of England Civil Society Partnership, building a strong relationship with the Bristol, North Somerset South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, including the creation of the 'volunteer Alliance' – helping a wide range of VCSE organisations work with the NHS locally. We continued to lead on VCSE engagement at a system level for the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care System. This has helped us to raise the profile of rural issues, which can otherwise get lost in a largely urban-focused system.

Details of use of volunteers

Most of the activities and projects we are involved in are run by, and/or supported by volunteers. We have a limited number of 'WERN volunteers' but we support and work with volunteers in most of our activities, not least village halls, where a significant majority are volunteer-run. Supporting local trustees is an important part of our work programme.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial performance and going concern

In the year under review, WERN's accounts show a deficit of nearly £69,000. The trustees have noted that this is substantially due to the amount of funding received in advance in previous years, if this had been shown on a matching basis the outcome would have been a small surplus. Under charity financial reporting rules (the SORP) such income has to be recognised in the accounts when it is awarded. Taking a longer view, the trustees are confident that WERN remains financially sound, and can therefore continue to operate as a going concern.

Reserves policy

The trustees regularly consider the reserves held by the charity and have set a target of holding three months' expenditure in reserve. As at the end of March 2024 unrestricted reserves amounted to £87,933 - very close to the three-month target.

The trustees designated an unrestricted fund of £40,000 at the end of March 2023 to cover the costs of closing down if required.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Main sources of funding

Our funding has come from a number of sources this year, including:

- ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) as part of the national Rural Community Council agreement with Dept of the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs;
- Bath & North East Somerset Council for Village Agents in B&NES;
- HCRG Care Group Ltd (formerly Virgin Care Ltd) for Village Agents in B&NES;
- South Gloucestershire Council for supporting a Village Agent pilot scheme, now in its second year;
- Curo for Village Agents in North Somerset, operating as part of Community Connect, funded by North Somerset Council;
- Sport England (via Wesport) for Rural Moves, providing physical exercise opportunities for older people;
- Quartet Community Foundation for the Community Oil buying scheme and various projects linking with our Village Agents;
- North Somerset Council have funded two projects as part of its Shared Prosperity Programme, funded by government:
 - 'Tea and Try It', a programme of craft and social activities encouraging older people to get involved, and
 - 'Power to Pill', a development programme aiming to support social inclusion; and
- West of England Combined Authority supporting our Chew Valley Community Transport volunteer car scheme.

How expenditure has supported charitable objectives

The income of West of England Rural Network is applied solely towards the fulfilment of the charitable objects.

Investment policy

Where appropriate WERN seeks to invest funds to try and ensure that value is maintained in real terms. Our general approach is to use fixed term and notice deposits rather than higher risk investments.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Main objectives for the next year

We will continue to develop our three Village Agent programmes, including making best use of 'Charity Log', our secure CRM system. All three projects are likely to face significant funding decisions within the next eighteen months, so one of our key activities will be to ensure that monitoring and development put them in the best possible position in what is likely to be a difficult funding environment.

We will continue to focus on community infrastructure support, where we recognise the need to strengthen our support for Village Halls and Community Transport providers. As part of the wider ACRE Network, we are fortunate to be able to call on support from our fellow members, particular in supporting Village Halls.

At more strategic level, we will continue to work with local authority partners to ensure that the needs of rural communities are recognised at Local Authority and West of England level. Our work with partner VCS infrastructure organisations through informal networks will continue to play an important part in making sure the voice of rural communities is heard and acted upon in an area with largely urban priorities.

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Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Looking ahead, environmental issues are likely to become increasingly important to our rural communities, not least in response to the new planning policies. We will aim to work with local communities, in partnership with others, to encourage initiatives that address climate change and biodiversity, while recognising issues such as the role of farming communities in food security, and the need for rural affordable housing and a just transition to net zero.

WERN will aim to work with leading local organisations to spread the word and engage communities in positive change.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Legal status, date of incorporation and date of charity registration

The organisation is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 20 February 2012 and its objects and powers are set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The organisation was registered at the Charity Commission on 29 February 2012.

Details of governing document

The articles prohibit any distribution of funds to trustees other than for proper reimbursement of costs incurred on the company's business.

Method of recruiting and appointing new trustees

In accordance with the articles at the first annual general meeting all the trustees retired and stood for re-appointment. At each subsequent annual general meeting one third of the trustees must retire from office. Under a bye law adopted by the board in December 2018, trustees can only serve for three years and must then retire. They may stand for re-election for up to a third term but are not eligible for subsequent re-election thereafter.

The trustees have appointed a chair, and membership is open to other individuals. Trustees may appoint additional individuals who can bring specific skills to the charity. Formal induction and training for any new trustees is provided as required.

Organisational structure and decision making

West of England Rural Network is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Our governing document is the Articles of Association. The trustees meet regularly to discuss the strategic direction of the charity, ensure its core aims and objects are being met in the most efficient way, and to take account of any risks to the charity and make sure all legal obligations are satisfied.

Outside these meetings, operational matters are handled by the executive director and staff team.

Related parties

There are no subsidiaries or charities controlled by the same trustees. All trustees have completed a declaration of interests form so that potential related parties can be identified.

Risk statement

The trustees have considered the major risks faced by the charity and have put in place a risk register alongside systems and controls to mitigate them. Risks are regularly monitored using the risk register at trustee meetings.

West of England Rural Network

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charitable company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £10 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2024 was 6. The trustees are members of the charitable company but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charitable company.

Independent examiners

Godfrey Wilson Limited were re-appointed as independent examiners to the charitable company during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 2 September 2024 and signed on their behalf by



Samantha Ross - Chair

Independent examiner's report

To the members of

West of England Rural Network

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of West of England Rural Network (the charitable company) for the year ended 31 March 2024, which are set out on pages 9 to 25.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charitable 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 charitable 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 the charitable company'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 charitable company's 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 member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

Godfrey Wilson Limited also provides payroll bureau services to the charitable company. I confirm that as a member of the ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the charitable company 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 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
- (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.

Rob Wilson

Date: 2 September 2024

Robert Wilson FCA, member of the ICAEW

For and on behalf of:

Godfrey Wilson Limited

Chartered accountants and statutory auditors

5th Floor, Mariner House

62 Prince Street

Bristol, BS1 4QD

West of England Rural Network

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Income from:					
Donations	3	196,276	-	196,276	241,164
Charitable activities	4	-	131,897	131,897	160,631
Other trading activities	5	-	1,470	1,470	1,470
Investments		-	7,692	7,692	2,632
Total income		<u>196,276</u>	<u>141,059</u>	<u>337,335</u>	<u>405,897</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	5,750	5,750	2,833
Charitable activities		<u>234,243</u>	<u>166,328</u>	<u>400,571</u>	<u>369,369</u>
Total expenditure	7	<u>234,243</u>	<u>172,078</u>	<u>406,321</u>	<u>372,202</u>
Net income / (expenditure)		(37,967)	(31,019)	(68,986)	33,695
Transfers between funds		<u>990</u>	<u>(990)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds	9	(36,977)	(32,009)	(68,986)	33,695
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		<u>146,794</u>	<u>159,942</u>	<u>306,736</u>	<u>273,041</u>
Total funds carried forward		<u><u>109,817</u></u>	<u><u>127,933</u></u>	<u><u>237,750</u></u>	<u><u>306,736</u></u>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 15 to the accounts.

West of England Rural Network

Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2024

	Note	£	2024 £	2023 £
Current assets				
Debtors	12	3,486		737
Cash at bank and in hand		162,079		233,843
Current asset investments		<u>83,338</u>		<u>80,000</u>
		248,903		314,580
Liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	13	<u>(11,153)</u>		<u>(7,844)</u>
Net current assets			<u>237,750</u>	<u>306,736</u>
Net assets	14		<u>237,750</u>	<u>306,736</u>
Funds	15			
Restricted funds			109,817	146,794
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds			40,000	81,295
General funds			<u>87,933</u>	<u>78,647</u>
Total charity funds			<u>237,750</u>	<u>306,736</u>

The directors 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(2), and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- ensuring that the company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act; and
- 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 are prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

Approved by the trustees on 2 September 2024 and signed on their behalf by



Samantha Ross - Chair

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

West of England Rural Network is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales. The registered office address is 5th floor, Mariner House, 62 Prince Street, Bristol, BS1 4QD.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in 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) and the Companies Act 2006.

West of England Rural Network 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.

b) Going concern basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern, which the trustees consider appropriate having regard to the current level of unrestricted reserves. There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

c) Conduit funding

The charity does not include income and expenditure in the SOFA for project partners for whom they act as agent by collecting donations and passing them on. The amount of such income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024 was £nil (2023: £1,000).

d) Income

Income is recognised when the charitable company has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the items of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from the government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charitable company has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charitable company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charitable company. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charitable company's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charitable company.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Grants payable

Grants payable are recognised as expenditure on the earlier of a) when the charity has a present obligation to transfer resources; and b) when the charity ceases to control the resource (e.g. via transferring funds to the grant recipient).

h) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

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

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

i) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated in full to charitable activities.

j) Debtors

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

k) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

l) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charitable company has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

m) Financial instruments

The charitable company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

n) Current asset investments

Current asset investments consist of cash held on deposit in interest bearing accounts. Such investments are measured at their fair value.

o) Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SOFA.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

p) Accounting estimates and key judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

There are no key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

2. Prior period comparatives

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2023 Total £
Income from:			
Donations	239,204	1,960	241,164
Charitable activities	-	160,631	160,631
Other trading activities	-	1,470	1,470
Investments	-	2,632	2,632
Total income	239,204	166,693	405,897
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	-	2,833	2,833
Charitable activities	199,641	169,728	369,369
Total expenditure	199,641	172,561	372,202
Net income / (expenditure) and net movement in funds	39,563	(5,868)	33,695

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Grants > £5,000				
Action with Communities in Rural England	34,413	-	34,413	-
BANES Council - Hospital Project	-	-	-	44,400
BANES Council - Community Development	-	-	-	30,252
BANES Council - Miicare	-	-	-	5,000
Environment Agency - WEIF	15,000	-	15,000	15,000
North Somerset Council	24,000	-	24,000	62,538
Pill Community Foundation	17,980	-	17,980	-
Quartet - Catalyst Project 1	18,000	-	18,000	-
Quartet - North Somerset Community Partnership (Digital)	-	-	-	15,000
Quartet - Oil Scheme	5,000	-	5,000	4,190
South Gloucestershire Council	74,813	-	74,813	14,963
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community	-	-	-	30,000
Grants < £5,000				
BANES Council - Ukraine Support	-	-	-	3,855
Chew Valley Community CIC	-	-	-	156
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	2,000	-	2,000	-
Quartet - Catalyst Project 2	2,000	-	2,000	-
Quartet - Community Wellness	-	-	-	2,000
Quartet - Wessex North Somerset Digital Programme	-	-	-	3,000
St Monica Trust - Coronation Events	-	-	-	500
Wesport - Rural Moves	550	-	550	5,000
West of England Civil Society Partnership	-	-	-	1,960
West of England Combined Authority - Community Transport	2,520	-	2,520	2,750
Westfield Parish Council - Community Support	-	-	-	600
Total income from donations	196,276	-	196,276	241,164

Income from donations in the prior period contained £1,960 of unrestricted donations from West of England Civil Society Partnership, all other income from donations was restricted.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Action with Communities in Rural England	-	37,525	37,525	36,325
BANES Council	-	-	-	28,000
Curo	-	27,193	27,193	25,307
Creativity Works	-	2,234	2,234	-
Mendip Vale medical practice	-	1,320	1,320	-
National Association for Voluntary and Community Action	-	-	-	1,000
Second Step	-	6,000	6,000	-
Shopmobility South Gloucestershire	-	1,681	1,681	1,615
Southmead Development Trust	-	-	-	2,000
Virgin Care	-	47,544	47,544	51,547
Voluntary Action North Somerset	-	5,000	5,000	-
Voscur	-	3,325	3,325	-
Wesport	-	75	75	-
West of England Combined Authority	-	-	-	14,837
Total income from charitable activities	-	131,897	131,897	160,631

All income from charitable activities in the prior year was unrestricted.

5. Income from other trading activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Oil membership scheme	-	1,470	1,470	1,470

All income from other trading activities in the prior year was unrestricted.

6. Government grants

The charitable company receives government grants, defined as funding from Action with Communities in Rural England (ultimately from DEFRA), Bath and North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council, Westfield Parish Council, the West of England Combined Authority, South Gloucestershire Council and the Environmental Agency to fund charitable activities. The total value of such grants in the period ending 31 March 2024 was £188,271 (2023: £245,482). There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attaching to these grants in 2023/24.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

7. Total expenditure

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance £	2024 Total £
Staff costs (note 10)	5,750	244,394	37,378	287,522
Training	-	846	-	846
Printing, postage and stationery	-	2,118	-	2,118
Membership and subscriptions	-	6,018	-	6,018
Travel and subsistence	-	14,061	-	14,061
Event costs and room hire	-	4,720	-	4,720
Premises costs	-	-	1,440	1,440
Telephone costs	-	-	5,114	5,114
Computer costs	-	-	8,800	8,800
Project consultants	-	34,621	-	34,621
Project costs	-	724	-	724
Insurance	-	-	977	977
Accountancy fees	-	-	3,462	3,462
Design and promotion	-	-	1,430	1,430
Legal and professional fees	-	-	2,813	2,813
Governance costs	-	-	74	74
Grants payable (note 8)	-	31,581	-	31,581
Sub-total	5,750	339,083	61,488	406,321
Allocation of support and governance costs	-	61,488	(61,488)	-
Total expenditure	5,750	400,571	-	406,321

Total governance costs were £3,074 (2023: £2,859).

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

7. Total expenditure (continued)				
Prior period comparative	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance £	2023 Total £
Staff costs (note 10)	2,833	214,360	8,266	225,459
Training	-	789	-	789
Printing, postage and stationery	-	2,244	-	2,244
Membership and subscriptions	-	6,652	-	6,652
Travel and subsistence	-	10,328	-	10,328
Event costs and room hire	-	7,453	-	7,453
Premises costs	-	-	1,440	1,440
Telephone costs	-	-	4,711	4,711
Computer costs	-	-	9,007	9,007
Project consultants	-	57,785	-	57,785
Project costs	-	365	-	365
Insurance	-	-	952	952
Accountancy fees	-	-	5,076	5,076
Design and promotion	-	-	1,155	1,155
Legal and professional fees	-	-	2,425	2,425
Miscellaneous costs	-	-	298	298
Governance costs	-	-	39	39
Grants payable (note 8)	-	36,024	-	36,024
Sub-total	2,833	336,000	33,369	372,202
Allocation of support and governance costs	-	33,369	(33,369)	-
Total expenditure	<u>2,833</u>	<u>369,369</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>372,202</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

8. Grants payable

During the year, 27 (2023: 17) new grants were awarded to 14 institutions (2023: 16) and 35 to individuals (2023: nil) to help local community organisations and individuals affected by the cost of living crisis.

Total grants committed during the year were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Grants payable to institutions:		
Bristol Avon River	7,950	10,088
Coombe Down PCC	4,114	-
All Saints Church PCC	2,500	-
Oasis Community	2,500	-
The Hive Community Hub	2,000	-
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	1,550	-
Sustainable Westbury-on-Trym	1,000	-
Flax Bourton Parish Council	-	4,890
Blagdon Village Club	-	3,919
Long Ashton Community Centre	-	1,146
Portishead Youth Centre	-	1,700
Yate Town Council	-	1,300
Flax Bourton Baby	-	2,090
Coaching for All	-	6,000
Others < £1,000	3,285	4,890
Total grants payable to institutions	24,899	36,024
Grants payable to individuals	6,682	-
	<u>31,581</u>	<u>36,024</u>

No support costs were allocated to these grants.

9. Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

	2024 £	2023 £
Trustees' remuneration	Nil	Nil
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	Nil	Nil
Independent examiner's fees (excluding VAT):		
▪ Independent examination	2,500	2,350
▪ Other services	126	2,139
	<u>2,626</u>	<u>4,489</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

10. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Salaries and wages	275,622	213,517
Social security costs	7,932	6,681
Pension costs	3,968	5,261
	<u>287,522</u>	<u>225,459</u>

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Executive Director. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £41,932 (2023: £40,279).

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Average head count	<u>24</u>	<u>20</u>

11. Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

12. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Accrued income	320	737
Other debtors	3,166	-
	<u>3,486</u>	<u>737</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

13. Creditors : amounts due within 1 year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	1,283	2,031
Accruals	7,543	5,025
Other creditors	707	788
Grant commitments	1,620	-
	<u>11,153</u>	<u>7,844</u>

14. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	General funds £	Total funds £
Current assets	113,911	40,000	94,992	248,903
Current liabilities	<u>(4,094)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(7,059)</u>	<u>(11,153)</u>
Net assets at 31 March 2024	<u>109,817</u>	<u>40,000</u>	<u>87,933</u>	<u>237,750</u>
Prior period comparative	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	General funds £	Total funds £
Current assets	146,794	81,295	86,491	314,580
Current liabilities	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(7,844)</u>	<u>(7,844)</u>
Net assets at 31 March 2023	<u>146,794</u>	<u>81,295</u>	<u>78,647</u>	<u>306,736</u>

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

15. Movements in funds

	At 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2024 £
Restricted funds					
Chew Valley Community CIC	19,011	-	-	-	19,011
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact	46,089	-	(29,155)	-	16,934
ACRE - Rural Housing Enabler	-	34,413	(5,967)	-	28,446
Quartet - Wessex	3,000	-	(3,000)	-	-
Quartet - North Somerset Community Partnership	12,620	-	(12,620)	-	-
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	-	2,000	(1,662)	-	338
Quartet - Community Wellness	2,000	-	(1,216)	-	784
Quartet - Oil Scheme	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
Quartet - Catalyst Project 1	-	18,000	(18,000)	-	-
Quartet - Catalyst Project 2	-	2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Wesport - Rural Moves	2,107	550	(2,657)	-	-
B&NES Council - Community Development	17,723	-	(17,723)	-	-
B&NES Council - Hospital	38,977	-	(25,935)	-	13,042
WECA - Community Transport	-	2,520	(2,520)	-	-
Shared Prosperity Fund - North Somerset	-	24,000	(24,000)	-	-
Shared Prosperity Fund - Pill	-	17,980	(18,970)	990	-
EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
South Gloucestershire Village Agents	5,267	74,813	(48,818)	-	31,262
Total restricted funds	146,794	196,276	(234,243)	990	109,817
Unrestricted funds					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
B&NES	41,295	-	(41,295)	-	-
Closing down reserve	40,000	-	-	-	40,000
<i>Total designated funds</i>	81,295	-	(41,295)	-	40,000
General funds	78,647	141,059	(130,783)	(990)	87,933
Total unrestricted funds	159,942	141,059	(172,078)	(990)	127,933
Total funds	306,736	337,335	(406,321)	-	237,750

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

15. Movements in funds (continued)

Prior period comparative	At 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2023 £
Restricted funds					
North Somerset - Community Hub	35,564	62,538	(98,102)	-	-
Chew Valley Community CIC	19,198	156	(343)	-	19,011
St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact	43,412	30,000	(27,323)	-	46,089
St Monica Trust - Rural Links	536	-	(536)	-	-
St Monica Trust - Coronation	-	500	(500)	-	-
Virgin Care - Digital Healthcare	7,000	-	(7,000)	-	-
Quartet - Wessex	-	3,000	-	-	3,000
Quartet - North Somerset Community Partnership	-	15,000	(2,380)	-	12,620
Quartet - Rural Links	187	-	(187)	-	-
Quartet - Bath Half Marathon	884	-	(884)	-	-
Quartet - Community Wellness	-	2,000	-	-	2,000
Quartet - Oil Scheme	-	4,190	(4,190)	-	-
Wesport - Rural Moves	-	5,000	(2,893)	-	2,107
B&NES Council - Community Development	-	30,252	(12,529)	-	17,723
B&NES Council - Miicare	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
B&NES Council - Community Transport (Ukraine)	-	54	(54)	-	-
B&NES Council - Hospital	-	44,400	(5,423)	-	38,977
B&NES Council - Ukraine	-	3,801	(3,801)	-	-
WECA - Community Transport	-	2,750	(2,750)	-	-
Westfield Parish Council - Community Support	-	600	(600)	-	-
Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner	450	-	(450)	-	-
EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
South Gloucestershire Village Agents	-	14,963	(9,696)	-	5,267
Total restricted funds	107,231	239,204	(199,641)	-	146,794
Unrestricted funds					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
B&NES	70,000	-	(28,705)	-	41,295
Closing down reserve	-	-	-	40,000	40,000
<i>Total designated funds</i>	70,000	-	(28,705)	40,000	81,295
General funds	95,810	166,693	(143,856)	(40,000)	78,647
Total unrestricted funds	165,810	166,693	(172,561)	-	159,942
Total funds	273,041	405,897	(372,202)	-	306,736

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

15. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds

Chew Valley Community CIC

Funding from Chew Valley Community CIC is held for the development of community transport services in the Chew Valley and surrounding area.

St Monica Trust - Woodspring Community Impact

Funding for a programme of community development targeted at people aged 50+ in the Woodspring area of North Somerset.

ACRE - Rural housing enabler

Funding from Defra to establish a rural housing enabler function, to work with communities to establish a need for rural housing and then undertake the necessary work to enable a scheme to come forward.

Quartet - Wessex (Chew Chat)

Funding to enable Chew Chat, a local voluntary group, develop social activities for older people in Chew Magna and environs.

Quartet - North Somerset Community Partnership

Funding to extend the successful Tea and Tech programme, helping older people in North Somerset to come to terms with Information Technology.

Quartet - Bath Half Marathon

Funding for walk leaders to provide a programme of walks for older people most affected by the pandemic, aiming to help prevent falls and enhance mental and physical wellbeing.

Quartet - Community wellness

Funding for new community activity that helps to support health and wellbeing across rural

Quartet - Oil Scheme

Funding to support WERN's community oil buying scheme, providing discretionary free membership to people aged 70+, and keeping in touch with isolated older people.

Quartet - Catalyst Project 1

WERN managed a programme of small grants to both local community organisations and individuals to help alleviate the impact of the cost-of-living crisis

Quartet - Catalyst Project 2

Additional funding for small grants to local community organisations working to address the impact of the cost-of-living crisis

Wesport - Rural Moves

A programme of gentle exercise for older residents in association with B&NES Village Agents and Rural Links, run on-line with funding from Sport England.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

15. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds

B&NES Council - Community Development

Funding for a part time Community Development post to support the Village Agent service in B&NES and to cover increasing need for a dedicated Village Agent in the Somer Valley.

B&NES Council - Hospital

A project to increase the through-flow of patients in B&NES hospitals, linking discharge teams with Community Wellbeing Hub partner organisations. WERN Village Agents are supporting the development of this new project.

North Somerset - Community Hubs Programme

Funding to work with 'community hubs' in rural areas across North Somerset, including a programme of training to help people engage with IT, and enabling hubs to improve their

WECA - Community Transport

Funding to help maintain services after the unexpected closure of Bristol Community Transport.

Shared Prosperity Fund - North Somerset

Government funding to enable a range of new social activities to be tried in Community Buildings to encourage social engagement, especially among older people.

Shared Prosperity Fund - Pill

A fund to provide short term Community Development Workers and support on behalf of Pill Community Foundation to undertake a community asset review

EA - Water Environment Improvement Fund

Water Environment Improvement Funding from Environment Agency for water management improvements in the Bristol Avon catchment area. WERN managed the grant process, making awards to three local projects.

South Gloucestershire Village Agents

Funding to extend the Village Agents scheme across South Gloucestershire.

Purposes of designated funds

B&NES

Funds to extend the Village Agent service to Peasedown St John and surrounding area for two years from December 2021, and Combe Down and Bathavon areas for one year from January 2022.

Closing down reserve

A reserve to cover potential winding up costs, in the event the charity were to cease operations.

Transfers between funds

Transfers between funds are to top up overspends on restricted funds from unrestricted reserves.

West of England Rural Network

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

16. Related parties

WERN is a founder member of West of England Civil Society Partnership CIC (WoE CS). Chris Head, executive director of WERN is also a director of WoE CS. During the year, WERN received £nil from the organisation (2023: £1,960 of unrestricted donations).

Chris Head, Richard Whittington, WERN rural services consultant, and Denise Perrin, project manager for WERN, are directors of Chew Valley Community Transport CIC. WERN works in partnership with the CIC to deliver its community transport program, funded by WECA. There were no transactions between the two entities in the current year (2023: WERN received a £156 restricted donation).