

**The Net North Shields
Registered Charity No. 1151677**

**Trustees' Report
and
Financial Statement
for the year ended
31 December 2021**

Legal and Administrative Information

Name: **The Net North Shields**

Charity no: 1151677

Structure: Unincorporated association governed by a constitution.

Trustees: D Hodgson
L Kay
B Tavernor
D Bavaird
C Brown
JC Nolan
S Barlow
R Chapman
S Tempest

Trustees are elected by the membership at each Annual General Meeting.

Principal Office: 26 Well Ridge Park
Whitley Bay
NE25 9PQ

Bankers: HSBC
110 Grey Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 6JG

Independent Examiner: Mark Thompson MAAT
VODA
Spirit of North Tyneside Wing
2nd Floor, Wallsend Customer First Centre
16 The Forum
Wallsend
NE28 8JR

The Net North Shields

Trustees Report: for the year ended December 2021.

The Net's two charitable objectives:

1. For the benefit of the people of North Shields, look after the Old Low Light (a grade II listed building) and keep it in public use.
2. For the benefit of the people of North Shields, promote local history, heritage, arts, national history, physical and mental wellbeing.

The Net employs a small team of staff (3 full time equivalents) and relies heavily upon support by volunteers to achieve this objectives. There are over 400 registered volunteers. 126 active on a monthly basis, 44 active in operational roles on a weekly basis.

Our main activity, dictated by our charitable objectives involved opening the heritage centre to the public and making sure our space was available and safe for them to use. The second objective mandated delivering a community heritage project titled to improve local knowledge of history and heritage. For this we chose a project titled 'That's Women's Work', focused on celebrating the history and heritage of women.

More than 33,000 visitors came to the centre during last year (April 2021 to end of December 2021).

In order to achieve our primary objective, The Net relies on a small team of staff supported by a large team of volunteers, co-ordinated by the volunteer co-ordinator. This joint staff/volunteer team, does everything at the centre. All operational roles are fulfilled from people drawn from this pool.

Volunteers work on the welcome desk, meeting and greeting visitors and relaying health and safety / covid secure information. These volunteers also process admissions to the centre, sell membership, and operate the shop. Volunteers work in the café, preparing and serving food and drinks to customers, taking orders, processing payments and maintaining high levels of food hygiene / covid secure practices.

Both of these key roles are important, as they allow us to open the building to the public, and to tell the story of North Shields. They also give volunteers an opportunity to gain skills and experience, which help them into employment, but also reduce social isolation (by working as part of a team) and maintain levels of physical activity.

Volunteers also prepare content for the heritage gallery. In 2021 the volunteers prepared an exhibition which was a true community heritage project and received creative contributions and support from hundreds of local people. Content was researched and curated by a small team of volunteers, and 22 volunteers, volunteered in operational roles on a weekly basis which enabled the exhibition to be open to the public from 22 July 2021 to 9 April 2022.

The project was researched and curated during periods of lockdown and restrictions when face to face communications with people were not possible. Visits to libraries and other organisations were also not possible. As such the volunteers had to rely mainly on emails, Zoom discussions and telephone calls. These activities were co-ordinated by the volunteer co-ordinator funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

The exhibition itself was paid for by money raised at plant sales organised by the volunteer coordinator, who marshalled green fingered volunteers and supported by friends of the Old Low Light who also donated plants. The project covered a wide variety of topics, to properly reflect the role of women in society passed and present. Its primary output was an exhibition which explored this history.

The exhibition was an excellent example of partnership working, also included works by local artists and crafts people.

Volunteers were overwhelmed by a shoal of around 250 herring knitted by Old Low Light friends. were overwhelmed at the response to a request for knitted fish which resulted in a shoal of 250 brought in by individuals and community groups. Some commented that knitting the fish had given them or their relatives a purpose during a period of lockdown.

Also, local craftspeople enthusiastically provided items they had made to include in the cabinet of curiosities. Including items produced by young adults with additional needs.

The programme of supporting activities was diverse providing something for people with wide ranging interests. It was an important way for us to link our project to other organisations and people. The activities included:

Talks

- o Graeme Rigby – story of the herring
- o Penny Payne – Horizons arts project (inc banners representing the skirts worn by Cullercoats Fisherwomen)
- o The Fisher King – story of Richard Irvin
- o Fish Quay artists

We also worked with new partners such as Northern Print, who's members provided content for the exhibition but also delivered some events and workshops. The most prominent of these was a Gyotaku workshop - Japanese fish painting.

Other local groups, such as the Northumbrian Basket Weavers did demonstrations and display of traditional crafts.

In order to ensure we attracted a wide audience, we also held music and poetry events. These included a song written about one of our volunteers, Sheila. The first female trawler skipper and poems by Katrina Porteous.

Some of the events we did were streamed internationally, in partnership with American Maritime Heritage Centres. Overall, it was a very popular exhibition, particularly with local people, including those who were related to or who knew some of the individuals featured on the display boards. Some visitors were interested in stories about the herring girls and women who had worked in the smokehouses and in fish processing, while others came to find out by women currently working in fishing and maritime related industries.

The oldest visitor was a former herring girl, now in her 90s, who visited the exhibition and commented how much she enjoyed seeing photographs of her younger self.

Some visitors left their stories, written up on cards. Some of these were followed up and additional display boards. There were several group visits, including a book club, members of the local U3A, Pearey House centre for people with visual impairment, a sewing group, a local high school, a local primary school (which described the visit as 'epic') and representatives from the Churches Conservation Trust. A senior representative from Tyne and Wear Buildings Preservation Trust, which is the centre's landlord, also brought a group of people to visit the exhibition and he later commented on Twitter: "Thanks for a wonderful visit to showcase your amazing work."

Visitors were invited to leave written comments. Over 170 people left their names alongside very positive comments – 23 pages of comments, of which the following is a sample:

- Enjoyed looking at myself from many years ago. Wonderful times.
- Informative, providing a real insight into lives of fisherwomen.
- Invaluable exhibition. So accessible.
- Beautifully presented information – easy to follow and I learned a lot.
- Excellent tour with fabulously well-informed volunteers – keeping women's history alive.
- What an exciting exhibition highlighting the need to work together in balance. Males and females all contributing with their various skills.
- Another very professional and well researched exhibition meeting the high standard I would expect of the OLL. It's the story of the 'common folk' and that's the kind of stories I love to hear about.
- This is such a fascinating exhibition – I have been in here hours reading, listening and looking at each piece. As my grandmother was a herring girl from Lewis who travelled as far as Great Yarmouth, I find it even more fascinating. Thank-you for all your hard work – this exhibition is amazing!!
- Came to honour the memory of my grandmother in law and her mother who were fisherwomen coming to collect their fish each day to sell in the market in Newcastle. Lots of memories!!
- Really interesting – can't believe how all this happened – such a different world – hard lives.
- Absolutely fascinating – look forward to my follow-up reading.
- Fantastic exhibition – thank-you to all your wonderful volunteers for all your hard work. Loved seeing my mam as part of it.
- Excellent exhibition – gives a real flavour of the women working in the fishing industry

- Amazing yet not widely known past.
- Superb – my 2nd visit.
- Wonderful, imaginative, inspiring, skilful, thank-you!
- Eye opening – so good to pause and reflect on the amazing yet not widely known past.
- So well presented will be back.

The project received much coverage on Facebook and Twitter, with some of the posts receiving more than 2,000 engagements.

It was also popular with the media resulting in coverage in The Journal, Chronicle, News Guardian online, The Northumbrian, Living North, Fishing News, BBC Who Do You think You Are? Magazine, Radio Newcastle and BBC Look North. It was also one of the first exhibitions covered in-depth and promoted on a new website Cultured North East.

The MP for Tynemouth and the elected Mayor of North Tyneside both visited the exhibition and spent time talking to staff, volunteers and members of the local fishing community. The Mayor returned on another occasion with a member of the council's media office team who made a small video about the exhibition which when posted online received several thousand views. A delegation from the DCMS, including a cultural commissioner also visited the heritage centre in September 2021.

They were heartened by the support they received and the strong links made with organisations including Scottish Fisheries Museum, Women in Fisheries, Blyth Tall Ship (particularly with those involved in a worldwide gansey knitting project), Middlesbrough Museum of Modern Art, Newbiggin Maritime Centre, Northern Print and the Northumbrian Basketry Group and Nexus.

Finally, the response of the local community for information to include in the exhibition was fantastic, with people willingly sharing stories, photographs and artefacts.

Shared and sustainable spaces and places, and stronger relationships.

All of the project just described was researched, curated and delivered by volunteers, co-ordinated by the volunteer co-ordinator funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. But the 'That's Women's Work' project was not the only one we engaged with over the last 12 months. Opening the centre to the public, involves more than just opening 'the heritage gallery'.

To ensure the Old Low Light is a shared, sustainable place we also open it up to many other groups. Volunteers are the life blood of the heritage centre, and without them we wouldn't exist. In the last 12 months we have had the following outcomes.

Volunteers – 126 engaged and active in the community, creating and sustaining a community

Before the pandemic we had 87 people active at Old Low Light on a weekly basis, with 400 volunteers registered over all. At that point the Old Low Light was a huge part of people's social lives, and when the pandemic hit, our volunteers were not immune to the negative impacts of lockdown. Not only did social isolation become a problem, but also the lack of physical activity. Before the pandemic most people said they volunteered at Old Low Light because they enjoy the social interaction from doing so. At this stage in the pandemic, that is still the main reason for volunteering – but more people now also comment on how important remaining staying 'physically active' is to them.

Other volunteers come to us to gain experience and skills, which will help them into employment. Since 2015 we have helped over 90 people on their journey into employment. In 2021 we continued this process, with many young volunteers joining us for this purpose. We will discuss a specific example of this further on.

The volunteer co-ordinator has maintained contact with all of our volunteers throughout the pandemic, and has increased the number of active volunteers from 87 in 2019 to 126 in 2022. The volunteer co-ordinator came up with new role descriptions, to allow more people to engage at the centre in a way that suits them. She also introduced new methods for recruitment, with a dedicated website page and customer management system. This allows people to sign up from anywhere, at anytime. Finally she created bespoke training packages for all of the roles at the centre, and deployed them in a standardized way – ensuring everyone felt prepare, confident and comfortable in their role.

621 school children visited Old Low Light

As well as having 33,000 members of the public visit the heritage centre, we also (from September 2021) welcomed 621 school pupils to the Old Low Light. These pupils attended on a Monday, a day when the rest of the centre was closed – allowing the school to have the whole centre to themselves.

Supported by the volunteer co-ordinator and volunteers, children explored Clifford's Fort, the fish quay, and mouth of the Tyne. They visited the heritage gallery, and the local RNLI station. Volunteers delivered specific activities such as workshops about RMS Titanic, rescues at sea, and wildlife on the river. None of the children had been on a school visit anywhere, since 2020. For one year 3 group, they had never been on any visits. Again, without the volunteer co-ordinator – we would not have been able to offer and deliver this.

59 community events

As well as the events linked to That's Women's Work, we also arranged and delivered 59 community events such as talks, walks, and workshops.

These are another keyway in which we achieve our charitable objectives and also generate commercial income. The pandemic stopped these, and even when they restarted we had to adapt many of them to the new reality of covid secure working. This meant delivering more, smaller event. This increased our costs somewhat. But was an important way of reconnecting with the community, and helping people to feel safe and move out of lockdown mentality.

All of these events were planned and delivered by volunteers.

200 attendees at 10 mental health and mindfulness sessions.

The first Saturday of every month, we run a mindfulness session in order to help provide mental health support. These are organised in partnership with The Centre for Mindfulness and Wellbeing.

48 exercise classes

Along with mental health wellbeing, we also restarted our exercise classes. These are attended by between 10 and 20 people, every Tuesday morning and one Saturday a week. The sessions are attended by around 20 people each. The sessions are delivered by a trained instructor, but the centre is opened by volunteers to allow them to go

2 seat fit events

In partnership with the Fishermen's Mission and North Tyneside Council we delivered 2 'seat fit events'. These events are designed to provide health and wellbeing services to local fishermen. These included dental checks, prostate checks, blood pressure checks and heart services. They also included financial advice from local banks and citizens advice.

Local community groups – using Old Low Light as a base of operations / social hub.

Many local groups use Old Low Light as a base of operations / social hub. These groups were some of the first to return to the centre in 2021, having had the longest absence – often due to the vulnerable nature of their members. These groups include:

- Flow (a group of young adults with additional needs, who have classes at the Old Low Light every Wednesday and Thursday).
- The Association of Retired Fishermen – who meet at the Old Low Light every day, but have formal get togethers every Wednesday.
- The North Shields Fishermen's Heritage Project – a very similar group to above, who used Old Low Light as a meeting place.
- The Fishermen's Mission Lunch Club – who meet for regular lunch functions.
- The Northumbrian Pipers – who meet on Tuesday evenings, to socialize and practice.
- Dolphin Quays Residence Group – who use the centre as a social hub, but also for business meetings.
- The Linkskill Centre Walking Group – who start their walks at Linkskill, but finish at the Old Low Light.
- The Northumbrian Basket Weavers – who produce traditional baskets.
- North Tyneside Mind – who meet clients who are their victims of crime at Old Low Light in a safe secure space, and offer practical as well as mental health support.

One group, had not met for 398 days. This had a considerable impact on their lives, and they were delighted to return. Others, were unable to return to their old meeting places because of size / capacity issues, so we were happy to accommodate them as new groups at the centre. Volunteers provide access to the centre for these groups, and the volunteers themselves are managed by the co-ordinator. Without this position we would not be able to deploy our volunteer resource in the flexible manner in which we currently do.

328 hours of third parties, local businesses, private groups and families using the community space for covid secure functions, activities and events.

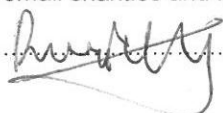
Irregular room hire, is as important to Old Low Light as regular hire. In 2021 we had 328 hours of irregular hire, with a variety of different groups, families, and businesses making use of our top floor community space for everything from parties, to training courses. Having a large, open, easily accessible and versatile space is fantastic. It is in high demand – but without the grant funding the lottery co-ordinator we would not have been able to deploy volunteers in a way to make the building as accessible as it is to everyone.

1 volunteer unemployed since 1987 given a chance to volunteer, and gain experience – then found his way into employment.

A good example of how the centre has made a huge difference to a single life is that of one of our volunteers, who had been homeless and unemployed between 1987 and 2017. This person began volunteering with us in 2017, moved from enforced sheltered accommodation to their own small home in 2018. Having passed their driving test in 1984, we encouraged and supported them in refreshing their skills through a refresher course in 2019. Though they didn't buy a car, refreshing this skill greatly improved their employment prospects and also their ability to socialize. When the pandemic hit in 2020 they took several steps back, but having somewhere to volunteer in 2021 meant when they applied for a job in 2022 they had gained the skills and experience for the employer to take them on. Without the volunteer co-ordinator to work them, this person would have been out on a limb. Alone with no support. They wouldn't have been able to volunteer here. They wouldn't have got the support and encouragement to apply for a job, and they wouldn't have got that job.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

Charity Law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which comply with the regulations set out in the Charities Act 1993. The Trustees have elected to take advantage of the provisions that apply to small charities and have prepared a Receipts and Payments Account and Statement of Assets and

Signed:  Chair, on behalf of the Trustees, date: 16/10/22

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Report to the
trustees of

The Net North Shields

On accounts for
the year ended

31 December 2021

Charity no 1151677

Respective
responsibilities of
trustees and
examiner

The trustees of the organisation are responsible for the preparation of accounts; they consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 and that an Independent Examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- examine the accounts (under section 145 of the 2011 Act),
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act), and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of
independent
examiner's
statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent
examiner's
statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:

- proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 130 of the Act); and
- accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Date: 17 October 2022

Name: Mark Thompson MAAT
Address: VODA

Spirit of North Tyneside Wing
2nd Floor, Wallsend Customer First Centre
16 The Forum
Wallsend
NE28 8JR

The Net North Shields

Receipts and payments account for the period

1 January to 31 December 2021

	Notes	2021 Unrestricted	2021 Restricted	2021 Total	2020 Total
Income					
Donations	(2)	26303	77588	103891	111246
Charitable Activities	(3)	6756		6756	3752
Other Trading Activities	(4)	38280		38280	38168
Investment Income		1		1	126
Total Income		71340	77588	148928	153292
Expenditure					
Cost of Trading Activities	(5)	10360		10360	16052
Charitable Activities	(6)	67393	66180	133573	129330
Depreciation	(7)	0		0	2245
Total Expenditure		77753	66180	143933	147627
Surplus for the period		-6413	11408	4995	5665
Transfers Between Funds					
Balance at 1 January 2021		28663	4154	32817	27152
Balance at 31 December 2021		22250	15562	37812	32817

**The Net North Shields
Balance Sheet
at 31 December 2021**

		2021	2020
		£	£
Fixed Assets	8	0	0
Current Assets			
Debtors		245	524
Prepayments		255	123
Stock		572	164
Cash at Bank & in Hand		38841	37261
Total Cash Balances		39913	38072
Current Liabilities		2101	5255
Net Current Assets		37812	32817
Net Assets at 31 December 2021		37812	32817
Represented By:			
Restricted Funds		15562	4154
Unrestricted Funds		22250	28663
		37812	32817
Total		37812	32817

The financial statements were approved by the following members of the Management Committee :

Signed  Position ... *Chairman of Trustees* ...
 Signed  Position ... *TRUSTEE* ...
 Date *16/10/22*

The Net North Shields

Notes to the accounts, 2021

1. Accounting Policies

- a 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

The Net North Shields 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).

- b Grants received are accounted for on a received basis and credited to income.
- c Voluntary income is received by way of donations and gifts and is included in full in the Receipts and Payments Account when received.

2. Grants & Donations

National Lottery Community Fund	14200
Public donations & fundraising	3447
Covid Job Retention Scheme	36828
Historic England - Cultural Recovery Trust	2560
North Tyneside Council - Business Support Grant	22356
Sir James Knott Trust	24000
British Museum Award	500

103891

3. Charitable Activities

Room Hire	6756
	6756

4. Other Trading Activities

Café & Shop Income	31507
Event Income	717
Admission and Ticket Sales	2962
Membership	3094
	38280

5. Costs of Trading Activities

Café Supplies	7884
Gift Shop Supplies	0
Event Costs of Sale	130
Museum Costs	2346
	10360

6. Costs of Charitable Activities

Staff Costs	100399
Premises	22717
Insurance Fees	1142
Legal & Professional	2032
Office Costs	7283
	133573

7. Trustees, staff and related party transactions

The organisation employed an average of 9 members of staff during the period of the accounts. No payments were made to trustees.

8. Tangible Fixed Assets

	2021	2020
Cost		
At 1st January 2021	79958	79958
Additions		
Disposals		
At 31st December 2021	79958	79958
Depreciation		
At 1st January 2021	79958	77713
Additions		
Disposals		2245
At 31st December 2021	79958	79958
Net Book Value		
At 31st December 2021	0	0
At 31st December 2020	0	0

8. Restricted Funds

Analysis of Restricted Funds:	Open Bal	Income	Expend	End Bal
Telling Our Story	986		986	0
National Lottery Community Fund	3168	14200	14368	3000
Covid Job Retention Scheme	0	36828	36828	0
Historic England - Cultural Recovery Trust	0	2560	2560	0
Sir James Knott Trust	0	24000	11438	12562
Total	4154	77588	66180	15562