

Chair

Hello and good evening, explorers! It's my pleasure to welcome you to this year's Annual General Meeting. One year on from the return from lock-down and I am pleased to say that BEC has continued to grow and evolve. I've been blessed to have seen a year with such a committed, supportive and hard-working committee along with section leaders, deputies and members who have all worked so hard to make it a truly memorable year. So, to start, big thank you to everyone that helps out, be it on a regular basis or just when you can, it all adds up to making BEC the great club we all enjoy being a part of.

Over the past year various sections organised successful trips to places like North Wales, South Wales, Devon, Cornwall, Dartmoor, France, Portugal and even further afield! The diary has been full of local mountain biking, indoor & outdoor climbing, water-sports, walking, running and social events at the club.

The (still quite new) website continues to operate well and a massive thanks to Chetan who continues to add features and patiently work through each new teething issue as they crop up. Thanks also to those on the committee who have helped (and continue to help) get the surprisingly large and disorganised BEC archive sorted through so we can make relevant parts available on the website.

BEC's relationship with the Sailing Club continues to strengthen with many members regularly socialising together & joint parties happening over the year with iSwim and beach tennis also getting involved. The Sailing Club have recently said goodbye to the Surf Lifesavers who have moved to a new home at the Sea Lanes and while it is sad to see them go this does mean that all clubs can now freely use the facilities on a Saturday and opens up the possibility of regular Saturday events at the club which I'm sure we will all take advantage of over the year.

The clubhouse has always played a big role in BEC and is often where trip ideas are conceived and realised. Many members, often including myself can be found here on a Wednesday evening throughout the year planning trips, greeting new members and generally socialising.

New Members meetings have proven consistently popular throughout the year, even in the colder months. Thanks to Val and Leah for running them so well and to all the members that socialise with the prospective members afterwards. It all helps to make them a friendly and welcoming introduction to the club.

Our charitable aims are to encourage people of all ages and young people in particular to participate in outdoor activities. BEC continues to meet these aims and we have made progress raising our visibility to a younger demographic.

Paddle-sports continue to be very popular and with the arch refreshed ahead of the start of the season we are in a great position to continue to grow this very popular arm of the club. This year saw 45 people signing up for Kayak induction and 43 for SUP induction raising £450 and £430 respectively. Thanks to all the leads, deputies and experienced club members who work together to make BEC water-sports happen and special mentions for Pat, Colin & Stef who have worked particularly hard in their sections running inductions. Many club members have come forward to assist in running the ever-expanding SUP section and with their help we can look forward to a busy year of BEC SUP. Kayaking trips were again popular and we have begun to build collaborative relations with other kayaking clubs to expand our range of paddlesport opportunities including a recent sea-kayaking trial at the Martlet Kayak Club. Swimming pool based training sessions helped the section stay busy through the winter and saw many improve their kayak skills and learn to roll.

This year we hope to be able to grow this opportunity and extend it to include SUP section too. Stef continues to be our representative and liaison to British Canoeing and has put great effort into organising and sometimes even running training courses for our water sections so thank you Stef!

Surf Section has seen a busy year with many trips including Cornwall, South Wales, Devon, the Bristol indoor wave and even Ericera in Portugal! Tim and Cat continue to do a great job making the trips happen and already have many in the works for this season. The Portugal trip also deserves a second mention as this was the highlight of several people's year and a big thanks to Judy for organising. BEC members also did a great job supporting the Surfers Against Sewage paddle-out protest last weekend with some members acting as martial's and even getting the club mentioned in news reports about the event. Thanks go to everyone who took part and Katie Wootton especially for her work organising the volunteers.

Climbing had an excellent season for top-roped sandstone climbing last summer, thanks to the bone-dry weather, and ran club sessions on most Friday evenings from June to August using the BEC sandstone kits. Many members were very helpful in sharing experience and lifts, including Colin Sandry, Colin Glenny, Susie Browning, Sue Haseltine and Alasdair McGregor.

We had enjoyable lead-climbing weekend trips to Gilwern in Wales and Portland in Dorset. Alasdair McGregor and Chetan Padia organised a long weekend of bouldering in Fontainebleau which proved very popular and may be repeated this year. There was also some climbing on the BEC multi-activity trip to the Gower peninsula last July. Over the February half-term week Alan Gornall and Colin Sandry even organised a trip to Costa Blanca in Spain. I couldn't make it but it sounded like a lot of fun.

Throughout the winter there was an active group of BEC members climbing at High Sports on a Monday evening. These evenings have proved an effective forum for BEC climbers to keep in touch and welcome new members to the club.

Turning to the new financial year, BEC's first sandstone session of 2023 ran last Friday, thanks to Susie Browning for taking the lead on organisation. We hope to continue them as long as the weather and light permit, likely until mid August. This year, despite the wet spring, we have also already had a lead-climbing weekend in Portland, and a day trip to the easier sport-climbing crags near Swanage.

There will be more to follow, we have a "BEC climbing organisers" WhatsApp group to throw trip ideas around in and will try to keep the trips coming. Thanks to Stephen Wilmot for his report.

Caving has had a slow restart after shaking off the shackles of lockdown and has had a relatively quiet year but they have recently run one beginner friendly trip, have another planned for June and hope to run more in the near future. Thanks to Antonio and Matt for their continued support.

Cycling has continued to run several sessions each week over the year. Thanks go to Susie Llewelyn, Rachel & Maisie Pettiger, Martin Packer, Judy Eaton and to everyone else who leads these regular local rides. I'm sure there is always scope for more people to lead rides so please volunteer if you can.

Running section has enjoyed its first year and was particularly active during the summer with Leah and Wairimu organising seafront and trail runs from 5km to 15km.

Walking has continued to organise regular walks locally and some further afield including a very well received trip to Madeira that also featured in this year's Explorers Tales! Thank you Bea and Elizabeth for all your hard work and I'm sure that there is always scope for more people to lead walks so please volunteer if you can.

Tennis and Badminton took place this year as usual. Thanks to Henna and David for organising and I would like to offer particular thanks to David who is stepping down as tennis section leader this year for a great job facilitating the role. If anyone could step up to lead tennis section this year that would be greatly appreciated!

Social – Angus and Felix have shared the position of Social Secretary this past year and have worked brilliantly together delivering some memorable and well attended parties. More will be coming soon with the Summer Party on the 12<sup>th</sup> August and Christmas party on the 16<sup>th</sup> December so get those dates in your diary. BEC is now responsible for running the bar on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month and helpers are always greatly appreciated so please reach out to Angus or Felix to get bar trained and come and get involved. Also any ideas for more parties/events are appreciated so please pitch those at them too.

Matt, Stephen and Wairimu are stepping down from their positions on the committee this year from the positions of Vice-Chair, Treasurer and PR Secretary respectively. Stephen and Matt have both played pivotal roles over their 3 years on the committee and their commitment and dedication will be fondly remembered as they move on to new roles within the club and a well deserved rest from committee business. I hope you both enjoy all the extra free time and I hope I can still rely on you for the odd piece of advice. Wairimu has been fantastic as PR secretary and has successfully juggled starting up a running section alongside her committee duties. You have all been a pleasure to work alongside and I'd like to thank you on behalf of myself, the committee and the club.

Committee Monitor Damian has been a great help in his role as monitor and I am very grateful to him for agreeing to be nominated for a further year so that we can continue to rely on his advice and experience. He also ran a very successful series of Explorers Tales over the winter and If you have any tales of adventure you would like to share its never too soon to get them lined up so please contact Damien if you're interested.

I would also like to thank Sumitra for her work updating and streamlining BEC spreadsheets and other online procedures.

Arch management has been a particularly busy area this year with the implementation of the planned arch refurbishment. This has taken a great deal of time and effort over the year from meeting with suppliers and external contractors over the summer, planning and carrying out their foundational works around activities through the autumn and into the herculean effort by BEC members in finally realising the new arch design. A process that has dominated the winter months to make sure it was complete in time for the start of the water season. To celebrate the completion of these works I'd like to invite everyone to join me in thanking all those involved in making this project happen. Particular credits go to Alex Robins for his excellent design, everyone who volunteered within the build crew, and an honourable mention for Dan Richards for putting the work in every session over the months of work and, of course, the one, the only, Brian Orsola! He organised, project managed, haggled, motivated, put more physical work in than any one else, adapted to the many speedbumps that came up, lead by example and remained positive and upbeat throughout! Truly inspiring and we are all indebted to your efforts so thank you Brian! We now intend to have a few months using it in its current configuration while collecting feedback from members and water leaders. We will then meet with all the relevant section leaders to discuss any potential tweaks or alterations.

Now, I would like to comment briefly on the matter of how we communicate with each other within the club. Communication in BEC can be tricky with so many messages flying around by email, Whatsapp and Signal. It hasn't escaped my attention as Chair that there have been some negative

experiences related to club communications. Please be mindful of how your messages may affect others and do reach out if you're having a tough time. The committee will do our best to support you where we can, and if necessary, enforce the code of conduct which is designed to protect our members. There is never an acceptable reason for treating any club member in a manner not befitting the code of conduct. I am sure that you all, like I do, aspire to a club that looks for constructive, collaborative solutions to any hurdles we may encounter.

Please remember that those on the Committee, the Section Leaders & Deputies, the trip organisers and everyone else who contributes to BEC give of their time freely and we all do our best to keep BEC running smoothly despite other commitments in our lives. BEC is a members club and as such each and every member should try to help in some way in the running of this fabulous club. This could be something as simple as helping behind the bar, helping tidy the arch, organising a BBQ on a Wednesday, helping to run a trip alongside someone else etc.

As I'm sure many of you know this has been my first year as Chair. Much of it has been enjoyable and those times it has been difficult I am grateful to have such a supportive & constructive group of people around me to help put in the time and mental energy to resolve those hiccups and keep BEC looking forward with positivity. I look forward to another year working with members old and new to keep BEC inclusive, exciting and fun.

# BEC FINANCIAL REPORT 2022/23

*Stephen Wilmot, treasurer*

*Independent examiners: Damian Tow and Antonio Emmanouilidis*

## Overview

At the beginning of the financial year the club had unusual financial surpluses. The pandemic reminded people of the benefits of outdoor pursuits, leading to strong subscriptions in 2021/22, but during the initial period of uncertainty former chair Denise Robins applied to various grants that gradually came through. So we started 2022/23 with total funds of £56,374, a historically high amount for the club.

Following much discussion within the committee and at the Exceptional General Meeting a year ago, we deployed these surpluses during 2022/23 in two ways.

First, in October we put £20,000 in an account with Rathbones, an investment manager. The specific fund is called the Rathbone Active Income and Growth Fund and consists of a variety of assets (stocks, bonds, commercial property, etc). We chose it because of the medium risk profile, and because Rathbones was the only fund provider we could find that offered a dual-mandate investment account for the relatively small sum of £20,000. By the end of March the fund had grown modestly to £20,524.

Second, we invested just under £14,000 in our storage arch at 108 Kings Road Arches, which we rent on a long-term basis from Brighton & Hove council. It might sound like a lot to spend on a rented property, but the kayaking section in particular accounts for a large share of club activity and a better home for our equipment was sorely needed. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of volunteer members led by Brian Orsola, the refurbishment was much less expensive than it would have been on a commercial basis. The breakdown of costs can be found later in this report.

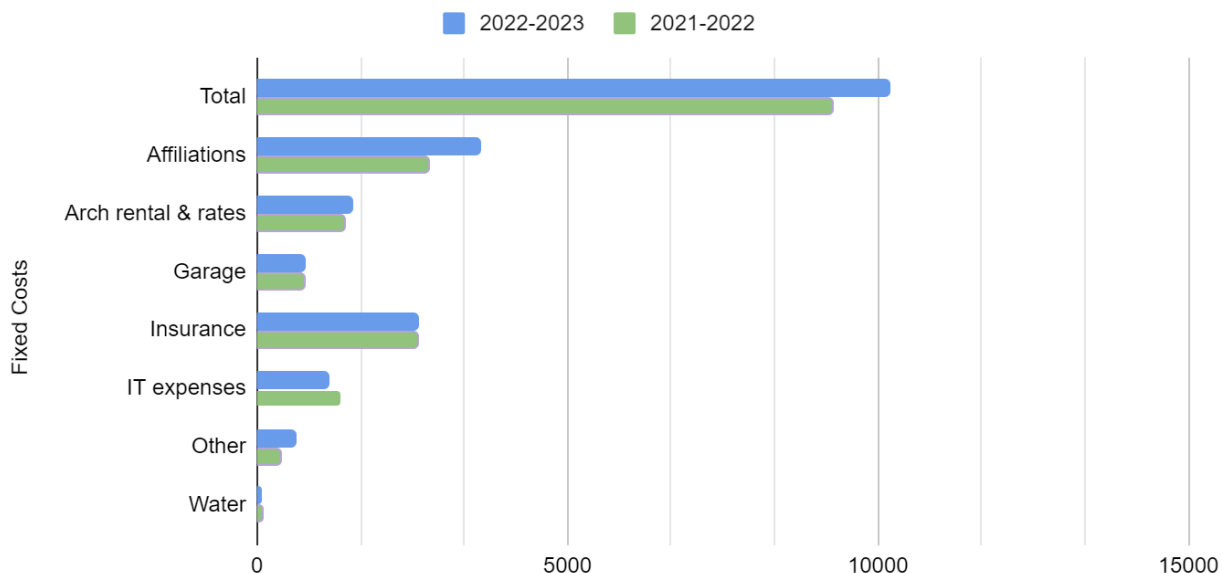
Stripping out the arch project, it was a normal year financially, with club operating income (everything except pass-through income) of £14,991 covering fixed and variable costs of £14,632.

	£	2022-2023	2021-2022
		Money out	
<b>Fixed costs</b>		£ 10,184	£ 9,261
Arch rental & rates	£ 1,509	£ 1,400	
Insurance	£ 2,581	£ 2,584	
IT expenses	£ 1,123	£ 1,330	
Garage	£ 750	£ 750	
Water	£ 51	£ 78	
Affiliations	£ 3,571	£ 2,752	
Other	£ 599	£ 368	
<b>Variable costs</b>		£ 4,448	£ 5,293
Watersports gear	£ 1,536	£ 4,037	
BEC-paid training	£ 2,480	£ 930	
Marketing	£ 217	£ -	
Climbing gear	£ 215	£ 326	
<b>Arch reburishment</b>		£ 13,867	£ -
<b>Pass-through costs</b>		£ 13,832	£ 4,644
<b>Refunds</b>		£ 2,379	£ 575
<b>TOTAL</b>		£ 44,710	£ 19,773
		Money in	
<b>Operating income</b>		£ 14,991	£ 20,637
Membership income	£ 13,987	£ 14,831	
Watersports inductions	£ 800	£ 519	
Other income	£ 204	£ 80	
Grant income	£ -	£ 5,208	
<b>Pass-through income</b>		£ 15,299	£ 6,990
<b>Total</b>		£ 30,290	£ 27,627
<b>Discrepancy</b>		£ (317)	£ (5)
<b>TOTAL via bank balance</b>		£ 29,973	£ 27,623

## Fixed costs

In fixed costs, the biggest change versus the previous year appears to be the affiliation fees we pay. In fact, the change is only to do with timing. We paid for two years worth of affiliation fees to British Canoeing in 2022/23 due to a delay in the invoice for the previous year. Most fixed costs were in line with last year. "Other" expenses include supplies for the BEC maintenance day in April 2022 and the cost of the new club projector.

## Fixed costs

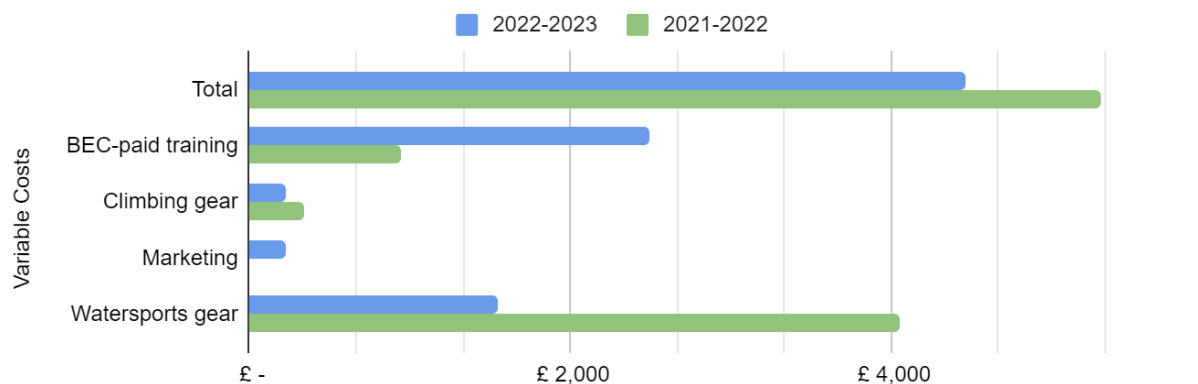


## Variable costs

In variable costs, the big changes were:

- a reduction in watersports equipment purchases. In 2021/22 we were renewing our equipment following the award of a grant specifically for watersports.
- an increase in BEC-funded training. The total for 2022/23 given below is £2,480, including £2,400 for subsidized First Aid training, excluding the contributions made by members, and £80 for caving. For the First Aid training, members who help organise activities paid 25% of the cost and other members contributed 50%. Overall, members contributed £930, bringing the net cost to the club down to £1,470.

## Variable Costs

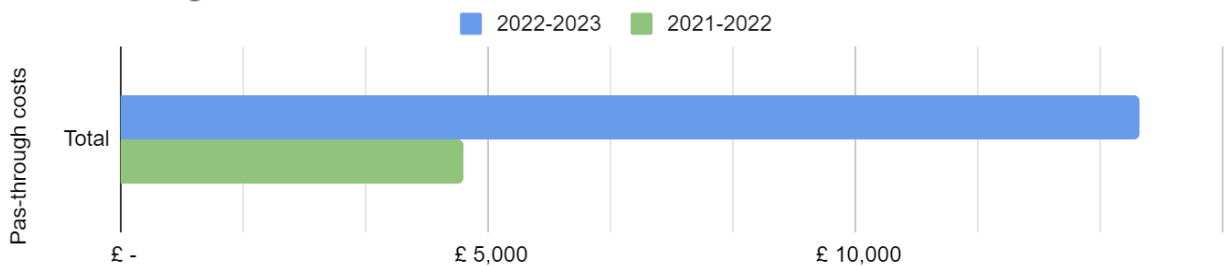


## Pass-through income and costs

Pass-through income and costs, which are excluded from the operating numbers, are the revenues taken via the website from members to cover the cost of trips or parties. Income of £15,299 covered £13,832 of costs (including refunds). The imbalances between these two are usually due to timing issues—we receive income for trips before we pay for the accommodation, for example—but in some cases also include gains and losses on trips. Ideally, members should organise trips so they cover their costs, but it doesn't always work out.

Pass-through flows were much higher than the previous year, when the dampening effect of the pandemic on activities lingered.

### Pass-through costs

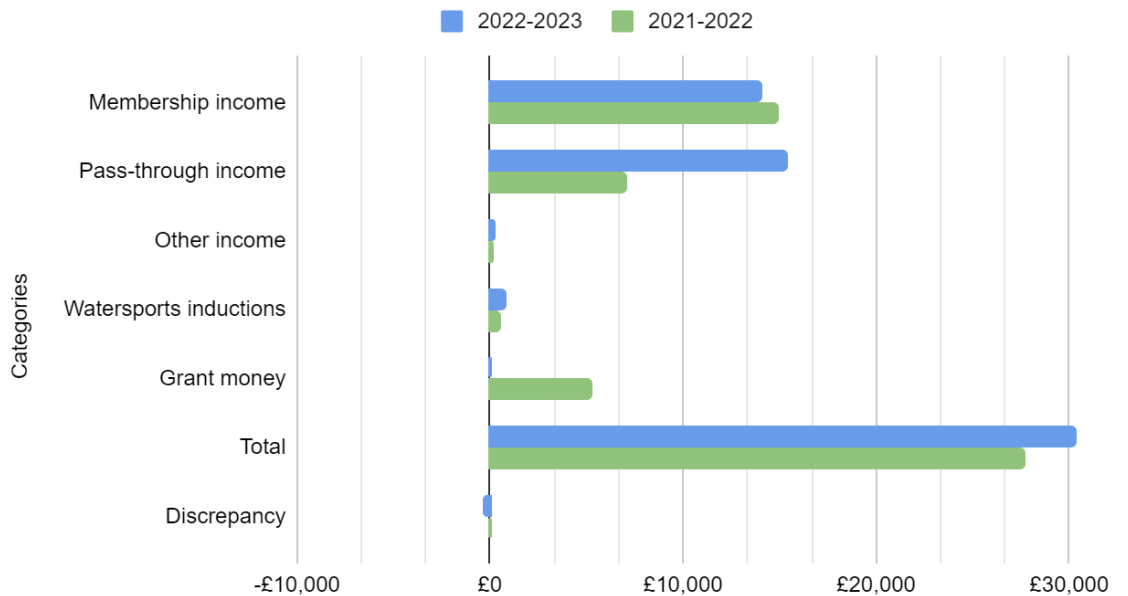


## Revenue

In terms of revenues, membership income last year was £13,987, down slightly from £14,831 in 2021/22, when we had an unusual increase in membership. Full memberships accounted for 81% of total membership revenues. We didn't get any more grant income as during the pandemic years, but we did earn more income from watersports inductions.



## Revenue



## Arch Project

A breakdown of spending on the arch is as follows. Some further costs were incurred after the end of the financial year, but those below account for the vast majority of the likely eventual total. They are all for the refurbishment project with the exception of the electrician, whose work was mainly to separate the arch electrics from those of the Brighton Sailing Club. The project would have been much more expensive if Brian and his team hadn't given their valuable time and expertise to the club to assemble the materials listed below. We are extremely grateful for their help, without which none of this could ever have happened.

Tanking	£ 4,800
Dehumidifier	£ 3,148
Electrics	£ 2,268
Racking	£ 1,539
Metal fixings	£ 679
Wood	£ 725
Paint for doors	£ 138
Plumbing	£ 55
Screws, bolts, foam, adhesives, other	£ 514
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 13,867</b>

## Notes

Other things of note financially that happened in the last fiscal year:

- In April we moved our current account from Barclays to Metrobank. This was because Barclays didn't allow us to change the signatories on the account.
- In October we moved our website payment provider from PayPal to Stripe, a lower-cost platform.
- We negotiated a new 10-year lease with Brighton & Hove Council, due to start in September 2023. The annual cost of the new lease is £1,750 for the first five years, up from £1,400 now. The increase is in line with inflation but will add to our fixed costs in future years.

## Membership Fees

Members will be aware of the challenge posed by inflation over the past year. BEC experienced this mainly in the arch project, where costs of materials were higher than initially anticipated. Despite not having raised membership fees last year, in 2022/23 we covered our operating costs with our operating income, the vast majority of which comes from fees. However, this will become harder in the current financial year. In addition to the increase in rent discussed above, the new arch dehumidifier will add to our electricity costs. We therefore feel it is prudent to raise fees by 10% for all except low-income and unwaged members. This will take effect in June.

## Discrepancy

We had a £317 negative discrepancy between the revenue data sourced from the website and the revenue that arrived in the bank account. This is always a problem with BEC accounting. Last year we managed to get the discrepancy down to under £5 but this year was much more complex given the changes in bank account and payment platforms and the much higher volume of payments generally. There was a further £100 positive discrepancy this year between the bank data and the amount in the bank account. So in total we have £217 less in the bank than we could explain through analysis of the data (about 0.5% of "money out" last year).

## Closing Remarks

I'd like to express my thanks to Wairimu Njuguna, our retiring PR secretary, who has been the second signatory on the Metrobank account for the past year. We wouldn't have been able to process payments without her.

I too am moving on after three years as treasurer. We reached out to all members seeking potential nominees for the role as treasurer and Sumitra Sri Bhashyam indicated her enthusiasm. I provided an overview of the various processes to her as I was compiling these accounts and am confident she possesses not only the personal traits but technical prowess to

excel in this position. I therefore encourage the wider membership to approve and endorse her nomination in the role as treasurer.

## Statement of assets

	2022-2023	2021-2022
<b>Financial assets at start of financial year</b>		
Building society account (reserves)	£ 14,536	£ 14,499
Current account	£ 41,839	£ 33,989
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 56,375</b>	<b>£ 48,488</b>
<b>Money In</b>		
Club operating income	£ 14,991	£ 20,637
Building society interest	£ 15	£ 37
Investment returns	£ -	£ -
Pass-through income	£ 15,299	£ 6,990
<b>Money out</b>		
Club operating costs	£ 14,632	£ 14,554
Arch refurbishment	£ 13,867	£ -
Pass-through costs and refunds	£ 16,211	£ 5,218
Transfer from current account to building society	£ 450	£ -
Transfer from current account to investment account	£ 20,000	£ -
<b>Financial assets at end of financial year</b>		
Building society account (Manchester)	£ 15,001	£ 14,536
Current account (Metrobank / Barclays)	£ 6,752	£ 41,839
Investment account (Rathbones)	£ 20,000	£ -
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 41,753</b>	<b>£ 56,375</b>
Current account balance as implied by accounts	£ 6,969	£ 41,844
Discrepancy	£ (217)	£ (5)