

Company Registration Number 08102487

Registered Charity Number 1153400

MORTAL FOOLS

(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the year ending 31 March 2025



MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

NOTE FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

As last year, Mortal Fools has successfully navigated another year shaped by economic uncertainty, continued political upheaval, and an increasingly competitive funding landscape. Despite these headwinds, we achieved what we hoped to and more. We reached around 10,000 young people, more than ever before, and importantly this group was more diverse than at any point in our history. We have continued to co-create high quality artistic work and maintained an unwavering focus on a programme for our communities.

While rooted in Ashington, our national profile continues to grow. This year has underlined our reputation as a trailblazing organisation, through the expansion of our work and the way we are governed and led. Having two young people on our Board of Trustees has been particularly refreshing; both are former members of our youth theatre. Their presence is exemplar, demonstrating the strength of our pipeline and integrity of our values in action. They are role models for the young people we engage and for their fellow trustees, their insight has strengthened our decision-making and added breadth to the perspectives that shape our direction.

Financial resilience has been a defining feature. Our turnover has grown although only modestly, which is impressive in these testing times. We continue to mature and have learnt to become more agile in our approach. Our resilience and resolve has been tested in full particularly managing the disappointment of not securing the Animating Ashington commission and the continued challenges in ever more competitive grant fund arena. These challenges have underlined the skill and expertise of our senior team and Board, who continue to balance ambition, sustainability and wellbeing.

This year, Trustees have supported the creation of a new Executive Director role, and we are delighted with the appointment of Ellie Turner. This development reflects the growing confidence of Mortal Fools as an organisation and our determination to ensure that leadership capacity supports our innovation and growth. Trustees also supported the move from the YMCA to new premises in Ashington, which was the right move, even though new venues have needed to be sourced to deliver our programmes.

As ever, progress has required immense energy from staff and Trustees alike. Yet the results are clear: pride and ownership is felt across all levels of the organisation, positive morale and wellbeing, and the ability to react to challenges. We continue to provide excellent working conditions, underpinned by our commitment to the real living wage. We work hard to ensure we maintain a supportive workplace built on strong leadership, fairness and integrity.

The wider economic climate remains stagnant, with public funding under sustained strain and cost of living pressures continuing to rise. Encouragingly, however, there is a growing recognition of the importance of mental health, preventative measures, and wellbeing. These developments align to the very core of Mortal Fools' mission and reinforce the enduring relevance of our work.

This is our third year in Ashington, and our impact continues to spread further afield. Alongside sustained delivery in Tyne Valley, our reach is increasingly national, supported by the digital expansion of programmes such as Melva.

On behalf of the Board and our beneficiaries, I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the entire team, our partners, and our supporters for another excellent year.



Richard Wise, Chair of Trustees

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

The Trustees, who are also Directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year to 31 March 2025.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered charity name	Mortal Fools
Charity registration number	1153400
Company registration number	08102487
Registered office	Wansbeck Workspace, Rotary Parkway, Ashington, Northumberland NE63 8QZ

Trustees

For the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, the Board of Trustees is the Board of Directors of the charitable company and is referred to as “the Trustees” throughout this report.

The Trustees of Mortal Fools during the period and to the date of signing this report are as follows:

Mr R Wise (Chair)	
Ms E Barber	Appointed 15 September 2025
Mrs K Crawley	Appointed 17 June 2024
Mr P Douglas	Resigned 26 September 2024
Mr M Gate	
Mrs L Jobson	
Ms N Leyden	
Mrs K Martin	
Ms R Pattinson	
Mr S Rutherford-Orrock	
Miss M Saunders	
Ms S Spencer	
Miss K Stanforth	Resigned 19 August 2025

Company Secretary	Ms S Allen
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Bankers	Triodos Bank, Deanery Road, Bristol, BS1 5AS
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Independent Examiner	Pete O'Hara FCA, Chartered Accountant, 26 La Sagesse, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 3AF
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MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Documents

Mortal Fools is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 12 June 2012, as Northern Arts Enterprises Limited, and registered as a charity on 14 August 2013.

It was established under the Memorandum of Association that established its objects and powers and is governed under its Articles of Association, as amended by special resolutions registered at Companies House on 5 July 2012, 3 September 2012, 8 August 2013, 12 May 2016, 22 February 2018, 1 December 2020 and 28 February 2022.

The Directors of the company are also Trustees of the charity.

Eligibility for membership of the charity and membership of the Board of Trustees is governed by the Memorandum and Articles of Association. There are no restrictions in the governing document on the operation of the charity other than those imposed by general charity law.

Charitable Purpose

Mortal Fools charitable objects are for the benefit of the public particularly but not exclusively in the north of England, through the teaching, practice and showcasing of the arts in all their forms:

- (1) To help children and young people develop their skills, capacity and capabilities to enable them to participate fully in society as responsible, mature and fulfilled individuals;
- (2) To advance the mental health education of children, young people, their significant adults and the general public to improve mental wellbeing;
- (3) To promote, support and improve the social inclusion of children and young people who are socially excluded by providing them with opportunities to access activities and develop their skills and experiences in such a way that they are better able to participate more fully in society;

For the purposes of this clause 'socially excluded' means children and young people (up to aged 25) who are excluded from society, or parts of society (like social circles) as a result of one or more of the following factors: socio-economic circumstances; race; gender; poor educational or skills attainment; mental health; disability; bullying and harassment and ethnic origin.

- (4) To maintain, improve, and advance arts education of children and young people, professional artists and the general public.

Board Structure & Operation

The charity currently has 11 Trustees, and recruitment remains open to refresh the membership and continue to bring new professional expertise and relevant lived experience to the Board, including a further incoming trustee under 21. Trustees participate in governance development through external training, including Anti-Racism, LGBTQIA+ Awareness and Safeguarding.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

Board Structure & Operation (Cont.)

The full Board meets quarterly, has at least one additional away day for strategic planning with leadership team staff and participates in a company development day with the whole staff team.

For accessibility and inclusivity, regular Board meetings are offered as hybrid – with some folks meeting in person and some dialing in via Zoom. The charity invested in technical conferencing equipment to make these meetings as high quality as possible.

Three Sub-Groups meet quarterly – usually online – between full Board meetings. They are a combination of leadership team, staff members and trustees. The current Sub-Groups are:

- Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) group - financial management, company risk register, business planning / operations, legal compliance.
- People group – HR, EDI and company culture, Ethical Business Practices.
- Green Team – environmental responsibility and sustainability.

Minutes are taken from all Sub-Group meetings.

The operating model of a fourth sub-group - Artistic, Delivery & Practice (ADP) (creative programme development, delivery practice, multi-sector partnerships, safeguarding) is currently under review.

For all full Board meetings, an agenda, detailed written business reports and specific subject papers are prepared by senior staff and circulated to trustees in advance of Board meetings, integrating notes from sub-group meetings.

The charity has almost filled the number of trustees allowed within its current governing document. To accommodate a greater number of young people as trustees (18-25), in 2025-26, the charity will amend the governing document to allow this.

Appointment and Induction of Trustees

Trustees are recruited via a combination of open advertising and contacts via personal and professional networks. In all cases, Trustees are elected to the Board following the same process:

- Submission of an application letter and CV
- Interview by two Trustees (considering skills, experience, alignment with company values, gaps within current governance)
- Opportunity to observe a Board meeting and a meeting with Chair of trustees and CEO
- Recommendation of appointment to full Board and appointment at general meeting

The Trustee Induction Process will be reviewed and updated in 2025-26. It includes a range of resources to support newcomers' understanding of their role and the charity's activities, and signposting to training by external providers, with the Company covering any costs associated with the training.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have reviewed the charity's needs for reserves in line with the guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

The Trustees aim to hold a level of Unrestricted Reserves which enables the charity to have sufficient financial resources to meet various liabilities which would occur if Mortal Fools were unable to continue operating, together with an allowance to enable the charity to respond flexibly to issues or appropriate initiatives which might be identified outside of its annual budgeting process.

At present, the Trustees estimate that the Unrestricted Reserves required to cover all known liabilities for a period of 3 months amounts to approximately £145,000 and that this should be the minimum Free Reserves Target held in the accounts. The Trustees recognise that these liabilities will increase as the charity continues to grow.

Mortal Fools currently holds total Unrestricted Reserves at 31 March 2025 of £209,940 (2024: £209,256).

'Free Reserves', defined as total non-designated Unrestricted Funds minus the value of unrestricted Tangible Fixed Assets of £562, are £209,378 (2024: £208,916).

Although this exceeds the minimum target level at 31 March 2025, the Trustees note that the charity's financial operating model involves regular spending of unrestricted funds for core organisational costs and consider these figures satisfactory.

This policy is reviewed by the Trustees on an annual basis as part of the charity's budgeting processes.

Grant-making

The charity does not currently engage in grant-making activity.

Contribution of Volunteers

The charity makes limited use of volunteers within its productions and to support its activities.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Aims & Objectives

Mortal Fools' core purpose is to support people to have better quality inter-personal relationships with one another – as a fundamental component of wellbeing – and to use participation in creative and performance-based activities as the methodology to achieve this.

We specialise in the co-creation of compelling, dynamic, socially-relevant and high-quality creative and performance-based work with children, young people and communities.

We work with 1,000s of children and young people every year, mostly in the North East.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Aims & Objectives (Cont.)

We develop our skills, knowledge and approach through dynamic multi-sector partnerships (Youth, Community, Health, Education, and Arts and Culture), jointly co-designing work to meet the contemporary needs of children and young people.

We are champions of theatre and performance produced by young people and for young people. We advocate for this work to be recognised and supported as an important art form in our sector, touring our work nationally, supporting participatory artists to train in co-creation, and embedding the achievement of positive wellbeing outcomes across all our work.

Our use of digital technology to engage a more diverse cohort of beneficiaries and audiences continues to be a great success and our future plans includes further development of this.

WHY we do what we do

We are a purpose-driven organisation. Our work must be relevant to and matter in wider society and make a demonstrable and measurable difference to those we work with.

We recognise that the presence of positive and secure interpersonal relationships is a key factor in personal wellbeing, motivation, civil engagement and life fulfilment. We use drama and theatre-based approaches – interpersonal by nature – to support people to build the skills and knowledge to form and maintain better relationships. This work is positive action against the shift towards the divided, competitive and aggressive societal changes seen in the UK and wider world in recent years.

Through all our work we advocate for, demonstrate and give people ways to form better relationships and learn how positive connection and shared positive experiences with one another can be used to prevent those things which drive us apart. Positive mental health and wellbeing outcomes are an integral part of our work. We use the ratified PERMA™ Framework as our approach to planning, monitoring and evaluating the impact of our work on wellbeing outcomes.

Our work helps people to bring about changes in behaviour and outlook, increasing in confidence, experiencing personal accomplishment, building their personal resilience, shaping a more positive self-image and setting themselves up for a more positive future.

HOW we work

We use high-quality drama and the process of making and performing theatre-based work as our primary tools for change. Our work explores contemporary concerns facing children and young people and the realities of the world we're living in right now – inviting positive change.

We have 4 key values that shape everything we do:

1. CONTRIBUTING - *Everyone Matters*

Co-creation is at the centre of everything we do. All our team and everyone we work with contributes to shaping our programmes and our activities, helping us to learn and make an impact.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Aims & Objectives (Cont.)

Our activities are participatory, with ideas being supported, acted upon and recognised from all involved. Our activities are an asset in the lives of the people we work with, making a positive contribution and influence in both grassroots and strategic multi-sector settings.

We consistently evaluate our work so we remain relevant to wider society and make a tangible positive contribution.

2. GROWING - *Becoming more*

We are bold, ambitious and entrepreneurial. We embrace challenges and are not afraid of failure. We champion a *growth mindset* and constantly look to learn from others. We are committed to continuous reflection and development, supporting everyone with the right level of challenge to become more.

We receive feedback graciously and gratefully and use supportive and constructive ways to give and respond to feedback.

3. WITH OTHERS - *Better Together*

Our activities bring people together – to achieve, to learn and to have fun – with curiosity, co-creation and kindness at the heart of everything we do. We seek out people to work with who know things that we do not, integrating ongoing input from our beneficiaries, artists and others we work with or whose work relates to our own. We prioritise working with partners who share our values and whose work has similar motivations.

We support the development of key interpersonal skills like empathy, teamwork and resilience for all who work with us. We care for one another, and this compassion helps us to build strong, lasting and fruitful relationships.

4. AS OURSELVES - *Always authentic*

We create safe spaces which support and encourage everyone to be their authentic, imperfect selves - with individual strengths, vulnerabilities, lived experiences, emotions and needs. We recognise, respect and embrace our differences, understanding that this makes us all stronger, more empathetic and wiser.

We strive to meet the needs of everyone we work with, making sure our company is welcoming and inclusive to people from all walks of life. We create environments that are genuinely supportive and accessible, where everyone feels valued as an individual, and is enabled to contribute.

As a company, we do not copy or try to compete with others. We confidently walk our own path, and we seek to work with those who also value authenticity and openness.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Aims & Objectives (Cont.)

WHAT we do

We have several programmes of activity. Each of them achieves a combination of the following objectives:

- a) Enable children and young people to co-create with professional artists, treating young people as artists in their own right.
- b) Inspire people to make positive behavioural change through dynamic youth-led theatre productions, short films, creative digital assets and workshops.
- c) Learn through working with multi-sector organisations, schools, individuals, and artists who share our values.
- d) Co-construct drama and theatre-based approaches which enrich the provision within formal education settings, including training teachers and improve the personal, social, and educational outcomes of pupils.
- e) Make dynamic, engaging, and relevant contemporary theatre for young audiences, especially those who are under-served.
- f) Programme exciting theatre by other companies and artists – prioritise bringing this to under-served settings.
- g) Raise the profile of artistic work produced by young people.
- h) Improve mental health and wellbeing of beneficiaries and embed this at all stages of projects.
- i) Embody and champion inclusive approaches to co-creation, collaboration and creativity including providing a broad range of activities, working in-person and digitally designed to accommodate a range of access needs (e.g. special educational needs, logistical, age-specific, low cost).
- j) Reduce barriers to taking part by using in-person and digital engagement and producing our work in a range of settings, community buildings, schools, outdoor spaces, and professional theatre venues - prioritising areas of socio-economic disadvantage or rural isolation that are under-served.
- k) Create new pathways into participatory arts careers including work experience, internships, training, mentoring, volunteering and employment.
- l) Run practical skills training for multi-sector businesses supporting them to learn how to connect better interpersonally in the workplace, with clients and as leaders.
- m) Provide opportunities for participants to work with a diverse range of dynamic professional artists and companies and other specialist practitioners.
- n) Signpost young people to other available arts activities through our networks.
- o) Provide training, mentoring, volunteering and employment for young and/or early career participatory artists and practitioners, especially those working with young people.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Our Activity Programmes

PROGRAMME 1: YOUTH THEATRE (objectives achieved are: a,b,e,g,h,i,j,m,n)

Youth Theatre

A term-time programme of activities with groups in West and South East Northumberland, providing a fun, safe and active environment where young people aged 7-19 explore their own lives and their wider world through drama and theatre. In these sessions, young people co-create dynamic, thought-provoking, original theatre alongside professional theatre artists - with the young people's ideas, emotions and experiences at the heart.

Following an evaluation of how best to meet the core needs of our beneficiaries and allocate our resources, during the year, we began the process of discontinuing Youth Theatre groups in West Northumberland to create capacity for expansion in Ashington – where there is greater need and demand.

The Youth Theatre groups include:

- Tyne Valley, West Northumberland: Stage 2 (school years 3-6) – discontinued from Summer 2024; Stage 3/4 (school years 7-11) and a resident Youth Theatre partnership with Highfield Middle School in Prudhoe, West Northumberland – scheduled to end Summer 2025.
- Ashington, South East Northumberland: Stage 2 (school years 3-6); Stage 3/4 (school years 7-11).

In 2024-25, our MFYT groups created an original film series entitled 'Sounding Board', live performance events in both operating locations entitled 'Light Up' and began R&D of a new project called 'Watch this Space' on the theme of change.

Ensemble Young Company

This programme for school years 9-13 and up to age 19 moved to a year-long operating model in 2024-25 academic year. It supports teenagers to co-create and tour original theatre in a process closely aligned with professional theatre production.

Young company members originate from our two main operational locations.

In 2024-25, the Ensemble Young Company toured their completed production 'Inevitable?' (Apr 2024) to venues in the Northeast and North West of England and created their new production – 'Brainstorm'.

PROGRAMME 2: FUTURE READY (a,b,c,d,h,i,j,m,n)

Young Cultural Leaders

Supporting young people in their broader personal development through social action projects, event management, Peer Facilitation training, volunteering and work experience. This includes opportunities to do higher level Arts Award qualifications.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Our Activity Programmes (Cont.)

Creative Interventions

Working with Education and Youth settings to use participation in creative activities to support young people to develop confidence, creative and social skills. Young people are referred into the groups by the host partner, using criteria like high levels of school absence, mental health or behavioural challenges or inter-sectional needs.

The structure is 12 weekly 2-hour sessions with an informal sharing at the end and young people completing an Arts Award qualification.

In 2024-25, our education Creative Intervention partners were Duke's Secondary School in Ashington and Highfield Middle School in Prudhoe. Our Youth partners were YMCA Northumberland and Newcastle Carers, young adult carers group.

Employability Skills

In 2024-25, we delivered a programme of employability pilot work, commissioned by North of Tyne Combined Authority, focused on young people aged 16-25 in and around Ashington, Northumberland. It involved working with referral partners including Northumberland College, Duke's Secondary School and other VCSE partners.

This work is set for further development with business referral partners in the following year.

PROGRAMME 3: Professional Theatre for young audiences (b,c,e,h,j)

We work with professional theatre artists (writers, directors, actors, designers and production staff) to create social-change theatre that is relevant to the lives of our core beneficiaries.

Melva Digital

This online multi-media creative intervention programme continues to develop, with primary schools as the primary audience. The digital package supports children's, teachers' and parents' mental health education and strategies for self-management of worries and anxiety and includes:

- Digital captured version of the original stage play – in five episodes
- Online storytelling game
- Animation Series, with themes aligned to the NHS 5 Steps for mental wellbeing
- Teacher practical CPD training
- Summary Impact Report for schools

The programme will undergo a further enhancement in 2025-26 with the addition of introductory activities for key stage 1 and an illustrated novel (and audio version) for upper key stage 2 and lower key stage 3, providing a whole-school intervention approach.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Our Activity Programmes (Cont.)

PROGRAMME 4: CONNECT (b,h,l)

This is our business training programme for multi-sector organisations, which generates earned income to subsidise our delivery with young people. The CONNECT training approach combines practice from actor training and theatre rehearsals with business thought leadership and social science and neuroscience content and research.

The CONNECT programme is a hybrid model of in person and online delivery and is a fast-growing strand of our work and income stream attracting clients from multiple sectors and a variety of size and scale of businesses.

PROGRAMME 5: Sector Development (c,d,f,g,i,j,k,n,o)

National Youth Theatre Development

Together with other Arts Council NPO Youth Theatre organisations, we continue to deliver and support *Running a Youth Theatre* digital training and CPD for practitioners and companies.

Following our joint commissioning of the first national youth theatre census since 2011 during 2024-25 (published January 2025), we are now working with some of these partners on the formation of a new national development organisation for the sector.

Cross Sector Collaboration

We continue our collaborations with Youth Work organisations, predominantly North East Youth Alliance, supporting their workforce development aims through delivery of our training and in an advisory role supporting collaborations between Arts & Culture Organisations and Youth Work organisations.

In our place-based work, we are strongly aligned with partners in regeneration, Health and Education.

Public Benefit

The Trustees understand and have discussed the implications of the provisions of the Charities Act 2006, which state that all charities must demonstrate that they are established for public benefit, and have had due regard to the public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission. The Trustees believe that the charity meets both of the key principles.

Principle 1 - There must be an identifiable benefit, or benefits

Principle 2 - Benefit must be to the public, or a section of the public

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Public Benefit (Cont.)

The charity's principal public benefits are:

1. Education and development of young people

The charity's participatory arts activities focus on strengthening the social and emotional capabilities and mental health of young people – such things as confidence, resilience, creativity, communication, managing feelings, problem-solving, relationship-building, responsibility and perseverance, through participation in performance-based activities.

2. Education and development of adults

The charity delivers professional development skills workshops with adults that utilise similar approaches to those used with young people but made bespoke for the particular setting e.g. teacher CPD and masterclasses in creative leadership and managing imposter syndrome.

3. Events and plays for the general public

The charity runs c. 20-30 events and performances per year with its various groups, which are delivered to a high standard and directed by paid professional staff. Those in partner settings are primarily for the young people, families, and staff associated with the setting. They also use community venues and / or in regional theatre venues for performances and events such as Gosforth Civic Theatre, YMCA Northumberland and Family Hubs.

There is a safeguarding policy in place, which includes online working, and is reviewed at least annually (including a review of statutory guidance). There is a safeguarding link trustee and they, together with staff members as Designated Safeguarding Officer and a deputy, are all trained with a Level 3 Safeguarding accreditation, refreshed every 3 years.

As per our policy, we undertake the following Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and procedures:

- Ensuring that everyone who works directly and frequently (more than 3 days in any 30-day period) with children and young people under 18 on our behalf including paid employees, freelancers, volunteers or in any other capacity has an enhanced check with a children's barred list check from the DBS no more than 12 months old (including checks via the DBS update service).
- Ensuring trustees have an enhanced check from the DBS no more than 12 months old (including checks via the DBS update service)
- DBS checks are recorded, monitored and managed using our company management software.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Public Benefit (Cont.)

The main beneficiaries are:

- Children and young people aged 7-19 in North East England who attend our activities e.g. our Youth Theatre groups.
- Children and young people aged 7-19 in North East England who we work with in partnerships with other settings; arts, education or community organisations, including our Creative Interventions and Melva Digital programme. This includes national participants.
- Adults who participate in our work; artists and practitioners from other settings e.g. teachers and Youth Workers.
- Adults who participate in our professional development training – including national and international participants. This includes both in-person and digital participation.
- Members of the public who attend our performances and events. This includes both in-person and digital participation.

We prioritise working with beneficiaries in locations of socio-economic disadvantage and rural isolation and which are under-served by cultural provision. From our base in YMCA Northumberland in Ashington, we operate a satellite model of delivery including a secondary base in Prudhoe in west Northumberland and a growing number of residential partnerships with cross-sector partners.

Risk Management

The Trustees regularly review the major governance, operational and financial risks which the charity faces as part of its annual business planning process and confirm that systems have been established to mitigate these risks.

The charity has a comprehensive risk management framework. It comprises:

- an annual review of the strategic risks the charity may face via the business plan
- the establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified
- the implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise.

The charity has a comprehensive approach to risk management, comprising:

- Whole company risk register, reviewed quarterly by senior staff and the Board
- Delegation of risk management responsibilities between staff, detailed in the risk register
- The establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified, reviewed by the FAR Sub-Group
- The implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise.

The Trustees are satisfied that appropriate financial systems and controls and employment policies and practices are in place.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Risk Management (Cont.)

They consider the key risks facing the charity currently to be:

- **Competition for Grant Funding**

Competition for grant funding within the charitable, youth and arts sector remains high. While the charity received an extension of a further year (2026-27) of their Arts Council NPO funding, following a spending and impact review, the long-term future of this core funding source remains unclear.

The charity had several multi-year grant funding agreements which ended in 2024 and received rejections from previous high level grant funders (e.g. Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Children in Need), with competition for funds being cited as the reason.

The multi-stream income generation model the charity operates has maintained financial stability, with growing successes in local and regional authority commissions and earned income. The trustees recognise the need for the charity to continue to decrease its reliance on grant funding (remaining at c68% of income in 2024-25) by maximising income from other income generation streams.

- **Staffing Capacity**

Demand for the charity's services continues to increase. A new Executive Director was recruited during 2024-25, who will take up their full-time post in April 2025, increasing capacity in senior leadership and enabling the Artistic Director to provide additional support to the delivery teams.

Recruitment is scheduled for a new Producer and for further delivery staff in 2025-26.

The trustees note the scheduled maternity leave for the current Producer and Paternity leave for the Senior Administrator.

- **Escalated and changing needs of young people**

Public Health England states that in 2024, 1 in 5 children and young people between 5-16 had a diagnosable mental health condition. This has been exacerbated by the social, economic and political landscape in the UK including the cost-of-living crisis and post-pandemic legacy.

The development of our working practices with young people has resulted in us attracting and retaining higher numbers of young people with complex challenges – creating additional profound, complex and changeable challenges in our delivery contexts.

The Trustees recognise the importance of supervision and support of delivery team staff as part of the charity's duty of care to staff, alongside safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. This will be an area for further development in the coming year.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Overview

The year has been another one of growth and development, with the organisation moving further into thought and practice leadership in the various sectors that we operate in and growing our reputation and influence nationally.

From a grassroots delivery perspective, we worked with more young people than ever before during the year and continued to diversify our beneficiaries through our growing digital programmes, new partnerships and refocusing of our delivery settings.

The creation of the Executive Director role within senior leadership signifies a step change for the organisation, with the new post-holder set to work alongside the Artistic Director (CEO) to drive forward the charity in the coming years. (Appointed in Jan 2025, commencing post in Apr 2025.)

Following the success of several pilot commissions in the last couple of years, the organisation is now moving into a phase of pioneering new ways of working, consciously planning activities that both meet the needs of our local community beneficiaries together with being exemplars of excellence in practice in a regional and national context.

This includes:

- Submission of a tender to Northumberland County Council to be the operator of a new cultural, arts and community venue in Ashington
- Convening multi-sector partners in Ashington to drive forward a multi year, place-based programme of activity focusing on creative health
- Recommissioning of our Melva Digital programme by North East Combined Authority, enabling its cost-free distribution to c130 schools across the region
- Testing a new model of employability skills training utilising creative participation as the core methodology, addressing a significant gap in the market

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (CONTINUED)

Summary of the Main Achievements in the Year

In summary, in 2024-25, the charity:

- Reached **c10,000 young people** who actively participated in our work. This includes young people participating in our weekly sessions, attending our live events and workshops, participating in our Melva programme, or participating in workshops run by external partners using our digital content and resource packs.
- Delivered creative activity directly with **c1,700 young people** through our programmes, including deep to light engagements facilitated by Mortal Fools.
- Delivered activities for young people in **46 weeks** of the year.
- Delivered **366 sessions to 230 young people** in Mortal Fools Youth Theatre, school, college & youth settings, averaging approximately **110 young people per week**
- Had audiences of **c.750 audience members** at our live performances or showcases, and a further **c.1,700 at digital screenings**
- Achieved **2.5k views** on our YouTube totaling **76.5 hours watch time** (views only counted where average is at least 1 minute+ or 90% of short form content), and engaged **c50,000 people** via our Mortal Fools digital channels
- Supported **58** young people to achieve an **Arts Award** accredited qualification.
- Created **17 short films, animations, and audio pieces** with young people.
- Engaged **c7,000 young people in our Melva Digital** programme for mental health, equating to **32,000+ engagements**, across **1,300+ sessions** delivered in **c135 schools**, supported with our CPD training with **c100 teachers** in the North East.
- **Provided 17 CPD / training sessions** for artists and producers both internally and externally.
- Delivered **52 CONNECT training interventions** and **engaged 360 training participants**.
- Contracted **24 freelance professionals** to work with us.
- Worked with six young people in paid and voluntary assistant roles.
- Was nominated for five awards: NE Youth Voice Awards; Chris Drinkwater Creative Health in Primary Schools Award 2025; NE Charity Awards (Charity of the Year); NE Culture Awards (Arts Council England Award); National Diversity Awards (Community Organisation Award: multi-strand).
- Had work featured in local and national publications including The Stage, Northern Insight Magazine, Northumberland Gazette, The Chronicle, and many other press publications.
- Maintained the following accreditations/statuses: Real Living Wage Foundation Employer, Good Work Pledge – Advanced Level, and Arts Award Trinity Champion Centre

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (CONTINUED)

Summary of the Main Achievements in the Year (Cont.)

The main creative projects this year were:

Ensemble Young Company – Inevitable? Tour & Arts Award Project

A northern tour of our new Ensemble Young Company play, *Inevitable?* performed by 11 young people from Northumberland plus 6 group members achieving their Arts Award Bronze (level 1) qualification.

"Mortal Fools has been such a lifeline for me. It gives me a space to truly be myself and I have met the most amazing, genuine people. The way this theatre gives the young people a voice, is honestly really special." Ensemble Young Company Member, aged 18

"The show was fantastic - loved the concept and the execution. So great to see a diverse range of characters and experiences on stage, filled with moments of joy and laughter as well as reflection and insight." *Inevitable?* Audience Member

Ensemble Young Company – Brainstorm Production

Co-creating and premiering a new version of Company 3's blueprint play, *Brainstorm*, with 10 young people from Northumberland.

"My son and I loved the show, not only for the comical value, but also for the honest and heart-warming storytelling of what really goes on inside a teenager's brain...the actors on stage were a testament to the hard work of parents, carers and people who work with young people." *Brainstorm* Audience Member

Youth Theatre – Sounding Board

Our first *Youth Music* funded project - co-creating a series of 4 short films and a live performance event with original new music, song, and sound design composition with our 6 youth theatre groups from Ashington and the Tyne Valley. The creative work explored socially engaged themes important to the young people such as mental health and protecting the environment. Included community filming/activity days, live performance, community screenings and workshops.

"Projects like these give young people more opportunity to try new things like music...It opens young people up to more ideas and ambitions about what they could do with their life." Mark, Young Trustee

"I enjoyed feeling free to talk about how I'm feeling, more than I maybe would outside the sessions" *Sounding Board* Participant

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (CONTINUED)

Summary of the Main Achievements in the Year (Cont.)

Youth Theatre – *Light Up*

Two live events of micro-performances from our 4 youth theatre groups in Ashington and the Tyne Valley – inspired by the theme of 'light up'. The project used innovative lighting design, props, and installation, with the highlight being a new promenade-style immersive theatre event at Duke's Secondary School, Ashington.

"All age groups performed with passion, insight and creativity"

"The small performances were really powerful and impactful. Great way to demonstrate and show emotions and challenges young people are faced with"

"Great range of activities and inclusive of age groups. Interactive activities helped viewers to understand / be more aware of wellbeing and mental health in a creative and fun way"

***Light Up* Audience Members**

Youth Theatre – *Watch This Space* R&D

A research and development term exploring the theme of 'change' using live performance, film and audio.

Creative Interventions: Youth

Two projects at YMCA Northumberland, working alongside their youth work team, engaging young people in Ashington facing barriers to the arts:

- *Bandcamp* – a music and songwriting summer holidays intensive
- *Creative Mondays Light Up* – a 6-week multi arts project exploring music and visual art.

Commenced a pilot project with Newcastle Young Adult Carers developing creative provision for young people with unpredictable life circumstances.

Creative Interventions: Education

Two 12-week creative intervention projects in Duke's Secondary School (Ashington) and Highfield Middle School (Prudhoe) supporting young people referred because they have specific needs or challenging circumstances. The groups experimented with different creative activities, created theatre & audio pieces, presented a showcase of their work and achieved Explore Arts Awards.

"I have loved watching [her] confidence grow. Her worries are becoming less and she has stepped out of her comfort zone. It has had a positive impact in school life" Parent of Creative Intervention Participant

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (CONTINUED)

Summary of the Main Achievements in the Year (Cont.)

Future Ready – Employability Skills

A large-scale pilot programme (4 cohorts across 20 days) supporting young people and young adults to develop core skills and capabilities needed for success in future employment whilst supporting their needs, with referral partners Northumberland College and Duke's Secondary.

The programme used applied creative activities, mentorship with industry professionals, and wraparound support to help young people facing barriers explore their strengths and aspirations. Funded by North of Tyne Combined Authority.

"Before Future Ready, I had no idea what I wanted to do and I didn't think I would ever be able to get a job. I felt rubbish about myself all the time and talking about myself was too hard. After my time with Mortal Fools, I felt way more confident...The week helped me decide what I'm good at and what I'm interested in. A few months ago, I went to a college open day ON MY OWN, and a few weeks later, I smashed an interview getting a place on an Early Years and Nursery course in September. It's nice to be excited about the future for once." **Future Ready Participant**

Melva Digital

The programme continued to grow its user base and reputation, supported with distribution commissions totalling £116,000 from North East Combined Authority and further financial support from private business sponsors, enabling us to provide it free of charge to schools, greatly increasing accessibility of the programme.

The result of this is the engagement of **c7,000 children**, equating to **32,000+ online engagements across 1,300+ sessions**, delivered in **c135 schools**, supported with our CPD training with **c100 teachers**.

The evaluation data generated demonstrated a notable improvement in children's knowledge, understanding and recall of self-management techniques (average 80-90% improvement from baseline to end of programme assessments).

"The day was extremely informative and insightful. It is the kind of CPD that can adapt and change the practice of the most experienced teachers for the better. It is also the kind of evidence-based training that will take us away (hopefully as far away as possible) from paper and jargon-based provisions for children with SEND/SEMH needs." Teacher CPD Participant

During the year, work continued on the development of introductory activities for key stage 1 (to enable a whole school delivery) together with a new illustrated novel for the programme, aimed at upper key stage 2 and lower key stage 3, exploring themes of grief, loss, bereavement, transition and puberty. These are scheduled to be added to the programme from September 2025.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (CONTINUED)

Summary of the Main Achievements in the Year (Cont.)

Other Opportunities For Young People

Peer Facilitators

We continued to mentor and support 6 young assistants in voluntary and paid roles helping run our younger youth theatre groups and support events. These roles have provided an entry route into casual creative employment and volunteering for young people from our youth theatre and provided excellent role models for our younger members.

We also continued to support two young trustees who are ex members of our youth theatre.

We have delivered **creative outreach sessions** with organisations including:

- Ashington Town Council (Pride Picnic, Family Day, Market Day Pop-Ups, Christmas Lights switch on)
- Hirst Welfare Centre
- Ashington Family Hub
- Northumberland College
- Pride Action North
- North East Youth Alliance
- NCEA Duke's Secondary School, Ashington

We **distributed digital content (films & resource packs)** to a further 30+ settings which hosted screenings and workshops (schools, colleges, youth work settings, arts organisations).

PARTNERSHIPS

Local Authority & Strategic:

- **North of Tyne Combined Authority** – several commissions secured, as detailed above.
- **Northumberland Cultural Education Partnership (NCEP)**
- **Creative Health** networks and initiatives
This is a growing area of work nationally – including the formation of a new APPG for Creative Health in November 2024 - recognising the profound impact that creative participation can have on people's health and wellbeing.
- **Ashington Town Council** – local funding support, contribution to their community events and advocacy.
- **Youth Theatre Together** – the new brand name for the collaboration of Youth Theatre NPOs detailed earlier in the report, working towards the formation of a new national development organisation

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (CONTINUED)

Summary of the Main Achievements in the Year (Cont.)

Partnerships (Cont.)

Voluntary Sector and Community-Based:

- **North East Youth Alliance** – contributions to their conferences, commissioned workforce development training, activities, and membership of their Culture and Youth partnerships steering group.
- **YMCA Northumberland** – *co-delivery of music-based intervention projects*
- **Newcastle Carers** – *piloting an intervention with their young adult carers*
- **NCVA and Hirst Masterplan** – *community engagement and consultation using creative participation as the core mechanism*

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The charity is expected to grow further in the coming year, including the expansion of the staff team, an increase in the participatory groups and the growth of beneficiary numbers.

Place-based working continues to be a key strategic focus, including localised work in our hometown of Ashington, county-wide and region-wide initiatives and growing our sector development work and profile nationally.

Key *Local Developments* are:

- The creation of new participatory groups for young people and families in Ashington in response to local demand
- A move into new office premises – supporting the growth of the team and providing an operational base that is more fit for purpose
- The development of relationships with new community buildings for delivery of our young people's activities e.g. Hirst Welfare Centre and Family Hubs – rooting our delivery in the heart of the local community
- Place-based partnership programme development – collaborative delivery of creative activities with multi-sector local partners, including education, health, regeneration and other VCSE organisations – with a Creative Health focus – including an application to Arts Council England Place Partnerships Fund.
- The pursuit of a cultural community hub building at Wansbeck Square – next to the newly opened railway station on the Northumberland Line – together with the local authority and other VCSE partners.

Key *National Developments* are:

- Working with other Youth Theatre Arts Council NPO partners to:
 - deliver a national youth theatre development training and consultancy gathering – named *Youth Theatre Together*
 - work towards the formation of a new development organisation / agency for youth theatres nationally
 - continue to deliver the *Running a Youth Theatre* programme of digital training nationally

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS (CONTINUED)

Business Development

There are several focus areas of this work, including:

- Newly appointed Executive Director starts role in April 2025, supporting business leadership and development, including income generation and national profile development
- Existing roles to be refocused and streamlined to support efficiency and next growth phase
- Recruitment to support additional Producing capacity to manage growing portfolio of programmes and delivery team staff.
- Launching a new **Digital Strategy** to include a fit-for-purpose website, digital engagement and content creation plans for the coming years.
- **Income generation** – continuing to increase financial resilience with diversification and growth of earned income streams.

For **Melva Digital**, this means:

- A recommission from the North East Combined Authority supporting region-wide distribution.
- Pursuing other commissions nationally by profiling the programmes as an exemplar creative health programme through national conferences and networks
- Developing the Melva programme systems so it can accommodate delivery at scale
- Expanding the creative portfolio to support a whole-school delivery approach

For **CONNECT Training Programme**, this means:

- Growing the delivery team.
- Building new multi-year client relationships
- Refresh of content menu in response to market needs
- Growing the profile through presence at key conferences, events etc

We will also develop our internal **Wellbeing Practice Guide and Toolkit** into a saleable web-based app, designed for settings working with children and young people.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT
For the period ended 31 March 2025

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees (who are also the Directors of Mortal Fools for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (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 charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

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

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and 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 charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees



Richard Wise
Trustee
15 September 2025

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS ON THE UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS OF MORTAL FOOLS LIMITED YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

I hereby report to the Trustees of Mortal Fools (Charity Registration Number 1153400) on my examination of the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 set out on pages 26 to 41.

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the charity's Trustees (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.

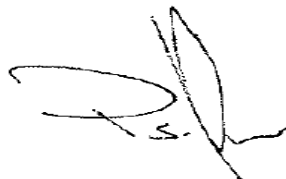
Independent Examiner's Statement

Since the 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 Accountant in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the 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 or 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 (FRS102)).

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.



Pete O'Hara, FCA, Chartered Accountant
Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales
26 La Sagesse, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 3AF

15 September 2025

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Income					
Income from Investments	3	5,035	-	5,035	5,392
Income from Charitable Activities	4	405,062	180,955	586,017	555,757
Income from Donations & Legacies	5	4,480	-	4,480	9,375
Other Income	6	24,814	-	24,814	22,265
		439,391	180,955	620,346	592,789
Expenditure					
Expenditure on Charitable Activities	7	438,707	217,065	655,772	610,792
		438,707	217,065	655,772	610,792
Net Income/(Expenditure)		684	(36,110)	(35,426)	(18,003)
Balance brought forward		209,256	162,185	371,441	389,444
Balance carried forward	14	£209,940	£126,075	£336,015	£371,441

The notes on pages 28 to 41 form part of the financial statements.

All of the activities of the company are classed as continuing.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses in the year and therefore a statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION/BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2024 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Fixed Assets	10	1,930	2,572
Current Assets			
Debtors	11	13,761	104,501
Cash At Bank & In Hand		348,096	293,103
		<u>361,857</u>	<u>397,604</u>
Creditors – Amounts Falling Due Within 1 Year	12	(27,772)	(28,735)
Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)		<u>334,085</u>	<u>368,869</u>
Total Net Assets	13	<u>£336,015</u>	<u>£371,441</u>
Represented by:			
Unrestricted Reserves	14	209,940	209,256
Restricted Reserves	14	126,075	162,185
		<u>£336,015</u>	<u>£371,441</u>

The notes on pages 28 to 41 form part of the financial statements.

The Trustees are satisfied that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the charity was entitled to exemption under section 477(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

The Trustees also confirm that the Members have not required the charity to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

(i) ensuring that the charity 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 charity 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 charity.

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 15 September 2025 and signed on their behalf:



Richard Wise
Trustee
Company Registration Number 08102487

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of Preparation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable United Kingdom accounting standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 – 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland' ('FRS 102'), and with the Companies Act 2006 and the Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP FRS 102) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, modified to include certain financial instruments at fair value.

Advantage has been taken of the provisions in the SORP for Charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a statement of cashflows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity.

Income

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income, any performance related conditions attached have been met or are fully within the control of the charity, the income is considered probable and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- Donations and legacy income is received by way of donations, legacies, grants and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable. Where legacies have been notified to the charity but the criteria for income recognition have not been met, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material.
- Grants, where entitlement is not conditional on the delivery of a specific performance by the charity, are recognised when the charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant.
- Investment income is included when receivable.
- Income from charitable trading activity is accounted for when earned.
- Other income is accounted for when receivable.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Accounting Policies (Continued)

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates:

- Costs of raising funds comprise the costs associated with attracting donations, grants and legacies and the costs of trading for fundraising purposes.
- Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.
- Other expenditure includes all expenditure that is neither related to raising funds for the charity nor part of its expenditure on charitable activities.

Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on any fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the assets over their remaining useful lives as follows:

- IT Equipment - 33% per annum straight line
- Office Equipment – 25% per annum straight line

A full year's depreciation charge is applied in the year of acquisition and no charge is made in the year of disposal.

Impairment of Fixed Assets

A review for indicators of impairment is carried out at each reporting date, with the recoverable amount being estimated where such indicators exist. Where the carrying value exceeds the recoverable amount, the asset is impaired accordingly. Prior impairments are also reviewed for possible reversal at each reporting date.

Financial Instruments

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the charity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the amount receivable or payable including any related transaction costs.

Current assets and current liabilities are subsequently measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received and not discounted.

Debt instruments are subsequently measured at amortised cost where there is a material adjustment.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Accounting Policies (Continued)

Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the purposes of the charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for specific purposes.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor.

Taxation Status

Mortal Fools is a Charity registered under the 1960 Charities Act and is accorded exemption from liability to taxation on its income under S505 Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

Going Concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

Judgements and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

There are no significant judgements or estimation uncertainty included within the financial statements.

2. Legal Status

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The liability of each member in the event of winding up is limited to £1.

3. Income from Investments

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
Interest on cash deposits	5,035	-	5,035	5,392
	£5,035	£-	£5,035	£5,392

The 2024 total of £5,392 relates wholly to Unrestricted Funds.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

4. Income from Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
Grant Income				
The 1989 Willan Charitable Trust at the CFTWN	-	-	-	10,000
Appletree Fund at the CFTWN	-	4,995	4,995	-
Arts Council England: National Portfolio Organisation (NPO)	180,000	-	180,000	180,000
Asda Foundation	-	1,200	1,200	294
Ashington Community Development Trust at the CFTWN	-	-	-	10,000
Ashington Town Council	-	2,000	2,000	5,000
BBC Children In Need	-	30,070	30,070	29,370
Carroll Savage Fund at the CFTWN	-	-	-	2,500
The Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust	-	500	500	-
Co-op Local Community Fund	-	500	500	-
Culture Bridge North East: Partnership Investment	-	(2,000)	(2,000)	
Curtin PARP Fund at the CFTWN	-	544	544	-
The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust	-	4,000	4,000	-
Garfield Weston Foundation	-	-	-	25,000
Hadrian Trust	-	1,000	1,000	-
Hays Travel Foundation	-	4,000	4,000	-
Northumberland High Sheriff Awards at the CFTWN	-	1,250	1,250	1,000
The Joicey Trust	-	-	-	2,000
Kavli Trust	-	91,543	91,543	52,789
Linden Family Fund at the CFTWN	-	-	-	5,000
Muckle LLP at the CFTWN	-	2,550	2,550	1,000
Newcastle City Council TWAM – LCEP	-	10,400	10,400	10,000
North of Tyne Combined Authority: Small Grant Programme	-	-	-	49,598
North of Tyne Combined Authority: Inspire	-	-	-	20,000
Northumberland Children's Trust	-	5,000	5,000	5,000
Northumberland County Council: Cultural Investment Portfolio	-	8,748	8,748	8,748
Northumberland County Council: Cultural Investment Project	-	-	-	5,000
Northumberland County Council: Community Chest Scheme	-	4,900	4,900	-

Continued overleaf...

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

4. Income from Charitable Activities (Cont.)

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
Grant Income (Cont.)				
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	-	-	-	6,000
Postcode Community Trust	50,000	-	50,000	-
Ridley Family Charity	-	5,000	5,000	-
Robert Wood Trust at the CFTWN	-	-	-	2,000
The Rothley Trust	-	1,000	1,000	-
Sir James Knott Trust	10,000	-	10,000	10,000
The Sylvia Waddilove Trust	-	1,000	1,000	-
Wide Open Road Fund at the CFTWN	-	2,000	2,000	-
Youth Music Trailblazer Fund	-	-	-	23,280
Promise Awards – World Youth Clubs	-	755	755	-
	240,000	180,955	420,955	463,579
Earned Income				
Box Office Takings	1,788	-	1,788	1,596
Drama Session Fees	5,950	-	5,950	11,389
Partner Contributions	15,510	-	15,510	14,238
Refreshment & Other Sundry Sales	583	-	583	1,110
Statutory Contract Income	116,000	-	116,000	36,874
Training Fees	25,231	-	25,231	26,971
	165,062	180,955	165,062	92,178
	£405,062	£180,955	£586,017	£555,757

Of the 2024 total of £555,757, £307,178 relates to Unrestricted Funds and £248,579 to Restricted Funds.

5. Income from Donations & Legacies

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
Donations & Gift Aid	4,480	-	4,480	4,875
Donation In Kind	-	-	-	4,500
	£4,480	£-	£4,480	£9,375

The 2024 total of £9,375 relates wholly to Unrestricted Funds.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

6. Other Income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2025 £	2024 £
Theatre Tax Relief	24,814	-	24,814	22,265
	£24,814	£-	24,814	£22,265

The 2024 total of £22,265 relates wholly to Unrestricted Funds.

7. Total Expenditure on Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2025 £	2024 £
Production & Activity Costs				
Salaries & On Costs	340,029	143,701	483,730	422,780
Freelance Project Worker Fees	11,751	18,668	30,419	36,088
Production, Hire & Staging Costs	19,927	11,871	31,798	27,683
Design, Print & Promotional Materials	20,830	11,192	32,022	37,724
	392,537	185,432	577,969	524,275
Support Costs				
Administrative Costs	38,379	14,308	52,687	50,940
Consultancy Fees	938	4,200	5,138	5,027
Staff Training	1,805	704	2,509	6,343
Depreciation	275	2,907	3,182	10,553
Website Development	-	9,114	9,114	9,350
	41,397	31,233	72,630	82,213
Governance Costs				
Accountancy & Payroll Fees	2,480	400	2,880	2,857
Board Costs	-	-	-	650
Legal & Professional	2,293	-	2,293	797
	4,773	400	5,173	4,304
	£438,707	£217,065	£655,772	£610,792

Of the 2024 total of £610,792, £274,428 relates to Unrestricted Funds and £336,364 to Restricted Funds.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

8. Net Movement in Funds

	2025	2024
	£	£
The net movement in Funds is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Depreciation of Owned Fixed Assets	3,182	10,553
Independent Examiner's Fees – Independent Examination	900	900
Independent Examiner's Fees – Other Services	540	300

9. Staff Costs & Directors' Remuneration

	2025	2024
	£	£
Gross Salary Costs	436,967	383,743
Employer's National Insurance	33,926	28,132
Employer's Pension Contributions	12,837	10,905
	£483,730	£422,780

No employee received remuneration of more than £60,000 during the year (2024: Nil).

The average number of staff employed during the year, calculated as full-time equivalents, was as follows:

	2025	2024
	No.	No.
Artistic Production and Support	13.5	13

No remuneration was paid to any Trustees in the year.

No travel and subsistence expenses were reimbursed to Trustees in respect of their attendance at meetings of the charity (2024: £Nil).

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

10. Tangible Fixed Assets

	IT & Office Equipment £	Total Fixed Assets £
Cost		
At 1 April 2024	37,197	37,197
Additions in year	2,630	2,630
Disposals	(1,473)	(1,473)
At 31 March 2025	<u>38,354</u>	<u>38,354</u>
Accumulated Depreciation		
At 1 April 2024	34,625	34,625
Charge for year	3,182	3,182
Disposals	(1,383)	(1,383)
At 31 March 2025	<u>36,424</u>	<u>36,424</u>
Net Book Value		
At 31 March 2025	<u>£1,930</u>	<u>£1,930</u>
At 1 April 2024	<u>£2,572</u>	<u>£2,572</u>

11. Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade Debtors	1,625	5,300
Other Debtors	-	5,000
Accrued Income	7,853	90,749
Prepayments	4,283	3,452
	<u>£13,761</u>	<u>£104,501</u>

All sums are due within 1 year.

12. Creditors – Amounts Falling Due Within 1 Year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade Creditors	10,061	12,512
Other Taxes & Social Security Costs	8,928	8,859
Other Creditors - Pension Contributions Due	-	1,700
Income Received In Advance	1,300	1,100
Other Creditors	-	40
Accruals	7,482	4,524
	<u>£27,772</u>	<u>£28,735</u>

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

13. Analysis of Net Assets between Funds

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	562	1,368	1,930	2,572
Debtors	8,838	4,923	13,761	104,501
Cash at Bank and In Hand	224,556	123,540	348,096	293,103
Creditors – Due Within 1 Year	(24,016)	(3,756)	(27,772)	(28,735)
	£209,940	£126,075	£336,015	£371,441

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

14. Analysis of Charitable Funds

	Fund at 1 April 2024 £	Income in Year £	Expenditure in Year £	Fund at 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted Funds				
Charity General Fund	209,256	439,391	(438,707)	209,940
Restricted Funds				
1989 Willan Charitable Trust at the CFTWN	6,908	-	(6,908)	-
Appletree Fund at the CFTWN	-	4,995	(1,328)	3,667
Asda Foundation	-	1,200	(1,200)	-
Ashington Town Council	-	2,000	(2,000)	-
BBC Children In Need	-	30,070	(30,070)	-
The Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust	-	500	(500)	-
Co-op Local Community Fund	-	500	-	500
Culture Bridge North East: Capacity Building	5,000	-	-	5,000
Culture Bridge North East: Partnership Investment	17,042	(2,000)	(1,515)	13,527
Curtin PARP Fund at the CFTWN	-	544	(410)	134
DCMS Youth Investment Fund	192	-	(96)	96
The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust	-	4,000	-	4,000
Hadrian Trust	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
Hays Travel Foundation	-	4,000	(4,000)	-
Northumberland High Sheriff Awards at the CFTWN	1,000	1,250	(2,250)	-
The Joicey Trust	2,000	-	(2,000)	-
Kavli Trust	45,343	91,543	(50,236)	86,650
Muckle LLP at the CFTWN	-	2,550	(2,550)	-

Continued overleaf...

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

14. Analysis of Charitable Funds (Cont.)

	Fund at 1 April 2024 £	Income in Year £	Expenditure in Year £	Fund at 31 March 2025 £
Newcastle City Council TWAM: LCEP	7,530	10,400	(13,249)	4,681
North of Tyne Combined Authority: Inspire	7,360	-	(7,360)	-
North of Tyne Combined Authority: Small Grant Programme	49,598	-	(49,598)	-
Northumberland Children's Trust	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Northumberland County Council: Cultural Investment Portfolio	-	8,748	(8,748)	-
Northumberland County Council: Community Chest Scheme	1,858	4,900	(1,858)	4,900
Northumberland County Council: Cultural Investment Project	2,342	-	(2,342)	-
Northumberland Public Health: Creative Northumberland	1,648	-	-	1,648
Ridley Family Charity	184	5,000	(3,912)	1,272
The Rothley Trust	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
The Sylvia Waddilove Trust	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
Wide Open Road Fund at the CFTWN	-	2,000	(2,000)	-
Promise Awards – World Youth Clubs	-	755	(755)	-
Youth Music Trailblazer Fund	14,180	-	(14,180)	-
Total Restricted Funds	162,185	180,955	(217,065)	126,075
Total Funds	£371,441	£620,346	£(655,772)	£336,015

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

14. Analysis of Charitable Funds (Cont.)

Name of Restricted Fund	Purpose & Allocation of the Restricted Fund
Cross-Project / Core Funds	
<i>Kavli Trust</i>	Towards Melva, Future Ready, Wellbeing Toolkit and Core Funding, to support creative interventions using theatre and performance-based approaches to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.
<i>BBC Children in Need / 1989 Willan Charitable Trust / The Joicey Trust / The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust / Hadrian Trust</i>	Towards core programme costs associated with supporting young people with intersectional needs and experiencing disadvantage, including salaries.
<i>Ashington Town Council / Ridley Family Charity</i>	Towards core costs associated with supporting Young People living in Ashington
<i>DCMS Youth Investment Fund</i>	Remaining balance in this fund reflects fixed asset value.
<i>N'land CC Community Chest Scheme</i>	For the purchase of office and IT equipment. Any remaining balance reflects fixed asset values.
<i>N'land CC Cultural Investment Portfolio Grant / Northumberland Children's Trust</i>	Towards core running costs related to activity taking place in or with young people from Northumberland.
<i>Curtin PARP Fund at the CFTWN</i>	Towards young person's travel costs.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

14. Analysis of Charitable Funds (Cont.)

Name of Restricted Fund	Purpose & Allocation of the Restricted Fund
Project-Specific Funds	
<i>Muckle at the CFTWN</i>	Towards the cost of providing Melva licenses, to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing.
<i>Culture Bridge North East Partnership Funding / Northumberland Public Health / Newcastle City Council TWAM (North East Museums)</i>	Towards the cost of <i>Creative Northumberland</i> , a collaborative project between schools and cultural organisations testing the impact of cultural activity on wellbeing. Mortal Fools are acting as budget holders for this project on behalf of the Northumberland LCEP .
<i>ASDA Foundation / Hays Travel Foundation / The Sylvia Waddilove Trust / Appletree Fund & Wide Open Road Fund, both at the CFTWN</i>	Towards project costs associated with running our regular youth theatre groups for Young People in Ashington
<i>Northumberland High Sheriff at the CFTWN / N'land CC: Cultural Investment Project / The Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust / Promise Awards – World Youth Clubs</i>	Towards the cost of running Ensemble sessions with young people aged 13-19 in Ashington and surrounding areas.
<i>Culture Bridge North East: Capacity Building</i>	To fund a dedicated Producer for <i>Creative Northumberland (Northumberland LCEP)</i>
<i>Youth Music Trailblazer Fund</i>	Towards the costs of piloting new approaches to music making across all of our Mortal Fools Youth Theatre groups and outreach groups.
<i>The Rothley Trust</i>	Towards resources and creative equipment to support delivery of youth theatre programmes.
<i>North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA): Small Grants Programme. Commissioned by North East Combined Authority funded by the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</i>	Funding for 'Future Ready' - our pilot employability skills project supporting economically inactive and/or socially isolated young people aged 16-30 in Northumberland.
<i>NTCA: Inspire Project</i>	Towards the cost of developing new wellbeing education content for the Melva programme.

MORTAL FOOLS
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

15. Related Party Transactions

There were no related party transactions during this year.

16. Taxation

The company is a registered charity and no provision is considered necessary for taxation.

17. Financial Commitments

No material financial commitments have been made in respect of future financial years.

18. Company Limited by Guarantee

The charity is incorporated under the Companies Act 1985 and is limited by guarantee, each member having undertaken to contribute such amounts not exceeding 1 as may be required in the event of the company being wound up whilst he or she is still a member or within one year thereafter.

There are currently 11 members of the company (2024: 11).