

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

England & Wales · Charity number 1156917

Details

Status Registered

Legal form Charitable company

Company number [08002099](#)

Registered 2014-05-06

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address Bcvs
23 Queens Road
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S71 1AN

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Activities

Objects: TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT BY PREVENTING PEOPLE FROM BEING SOCIALLY EXCLUDED, RELIEVING THE NEEDS OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED AND ASSISTING THEM TO INTEGRATE INTO SOCIETY. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS CLAUSE 'SOCIALLY EXCLUDED' MEANS BEING EXCLUDED FROM SOCIETY, OR PARTS OF SOCIETY, AS A RESULT OF ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS: UNEMPLOYMENT; FINANCIAL HARDSHIP; YOUTH OR OLD AGE; ILL HEALTH (PHYSICAL OR MENTAL); SUBSTANCE ABUSE OR DEPENDENCY INCLUDING ALCOHOL AND DRUGS; DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF SEX, RACE, DISABILITY, ETHNIC ORIGIN, RELIGION, BELIEF, CREED, SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT; POOR EDUCATIONAL OR SKILLS ATTAINMENT; RELATIONSHIP AND FAMILY BREAKDOWN; POOR HOUSING (THAT IS HOUSING THAT DOES NOT MEET BASIC HABITABLE STANDARDS); CRIME (EITHER AS A VICTIM OF CRIME OR AS AN OFFENDER REHABILITATING INTO SOCIETY).

Activities: We provide a daily (mon-Fri) drop-in service for information, support and guidance many issues, including benefits, debt, relationships, health and wellbeing, housing, etc. We provide home visits and advocacy as needed. We offer a community scribe service, job-search help, informal basic skills tuition and study support. We encourage volunteering and progression to mainstream work/education.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Arts/culture/heritage/science, Environment/conservation/heritage, Economic/community Development/employment, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity, Recreation
- **Who:** Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Barnsley

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£69,432	£93,666	-	-
2024-03-31	£103,368	£83,484	-	-
2023-03-31	£65,091	£71,203	-	-
2022-03-31	£58,028	£51,655	-	-
2021-03-31	£70,207	£62,691	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Lorraine Ocallaghan		2020-10-30
Louise Jane Crofts		2023-01-10
Lynn Shepherd		2018-06-25
MR T SCORAH		2014-03-26

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

England & Wales - Charity number 1156917

Accounts

Company Number. 08002099 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity Number. 1156917

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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ROMERO COMMUNITIES
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Full name: Romero Communities

Registered Company number: 08002099

Registered Charity Number: 1156917

Registered office & principal address: 23 Queens Road
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S71 1AN

Trustees & Directors: L J Crofts
L S Hanrahan
A Jones
K G Moore
L Ocallaghan
L Shepherd

Chairperson: L S Hanrahan

Company Secretary: M Phillips

Treasurer: K Moore

Independent Examiner: Angela Hayes, FMAAT
Community Accountant
22 Brocklehurst Avenue
Barnsley
S70 3EE

Bankers: HSBC
5 Market Hill
Barnsley
S70 2PY

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Structure, governance and management

Romero Communities is a registered charity with the Charity Commission and a company limited by guarantee, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, dated March 2012, most recently amended February 2014. The company has no share capital and the liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to a sum not exceeding £1. The affairs of the charity are managed on a day-to-day basis by the trustees who have control of the charity and its property and funds.

Appointment of trustees

The trustees are also directors of the company for the purpose of company law. The trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting. Every trustee must sign a declaration of willingness to act as a charity trustee before being eligible to vote at the meetings.

The trustees who served during the year are listed on page 3 of this report.

Charitable aims and objectives

The objectives of the charity are:

To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.

For the purpose of this clause 'socially excluded' means being excluded from society, or parts of society, as a result of one or more of the following factors: unemployment; financial hardship; youth or old age; ill health (physical or mental); substance abuse or dependency including alcohol and drugs; discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, belief, creed, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment; poor educational or skills attainment; relationship and family breakdown; poor housing (that is housing that does not meet basic habitable standards); crime (either as a victim of crime or as an offender rehabilitating into society).

Risk Management

The trustees have ultimate responsibility for identifying and managing risk. The main risk to the organisation is the loss of funding to continue the essential services. The financial position and level of reserves is reviewed at each trustee meeting and funding applications are ongoing. For other areas, the charity has risk management policies and procedures in place which are reviewed regularly by the trustees.

Public Benefit Statement

In shaping the objectives for the year the trustees have paid due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Report of the Trustees on activities undertaken and achievements during the period.

Our Romero Communities Board of Trustees and team of sessional workers would like to share what's been happening in the year April 2024 to March 2025.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN DELIVERING OUR WORK

We are led by our Board of Trustees. As a Charity we are fortunate to have trustees who are committed to our work and our meetings are well attended.

Romero Support and Guidance Board of Trustees

Our Chairperson, **Linda**, brings her experience of working for Citizens Advice Barnsley. She Chairs our meetings by ensuring all Board members are informed and actively involved in decision making.

Keith, our Finance trustee, his knowledge and experience is invaluable when managing our many strands of funding. He keeps copious records of our income and spend. To ensure the other Board members can make informed decisions, he provides regular updates, supported by spreadsheets which are considered at every meeting.

Maria, her dedicated work as Secretary and providing invaluable administrative support.

Lorraine, Lynn, Alan and Louise give their unwavering support for the Charity. They will not only act in their role in support of the work but will act as critical friends, asking questions and shaping decisions.

Our Board of Trustees are 'hands on' and are involved in our day-to-day work with residents. Having their own experiences contributes to their understanding of the needs of our customers. This in turn supports decision making at Board level.

A very big thank you to all Board members who give a great deal of voluntary time to ensure the Charity operates within Charity Commission and Companies House regulations.

Our Support and Guidance Team

Thanks to our sessional support workers, **Paula R, Pete J, Wayne B and Emily P**, who deliver our Support and Guidance service. They are a great 'team' and deliver our sessions with great humility, kindness and efficiency, supported by their extensive knowledge and skills. They have embraced new opportunities to meet the needs of residents. We have added value to the service by introducing focussed support. This has meant that we have applied for and received some additional funding over and above our Lottery funded work. The team have developed partnerships with many other services. A collaborative approach is adopted when needed to ensure complex problems can be addressed holistically.

Thanks to **L** who provides counselling sessions, as a volunteer, for our clients. It is important that when people are going through difficult times they can access this type of person-centred counselling support, without the need to join a long waiting list.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

ADDED VALUE

Home Visits

We continue to offer our face-to-face Drop-in Support and Guidance service. We have long been concerned that many of our existing and potential customers have barriers to accessing our service if they do not have access to telephones and e-mail. In addition, loneliness, isolation, physical conditions and poor mental health have restricted or prevented some residents accessing our help. In addition to the Home Visits, we aim to support and encourage these customers to access other help, services and activities, including Romero services and activities. The long-term aim is that these residents experience an improved way of life, a general improvement in their overall wellbeing and improved connections with family, friends and more involvement in their immediate locality. We are seeking continued funding to meet the growing needs for this service.

Over the year 07/07/24 to 07/07/25 we carried out 24 Home Visits which supported individuals for an average of 2.5 hours of face to face, personalised help with 44 different problems. Of this group there were 15 females and 9 males living across 10 areas of Barnsley. This period has proved difficult as we have experienced funding shortages and have had to reduce the hours we spend on the visits. As a further example we have recorded data over a longer period, April 2022 to July 2025 which averaged out at 43.6 visits per year. During this period we had secured funding to develop this service.

Customer feedback from people who have received Home Visits

G "I contacted Romero via my housing officer as I needed to update DLA of the changes to my son's health; I've also got health problems. Peter came to see me at my home, and as we talked, we managed to narrow down a plan to move forward. My circumstances are as such that I cannot disclose my story and the task wasn't easy. I didn't have a car at the time and couldn't really leave the house for safety reasons; the home visit therefore was essential to do this work. After 2 x visits, we managed to complete the DLA update for my son and managed to complete a successful appeal for my personal independence payments which I had previously been turned down for. The benefit of having Peter come to my home was great as without this, I would be stuffed".

L: "When I got in touch with Romero Communities I was in a state. I hadn't had any heating for a long time, and my house was cold and damp. I stopped work in 2020 and had fallen into mortgage arrears. I met with Paula, and she put a plan together. Initially she got me some money to buy a washer as the one I had was broken. I benefitted from a lot of home visits as there was a lot of repairs to be done. With the help from Romero, Paula and Pete, I managed to sell my house and move into St Edwins where I am today. I don't have the stress that I had at the time when I was in debt and living in a home that wasn't nice. It took a lot of sorting to get turned around, but because I stuck to a plan, things are certainly better today".

Outreach sessions

We were approached by a local councillor, BMBC, to deliver a weekly 2-hour session for people living in another area of Barnsley. This has been funded as a pilot to continue into the new financial year. This is being well received but unfortunately can only be supported by on-going funding.

Acts 435

We continue to refer to this charity. In addition to referrals there is substantial work required to manage the grants. We work with customers to identify need, source items and pay for them, connect with partner organisations, ensure the items requested are received and follow up to offer on-going support. We also are required to provide documentation to the charity following all successful applications. We do not receive any monies for this service.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Household Support Fund

As a trusted partner of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, we manage 2 grants. This fund does not include any core funding so the team administer this as part of their working day.

To ensure that we could get the grant out to the people who met the criteria of the fund we 'designed' a model to address the needs of families with babies and young children and to support people moving into a tenancy, providing essential items such as cots, toddler beds and essential household items. We presented our model to the 0-19 team of Health Visitors and take referrals from them. The outcome is improved joint working practice and increased awareness for families about our work. We have plans to extend the offer to other teams who work with the target groups. This will require core funding going forwards into 2025/2026. The target group is aimed at families who are working on low income.

Migration from Employment and Support Allowance onto Universal Credit

The migration from ESA to UC has been rolled out with very little support put in place to help people move across from one benefit to the other. We have bridged the gap for claimants and supported other services and organisations to do the same.

The need for the claimant to own a smart phone, have the literacy skills needed to complete journals, read and reply to messages and make any changes to their circumstances can be a very stressful experience for people. Before an account can be set up every person needs an e-mail address, access to Wi-Fi or data allowance. They are required to provide personal identification such as birth certificates, a passport, a driving licence and bank account. As an organisation we are supporting individuals to provide these essential documents. This is a long and complicated process which creates high levels of anxiety and stress.

We hold a small amount of money which has been donated to our Charity for the sole purpose of providing some financial support to pay for emergency help. As an example we utilised this to pay for a smart phone for a severely disabled adult, gave him 'lessons' in how to use it and how to manage his UC account. He also needed our support for him to contact rents to ensure his rent would continue to be paid. When he came to us he had already accrued rent arrears because he had been unable to complete the task of migration.

Food Banks

We continue to work alongside Barnsley Food Bank. Our referrals are made as part of visits to our Drop In, or referrals from partner organisations. We are in a privileged position to work with people to address the causes of the need. This can lead to us providing additional help with the aim of eradicating the need in the future. This can relate to, money management, issue with the payments of benefit or pay from employment. We can also respond directly to anyone who visits after the weekly Food Bank delivery day as trusted partners. There can be bags of food which do not get collected, we then work with the Food Bank to redistribute to those who would otherwise be without food.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Our delivery, as always, focuses on finding alternative ways of working to best meet the needs of our customers. This help is enhanced by our Home Visiting service. Positive links with the library has led to new sharing and/or opportunities for our customers or referrals into our service. We have adjusted our roles within the team of sessional workers. Two workers are focussing on funding applications and alternative ways of raising funds.

FOR OUR FUTURE

- We will continue to open 3 days per week.
- We will deliver the 3 days Drop in
- We will carry out follow up work on behalf of our customers.
- We will maintain and further develop our methods of contacting and supporting our customers using technology.

Our future moving forward is dependent on grant funding, we have made several applications to funders for funding after February 2025. We will require funding to maintain our current service and to also develop and improve. We need to extend our hours, but this will depend on future funding. The Drop In will continue to be the 'chosen method of contact' by those people who face barriers to accessing support using technology and who choose to seek help to address their issues by visiting our face-to-face Drop In.

OUR CHALLENGES

The work of Romero Communities is a 'team' effort. We still have ambitions for the future to secure long-term funding. We continue to explore ways of raising income, so we do not rely fully on external funds. We realise this will be difficult and will be a long-term goal. Romero Communities is built on partnerships with other voluntary and statutory organisations and this will continue into our future. By working in this way, we hope to continue to bring the best and most appropriate services together to help our customers resolve their problems.

Following the end of our Lottery grant, we face huge challenges to secure core funding for Romero Communities Support and Guidance.

OUR VISION AND LONG-TERM AIMS

We hold a long-term aim to develop social opportunities to encourage peer support, reduce loneliness and isolation and support people into learning and job opportunities.

The empowerment of individuals is at the forefront of our work, sharing knowledge, encouraging self-help, confidence, self-esteem and skills which will put people back in control of their own lives. We will continue to resist having to restrict the time we spend with people to help them reach a solution rather than spending less time and resorting to a 'sticking plaster' approach. We are keen to increase the times of opening in the future.

We need to secure funding which will support designated time for networking and liaising/co-working with partner organisations when supporting clients with complex problems. Follow up work takes up approximately 50% of our time.

Our biggest challenge as a small Charity is the financial sustainability of this type of work. This is at the forefront of our planning for 2025/2026 and beyond.

Related parties

The trustees consider that there are no related parties to the charity.

The charity's policy on reserves

As a small charity, reliant on public and charitable funding and susceptible to factors beyond the control of the organisation, the trustees recognise the need to keep reserves at a level that will give the organisation stability to enable it to continue to operate in the future and meet all statutory and service delivery obligations. The trustees aim to accumulate reserves equivalent to 3 months' annual expenditure on core charitable activities, which equates to a sum of £21,697 in the current financial year. At the year-end, the unrestricted reserve stands at £13,188 (2024: £17,037). The trustees are aware of the need to generate further unrestricted funds to bring reserves to the desired level and this is being addressed in the implementation of the business plans.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the surplus or deficiency for the year then ended. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to: select suitable accounting policies and then apply them on a consistent basis, making judgements and estimates that are prudent and reasonable. The trustees must also prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charity, 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 charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud or other irregularities.

Financial Position

The financial statements are set out in pages 11 to 16. The Statement of Financial Activities shows a deficit for the year of £24,234 (2024: a surplus of £19,884). The total funds at the year-end stand at £38,145 (2024: £62,379). Total funds include balances remaining on restricted grants of £24,957 and the general reserve of £13,188.

Small company provisions:


This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Exemptions

The trustees have taken advantage of the exemptions available to small companies, including the audit exemption.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:

Signed: 

Date: 15 September 2025

K Moore, Trustee/ Director

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

I report on the accounts of the charity, which are set out on pages 11 to 16.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; or
- the accounts do not accord with such records; or
- the accounts do not comply with relevant accounting requirements under section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102).

I have no concerns and I 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.

Signed: *A Hayes*

Date: 15 September 2025

Angela Hayes, FMAAT
Community Accountant
22 Brocklehurst Avenue, Barnsley, S70 3EE

 | Licensed
Accountant

Angela Hayes is licensed and regulated by
AAT under licence number 1006755

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(Incorporating an Income & Expenditure Account)**

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2025 Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total Funds £
Income							
Gifts & donations		165	-	165	12,669	-	12,669
Grants received	2	-	69,117	69,117	-	90,699	90,699
Other income		150	-	150	-	-	-
Total income		315	69,117	69,432	12,669	90,699	103,368
Expenditure							
Sessional workers		4,164	66,679	70,843	2,872	60,327	63,199
Rent & office costs		-	7,368	7,368	-	7,368	7,368
Insurance		-	626	626	-	605	605
Printing, stationery & admin expenses		-	722	722	-	1,965	1,965
Telephone, computer & internet costs		-	4,230	4,230	-	5,686	5,686
Volunteer expenses		-	775	775	-	1,050	1,050
Accountancy		-	750	750	-	750	750
Website		-	1,418	1,418	-	998	998
Gardening project expenditure		-	-	-	-	458	458
Household support grants		-	6,876	6,876	-	1,363	1,363
Other expenditure		-	58	58	-	42	42
Total expenditure		4,164	89,502	93,666	2,872	80,612	83,484
Net income/(expenditure)		(3,849)	(20,385)	(24,234)	9,797	10,087	19,884
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	(7,500)	7,500	-
Total funds brought forward		17,037	45,342	62,379	14,740	27,755	42,495
Total funds carried forward	9/10	13,188	24,957	38,145	17,037	45,342	62,379

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

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

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Note	£	2025 £	£	2024 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets		-		-	
Total fixed assets		-		-	
Current assets					
Debtors & prepayments	3	296		278	
Cash at bank and in hand		63,159		82,649	
Total current assets		63,455		82,927	
Liabilities					
Creditors & accruals amounts falling due within one year	4	(25,310)		(20,548)	
Net current assets			38,145		62,379
Net assets			38,145		62,379
Funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds	9		13,188		17,037
Restricted funds			24,957		45,342
Total funds			38,145		62,379

Exemption from audit

For the period ending 31 March 2025 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.


Directors' responsibilities:

- *The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476;*
- *The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.*

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The trustees declare that they have approved the accounts above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed: 

Dated: 15 September 2025

K Moore, Trustee/Director

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Accounting policies

Basis of the preparation of the accounts

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities - Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are prepared in pounds sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest pound.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value, unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Income and expenditure has been analysed in the accounts using natural classification, in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.6, SORP 2019 (smaller charities). The charity also meets the requirements for exemption for preparing a statement of cash flows.

Going concern note

The trustees regularly review the financial position of the charity and its reserves. The grant from the National Lottery Community Fund ended in January 2025 and the charity is currently working to secure funding for the future of its services, with a number of funding applications in progress.

The charity is currently able to meet all liabilities as they fall due and the trustees have reasonable expectation that the charity will have adequate resources to continue in operation for the twelve-month period following the signing of these accounts. It is therefore deemed appropriate to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

Incoming resources

All material incoming resources have been included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, when any performance conditions attached are met, when it is probable that the income will be received and when the amount can be measured reliably.

Resources expended

Resources expended have been analysed using natural classification.

All expenditure is included on an accruals basis and is recognised as a liability is incurred. The charity is not registered for VAT and accordingly resources expended are shown gross of irrecoverable VAT.

Donated goods and services

Donated facilities and services are recognised in the accounts at the amount the charity would pay in the open market for a service equivalent to that being donated, when the charity would otherwise have purchased them and the value can be measured reliably.

Donated goods for the charity's own use are recognised as income, at their fair value.

The contribution of general volunteers is not recognised as income in the charity accounts

Taxation

Romero Communities is a registered charity and is exempt from UK corporation tax on income from its charitable activities.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated to write down the cost or valuation less estimated residual value of all tangible fixed assets, with an individual cost exceeding £1,000, over their expected useful lives.

There were no individual assets with a value exceeding £1,000 in the current year.

Funds Structure

The charity maintains a general unrestricted fund which represents funds which are expendable at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity.

Restricted funds have been provided to the charity for particular purposes and may only be spent for the purposes for which they were given. Any balance remaining outstanding on a restricted fund at the end of the year is carried forward as a balance on the fund, unless permission has been given by the funder to remove the restriction on the balance outstanding.

2. Restricted grants received

	2025	2024
	£	£
The National Lottery Community Fund	38,387	60,287
BMBC Pride of Place	19,578	-
The Tudor Trust	-	20,000
BMBC - Household Support Grant	10,000	8,976
BMBC AP	1,152	-
BMBC - Gardening Project	-	1,436
	<u>69,117</u>	<u>90,699</u>

3. Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Insurance prepaid	296	278
	<u>296</u>	<u>278</u>

4. Creditors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Accountancy fee	750	750
Room rent	24,560	17,192
Other creditors	-	2,606
	<u>25,310</u>	<u>20,548</u>

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

5. Independent examination and accountancy services

During the period, the cost of the independent examination and accountancy service was £750 (2024: £750).

6. Trustees' remuneration, benefits and expenses

A sum of £750 was paid to Keith Moore, for expenses in relation to grant monitoring and bookkeeping services. (2024: £1,150). Other than reimbursement of items purchased on behalf of the charity, there were no further payments, remuneration or benefits made to trustees in the accounting period.

7. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

8. Funds held on behalf of third party groups

During the year, the charity received funds from the ACTS 435 charity, to pay over to named individuals. The income is held on behalf of ACTS 435 and is therefore not recognised in the accounts of Romero Communities. A balance of £150 was held in the bank account of Romero Communities on behalf of ACTS 435 at the year end.

9. Movement in funds

	Opening balance £	Incoming resources £	(Resources expended) £	Fund Transfers £	Closing balance £
Unrestricted funds					
General Fund	17,037	315	(4,164)	-	13,188
	17,037	315	(4,164)	-	13,188
Restricted funds					
The National Lottery Community Fund	10,171	38,387	(48,558)	-	-
BMBC Pride of Place	-	19,578	(19,578)	-	-
BMBC AP	-	1,152	(1,152)	-	-
The Tudor Trust	26,580	-	(13,338)	-	13,242
Household Support Grant	7,613	10,000	(6,876)	-	10,737
Gardening Project	978	-	-	-	978
	45,342	69,117	(89,502)	-	24,957
TOTAL FUNDS	62,379	69,432	(93,666)	-	38,145

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

10. Restricted Funds

- The National Lottery Community Fund– a five-year Community Fund grant to fund the Support & Guidance service.
- BMBC Pride of Place – a grant to fund Sessional Workers and associated overheads for the Support & Guidance service.
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council – Practical Support Grant from the North Area Council to fund a drop-in worker.
- The Tudor Trust – a grant to help support people living with complex issues.
- Gardening Project – a grant from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to support this project
- Household Support Grants - Government funding to help people who have been financially impacted by the cost of living crisis. To provide Individual grants to help with food, energy costs and other household essentials.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

England & Wales - Charity number 1156917

Accounts

Company Number. 08002099 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity Number. 1156917

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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ROMERO COMMUNITIES
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Full name: Romero Communities

Registered Company number: 08002099

Registered Charity Number: 1156917

Registered office & principal address: 23 Queens Road
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S71 1AN

Trustees & Directors: L J Crofts
L S Hanrahan – *appointed 08/03/2024*
A Jones – *appointed 08/03/2024*
K G Moore
L Ocallaghan
T Scolah – *resigned 08/03/2024*
L Shepherd

Chairperson: L S Hanrahan

Company Secretary: M Phillips

Treasurer: K Moore

Independent Examiner: Angela Hayes, FMAAT
Community Accountant
22 Brocklehurst Avenue
Barnsley
S70 3EE

Bankers: HSBC
5 Market Hill
Barnsley
S70 2PY

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Structure, governance and management

Romero Communities is a registered charity with the Charity Commission and a company limited by guarantee, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, dated March 2012, most recently amended February 2014. The company has no share capital and the liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to a sum not exceeding £1. The affairs of the charity are managed on a day-to-day basis by the trustees who have control of the charity and its property and funds.

Appointment of trustees

The trustees are also directors of the company for the purpose of company law. The trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting. Every trustee must sign a declaration of willingness to act as a charity trustee before being eligible to vote at the meetings.

The trustees who served during the year are listed on page 3 of this report.

Charitable aims and objectives

The objectives of the charity are:

To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.

For the purpose of this clause 'socially excluded' means being excluded from society, or parts of society, as a result of one or more of the following factors: unemployment; financial hardship; youth or old age; ill health (physical or mental); substance abuse or dependency including alcohol and drugs; discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, belief, creed, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment; poor educational or skills attainment; relationship and family breakdown; poor housing (that is housing that does not meet basic habitable standards); crime (either as a victim of crime or as an offender rehabilitating into society).

Risk Management

The trustees have ultimate responsibility for identifying and managing risk. The main risk to the organisation is the loss of funding to continue the essential services. The financial position and level of reserves is reviewed at each trustee meeting and funding applications are ongoing. For other areas, the charity has risk management policies and procedures in place which are reviewed regularly by the trustees.

Public Benefit Statement

In shaping the objectives for the year the trustees have paid due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Report of the Trustees on activities undertaken and achievements during the period.

Our Romero Communities team would like to share what's been happening this year.

As a Board of Trustees, volunteers, paid workers and partner organisations we have continued to respond to demand and customer need and make changes, as appropriate, to our delivery of Romero Support and Guidance. Our base is shared by other groups and organisations which provide new opportunities to work in partnership, this enhances the service we provide for our customers.

We thank The National Lottery Reaching Communities and Tudor Trust for supporting us this year by funding our work.

We constantly meet new people seeking help so that they can move forwards. We continue to encourage and support those who look to make changes to their lives.

We hope this report will enable us to move into year 5 and to build for the future and address any areas of our work which require improvement or further development. We are already seeking funding to continue our work for the benefit of our customers past and present.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN DELIVERING OUR WORK

We are led by our Board of Trustees.

Romero Support and Guidance

A big thank you to our volunteers and workers:

Thanks to Maria, her dedicated work continues, ensuring our systems are working to meet our outcomes.

Thanks to Lorraine who is dedicated to carrying out her volunteer role, making calls to customers. The calls gather feedback from customers seeking support. This information provides valuable evidence to support our applications for funding and for reports required by them.

Thanks to Linda who has supported our Drop In and brings her vast experience as a key worker for Citizens Advice Barnsley to our work.

Thank you to Alan who approached us to organise a fundraising event following help we gave to his daughter. This was delayed during Covid but took place as a 2022 Xmas Ceilidh. The music and Ceilidh was performed 'free of charge' by Penistone Folk Ensemble. The Ceilidh was held in December 2022 and again in 2023, both were a great success and following requests from those attending we are to hold a follow up in Year 5.

Thank you to Louise who lived locally for 20 years and currently is our 'in house' Counsellor, providing 3 appointments twice per month.

Thanks to our sessional Support Workers; - Paula R, Pete J, Wayne B and Emily P who deliver our Support and Guidance service. They are a great 'team' and deliver our sessions with great humility, kindness and efficiency supported by their extensive knowledge and skills.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Board of Trustees

We were contacted by Trevor, our Chairperson, following our November Board meeting. He stepped down from the role and sent his formal resignation. We followed this by a letter of gratitude for his long-standing support for the Charity. Trevor hopes to work alongside us in the future once his plans for a new community initiative come to fruition.

A very big thank you to all our Board members who give a great deal of voluntary time to ensure the Charity operates within Charity Commission guidelines.

Keith- we are very grateful for his work as our accounts are managed in a timely and a professional manner. Our annual accounts are completed immediately once the end of our financial year arrives. He submits to Company House and Charity Commission as soon as they have been accepted by the Board. He also supports our direct work with residents.

Lynn has been active in the community for many years. She has been active in a number of resident-led initiatives. Living locally for over 20 years, she has a wealth of relevant knowledge. Her contribution ensures our service delivery is in line with local need which is vital to the success of our work.

Lorraine lived locally for over 20 years and also contributes a great deal to ensure our service delivery is in line with local need. On a number of occasions she has carried out surveys of resident views and experiences of our service. She continues to do this when the need arises. We use the outcomes to shape our working model.

Louise brings local knowledge to the Support and Guidance work and is keen to develop her role on the Board.

Linda was a Drop-In volunteer for a year. Having retired she is keen to help us manage the Charity. Linda has volunteered to take on the role of temporary Chairperson at our next meeting. We look to give the opportunity to other board members who may consider joining a temporary 'rolling chair' position until our AGM.

Alan lives locally and is keen to help us to raise funds. He has good local knowledge as he lives in the area. He also promotes our work widely. He is a positive addition to our Board of Trustees.

OUR ACTIVITIES

Support and Guidance Drop in and Home Visits

We have continued to offer our face-to-face Drop-in Support and Guidance service. We have long been concerned that many of our existing and potential customers have barriers to accessing our service if they do not have access to telephones and e-mail. In addition, loneliness, isolation, physical conditions and poor mental health have restricted or prevented some residents accessing our help.

A grant was awarded by Tudor Trust, adding value to our work. We now have the capacity to deliver our service via Home Visits. In addition to the Home Visits, we aim to support and encourage these customers to access other help, services, and activities, including Romero services and activities. The long-term aim is that these residents see an improved way of life, general improvement in their overall wellbeing, improved connections with family, friends and in general more involvement in their immediate locality.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Throughout the year we have adapted our recording methods, so we are able to accurately report our work. Our Database did have some initial 'hiccups' but as a tailored system we have been able to make adaptations to meet our needs.

Referrals from Romero and to Romero continue, along with new connections to other groups and organisations. We believe this is because some other organisations are experiencing a reduced capacity to deliver their services, or the demand for support is vastly oversubscribed. Our referrals to Food Banks continue as part of our 'wrap around support', along with referrals to us for help from the Charity ACTS 435 and to our Housing Support Grant work.

An analysis of our contacts during year 4 evidence the prevalence of help needed in the following areas:

- Benefit applications and help to appeal decisions which are contrary to the outcome anticipated by the customer.
- Employment and unemployment issues
- Debt
- Legal, social care needs, housing, and relationship/poor mental health are recorded in our more copious recording.

This work is intense and requires a great deal of knowledge and skill by our workers. We support many who do not have access to the internet, this can also be difficult when customers have additional needs such as learning difficulties, complex physical and mental health needs, unstable lifestyles, which can result in a breakdown of family relationships and even result in homelessness.

This comment below was shared by a local resident who came for help.

'I came to Romero 7 years ago for help and support with son's benefit form as DIAL couldn't help. C also helped me get my son a home visit from college as I struggle daily to get him out the house, a women from college came to my home and spoke to my son regarding a college place.

Romero staff are always friendly, welcoming and always happy to help and support with any problems I face. I returned for support this week (26/06/23) with a UC (universal credit) application as I am switching over from income support. Romero is a brilliant help to everyone in the community and reliable too.'

Activity Plan

We continually seek to canvas the views of our customers and the wider community who may or may not have experience of Romero Communities charity or, in turn, Romero Support and Guidance. We intend to carry out a full evaluation during 2024/25.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

‘JOINED UP’ SUPPORT’

Our work is based on positive relationships with partner services and organisations to deliver a holistic service for our customers. We continue to link with other services to deliver holistic support.

Here are the links to date (and growing):

- Social Prescribing Teams
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Berneslai Homes
- Citizens Advice Barnsley
- D.I.A.L.
- Barnsley Food Bank Partnership
- Acts 435
- Adult and Children and Families Social Care
- 0-19 service (Health Visitors)
- Department of Works and Pensions
- Firm of local solicitors (MKB)
- Step Change
- G.P. surgeries
- IDAS
- Resolute
- ADASTRA

We hosted research on behalf of Barnsley Council’s Pathways to Work project. The research was carried out in order to design future support to help people who want to be in paid work. This is the feedback we received from the Kada researcher.

‘Romero Communities have been incredibly helpful in connecting me with people with lived experiences of economic inactivity in Barnsley, for a research study that aims to understand the challenges and barriers of economic inactivity and develop new solutions for Barnsley residents. Romero Communities also provided a room for the research conversations to take place and gave background information about the individuals prior to the meeting to ease the conversation and ensure the participants felt as comfortable as possible. They were also on hand to offer any support if required and had supported the people I spoke with for many years’.

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Our delivery, as always, focuses on finding alternative ways of working to best meet the needs of our customers. This help has been enhanced by our Home Visiting service. Having more space has meant that we have considered the use of our Drop-In space, to offer social opportunities, adult learning and sessions held by some partners in our locally accessible space. We were helped by a small pot of funding to carry out surveys on behalf of BMBC (Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council).

We held ‘Grub n Gab’ get togethers which were focussed on social opportunities for people, who we knew to be isolated and wanting to join new activity groups, to take up some form of exercise or learning. We were unable to achieve our ideas fully but continue to seek funding to further develop during Year 5.

Positive links with the library has led to new sharing and/or opportunities for our customers or referrals into our service.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

As referred to earlier we have initiated a mapping exercise which we hope will inform any changes we need to make and to ensure that changes are needs led.

We have secured a further round of funding for the Housing Support Grant from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC), following the success of the previous grant. We designed an initiative aimed at supporting pregnant mums/ families with essential items for baby or starter packs for new tenancies. We continue to work closely with the Health Visiting Team /0 to 19 service. We receive referrals, using a system designed to ensure the process could be accessed easily and the referral was completed quickly. The feedback is positive from both workers and the families in receipt of the items.

PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

- We have continued to open 3 days per week.
- We delivered the 3 days Drop-In over Year 4.
- We maintained and further developed our methods of contacting and supporting our customers using technology.

Our future moving forward is looking positive, we have already made a start on our funding search, for funding after January 2025. We will require funding to maintain our current service and to also develop and improve.

Our plans beyond this will be developed during Year 5 but will be within our current funding restrictions. We would like to extend our hours, but this will depend on future funding.

The Drop-In continues to be the 'chosen method of contact' by those people who face barriers to accessing support using technology and chose to seek help to address their issues by visiting the Drop-In. We make use of our website and FaceBook as a social media method of sharing information which may help and support our customers.

We have found accessing other services and organisations on behalf of our customers extremely time consuming. It is apparent that some organisations were not offering a full service during the pandemic and we have found it can be a 'lottery' of who is available. This continues in some areas to date. We hope the outcome of a mapping exercise will help us and partner organisations to develop a system for improved links.

OUR CHALLENGES

The work of Romero Communities is a 'team' effort. We have ambitions for the future to secure long-term funding. We aim to develop ways of 'earning' income, so we do not rely fully on external funds. We realise this will be difficult and will be a long-term goal. We hope to engage people from the community to help us to achieve this. The first step will be to recruit a Fundraising Sub-Group bringing together service users, trustees, volunteers, partner organisations and workers. Sustainability continues to prove difficult, particularly in the current financial climate.

Romero Communities is built on partnerships with other voluntary and statutory organisations and will continue into our future. By working in this way, we hope to bring the best and most appropriate services together to help our customers resolve their problems.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

We hold a long term aim to develop social opportunities to encourage peer support, reduce loneliness and isolation and support people into learning and job opportunities. In year 4 we have introduced an activity 'Grub and Gab' which provides a social setting where friendships can be forged and aspirations can be encouraged and supported. Links can be made into other opportunities offered by other groups and aims to be led by participants.

The empowerment of individuals is at the forefront of our work, sharing knowledge, encouraging self-help, confidence, self-esteem and skills which will put people back in control of their own lives.

We try to approach our challenges as opportunities to provide an improved service. We are also very honest and face our challenges realistically. The link between demand and capacity can be frustrating at times and can rely on the genuine good will of our workers. We don't want to increase demand to our Drop-ins to a point where we have to turn people away, however we are always keen to look at ways of managing our sessions to maximise the time available.

We continue to resist having to restrict the time we spend with people to help them reach a solution, rather than spending less time and resorting to a 'sticking plaster' approach. We are keen to increase the times of opening in the future.

We need to have designated time for networking and liaising/co-working with partner organisations when supporting clients with complex problems. Follow up work with partners takes up approximately 50% of our time.

Our biggest challenge as a small charity is the financial sustainability of this type of work. This is at the forefront of our planning for 2024/2025 and beyond.

THANK YOU FOR READING OUR REPORT.

PLEASE SEE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BELOW (Appendix 1 to our Annual Report).

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Appendix 1

THE STORY OF OUR PROJECT IN YEAR 4

- The Lottery funding has ensured that Romero Communities can remain active in the Barnsley area; most of all in the St Helens ward of Barnsley.
- The organisation has been able to employ 4 part time sessional support workers, allowing for support and guidance to be offered to a proportionate number of individuals.
- Romero Communities has moved offices into the local resource centre/ library, this enables easier referral and ad-hoc support made available by the service.
- The organisation is now better placed to network other services that are delivered from the resource centre. We are regularly carrying out joined up work with our counter colleagues.
- We supported 475 individuals with 1,625 different issues.
- Romero Communities have a Drop-in service, Monday to Wednesday 09.30-12.30 and an appointment system for more specific areas of need.
- Romero Communities have recently been a conduit for a survey of adult social care and the re-shaping of that service.
- Romero Communities continues to provide a free counselling service, via our qualified counsellor every 2 weeks.
- Personal development opportunity has been provided for 1 sessional worker to complete an NVQ Information Support and Guidance.

The differences we are making (both big and small)

Romero Communities has been able to help to resolve a broad range of problems for Barnsley people. As we don't have a specific geographical area to work within, we can bridge the gaps in areas where local councils do not fund, (for example, non-DIAL areas). A big difference derives from the increase in support staff, as this has increased output due to having more time available for both short and long term support.

Being able to provide a Drop-in and appointment service has benefitted the community greatly, due to the lack of restrictions, as does the availability to do home visits. The new office surroundings have made the service user friendly, it benefits from a reception and all the facilities the resource centre/library offers. The building is warm and provides additional resources. The locality of the building is pretty much central to Athersley, New Lodge and Smithies and is on a main bus route and therefore very accessible.

Romero Communities provide a service with a vision that, once started, the level of support is there through to a solution that the customer is happy with. Feedback from the community is that they like Romero Communities being here; some of this is most likely because the organisation has been part of the St Helens Ward for nearing 20 years and people are familiar with what we do and with the individuals that work here. There is a feeling of trust between all concerned.

Romero Communities currently has 6 board members, 3 that were previous users of the service, 1 recently resigned due to changing health needs. Having previous clients on the board enables us to have a proper insight into how things work in this area, it also aligns with other grass route projects and gives a better understanding of what is needed.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Appendix 1 continued

What we've learned

The high cost of living and post covid effects have seen a massive increase in financial need. Romero Communities has provided an upward trend of support around DWP benefits and helped people and families overcome periods of poverty from food and utility bills. Our support and guidance staff have helped people deal with debt and benefit overpayments. Our partners at CAB have increasingly referred people to our service for help to pay for debt relief orders. We have seen an increase in the need for food parcels and for emergency support from our service. Therefore, what we have learned is that the general all round need has become far greater than what we could have planned for. The place where we are based has improved the access to our front door as we are now in the next office to CAB, DIAL, Adastra, Resolute, North Area Council (BMBC) and not a phone call away. We maintain a solid relationship with BMBC and Berneslai Homes.

The above needs have meant that we, as a service, have had to think more creatively and plan for longer term solutions. We have therefore taken time to spend with our clients with an intention of helping them help themselves. Therefore, we dedicate time to explain why we do things in a certain way, and take time to demonstrate how, we in our personal lives, avoid pitfalls. In other words, we peer mentor our clients and don't "take over".

Our foundations are based upon friendliness and trust, and it is through this that we can make progress and engage with people on a 1-1 basis. Romero Communities has become a well-respected organisation in the Barnsley area, and one that has been recognised for its hard work and determination to see things through.

We are currently in a period where we are trying to provide a social outlet to our clients, as this is something that we have possibly neglected due to being busy with other things. Prior to, and during the build up to Christmas 2023 we tried several "Grub and Gab" sessions in connection with a piece of work set by Barnsley CVS (adult social care questionnaire) and this worked well, so we have decided to carry on with the events as to provide a social outlet, to reduce isolation and provide an additional opportunity for support and guidance.

How we're changing what we do

Throughout this period, we have noticed the need to make some changes, but the needs have generally been the same, just in a greater number. If further funding can be secured, we will continue to provide the service and home visits, but potentially over more days as the need for our support has become greater. Our Drop-in service works well as we can triage enquiries. Drop-in provides somewhere for people to come and share their problems and we can then plan to help resolve them. Some of the issues we are finding within the community have come later than expected and the "eat or heat" scenario has only recently manifested to the forefront of what we do.

Our current funding ends in January 2025 and we are therefore exploring options to secure future funding. Romero Communities feel that they are an integral part of the Athersley community, and this is shared by our partner organisations. Romero Communities has become an extremely busy hub for resolving problems and somewhere residents come to have a chat. Being placed where we are, has made accessibility easier and this in turn has increased the need for our help and support, like a supportive neighbour or relative.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Related parties

The trustees consider that there are no related parties to the charity.

The charity's policy on reserves

As a small charity, reliant on public and charitable funding and susceptible to factors beyond the control of the organisation, the trustees recognise the need to keep reserves at a level that will give the organisation stability to enable it to continue to operate in the future and meet all statutory and service delivery obligations. The trustees aim to accumulate reserves equivalent to 3 months' annual expenditure, which equates to a sum of £20,870 in the current financial year. At the year-end, the unrestricted reserve stands at £17,037 (2023: £14,740). The trustees are aware of the need to generate further unrestricted funds to bring reserves to the desired level and this is being addressed in the implementation of the business plans.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the surplus or deficiency for the year then ended. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to: select suitable accounting policies and then apply them on a consistent basis, making judgements and estimates that are prudent and reasonable. The trustees must also prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charity, 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 charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud or other irregularities.

Financial Position

The financial statements are set out in pages 15 to 20. The Statement of Financial Activities shows a surplus for the year of £19,884 (2023: a deficit of £6,112). The total funds at the year-end stand at £62,379 (2023: £42,495). Total funds include balances remaining on restricted grants of £45,342 and a general reserve of £17,037.

Small company provisions:


This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Exemptions

The trustees have taken advantage of the exemptions available to small companies, including the audit exemption.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:

Signed: 

Date: 18 September 2024

K Moore, Trustee/ Director

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

I report on the accounts of the charity, which are set out on pages 15 to 20.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; or
- the accounts do not accord with such records; or
- the accounts do not comply with relevant accounting requirements under section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102).

I have no concerns and I 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.

Signed: 

Date: 18 September 2024

Angela Hayes, FMAAT
Community Accountant
22 Brocklehurst Avenue, Barnsley, S70 3EE



Angela Hayes is licensed and regulated by
AAT under licence number 1006755

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(Incorporating an Income & Expenditure Account)**

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 Total Funds £
Income							
Gifts & donations		12,669	-	12,669	1,011	280	1,291
Grants received	2	-	90,699	90,699	-	63,800	63,800
Other income		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total income		12,669	90,699	103,368	1,011	64,080	65,091
Expenditure							
Sessional workers		2,872	60,327	63,199	-	54,907	54,907
Rent & office costs		-	7,368	7,368	-	7,368	7,368
Insurance		-	605	605	-	575	575
Printing, stationery & admin expenses		-	1,965	1,965	-	1,979	1,979
Telephone, computer & internet costs		-	5,686	5,686	-	4,066	4,066
Volunteer expenses		-	1,050	1,050	-	1,231	1,231
Accountancy	5	-	750	750	-	725	725
Website		-	998	998	-	-	-
Gardening project expenditure		-	458	458	-	-	-
Household support grants		-	1,363	1,363	-	-	-
Other expenditure		-	42	42	10	342	352
Total expenditure		2,872	80,612	83,484	10	71,193	71,203
Net income/(expenditure)		9,797	10,087	19,884	1,001	(7,113)	(6,112)
Transfers between funds	9	(7,500)	7,500	-	2,500	(2,500)	-
Total funds brought forward		14,740	27,755	42,495	11,239	37,368	48,607
Total funds carried forward	9/10	17,037	45,342	62,379	14,740	27,755	42,495

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

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

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Note	£	2024 £	£	2023 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets		-		-	
Total fixed assets			-		-
Current assets					
Debtors & prepayments	3	278		558	
Cash at bank and in hand		82,649		52,486	
Total current assets		82,927		53,044	
Liabilities					
Creditors & accruals amounts falling due within one year	4	(20,548)		(10,549)	
Net current assets			62,379		42,495
Net assets			62,379		42,495
Funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds	9		17,037		14,740
Restricted funds			45,342		27,755
Total funds			62,379		42,495

Exemption from audit

For the period ending 31 March 2024 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- *The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476;*
- *The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.*

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The trustees declare that they have approved the accounts above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed: *K G Moore*

Dated: 18 September 2024

K Moore, Trustee/Director

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. Accounting policies

Basis of the preparation of the accounts

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities - Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are prepared in pounds sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest pound.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value, unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Income and expenditure has been analysed in the accounts using natural classification, in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.6, SORP 2019 (smaller charities). The charity also meets the requirements for exemption for preparing a statement of cash flows.

Going concern note

After reviewing the charity's forecasts and projections and its reserves, the trustees have reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operation for the foreseeable future. The 5-year Lottery grant ends in January 2025 but the charity is also supported by other funders and the trustees are in the process of applying for additional funding to continue the current level of activities beyond January 2025. The charity therefore continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing its financial statements.

Incoming resources

All material incoming resources have been included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, when any performance conditions attached are met, when it is probable that the income will be received and when the amount can be measured reliably.

Resources expended

Resources expended have been analysed using natural classification.

All expenditure is included on an accruals basis and is recognised as a liability is incurred. The charity is not registered for VAT and accordingly resources expended are shown gross of irrecoverable VAT.

Donated goods and services

Donated facilities and services are recognised in the accounts at the amount the charity would pay in the open market for a service equivalent to that being donated, when the charity would otherwise have purchased them and the value can be measured reliably.

Donated goods for the charity's own use are recognised as income, at their fair value.

The contribution of general volunteers is not recognised as income in the charity accounts

Taxation

Romero Communities is a registered charity and is exempt from UK corporation tax on income from its charitable activities.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated to write down the cost or valuation less estimated residual value of all tangible fixed assets, with an individual cost exceeding £1,000, over their expected useful lives.

There were no individual assets with a value exceeding £1,000 in the current year.

Funds Structure

The charity maintains a general unrestricted fund which represents funds which are expendable at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity.

Restricted funds have been provided to the charity for particular purposes and may only be spent for the purposes for which they were given. Any balance remaining outstanding on a restricted fund at the end of the year is carried forward as a balance on the fund, unless permission has been given by the funder to remove the restriction on the balance outstanding.

2. Restricted grants received

	2024	2023
	£	£
The National Lottery Community Fund	60,287	43,800
The Tudor Trust	20,000	20,000
BMBC - Household Support Grant	8,976	-
BMBC - Gardening Project	1,436	-
	<u>90,699</u>	<u>63,800</u>

3. Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Insurance prepaid	278	278
Amount due from ACTS	-	280
	<u>278</u>	<u>558</u>

4. Creditors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accountancy fee	750	725
Room rent	17,192	9,824
Other creditors	2,606	-
	<u>20,548</u>	<u>10,549</u>

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

5. Independent examination and accountancy services

During the period, the cost of the independent examination and accountancy service was £750 (2023: £725).

6. Trustees' remuneration, benefits and expenses

A sum of £1,150 was paid to Keith Moore, for expenses in relation to grant monitoring and bookkeeping services. (2023: £450). Other than reimbursement of items purchased on behalf of the charity, there were no further payments, remuneration or benefits made to trustees in the accounting period.

7. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

8. Funds held on behalf of third party groups

During the year, the charity received funds from the ACTS 435 charity, to pay over to named individuals. The income is held on behalf of ACTS 435 and is therefore not recognised in the accounts of Romero Communities. A balance of £410 was held in the bank account of Romero Communities on behalf of ACTS 435 at the year end.

9. Movement in funds

	Opening balance £	Incoming resources £	(Resources expended) £	Fund Transfers £	Closing balance £
Unrestricted funds					
General Fund	14,740	12,669	(2,872)	(7,500)	17,037
	14,740	12,669	(2,872)	(7,500)	17,037
Restricted funds					
The National Lottery Community Fund	3,092	60,287	(60,708)	7,500	10,171
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	6,203	-	(6,203)	-	-
The Tudor Trust	18,460	20,000	(11,880)	-	26,580
Household Support Grant	-	8,976	(1,363)	-	7,613
Gardening Project	-	1,436	(458)	-	978
	27,755	90,699	(80,612)	7,500	45,342
TOTAL FUNDS	42,495	103,368	(83,484)	-	62,379

Fund Transfers - £7,500 was transferred from the General Fund to the National Lottery Community Fund, this being the repayment of the management and overhead fee, for years 1 to 3 of the grant.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

10. Restricted Funds

- The National Lottery Community Fund– a five-year Community Fund grant to fund the Support & Guidance service.
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council – Practical Support Grant from the North Area Council to fund a drop-in worker.
- The Tudor Trust – a grant to help support people living with complex issues.
- Gardening Project – a grant from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to support this project
- Household Support Grants - Government funding to help people who have been financially impacted by the cost of living crisis. To provide Individual grants to help with food, energy costs and other household essentials.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

England & Wales - Charity number 1156917

Accounts

Company Number. 08002099 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity Number. 1156917

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

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ROMERO COMMUNITIES
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Full name: Romero Communities

Registered Company number: 08002099

Registered Charity Number: 1156917

Registered office & principal address: 23 Queens Road
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S71 1AN

Trustees & Directors: L J Crofts – *appointed 16/01/2023*
K G Moore
L Ocallaghan
T Scolah
L Shepherd

Chairperson: T Scolah

Company Secretary: M Phillips

Treasurer: K Moore

Independent Examiner: Angela Hayes
Community Accountant
22 Brocklehurst Avenue
Barnsley
S70 3EE

Bankers: HSBC
5 Market Hill
Barnsley
S70 2PY

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the period 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Structure, governance and management

Romero Communities is a registered charity with the Charity Commission and a company limited by guarantee, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, dated March 2012, most recently amended February 2014. The company has no share capital and the liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to a sum not exceeding £1. The affairs of the charity are managed on a day-to-day basis by the trustees who have control of the charity and its property and funds.

Appointment of trustees

The trustees are also directors of the company for the purpose of company law. The trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting. Every trustee must sign a declaration of willingness to act as a charity trustee before being eligible to vote at the meetings.

The trustees who served during the year are listed on page 3 of this report.

Charitable aims and objectives

The objectives of the charity are:

To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.

For the purpose of this clause 'socially excluded' means being excluded from society, or parts of society, as a result of one or more of the following factors: unemployment; financial hardship; youth or old age; ill health (physical or mental); substance abuse or dependency including alcohol and drugs; discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, belief, creed, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment; poor educational or skills attainment; relationship and family breakdown; poor housing (that is housing that does not meet basic habitable standards); crime (either as a victim of crime or as an offender rehabilitating into society).

Risk Management

The trustees have ultimate responsibility for identifying and managing risk. The main risk to the organisation is the loss of funding to continue the essential services. The financial position and level of reserves is reviewed at each trustee meeting and funding applications are ongoing. For other areas, the charity has risk management policies and procedures in place which are reviewed regularly by the trustees.

Public Benefit Statement

In shaping the objectives for the year the trustees have paid due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Report of the Trustees on activities undertaken and achievements during the period.

Our Romero Communities team would like to share what's been happening in 2022/2023.

As a Board of Trustees, volunteers, paid workers and partner organisations we have continued to respond and make changes to our delivery methods of Romero Support and Guidance. This year we have made changes to our delivery and negotiated a move into new premises. We have more space which is also more appropriate to our work. The building is also shared by other groups and organisations which provide new opportunities to work in partnership to enhance the service we provide for our customers. The building has recently had a refurbishment to the library area and is now developing new sessions and courses for adults and families.

We are pleased to share the following update and hope to give the reader a clear picture of our developments and achievements.

We hope this report will enable us to move into 2023/2024 allowing us the chance to build on our future and address any areas of our work which require improvement or further development.



We would like to say thank you to the Mayor of Barnsley 2022/23, (Councillor Sarah Tattersall) for choosing us as her charity, in her year of Office. We cannot thank you enough for your marvellous cheque of £8,184.31.



We were so proud to be acknowledged by the Mayor of Barnsley, Cllr Sarah Tattersall.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

OUR ACTIVITIES

A big thank you to our volunteers and workers:

Thanks to **Maria** her dedicated work continues to ensure our systems are working to meet our outcomes. Maria delivers a daily telephone service 'triaging' callers, ensuring our support for them is coordinated and referred to our team.

Thanks to **Lorraine** who is dedicated to carrying out her volunteer role making calls to customers. The calls gather feedback from customers seeking support. This information provides valuable information to support our applications for funding and for reports required by them.

Thanks to **Linda** who has supported our Drop In and brings her vast experience as a key worker for Citizens Advice Barnsley to our work.

Thank you to **Alan** who approached us to organise a fundraising event following help we gave to his daughter. This was delayed during Covid but was planned as a 2022 Xmas Ceilidh. The music and Ceilidh was performed 'free of charge' by Penistone Folk Ensemble. The Ceilidh was held in December 2022 and was a great success and following requests from those attending we are to hold a follow up in December 2023.

Thanks to our sessional Support Workers; - **Paula R, Pete J, Wayne B and Emily P** who deliver our Support and Guidance service. They are a great 'team' and deliver our sessions with great humility, kindness and efficiency, supported by their extensive knowledge and skills. We have successfully applied for funding to extend Wayne and Emily's contracts.

Thanks to **Caroline P** who has been a worker for Romero Communities since it was registered as a charity. Previous to this, she worked for 18 years for Romero Support and Guidance which was initially managed by The Roundhouse Community Partnership. This organisation folded and the project was taken over by Romero Communities. Caroline is now working as a sessional worker and has the role of supporting our workers who deliver the Support and Guidance project. Caroline also works closely with Board members to maintain the effective management of the Charity. The charity is led by trustees who have local links and knowledge and some have been previous customers too. Caroline also works closely with Keith, the Treasurer, to support transparent financial management and secure on-going funding.

We are led by our Board of Trustees. We currently have 4 trustees and Maria who is Company Secretary and a volunteer for the support and guidance service. **Trevor** the Charity Chairperson, **Keith** who is Treasurer, **Lynn and Lorraine** both lived locally for over 20 years and are able to contribute a great deal to ensure our service delivery is in line with local need. Our Board of Trustees have been involved in the charity both as 'service users' and partners or by answering our publicity aimed at recruiting new members. However currently half have accessed the support and guidance themselves. We are keen to encourage and recruit more people onto our Board.

In 2022/2023 we recruited 3 new board members.

Louise who lived locally for 20 years and currently is our 'in house' Counsellor, providing 3 appointments twice a month. Louise contributes this skill but also brings local knowledge.

Linda who has been a Drop in volunteer for a year. Linda worked for CAB Barnsley and has previously worked alongside us. Having retired she is keen to help us manage the charity.

Alan lives locally and is keen to help us to raise funds. He has good local knowledge as he lives in the area. He also promotes our work widely.

A big thank you to all our Board members.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Romero Support and Guidance - Overview

We have been able to continue our face-to-face appointments following the covid restrictions. We have been concerned that many of our existing and potential customers have barriers to accessing our service if they do not have access to telephones and email. Thanks to a grant made by Tudor Trust, we now have capacity to deliver our service via Home Visits.

Throughout the year we have adapted our recording methods, so we are able to accurately report our work. Our Database did have some initial 'hiccups' but as a tailored system we have been able to make adaptations to meet our needs. Referrals from Romero and to Romero have increased and our partner base has increased. We believe this is because some other organisations are experiencing a reduced capacity to deliver their services or the demand for support is vastly oversubscribed. We are keen to take part in a borough wide mapping exercise in the future to ensure duplication can be avoided and joint working practice is improved.

Our referrals to Food Banks have increased substantially as have our referrals to the Charity ACTS 435. Many of our ACTS referrals are as a result of a continued joined-up working relationship with Barnsley Citizens Advice debt team, tenant and school support workers or our on-going support helping customers with complex issues. Referrals to ACTS in 95% of cases result in a monetary 'gift' which enables the applicants to pay the required cost of £90 for a Debt Relief Order. The result of this order can change a family's financial situation beyond belief. It also reduces high levels of stress and helps the individual to take control. Alternatively, customers can purchase goods such as washing machines or cover transport costs to work for example, which in turn also reduces levels of worry and stress.

An analysis of our contacts during this year evidences the prevalence of help needed in the following areas:

- Benefit applications and help to appeal decisions which are contrary to the outcome anticipated by the customer. This work is intense and requires a great deal of knowledge and skill by our workers. It was particularly difficult coming through and out of restrictions and time consuming as 90% of our contact is by telephone or via e mail. We support many who do not have access to the internet, this can also be difficult when customers have additional needs such as learning difficulties, complex physical and mental health needs, unstable lifestyles which can result in a breakdown of family relationships and even result in homelessness.
- Employment and unemployment issues, debt, legal, social care needs, housing, and relationship/poor mental health are recorded in our more copious recording.

Activity Plan

We continually seek to canvas the views of our customers and the wider community who may or may not have experience of Romero Communities Charity or in turn Romero Support and Guidance. We intend to carry out a full evaluation during 2024/25.

<i>2022 Figures</i>													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
Customers:													
New	11	20	29	15	24	19	20	19	10	7	16	11	201
Existing	131	111	102	88	119	79	48	65	41	44	52	46	926
Total	142	131	131	103	143	98	68	84	51	51	68	57	1127
Issues	223	226	182	243	288	215	142	176	137	260	204	164	2460

'JOINED UP' SUPPORT'

Our work is based on positive relationships with partner services and organisations to deliver a holistic service for our customers. We continue to link with other services to deliver holistic support.

Here are the links to date (and growing):

- Social Prescribing Teams
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Berneslai Homes
- Citizens Advice Barnsley
- D.I.A.L.
- Barnsley Food Bank
- Acts 435
- Adult and Children and Families Social Care
- 0-19 service (Health Visitors)
- Department of Works and Pensions
- Firm of local solicitors (MKB)
- Step Change
- G.P. surgeries

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Our delivery, as always, focuses on finding alternative ways of working to best meet the needs of our customers. During 2021/22 we adapted to meet the needs of residents following the pandemic restrictions and the impact on our future potential customers. We introduced some face-to-face appointments for those people who were unable to use or did not have the technology at their disposal required so we could help by collecting for example, documents or letters. We were then able to support those most isolated. This help has been maintained by our Home Visiting service.

Having more space has meant that we have considered the use of our Drop In space to offer social opportunities, adult learning and sessions held by some partners in our locally accessible space. We were unable to achieve our ideas fully but continue to seek funding to further develop during 2023/24.

We are asked to act as advocates for residents who need to complete a DWP formal assessment for benefit claims. This is very time consuming as is the subsequent request to appeal the outcome of the assessment. This again is an adaptation to our planned service. This work stretches our capacity.

PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

We returned to open 3 days per week as soon as possible following the pandemic restrictions. We have delivered the 3 days Drop In throughout 2022/23. We have maintained and further developed our methods of contacting and supporting our customers using technology.

Our future to January 2025 is looking positive, however looking forward we have made a start on our funding search. We will require funding in order to maintain our service as it presently operates. Our plans beyond will be developed during 2023/2024 but will be within our current funding restrictions. Our Board are working to secure our future for the residents we serve. We would like to extend our hours but this will depend on future funding.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Drop In continues to be the 'chosen method of contact' by those people who face barriers to accessing support using technology and choose to seek help to address their issues by visiting the Drop In.

We have found accessing other services and organisations on behalf of our customers extremely time consuming. It is apparent that some organisations were not offering a full service during the pandemic and we have found it can be a 'lottery' of who we speak to. This continues in some areas to date.

OUR CHALLENGES

The work of Romero Communities is a 'team' effort. We have ambitions for the future to secure long-term funding. We aim to develop ways of 'earning' income, so we do not rely fully on external funds. We realise this will be difficult and will be a long-term goal. We hope to engage people from the community to help us to achieve this. The first step will be to recruit a Fundraising Sub-Group bringing together service users, trustees, volunteers, partner organisations and workers. We continue to work closely with Barnsley CVS to ensure we work in line with Voluntary Sector organisations both local and national.

Romero Communities is built on partnerships with other voluntary and statutory organisations and will continue into our future. By working in this way, we hope to bring the best and most appropriate services together to help our customers resolve their problems.

We hold a long term aim to develop social opportunities to encourage peer support, reduce loneliness and isolation and support people into learning and job opportunities.

The empowerment of individuals is at the forefront of our work, sharing knowledge, encouraging self-help, confidence, self-esteem and confidence, and skills which will put people back in control of their own lives.

We try to approach our challenges as opportunities to provide an improved service. We are also very honest and face our challenges realistically. The link between demand and capacity can be frustrating at times and can rely on the genuine good will of our workers. We do not want to increase demand to our drop-ins to a point where we have to turn people away, however we are always keen to look at ways of managing our sessions to maximise the time available.

We continue to resist having to restrict the time we spend with people to help them reach a solution, rather than spending less time and resorting to a 'sticking plaster' approach. We are keen to increase the times of opening in the future.

We need to have designated time for networking and liaising/co-working with partner organisations when supporting clients with complex problems. Follow up work with partners takes up approximately 50% of our time.

Our biggest challenge as a small charity is the financial sustainability of this type of work. This is at the forefront of our planning for 2023/2024 and beyond..

THANK YOU FOR READING OUR REPORT

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

I report on the accounts of the charity, which are set out on pages 12 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2022 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; or
- the accounts do not accord with such records; or
- the accounts do not comply with relevant accounting requirements under section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102).

I have no concerns and I 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.

Signed Angela Hayes

Date: 01/11/2023

Angela Hayes, FMAAT
Community Accountant
22 Brocklehurst Avenue, Barnsley, S70 3EE

aat | Licensed
Accountant

Angela Hayes is licensed and regulated by
AAT under licence number 1006755

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(Incorporating an Income & Expenditure Account)**

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2022 Total Funds £
Income							
Gifts & donations		1,011	280	1,291	120	-	120
Grants received	2	-	63,800	63,800	-	57,800	57,800
Other income		-	-	-	108	-	108
Total income		1,011	64,080	65,091	228	57,800	58,028
Expenditure							
Sessional workers		-	54,907	54,907	-	40,086	40,086
Rent & office costs		-	7,368	7,368	-	3,939	3,939
Insurance		-	575	575	-	290	290
Printing, stationery & office expenses		-	1,979	1,979	-	1,685	1,685
Telephone, computer & internet costs		-	4,066	4,066	-	3,870	3,870
Volunteer expenses		-	1,231	1,231	-	883	883
Accountancy	5	-	725	725	-	650	650
Away day activities		-	-	-	-	206	206
Other expenditure		10	342	352	10	36	46
Total expenditure		10	71,193	71,203	10	51,645	51,655
Net income/(expenditure)		1,001	(7,113)	(6,112)	218	6,155	6,373
Transfers between funds	9	2,500	(2,500)	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Total funds brought forward		11,239	37,368	48,607	6,021	36,213	42,234
Total funds carried forward	9/10	14,740	27,755	42,495	11,239	37,368	48,607

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

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

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Note	£	2023 £	£	2022 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets		-		-	
Total fixed assets		-		-	
Current assets					
Debtors & prepayments	3	558		248	
Cash at bank and in hand		52,486		51,465	
Total current assets		53,044		51,713	
Liabilities					
Creditors & accruals amounts falling due within one year	4	(10,549)		(3,106)	
Net current assets			42,495		48,607
Net assets			<u>42,495</u>		<u>48,607</u>
Funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds	9		14,740		11,239
Restricted funds			27,755		37,368
Total funds			<u>42,495</u>		<u>48,607</u>

Exemption from audit

For the period ending 31 March 2023 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- *The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476;*
- *The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.*

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The trustees declare that they have approved the accounts above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed K G Moore

Dated: 1/11/2023

K Moore, Trustee/Director

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. Accounting policies

Basis of the preparation of the accounts

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities - Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)) and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value, unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Income and expenditure has been analysed in the accounts using natural classification, in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.6, SORP 2019 (smaller charities). The charity also meets the requirements for exemption for preparing a statement of cash flows.

Going concern note

After reviewing the charity's forecasts and projections and its reserves, the trustees have reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operation for the foreseeable future. No material uncertainties exist in the 12-month period following the signing of these accounts. The charity therefore continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing its financial statements.

Incoming resources

All material incoming resources have been included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, when any performance conditions attached are met, when it is probable that the income will be received and when the amount can be measured reliably.

Resources expended

Resources expended have been analysed using natural classification.

All expenditure is included on an accruals basis and is recognised as a liability is incurred. The charity is not registered for VAT and accordingly resources expended are shown gross of irrecoverable VAT.

Donated goods and services

Donated facilities and services are recognised in the accounts at the amount the charity would pay in the open market for a service equivalent to that being donated, when the charity would otherwise have purchased them and the value can be measured reliably.

Donated goods for the charity's own use are recognised as income, at their fair value.

The contribution of general volunteers is not recognised as income in the charity accounts

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated to write down the cost or valuation less estimated residual value of all tangible fixed assets, with an individual cost exceeding £1,000, over their expected useful lives.

There were no individual assets with a value exceeding £1,000 in the current year.

Funds Structure

The charity maintains a general unrestricted fund which represents funds which are expendable at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity.

Restricted funds have been provided to the charity for particular purposes and may only be spent for the purposes for which they were given. Any balance remaining outstanding on a restricted fund at the end of the year is carried forward as a balance on the fund, unless permission has been given by the funder to remove the restriction on the balance outstanding.

2. Restricted grants received

	2023	2022
	£	£
The National Lottery Community Fund	43,800	43,800
Bamsley Metropolitan Borough Council	-	14,000
The Tudor Trust	20,000	-
	<u>63,800</u>	<u>57,800</u>

3. Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Insurance prepaid	278	248
Amount due from ACTS	280	-
	<u>558</u>	<u>248</u>

4. Creditors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accountancy fee	725	650
Room rent	9,824	2,456
	<u>10,549</u>	<u>3,106</u>

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

5. Independent examination and accountancy services

During the period, the cost of the independent examination and accountancy service was £725 (2022: £650).

6. Trustees' remuneration, benefits and expenses

A sum of £450 was paid to Keith Moore in this financial year, for expenses in relation to grant monitoring and bookkeeping services. Other than reimbursement of items purchased on behalf of the charity, there were no further payments, remuneration or benefits made to trustees in the accounting period (2022: £100).

7. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

8. Funds held on behalf of third party groups

During the year, the charity received funds from the ACTS 435 charity, to pay over to named individuals. The income was held on behalf of ACTS 435 and is therefore not recognised in the accounts of Romero Communities. A sum of £280 was due to Romero Communities at the year end from ACTS 435.

9. Movement in funds

	Opening balance £	Incoming resources £	(Resources expended) £	Fund Transfers £	Closing balance £
Unrestricted funds					
General Fund	11,239	1,011	(10)	2,500	14,740
	<u>11,239</u>	<u>1,011</u>	<u>(10)</u>	<u>2,500</u>	<u>14,740</u>
Restricted funds					
The National Lottery Community Fund	10,818	43,800	(49,026)	(2,500)	3,092
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	14,000	-	(7,797)	-	6,203
The Tudor Trust	2,762	20,000	(4,302)	-	18,460
Next Steps	-	280	(280)	-	-
Garfield Weston Foundation	7,341	-	(7,341)	-	-
The Edward Gostling Foundation	2,447	-	(2,447)	-	-
	<u>37,368</u>	<u>64,080</u>	<u>(71,193)</u>	<u>(2,500)</u>	<u>27,755</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>48,607</u>	<u>65,091</u>	<u>(71,203)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>42,495</u>

Fund Transfers - £2,500 was transferred from the National Lottery Fund to the General Fund for contribution to management and overheads, for year 3 of the grant.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

10. Restricted Funds

- The National Lottery Community Fund– a five-year Community Fund grant (2019 to 2024) to fund the Support & Guidance service.
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council – Practical Support Grant from the North Area Council to fund a drop-in worker.
- The Tudor Trust – a grant to help support people living with complex issues.
- Garfield Weston Foundation – a grant of £15,000, received in 2019-20, towards the Support & Guidance service.
- The Edward Gostling Foundation - contribution towards the salary cost of a support and guidance worker.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

England & Wales - Charity number 1156917

Accounts

Company Number. 08002099 (England and Wales)
Registered Charity Number. 1156917

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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ROMERO COMMUNITIES
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Full name: Romero Communities

Registered company number: 08002099

Registered Charity Number 1156917

Registered office & principal address: Priory Campus
Pontefract Road
Lundwood
Barnsley
S71 5PN

Trustees & Directors: K Moore
L Ocallaghan
T Scolah
L Shepherd

Chairperson: T Scolah

Company Secretary: M Phillips

Independent Examiner: Angela Hayes
Community Accountant
BCVS Services Limited
Priory Campus
Pontefract Road
Lundwood
Barnsley
S71 5PN

Bankers: HSBC
5 Market Hill
Barnsley
S70 2PY

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the period 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Structure, governance and management

Romero Communities is a registered charity with the Charity Commission and a company limited by guarantee, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, dated March 2012, most recently amended February 2014. The company has no share capital and the liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to a sum not exceeding £1. The affairs of the charity are managed on a day-to-day basis by the trustees who have control of the charity and its property and funds.

Appointment of trustees

The trustees are also directors of the company for the purpose of company law. The trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting. Every trustee must sign a declaration of willingness to act as a charity trustee before being eligible to vote at the meetings.

The trustees who served during the year are listed on page 3 of this report.

Charitable aims and objectives

The objectives of the charity are:

To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.

For the purpose of this clause 'socially excluded' means being excluded from society, or parts of society, as a result of one or more of the following factors: unemployment; financial hardship; youth or old age; ill health (physical or mental); substance abuse or dependency including alcohol and drugs; discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, belief, creed, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment; poor educational or skills attainment; relationship and family breakdown; poor housing (that is housing that does not meet basic habitable standards); crime (either as a victim of crime or as an offender rehabilitating into society).

Risk Management

The trustees have ultimate responsibility for identifying and managing risk. The main risk to the organisation is the loss of funding to continue the essential services. The financial position and level of reserves is reviewed at each trustee meeting. The trustees work with an external consultant and funding applications are ongoing. For other areas, the charity has risk management policies and procedures in place which are reviewed regularly by the trustees.

Public Benefit Statement

In shaping the objectives for the year the trustees have paid due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Report of the Trustees on activities undertaken and achievements during the period.

As a Board of Trustees, volunteers, paid workers, partner organisations, we have continued to respond and make changes to our delivery methods of Romero Support and Guidance. This year we have made changes to our delivery as we return to a more 'normal' way of working. We are pleased to share the following update and hope to give the reader a clear picture of our development and achievements. We hope this report will enable us to move into 2022/2023 without facing restrictions, allowing us the chance to build on our future and address any areas of our work which require improvement or further development.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN DELIVERING OUR WORK

We are led by our Board of Trustees. We have retained our Board members, even though this has had its problems. As individuals, Board members and workers alike we have come through 2021/22 still unified and determined to take our work forward. **A big thank you to Lorraine, Keith, Lynn and Trevor.**

OUR ACTIVITIES

Romero Support and Guidance - overview

A big thank you to our volunteers and workers:

Thanks to **Maria**, her dedicated work ensures our systems are well supported and adapted in line with the needs of our work. She has delivered a daily telephone service 'triaging' callers and ensuring our support for them is coordinated and referred to our team. This was invaluable throughout the Pandemic and we are very fortunate that Maria has been willing to carry this out as part of our links between customers, workers and partners. This means we offer a responsive service for customers who have told us *'it's great to get a reply and my needs are acted on straightaway'*. Maria then coordinates contact with one of our sessional workers.

Thanks to **Lorraine** who is dedicated to carrying out her volunteer role, making calls to customers. The calls gather feedback from customers seeking support. This information provides valuable information to support our applications for funding and for reports required by them.

Thanks to **Linda** who supports our Drop-In and brings her vast experience as a key worker for Citizens Advice Barnsley to our work.

Thank you to **Alan** who approached us to organise a fundraising event following help we gave to his daughter. This was delayed during Covid but is now planned as a 2022 Xmas Ceilidh. The music and Ceilidh will be performed 'free of charge' by Penistone Folk Ensemble.

Thanks to our sessional Support Workers; **Paula R, Geoff L, and Pete J** who deliver our Support and Guidance service. They are a great 'team' and deliver our sessions with great humility, kindness and efficiency, supported by their extensive knowledge and skills.

Thanks to **Keith** our finance director for the complex and vital work he carries out throughout the year. This work includes daily payments of invoices, keeping accurate and clear accounts, presented to our Board in such a way that we can all understand and agree our spending and budgets. He also works with Paula to ensure efficient payments to our customers of monies awarded to them by ACTS 435 and maintaining monthly payments to our sessional workers. In addition he produces, in a timely manner, our annual accounts for audit.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Many thanks also to:

Trevor our Chairman who provides us with a vision for the Charity and its future development.

Lynn who shares her vast knowledge of the needs of our customers living in the area for many years. Lynn has been a great advocate for our work within the community.

Lorraine who in addition to her role as volunteer also shares her vast knowledge of the locality and the emotional needs of our customers with her knowledge and experience as a counsellor.

Thanks to all our Board members for their commitment to our work and for the support they offer our team.

Thanks also to **Louise** for her delivery of professional counselling sessions. These sessions have provided many local people with support which is reported as extremely helpful and enabled people to move forwards.

We reintroduced face to face appointments as restrictions allowed. We have been concerned that many of our existing and potential customers have barriers to accessing our service if they do not have access to telephones and e mail. We have made distanced visits to those who are unable to maintain contact any other way.

Throughout the year we have adapted our recording methods, so we are able to accurately report our work. We have found this to be a pre-cursor to the launch of our new database. The database had some 'hiccups' but as a tailored system we have been able to make adaptations to meet our needs. Referrals from Romero and to Romero have increased and our partner base has increased. We believe this is because some other organisations are experiencing a reduced capacity to deliver their services or the demand for support is vastly oversubscribed. This has changed in the final quarter of this reporting period as partners return to their new ways of working.

Our referrals to Food Banks have increased substantially as have our referrals to the Charity ACTS 435. Many of our ACTS referrals are as a result of a continued joined-up working relationship with Barnsley Citizens Advice debt team, tenant and school support workers or our on-going support helping customers with complex issues. Referrals to ACTS in 95% of cases result in a monetary 'gift' which enables the applicants to pay the required cost of £90 for a Debt Relief Order. The result of this order can change a family's financial situation beyond belief. It also reduces high levels of stress and helps the individual to take control. Alternatively, customers can purchase goods such as washing machines or cover transport costs to work for example, which in turn also reduces levels of worry and stress.

An analysis of our contacts during our first year evidences the prevalence of help needed in the following areas. Benefit applications and help to appeal decisions which are contrary to the outcome anticipated by the customer. This work is intense and requires a great deal of knowledge and skill from our workers. It was particularly difficult coming through and out of restrictions and time consuming as 90% of our contact is by telephone or via e mail. We support many who do not have access to the internet, this can also be difficult when customers have additional needs such as learning difficulties, complex physical and mental health needs, unstable lifestyles which can result in a breakdown of family relationships and even result in homelessness. Employment and unemployment issues, debt, legal, social care needs, housing, and relationship/poor mental health are recorded in our more copious recording.

During the 3rd and final quarters of this year's reporting, we were faced with a decision to move into new premises which would better suit the needs of the charity and its future developments. We moved late December 2021 and reopened in January 2022. The move proved to provide us with more space and access to other services who also work in the building.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to **St Helens Church** for 17 years of tenancy that provided local people with the **Romero Centre**, where they could access our Support and Guidance Sessions. We also thank **Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council** for the support they have offered to us in our new tenancy. The final quarter of this reporting year has proved to be positive for all.

OUR ACTIVITY PLAN

We continually seek to canvas the views of our customers and the wider community who may or may not have experience of Romero Communities charity or in turn Romero Support and Guidance.

'JOINED UP' SUPPORT'

Our work is based on positive relationships with partner services and organisations, to deliver a holistic service for our customers. We have continued to work in partnership to deliver our service throughout the Pandemic. Unfortunately, this has been impacted due to forced changes to systems, resources and face to face services which are often vital for many of our customers. We continue to link with other services to deliver holistic support.

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Facing another uncertain year was very difficult. The Pandemic and restrictions changed rapidly and unexpectedly and this made it difficult to predict and plan our work. We concentrated on finding alternative ways of working to best meet the needs of our customers. We anticipated opening our 'Drop-In' which underpins all we do. Unfortunately, this was impossible as our premises were restricted. However, as is evident in our recorded contacts, our support has maintained and exceeded expectations. The vaccination and booster roll out gave us some confidence and we introduced some face-to-face appointments for those people who were unable to use the technology, or did not have the technology at their disposal, required so we could help remotely.

As the Omicron variant cases increased, we put our plans to open our normal service on hold. We made the decision to continue working remotely until such time as the guidance changed. At this point we concentrated on assessing our systems and ways of working. We wanted to use some of our capacity to make improvements. The focus was to seek alternative premises as we predicted more demand as our contacts during the year would indicate. Moving at this point would mean a new start once the restrictions were lifted.

PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

We looked to 'Live Well with Covid' in 2021/22. We have identified partner organisations who will deliver free sessions in our space for our customers. To date this includes specialist weekly sessions to support issues such as debt, unemployment, legal issues and adult learning.

We worked from home until we split our time, from 20/04/21, and worked an appointment system 1 day per week and 2 days from home to date.

We planned our return to open 3 days per week as soon as possible. We intend to deliver the 3 days Drop-In and in addition maintain and further develop our methods of contacting and supporting our customers using technology.

To maintain a full service, we needed more worker hours to maintain the demand of work which has increased, not only in numbers but in the complexity of customer issues and the very high levels of stress and anxiety felt by our customers. Our Core service is a Face-to-Face Drop-In. Reviews /evaluations of our work tells us that the face-to-face approach is the most needed and preferred type of support. This is recorded by 95% of our customers.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

TRUSTEES' REPORT continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

However, we are reaching more customers via technology, but the demand has been high and to do this we anticipated that we would be unable to maintain that demand alongside the drop-in sessions. We have assessed the need for additional worker hours to ensure that a safe and effective Drop-In can be re-introduced. The additional hours required to support our Drop-In was made possible by a grant from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (Covid Resilience Fund) for 12 months. The Drop-In will allow those people who face barriers to accessing support using technology to seek help to address their issues by visiting the Drop-In.

We introduced a 3-day telephone enquiry/help line. We do not envisage the increase in people we have seen throughout the Covid period to date declining in numbers. We have learned that changing the way we worked has been successful for those people able to use technology and able to verbally communicate and understand using a telephone. We are committed to continue offering this method for those people who may be unable to fit in with our Drop-In times.

We have found accessing other services and organisations on behalf of our customers extremely time consuming. It is apparent that some organisations were not offering a full service and we have found it can be a 'lottery' of who we speak to. We have changed to accommodate the increase in requests for help to complete forms for example, Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Income and Expenditure, or Disability Living Allowance for a child. We have devised ways for forms to be delivered and to be collected. The length of time for helping someone to complete forms has substantially increased. This has been carried out over the telephone or can require several appointments if medical evidence has to be gathered in order to complete the form. We are acting as advocates when people need to complete a DWP formal assessment for benefit claims or appeal the outcome of a decision.

OUR CHALLENGES

The work of Romero Communities is a 'team' effort. We have ambitions for the future to secure long-term funding. We aim to develop ways of 'earning' income, so we do not rely fully on external funds. We realise this will be difficult and will be a long-term goal. We hope to engage people from the community to help us to achieve this. The first step will be to set up a Fundraising Sub-Group, bringing together service users, trustees, volunteers, partner organisations and workers. We continued to work closely with Barnsley CVS, to ensure we work in line with voluntary sector organisations both local and national.

Romero Communities is built on partnerships with other voluntary and statutory organisations and will continue into our future. By working in this way, we hope to bring the best and most appropriate services together to help our customers resolve their problems. The empowerment of individuals is at the forefront of our work, sharing knowledge, encouraging self-help, confidence, self-esteem, and skills which will put people back in control of their own lives.

We try to approach our challenges as opportunities to provide an improved service. We are also very honest and face our challenges realistically. The link between demand, capacity and restrictions placed on us by space can be frustrating at times. We do not want to increase demand to our drop-ins to a point where we have to turn people away, however we are keen to look at ways of managing our sessions to maximise the time available.

We resist having to restrict the time we spend with people in order to help them reach a solution, rather than spending less time and resorting to a 'sticking plaster' approach. We are keen to increase the times of opening in the future. We need to have designated time for networking and liaising/co-working with partner organisations when supporting clients with complex problems. Follow up work with partners takes up approximately 50% of our time.

Our biggest challenge as a small charity is the financial sustainability of this type of work. This is at the forefront of our planning for 2022/23 and beyond.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

I report on the accounts of the charity, which are set out on pages 11 to 16.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; or
- the accounts do not accord with such records; or
- the accounts do not comply with relevant accounting requirements under section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102).

I have no concerns and I 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.

Signed At Hayes.

Date: 14 November 2022

Angela Hayes, FMAAT
Community Accountant
BCVS Services Limited
Priory Campus, Pontefract Road, Lundwood, Bamsley, S71 5PN

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(Incorporating an Income & Expenditure Account)**

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2022 Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2021 Total Funds £
Incoming resources							
Gifts & donations		120	-	120	245	-	245
Grants received	2	-	57,800	57,800	-	69,962	69,962
Other income		108	-	108	-	-	-
Total incoming resources		228	57,800	58,028	245	69,962	70,207
Resources expended							
Sessional workers		-	40,086	40,086	-	47,233	47,233
Rent & office costs		-	3,939	3,939	-	3,162	3,162
Insurance		-	290	290	-	140	140
Printing, stationery & office expenses		-	1,685	1,685	-	1,938	1,938
Telephone, computer & internet costs		-	3,870	3,870	-	2,581	2,581
Help packs		-	-	-	10	5,416	5,426
Covid response & PPE		-	-	-	189	700	889
Volunteer expenses		-	883	883	-	662	662
Accountancy	5	-	650	650	-	625	625
Away day activities		-	206	206	-	-	-
Other expenditure		10	36	46	-	35	35
Total resources expended		10	51,645	51,655	199	62,492	62,691
Net income/(expenditure)		218	6,155	6,373	46	7,470	7,516
Transfers between funds	9	5,000	(5,000)	-	-	-	-
Total funds brought forward		6,021	36,213	42,234	5,975	28,743	34,718
Total funds carried forward	9/10	11,239	37,368	48,607	6,021	36,213	42,234

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

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

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Note	£	2022 £	£	2021 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets		-		-	
Total fixed assets			-		-
Current assets					
Debtors & prepayments	3	248		-	
Cash at bank and in hand		51,465		43,442	
Total current assets		51,713		43,442	
Liabilities					
Creditors & accruals amounts falling due within one year	4	(3,106)		(1,208)	
Net current assets			48,607		42,234
Net assets			<u>48,607</u>		<u>42,234</u>
Funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds	9		11,239		6,021
Restricted funds			37,368		36,213
Total funds			<u>48,607</u>		<u>42,234</u>

Exemption from audit

For the period ending 31 March 2022 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- *The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476;*
- *The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.*

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The trustees declare that they have approved the accounts above.
Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed K S Moore

Dated: 14 November 2022

K Moore, Trustee/Director

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. Accounting policies

Basis of the preparation of the accounts

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities - Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)) and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value, unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Income and expenditure has been analysed in the accounts using natural classification, in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.6, SORP 2019 (smaller charities). The charity also meets the requirements for exemption for preparing a statement of cash flows.

Going concern note

After reviewing the charity's forecasts and projections and its reserves, the trustees have reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operation for the foreseeable future. No material uncertainties exist in the 12-month period following the signing of these accounts. The charity therefore continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing its financial statements.

Funding is secured to run the Support & Guidance service until 2024, with a 5-year grant from the National Lottery Community Fund.

Incoming resources

All material incoming resources have been included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, when any performance conditions attached are met, when it is probable that the income will be received and when the amount can be measured reliably.

Resources expended

Resources expended have been analysed using natural classification.

All expenditure is included on an accruals basis and is recognised as a liability is incurred. The charity is not registered for VAT and accordingly resources expended are shown gross of irrecoverable VAT.

Donated goods and services

Donated facilities and services are recognised in the accounts at the amount the charity would pay in the open market for a service equivalent to that being donated, when the charity would otherwise have purchased them and the value can be measured reliably.

Donated goods for the charity's own use are recognised as income, at their fair value.

The contribution of general volunteers is not recognised as income in the charity accounts

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated to write down the cost or valuation less estimated residual value of all tangible fixed assets, with an individual cost exceeding £1,000, over their expected useful lives.

There were no individual assets with a value exceeding £1,000 in the current year.

Funds Structure

The charity maintains a general unrestricted fund which represents funds which are expendable at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity.

Restricted funds have been provided to the charity for particular purposes and may only be spent for the purposes for which they were given. Any balance remaining outstanding on a restricted fund at the end of the year is carried forward as a balance on the fund, unless permission has been given by the funder to remove the restriction on the balance outstanding.

2. Restricted grants received

	2022	2021
	£	£
The National Lottery Community Fund	43,800	43,800
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	14,000	-
The National Lottery Uplift Fund (Covid-19)	-	21,494
The Tudor Trust	-	3,968
South Yorkshire Community Foundation	-	700
	<u>57,800</u>	<u>69,962</u>

3. Debtors

	2022	2021
	£	£
Insurance prepaid	248	-
	<u>248</u>	<u>-</u>

4. Creditors

	2022	2021
	£	£
Accountancy fee	650	625
Room rent	2,456	583
	<u>3,106</u>	<u>1,208</u>

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

5. Independent examination and accountancy services

During the period, the cost of the independent examination and accountancy service was £650 (2021: £625).

6. Trustees' remuneration, benefits and expenses

A sum of £100 was paid to Keith Moore in this financial year, for the preparation of Lottery papers. Other than reimbursement of items purchased on behalf of the charity, there were no further payments, remuneration or benefits made to trustees in the accounting period.

7. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

8. Funds held on behalf of third party groups

During the year, the charity received funds from the ACTS 435 charity, to pay over to named individuals. The income was held on behalf of ACTS 435 and is therefore not recognised in the accounts of Romero Communities. A sum of £381 remained in the bank account of Romero at the year end.

In addition, a balance of £280 was due to the Next Steps Project, remaining from a grant received in 2019-20, held on their behalf.

9. Movement in funds

	Opening balance £	Incoming resources £	(Resources expended) £	Fund Transfers £	Closing balance £
Unrestricted funds					
General Fund	6,021	228	(10)	5,000	11,239
	<u>6,021</u>	<u>228</u>	<u>(10)</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>11,239</u>
Restricted funds					
The National Lottery Community Fund	15,170	43,800	(43,152)	(5,000)	10,818
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	-	14,000	-	-	14,000
The Tudor Trust	3,968	-	(1,206)	-	2,762
Garfield Weston Foundation	12,806	-	(5,465)	-	7,341
The Edward Gostling Foundation	4,269	-	(1,822)	-	2,447
	<u>36,213</u>	<u>57,800</u>	<u>(51,645)</u>	<u>(5,000)</u>	<u>37,368</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>42,234</u>	<u>58,028</u>	<u>(51,655)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>48,607</u>

Fund Transfers - £5,000 was transferred from the National Lottery Fund to the General Fund for contribution to management and overheads, over years 1 and 2 of the grant.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

10. Restricted Funds

- The National Lottery Community Fund– a five-year Community Fund grant (2019 to 2024) to fund the Support & Guidance service.
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council – Practical Support Grant from the North Area Council to fund a drop-in worker.
- The Tudor Trust – a grant to support staff and volunteer wellbeing in recognition of the challenges face during the pandemic.
- Garfield Weston Foundation – a grant of £15,000, received in 2019-20, towards the Support & Guidance service.
- The Edward Gostling Foundation - contribution towards the salary cost of a support and guidance worker.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

England & Wales - Charity number 1156917

Accounts

Company Number. 08002099 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity Number. 1156917

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

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ROMERO COMMUNITIES
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Full name: Romero Communities

Registered company number: 08002099

Registered Charity Number 1156917

Registered office & principal address: Priory Campus
Pontefract Road
Lundwood
Barnsley
S71 5PN

Trustees & Directors: K Moore
L Ocallaghan - *appointed 13/10/2020*
T Scorah
L Shepherd

Chairperson: T Scorah

Company Secretary: M Phillips

Independent Examiner: Angela Hayes
Community Accountant
BCVS Services Limited
Priory Campus
Pontefract Road
Lundwood
Barnsley
S71 5PN

Bankers: HSBC
5 Market Hill
Barnsley
S70 2PY

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the period 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Structure, governance and management

Romero Communities is a registered charity with the Charity Commission and a company limited by guarantee, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, dated March 2012, most recently amended February 2014. The company has no share capital and the liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to a sum not exceeding £1. The affairs of the charity are managed on a day to day basis by the trustees who have control of the charity and its property and funds.

Appointment of trustees

The Trustees are also directors of the company for the purpose of company law. The Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting. Every Trustee must sign a declaration of willingness to act as a charity trustee before being eligible to vote at the meetings.

The Trustees who served during the year are listed on page 3 of this report.

Charitable aims and objectives

The objectives of the charity are:

To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.

For the purpose of this clause 'socially excluded' means being excluded from society, or parts of society, as a result of one or more of the following factors: unemployment; financial hardship; youth or old age; ill health (physical or mental); substance abuse or dependency including alcohol and drugs; discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, belief, creed, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment; poor educational or skills attainment; relationship and family breakdown; poor housing (that is housing that does not meet basic habitable standards); crime (either as a victim of crime or as an offender rehabilitating into society).

Risk Management

The trustees have ultimate responsibility for identifying and managing risk. The main risk to the organisation is the loss of funding to continue the essential services. The financial position and level of reserves is reviewed at each trustee meeting, the trustees work with an external consultant and funding applications are ongoing. For other areas, the charity has risk management policies and procedures in place which are reviewed regularly by the trustees.

Public Benefit Statement

In shaping the objectives for the year the trustees have paid due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

TRUSTEES' REPORT continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Report of the Trustees on activities undertaken and achievements during the period.

The Trustees on behalf of the Romero Communities Charity would like to thank our current funders for their considered understanding, guidance and support.

This Annual Report gives an overview of the activities and events that have taken place within the Charity over the past working year. The Board of Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank all contributors for their efforts and continued support.

FOREWORD

This year has been extremely challenging as we faced the onset of the Covid 19 Pandemic. Alongside our customers, trustees, partners and funders we have changed our methods of delivery to ensure we provided a service throughout the year.

Our Annual Report 2020-2021 delivers for the Charity a more optimistic outlook for the foreseeable future, and a year of constructive consultation and understanding of Trustee responsibility. Secured funding has enabled us to move forward in our overall aim:

'to support and empower people to take control of their individual life challenges'

WHO IS INVOLVED IN DELIVERING OUR WORK

We are led by our Board of Trustees. We currently have 4 trustees and Maria who is Company Secretary and volunteer for the support and guidance service. Our trustees are Trevor the Charity Chairperson, Keith who is Treasurer and Finance Director, Lynn and Lorraine who both lived locally for over 20 years and are able to contribute a great deal to ensure our service delivery is in line with local need. Our Board of Trustees have been involved in the charity both as 'service users' and partners or by answering our publicity aimed at recruiting new members. However currently half have accessed the support and guidance themselves. We are keen to encourage and recruit more local people onto our Board. This was planned to take place during the final quarter of 2020 but was postponed due to the Pandemic.

Our thanks and appreciation to our volunteer Company Secretary Maria, for all that she does for Romero Communities Charity. Her work is invaluable to the smooth running of the Charity and administration of our Support and Guidance work. Maria has been the first point of contact for all enquiries by email/telephone on our dedicated system during the pandemic.

Thanks to Lorraine who also carries out a volunteer role. This involves calls to customers. The calls gather feedback from those visiting Romero for support. This information provides valuable information to support our applications for funding and for reports required by them. These are reported by our customers as a lifeline during the pandemic. Lorraine also carries out calls to customers to gather their experiences during the pandemic, our aim is to share any outcomes which may indicate a need to adjust our work to better meet need. We aim to share with partner organisations any recurring issues which they may consider and adjust to meet the needs of their customers.

We have a new volunteer Dick who has a wide knowledge and great experience working for Citizens Advice, mainly as a housing specialist.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

We have 3 sessional paid workers Paula, Geoff and Caroline. Their hours of work in total provide one full time equivalent worker (38 hours).

Our thanks to our sessional Co-Support Workers; - Paula and Geoff who deliver our 3-day a week, face to face, drop-in, Support and Guidance sessions very successfully. They are a great 'team' and deliver our sessions with great humility, kindness and efficiency, supported by their extensive knowledge and skills. This has been maintained as we are all (volunteers, trustees and workers) working from home.

We also welcomed 2 sessional workers, Gemma and Pete to support additional work during the COVID-19 period. This additional capacity was made possible by the Lottery 'uplift' grant.

In the past we have held forums inviting both local people and external partners to help identify need and design the way we work. We intended to develop this approach further in the coming year. The COVID-19 restrictions have prevented us from developing this further. We aim to seek new ways of engaging with potential applicants, for example accessing Barnsley CVS systems as appropriate and our social media platforms and website. We will look at new ways of engaging with customers to inform our future developments.

OUR ACTIVITIES

Romero Support and Guidance - overview

Romero Support and Guidance continued to deliver a 3-day a week face to face drop-in service until the Covid 19 Pandemic required us to 'work from home' from March 2020.

We re-opened on 8th September and then closed again on 4th November intending to return for 2nd December. However, following a risk assessment, we have remained closed to date. We added face-to-face appointments at the Romero Centre 1 day per week starting on Tuesday 20th April 2021 to date.

In order to re-open in September 2020, we carried out in depth cleaning and decorating of our workplace and purchased vital PPE equipment. We purchased individually designed and built screens. These screens were made possible with a donation from a local business and a friend of Romero who designed and built them free of charge. We were confident following our risk assessment that the Centre was safe to open for face-to-face appointments.

In the event of forced closure, we set about making our service available to potential and existing customers by:

- Planning how our team could work from home. This meant applying for small pots of funding to provide any equipment the workers would need.
- Securing funding to design and distribute comprehensive 'Help Packs' to 450 local families. The covering letter enclosed in the pack asked people to share the information as widely as possible in order to reach as many people as possible. We were very aware that any digital information may not be accessible to everyone. We were awarded funds from The Tudor Trust to make this possible.
- We maintain communication via landline and mobile telephone, E mail, Facebook, Twitter, and our Website.
- We have developed a digital system of recording all our contacts while working from home
- We place articles in the local press and place posters on our doors that give information re contacting us etc.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

TRUSTEES' REPORT *continued*

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The Team maintain contact via e mail and telephone with each other and partner organisations. We hold virtual 'team' meetings to update and monitor our work. We also provide each other with support and encouragement.

In addition to our core Support and Guidance work we have developed and delivered additional support for those people who were experiencing the 'Furlough' Scheme, loss of work and or income and the personal and health impacts of the Pandemic.

This has been made possible by the 'uplift' grant we have been awarded by The Lottery. This enabled us to appoint a temporary sessional worker (12 weeks) to cover for one of our existing workers to focus support on these customers. We started this work to coincide with the planned ending of the 'Furlough' Scheme at the beginning of October. As the scheme was extended, we did not see as many customers as predicted who were affected by the end of the scheme. However, our workload has increased substantially by requests for help with benefit claims. Many requests are from individuals who are unfamiliar with the benefit system and consequently may need intense support.

We are extremely concerned that we will face a capacity issue when the scheme does finally end. We intend to seek additional funding so we can extend the work.

Our uplift grant gave us the opportunity to plan and explore ideas with local schools of how we can support parents better. We aim to do this in partnership with interested schools. The uplift grant has allowed us to increase our worker capacity for a short time in order to prepare to launch a pilot in one of the local schools. We are planning to start this before March. This date will of course be dependent on the current restrictions of COVID-19. Below is the development work we carried out prior to our closure.

We contacted 4 local schools to put a programme of preventive measures together that will be beneficial to families who struggle at times with money, confidence, mental health and day to day activities. Through our desire to try and improve the health and wellbeing of people in the local area and to be pro- active in our delivery we hope to work closely with these primary schools in the next 12 months. We aim to look at ways in which together we can support families to start to take control of their lives and give them aspirations for themselves and their children.

Throughout the year we have adapted our recording methods, so we are able to accurately report our work. We have found this to be a pre-cursor to the launch of our new database. This has been held back during the Pandemic, hopefully it will be integrated into our work early in 2021.

We have experienced a reduction of new customers which we know is due to the lack of our usual face-to-face service. However, we have measured these numbers against our predictions and the outcome sees a 50% increase in total number of contacts.

Our approach is based on supporting people in a holistic way. From our recording, the type of issues people seek are varied and often individuals ask for help with more than one issue. Our recording is demonstrating a gender split of 48% male and 52% female customers and we have worked hard to ensure equality for recipients of our work.

Referrals from Romero and to Romero have increased and our partner base has increased. We believe this is because some other organisations are experiencing a reduced capacity to deliver their services or the demand for support is vastly oversubscribed.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

TRUSTEES' REPORT continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Our referrals to Food Banks have increased substantially as have our referrals to the Charity ACTS 435. Many of our ACTS referrals are as a result of a joined -up working relationship with Barnsley Citizens Advice debt team, tenant and school support workers or our on-going support helping customers with complex issues. Referrals to ACTS in 95% of cases result in a monetary 'gift' which enables the applicants to pay the required cost of £90 for a Debt Relief Order. The result of this order can change a family's financial situation beyond belief. It reduces high levels of stress and helps the individual to take control. Alternatively, customers can purchase goods such as washing machines or cover transport costs to work for example, which in turn also reduces levels of worry and stress.

An analysis of our contacts evidences the prevalence of help needed in the following areas.

Benefit applications and help to appeal decisions which are contrary to the outcome anticipated by the customer. This work is intense and requires a great deal of knowledge and skill by our workers. It has been particularly difficult and time consuming as 90% of our contact is by telephone or via e mail. We support many who do not have access to the internet, this can also be difficult when customers have additional needs such as learning difficulties, complex physical and mental health needs, unstable lifestyles which can result in a breakdown of family relationships and even result in homelessness. Employment and unemployment issues, debt, legal, social care needs, housing, and relationship/poor mental health are recorded in our more copious recording.

We collect many comments from our customers, often relating to the importance of 1 to 1 and face-to-face delivery.

'I feel very supported and like to speak to someone face to face, I feel more comfortable talking about my problem'.

This example reflects the views of 90% of our customers giving feedback about their experience of the service during the Pandemic.

'Joined up Support'

Our work is based on positive relationships with partner services and organisations to deliver a holistic service for our customers. We have continued to work in partnership to deliver our service throughout the Pandemic. Unfortunately, this has been impacted due to forced changes to systems, resources and face-to-face services which are often vital for many of our customers. We continue to link with other services to deliver holistic support.

Planning for our Future

Planning for our future was for a very exciting, and productive year. Some of our planning has been placed on hold but will be a focus for the next financial year. Our future is based on meeting the needs of local people along with addressing local and national trends which impact on the day-to-day life of those who we work with. We track need using our current recording system. This will be enhanced in the coming year as we begin to use our new database. This was scheduled for completion in March 2020, but this was delayed as the author and designer was furloughed for most of the year. We are now looking forward to its completion.

Our Challenges

The work of Romero Communities is a 'team' effort. We have ambitions for the future to secure long-term funding. We aim to develop ways of 'earning' income, so we do not rely fully on external funds. We realise this will be difficult and will be a long-term goal. We hope to engage people from the community to help us to achieve this. The first step will be to establish a Fundraising Sub-Group bringing together service users, trustees, volunteers, partner organisations and workers. We will continue to work closely with Barnsley CVS to ensure we work in line with Voluntary Sector organisations both local and national. Romero Communities is built on partnerships with other voluntary and statutory organisations.

By working in this way, we hope to bring the best and most appropriate advice together to help our customers resolve their problems. The empowerment of individuals is at the forefront of our work, sharing knowledge, encouraging self-help, confidence, self-esteem, and skills which will put people back in control of their own lives.

We try to approach our challenges as opportunities to provide an improved service. We are also very honest and face our challenges realistically. The link between demand, capacity and restrictions placed on us by space can be frustrating at times. We do not want to increase demand to our drop-ins to a point where we have to turn people away, however we are keen to look at ways of managing our sessions to maximise the time available. We resist having to restrict the time we spend with people in order to help them reach a solution rather than spending less time and resorting to a 'sticking plaster' approach. We are keen to increase the times of opening in the future.

We need to have designated time to networking and liaising/co-working with partner organisations when supporting clients with complex problems. Follow up work with partners takes up approximately 50% of our time.

Our biggest challenge as a small charity is the financial sustainability of this type of work. This is at the forefront of our planning for 2021 onwards.

We will continue to adapt alongside COVID-19 restrictions placed on us during 2021.

Related parties

The trustees consider that there are no related parties to the charity.

The charity's policy on reserves

As a small charity, reliant on public and charitable funding and susceptible to factors beyond the control of the organisation, the trustees recognise the need to keep reserves at a level that will give the organisation stability to enable it to continue to operate in the future and meet all statutory and service delivery obligations. The trustees aim to accumulate reserves equivalent to 3 months' annual expenditure, which equates to a sum of £16,000 in the current financial year. At the year-end, the unrestricted reserve stands at £6,021. (2020: £5,975). The trustees are aware of the need to generate further unrestricted funds to bring reserves to the desired level and this is being addressed in the implementation of the business plans.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

TRUSTEES' REPORT continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the surplus or deficiency for the year then ended. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to: select suitable accounting policies and then apply them on a consistent basis, making judgements and estimates that are prudent and reasonable. The trustees must also prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charity, 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 charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud or other irregularities.

Financial Position

The financial statements are set out in pages 12 to 17. The Statement of Financial Activities shows a surplus for the year of £7,516 (2020: £4,192).

The total funds at the year-end stand at £42,234 (2020: £34,718). Total funds include balances remaining on restricted grants of £36,213 and the general reserve of £6,021.

Small company provisions:

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Exemptions

The trustees have taken advantage of the exemptions available to small companies, including the audit exemption.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.
Signed on behalf of the trustees:

Signed K G Moore Date: 17 November 2021

K Moore, Trustee/ Director

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

I report on the accounts of the charity, which are set out on pages 12 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; or
- the accounts do not accord with such records; or
- the accounts do not comply with relevant accounting requirements under section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102).

I 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.

Signed *A Hayes*

Date: 17 November 2021

Angela Hayes, FMAAT
Community Accountant
BCVS Services Limited
Priory Campus, Pontefract Road, Lundwood, Barnsley, S71 5PN

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(Incorporating an Income & Expenditure Account)

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2021 Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2020 Total Funds £
Incoming resources							
Gifts & donations		245	-	245	2,300	-	2,300
Grants received	2	-	69,962	69,962	-	65,820	65,820
Other income		-	-	-	180	-	180
Total incoming resources		245	69,962	70,207	2,480	65,820	68,300
Resources expended							
Sessional workers		-	47,233	47,233	-	42,958	42,958
Rent & office costs		-	3,162	3,162	833	2,762	3,595
Insurance		-	140	140	-	140	140
Printing, stationery & office expenses		-	1,938	1,938	-	893	893
Telephone, computer & internet costs		-	2,581	2,581	-	3,807	3,807
Training		-	-	-	-	45	45
Help packs	10	10	5,416	5,426	-	-	-
Covid response & PPE		189	700	889	-	-	-
Volunteer expenses		-	662	662	-	504	504
Accountancy		-	625	625	-	600	600
Project support & consultancy		-	-	-	642	10,658	11,300
Other expenditure		-	35	35	231	35	266
Total resources expended		199	62,492	62,691	1,706	62,402	64,108
Net income/(expenditure)		46	7,470	7,516	774	3,418	4,192
Transfers between funds	10	-	-	-	2,401	(2,401)	-
Total funds brought forward		5,975	28,743	34,718	2,800	27,726	30,526
Total funds carried forward	9	6,021	36,213	42,234	5,975	28,743	34,718

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

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

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Accounting policies

Basis of the preparation of the accounts

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities - Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)) and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value, unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Income and expenditure has been analysed in the accounts using natural classification, in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.6, SORP 2019 (smaller charities). The charity also meets the requirements for exemption for preparing a statement of cash flows.

Going concern note

After reviewing the charity's forecasts and projections and its reserves, the trustees have reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operation for the foreseeable future. The charity therefore continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing its financial statements.

Funding is secured to run the Support & Guidance service until 2024, with a 5-year grant from the National Lottery Community Fund. Grant funding has continued during the Coronavirus pandemic and the charity has seen no significant reduction in income as a result of the crisis. The Lottery also granted uplift funding to provide help-packs and additional worker hours to support those who are facing difficulties due to the pandemic.

Incoming resources

All material incoming resources have been included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, when any performance conditions attached are met, when it is probable that the income will be received and when the amount can be measured reliably.

Resources expended

Resources expended have been analysed using natural classification.

All expenditure is included on an accruals basis and is recognised as a liability is incurred. The charity is not registered for VAT and accordingly resources expended are shown gross of irrecoverable VAT.

Donated goods and services

Donated facilities and services are recognised in the accounts at the amount the charity would pay in the open market for a service equivalent to that being donated, when the charity would otherwise have purchased them and the value can be measured reliably.

Donated goods for the charity's own use are recognised as income, at their fair value.

The contribution of general volunteers is not recognised as income in the charity accounts

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated to write down the cost or valuation less estimated residual value of all tangible fixed assets, with an individual cost exceeding £1000, over their expected useful lives.

There were no individual assets with a value exceeding £1,000 in the current year.

Funds Structure

The charity maintains a general unrestricted fund which represents funds which are expendable at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity.

Restricted funds have been provided to the charity for particular purposes and may only be spent for the purposes for which they were given. Any balance remaining outstanding on a restricted fund at the end of the year is carried forward as a balance on the fund, unless permission has been given by the funder to remove the restriction on the balance outstanding.

2. Restricted grants received

	2021	2020
	£	£
The National Lottery Community Fund	43,800	45,820
The National Lottery Uplift Fund (Covid-19)	21,494	-
The Tudor Trust	3,968	-
South Yorkshire Community Foundation	700	-
Garfield Weston Foundation	-	15,000
The Edward Gostling Foundation	-	5,000
	69,962	65,820

3. Debtors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Rent prepaid	-	833
	-	833

4. Creditors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Accountancy fee	625	600
Room rent	583	-
Sessional fees	-	1,260
	1,208	1,860

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

5. Independent examination and accountancy services

During the period, the cost of the independent examination and accountancy service was £625 (2020: £600).

6. Trustees' remuneration, benefits and expenses

Other than reimbursement of items purchased on behalf of the charity, there were no payments, remuneration or benefits made to trustees in the accounting period.

7. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

8. Funds held on behalf of third party groups

During the year, the charity received funds from the ACTS 435 charity, to pay over to named individuals. The income was held on behalf of ACTS 435 and is therefore not recognised in the accounts of Romero Communities. A sum of £150 remained in the bank account of Romero at the year end.

In addition, a balance of £280 was due to the Next Steps Project, remaining from a grant received in 2019-20, held on their behalf.

9. Movement in funds

	Opening balance £	Incoming resources £	(Resources expended) £	Fund Transfers £	Closing balance £
Unrestricted funds					
General Fund	5,975	245	(199)	-	6,021
	<u>5,975</u>	<u>245</u>	<u>(199)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,021</u>
Restricted funds					
The National Lottery Community Fund	8,743	43,800	(37,373)	-	15,170
The National Lottery Covid Uplift	-	21,494	(21,494)	-	-
The Tudor Trust	-	3,968	-	-	3,968
S Yorkshire Community Foundation	-	700	(700)	-	-
Garfield Weston Foundation	15,000	-	(2,194)	-	12,806
The Edward Gostling Foundation	5,000	-	(731)	-	4,269
	<u>28,743</u>	<u>69,962</u>	<u>(62,492)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>36,213</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>34,718</u>	<u>70,207</u>	<u>(62,691)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>42,234</u>

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

10. Restricted Funds

- The National Lottery Community Fund – a five-year Community Fund grant (2019 to 2024) to fund the Support & Guidance service.
- The National Lottery Covid-19 Uplift Fund – a grant to enable to continuation of services and support during the pandemic and to provide help packs for local families.
- The Tudor Trust – A grant to support staff and volunteer wellbeing in recognition of the challenges face during the pandemic.
- South Yorkshire Community Foundation – a grant of £700 awarded from the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Fund, to help the charity resume its face-to-face service.
- Garfield Weston Foundation – a grant of £15,000, received in the previous financial year, towards the Support & Guidance service.
- The Edward Gostling Foundation - Contribution towards the salary cost of a support and guidance worker.



Company Number. 08002099 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity Number. 1156917

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

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ROMERO COMMUNITIES
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Full name: Romero Communities

Registered company number: 08002099

Registered Charity Number 1156917

Registered office & principal address: Priory Campus
Pontefract Road
Lundwood
Barnsley
S71 5PN

Trustees & Directors: K Moore
L Ocallaghan - *appointed 13/10/2020*
T Scorah
L Shepherd

Chairperson: T Scorah

Company Secretary: M Phillips

Independent Examiner: Angela Hayes
Community Accountant
BCVS Services Limited
Priory Campus
Pontefract Road
Lundwood
Barnsley
S71 5PN

Bankers: HSBC
5 Market Hill
Barnsley
S70 2PY

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the period 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Structure, governance and management

Romero Communities is a registered charity with the Charity Commission and a company limited by guarantee, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, dated March 2012, most recently amended February 2014. The company has no share capital and the liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to a sum not exceeding £1. The affairs of the charity are managed on a day to day basis by the trustees who have control of the charity and its property and funds.

Appointment of trustees

The Trustees are also directors of the company for the purpose of company law. The Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting. Every Trustee must sign a declaration of willingness to act as a charity trustee before being eligible to vote at the meetings.

The Trustees who served during the year are listed on page 3 of this report.

Charitable aims and objectives

The objectives of the charity are:

To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.

For the purpose of this clause 'socially excluded' means being excluded from society, or parts of society, as a result of one or more of the following factors: unemployment; financial hardship; youth or old age; ill health (physical or mental); substance abuse or dependency including alcohol and drugs; discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, belief, creed, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment; poor educational or skills attainment; relationship and family breakdown; poor housing (that is housing that does not meet basic habitable standards); crime (either as a victim of crime or as an offender rehabilitating into society).

Risk Management

The trustees have ultimate responsibility for identifying and managing risk. The main risk to the organisation is the loss of funding to continue the essential services. The financial position and level of reserves is reviewed at each trustee meeting, the trustees work with an external consultant and funding applications are ongoing. For other areas, the charity has risk management policies and procedures in place which are reviewed regularly by the trustees.

Public Benefit Statement

In shaping the objectives for the year the trustees have paid due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

TRUSTEES' REPORT continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Report of the Trustees on activities undertaken and achievements during the period.

The Trustees on behalf of the Romero Communities Charity would like to thank our current funders for their considered understanding, guidance and support.

This Annual Report gives an overview of the activities and events that have taken place within the Charity over the past working year. The Board of Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank all contributors for their efforts and continued support.

FOREWORD

This year has been extremely challenging as we faced the onset of the Covid 19 Pandemic. Alongside our customers, trustees, partners and funders we have changed our methods of delivery to ensure we provided a service throughout the year.

Our Annual Report 2020-2021 delivers for the Charity a more optimistic outlook for the foreseeable future, and a year of constructive consultation and understanding of Trustee responsibility. Secured funding has enabled us to move forward in our overall aim:

'to support and empower people to take control of their individual life challenges'

WHO IS INVOLVED IN DELIVERING OUR WORK

We are led by our Board of Trustees. We currently have 4 trustees and Maria who is Company Secretary and volunteer for the support and guidance service. Our trustees are Trevor the Charity Chairperson, Keith who is Treasurer and Finance Director, Lynn and Lorraine who both lived locally for over 20 years and are able to contribute a great deal to ensure our service delivery is in line with local need. Our Board of Trustees have been involved in the charity both as 'service users' and partners or by answering our publicity aimed at recruiting new members. However currently half have accessed the support and guidance themselves. We are keen to encourage and recruit more local people onto our Board. This was planned to take place during the final quarter of 2020 but was postponed due to the Pandemic.

Our thanks and appreciation to our volunteer Company Secretary Maria, for all that she does for Romero Communities Charity. Her work is invaluable to the smooth running of the Charity and administration of our Support and Guidance work. Maria has been the first point of contact for all enquiries by email/telephone on our dedicated system during the pandemic.

Thanks to Lorraine who also carries out a volunteer role. This involves calls to customers. The calls gather feedback from those visiting Romero for support. This information provides valuable information to support our applications for funding and for reports required by them. These are reported by our customers as a lifeline during the pandemic. Lorraine also carries out calls to customers to gather their experiences during the pandemic, our aim is to share any outcomes which may indicate a need to adjust our work to better meet need. We aim to share with partner organisations any recurring issues which they may consider and adjust to meet the needs of their customers.

We have a new volunteer Dick who has a wide knowledge and great experience working for Citizens Advice, mainly as a housing specialist.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
TRUSTEES' REPORT continued
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

We have 3 sessional paid workers Paula, Geoff and Caroline. Their hours of work in total provide one full time equivalent worker (38 hours).

Our thanks to our sessional Co-Support Workers; - Paula and Geoff who deliver our 3-day a week, face to face, drop-in, Support and Guidance sessions very successfully. They are a great 'team' and deliver our sessions with great humility, kindness and efficiency, supported by their extensive knowledge and skills. This has been maintained as we are all (volunteers, trustees and workers) working from home.

We also welcomed 2 sessional workers, Gemma and Pete to support additional work during the COVID-19 period. This additional capacity was made possible by the Lottery 'uplift' grant.

In the past we have held forums inviting both local people and external partners to help identify need and design the way we work. We intended to develop this approach further in the coming year. The COVID-19 restrictions have prevented us from developing this further. We aim to seek new ways of engaging with potential applicants, for example accessing Barnsley CVS systems as appropriate and our social media platforms and website. We will look at new ways of engaging with customers to inform our future developments.

OUR ACTIVITIES

Romero Support and Guidance - overview

Romero Support and Guidance continued to deliver a 3-day a week face to face drop-in service until the Covid 19 Pandemic required us to 'work from home' from March 2020.

We re-opened on 8th September and then closed again on 4th November intending to return for 2nd December. However, following a risk assessment, we have remained closed to date. We added face-to-face appointments at the Romero Centre 1 day per week starting on Tuesday 20th April 2021 to date.

In order to re-open in September 2020, we carried out in depth cleaning and decorating of our workplace and purchased vital PPE equipment. We purchased individually designed and built screens. These screens were made possible with a donation from a local business and a friend of Romero who designed and built them free of charge. We were confident following our risk assessment that the Centre was safe to open for face-to-face appointments.

In the event of forced closure, we set about making our service available to potential and existing customers by:

- Planning how our team could work from home. This meant applying for small pots of funding to provide any equipment the workers would need.
- Securing funding to design and distribute comprehensive 'Help Packs' to 450 local families. The covering letter enclosed in the pack asked people to share the information as widely as possible in order to reach as many people as possible. We were very aware that any digital information may not be accessible to everyone. We were awarded funds from The Tudor Trust to make this possible.
- We maintain communication via landline and mobile telephone, E mail, Facebook, Twitter, and our Website.
- We have developed a digital system of recording all our contacts while working from home
- We place articles in the local press and place posters on our doors that give information re contacting us etc.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

TRUSTEES' REPORT continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The Team maintain contact via e mail and telephone with each other and partner organisations. We hold virtual 'team' meetings to update and monitor our work. We also provide each other with support and encouragement.

In addition to our core Support and Guidance work we have developed and delivered additional support for those people who were experiencing the 'Furlough' Scheme, loss of work and or income and the personal and health impacts of the Pandemic.

This has been made possible by the 'uplift' grant we have been awarded by The Lottery. This enabled us to appoint a temporary sessional worker (12 weeks) to cover for one of our existing workers to focus support on these customers. We started this work to coincide with the planned ending of the 'Furlough' Scheme at the beginning of October. As the scheme was extended, we did not see as many customers as predicted who were affected by the end of the scheme. However, our workload has increased substantially by requests for help with benefit claims. Many requests are from individuals who are unfamiliar with the benefit system and consequently may need intense support.

We are extremely concerned that we will face a capacity issue when the scheme does finally end. We intend to seek additional funding so we can extend the work.

Our uplift grant gave us the opportunity to plan and explore ideas with local schools of how we can support parents better. We aim to do this in partnership with interested schools. The uplift grant has allowed us to increase our worker capacity for a short time in order to prepare to launch a pilot in one of the local schools. We are planning to start this before March. This date will of course be dependent on the current restrictions of COVID-19. Below is the development work we carried out prior to our closure.

We contacted 4 local schools to put a programme of preventive measures together that will be beneficial to families who struggle at times with money, confidence, mental health and day to day activities. Through our desire to try and improve the health and wellbeing of people in the local area and to be pro- active in our delivery we hope to work closely with these primary schools in the next 12 months. We aim to look at ways in which together we can support families to start to take control of their lives and give them aspirations for themselves and their children.

Throughout the year we have adapted our recording methods, so we are able to accurately report our work. We have found this to be a pre-cursor to the launch of our new database. This has been held back during the Pandemic, hopefully it will be integrated into our work early in 2021.

We have experienced a reduction of new customers which we know is due to the lack of our usual face-to-face service. However, we have measured these numbers against our predictions and the outcome sees a 50% increase in total number of contacts.

Our approach is based on supporting people in a holistic way. From our recording, the type of issues people seek are varied and often individuals ask for help with more than one issue. Our recording is demonstrating a gender split of 48% male and 52% female customers and we have worked hard to ensure equality for recipients of our work.

Referrals from Romero and to Romero have increased and our partner base has increased. We believe this is because some other organisations are experiencing a reduced capacity to deliver their services or the demand for support is vastly oversubscribed.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

TRUSTEES' REPORT continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Our referrals to Food Banks have increased substantially as have our referrals to the Charity ACTS 435. Many of our ACTS referrals are as a result of a joined -up working relationship with Barnsley Citizens Advice debt team, tenant and school support workers or our on-going support helping customers with complex issues. Referrals to ACTS in 95% of cases result in a monetary 'gift' which enables the applicants to pay the required cost of £90 for a Debt Relief Order. The result of this order can change a family's financial situation beyond belief. It reduces high levels of stress and helps the individual to take control. Alternatively, customers can purchase goods such as washing machines or cover transport costs to work for example, which in turn also reduces levels of worry and stress.

An analysis of our contacts evidences the prevalence of help needed in the following areas.

Benefit applications and help to appeal decisions which are contrary to the outcome anticipated by the customer. This work is intense and requires a great deal of knowledge and skill by our workers. It has been particularly difficult and time consuming as 90% of our contact is by telephone or via e mail. We support many who do not have access to the internet, this can also be difficult when customers have additional needs such as learning difficulties, complex physical and mental health needs, unstable lifestyles which can result in a breakdown of family relationships and even result in homelessness. Employment and unemployment issues, debt, legal, social care needs, housing, and relationship/poor mental health are recorded in our more copious recording.

We collect many comments from our customers, often relating to the importance of 1 to 1 and face-to-face delivery.

'I feel very supported and like to speak to someone face to face, I feel more comfortable talking about my problem'.

This example reflects the views of 90% of our customers giving feedback about their experience of the service during the Pandemic.

'Joined up Support'

Our work is based on positive relationships with partner services and organisations to deliver a holistic service for our customers. We have continued to work in partnership to deliver our service throughout the Pandemic. Unfortunately, this has been impacted due to forced changes to systems, resources and face-to-face services which are often vital for many of our customers. We continue to link with other services to deliver holistic support.

Planning for our Future

Planning for our future was for a very exciting, and productive year. Some of our planning has been placed on hold but will be a focus for the next financial year. Our future is based on meeting the needs of local people along with addressing local and national trends which impact on the day-to-day life of those who we work with. We track need using our current recording system. This will be enhanced in the coming year as we begin to use our new database. This was scheduled for completion in March 2020, but this was delayed as the author and designer was furloughed for most of the year. We are now looking forward to its completion.

Our Challenges

The work of Romero Communities is a 'team' effort. We have ambitions for the future to secure long-term funding. We aim to develop ways of 'earning' income, so we do not rely fully on external funds. We realise this will be difficult and will be a long-term goal. We hope to engage people from the community to help us to achieve this. The first step will be to establish a Fundraising Sub-Group bringing together service users, trustees, volunteers, partner organisations and workers. We will continue to work closely with Barnsley CVS to ensure we work in line with Voluntary Sector organisations both local and national. Romero Communities is built on partnerships with other voluntary and statutory organisations.

By working in this way, we hope to bring the best and most appropriate advice together to help our customers resolve their problems. The empowerment of individuals is at the forefront of our work, sharing knowledge, encouraging self-help, confidence, self-esteem, and skills which will put people back in control of their own lives.

We try to approach our challenges as opportunities to provide an improved service. We are also very honest and face our challenges realistically. The link between demand, capacity and restrictions placed on us by space can be frustrating at times. We do not want to increase demand to our drop-ins to a point where we have to turn people away, however we are keen to look at ways of managing our sessions to maximise the time available. We resist having to restrict the time we spend with people in order to help them reach a solution rather than spending less time and resorting to a 'sticking plaster' approach. We are keen to increase the times of opening in the future.

We need to have designated time to networking and liaising/co-working with partner organisations when supporting clients with complex problems. Follow up work with partners takes up approximately 50% of our time.

Our biggest challenge as a small charity is the financial sustainability of this type of work. This is at the forefront of our planning for 2021 onwards.

We will continue to adapt alongside COVID-19 restrictions placed on us during 2021.

Related parties

The trustees consider that there are no related parties to the charity.

The charity's policy on reserves

As a small charity, reliant on public and charitable funding and susceptible to factors beyond the control of the organisation, the trustees recognise the need to keep reserves at a level that will give the organisation stability to enable it to continue to operate in the future and meet all statutory and service delivery obligations. The trustees aim to accumulate reserves equivalent to 3 months' annual expenditure, which equates to a sum of £16,000 in the current financial year. At the year-end, the unrestricted reserve stands at £6,021. (2020: £5,975). The trustees are aware of the need to generate further unrestricted funds to bring reserves to the desired level and this is being addressed in the implementation of the business plans.

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

TRUSTEES' REPORT continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the surplus or deficiency for the year then ended. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to: select suitable accounting policies and then apply them on a consistent basis, making judgements and estimates that are prudent and reasonable. The trustees must also prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charity, 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 charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud or other irregularities.

Financial Position

The financial statements are set out in pages 12 to 17. The Statement of Financial Activities shows a surplus for the year of £7,516 (2020: £4,192).

The total funds at the year-end stand at £42,234 (2020: £34,718). Total funds include balances remaining on restricted grants of £36,213 and the general reserve of £6,021.

Small company provisions:

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Exemptions

The trustees have taken advantage of the exemptions available to small companies, including the audit exemption.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.
Signed on behalf of the trustees:

Signed K G Moore Date: 17 November 2021

K Moore, Trustee/ Director

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

I report on the accounts of the charity, which are set out on pages 12 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; or
- the accounts do not accord with such records; or
- the accounts do not comply with relevant accounting requirements under section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102).

I 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.

Signed *A Hayes*

Date: 17 November 2021

Angela Hayes, FMAAT
Community Accountant
BCVS Services Limited
Priory Campus, Pontefract Road, Lundwood, Barnsley, S71 5PN

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(Incorporating an Income & Expenditure Account)

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2021 Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2020 Total Funds £
Incoming resources							
Gifts & donations		245	-	245	2,300	-	2,300
Grants received	2	-	69,962	69,962	-	65,820	65,820
Other income		-	-	-	180	-	180
Total incoming resources		245	69,962	70,207	2,480	65,820	68,300
Resources expended							
Sessional workers		-	47,233	47,233	-	42,958	42,958
Rent & office costs		-	3,162	3,162	833	2,762	3,595
Insurance		-	140	140	-	140	140
Printing, stationery & office expenses		-	1,938	1,938	-	893	893
Telephone, computer & internet costs		-	2,581	2,581	-	3,807	3,807
Training		-	-	-	-	45	45
Help packs	10	10	5,416	5,426	-	-	-
Covid response & PPE		189	700	889	-	-	-
Volunteer expenses		-	662	662	-	504	504
Accountancy		-	625	625	-	600	600
Project support & consultancy		-	-	-	642	10,658	11,300
Other expenditure		-	35	35	231	35	266
Total resources expended		199	62,492	62,691	1,706	62,402	64,108
Net income/(expenditure)		46	7,470	7,516	774	3,418	4,192
Transfers between funds	10	-	-	-	2,401	(2,401)	-
Total funds brought forward		5,975	28,743	34,718	2,800	27,726	30,526
Total funds carried forward	9	6,021	36,213	42,234	5,975	28,743	34,718

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

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

ROMERO COMMUNITIES
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Accounting policies

Basis of the preparation of the accounts

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities - Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)) and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value, unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Income and expenditure has been analysed in the accounts using natural classification, in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.6, SORP 2019 (smaller charities). The charity also meets the requirements for exemption for preparing a statement of cash flows.

Going concern note

After reviewing the charity's forecasts and projections and its reserves, the trustees have reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operation for the foreseeable future. The charity therefore continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing its financial statements.

Funding is secured to run the Support & Guidance service until 2024, with a 5-year grant from the National Lottery Community Fund. Grant funding has continued during the Coronavirus pandemic and the charity has seen no significant reduction in income as a result of the crisis. The Lottery also granted uplift funding to provide help-packs and additional worker hours to support those who are facing difficulties due to the pandemic.

Incoming resources

All material incoming resources have been included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, when any performance conditions attached are met, when it is probable that the income will be received and when the amount can be measured reliably.

Resources expended

Resources expended have been analysed using natural classification.

All expenditure is included on an accruals basis and is recognised as a liability is incurred. The charity is not registered for VAT and accordingly resources expended are shown gross of irrecoverable VAT.

Donated goods and services

Donated facilities and services are recognised in the accounts at the amount the charity would pay in the open market for a service equivalent to that being donated, when the charity would otherwise have purchased them and the value can be measured reliably.

Donated goods for the charity's own use are recognised as income, at their fair value.

The contribution of general volunteers is not recognised as income in the charity accounts

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated to write down the cost or valuation less estimated residual value of all tangible fixed assets, with an individual cost exceeding £1000, over their expected useful lives.

There were no individual assets with a value exceeding £1,000 in the current year.

Funds Structure

The charity maintains a general unrestricted fund which represents funds which are expendable at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity.

Restricted funds have been provided to the charity for particular purposes and may only be spent for the purposes for which they were given. Any balance remaining outstanding on a restricted fund at the end of the year is carried forward as a balance on the fund, unless permission has been given by the funder to remove the restriction on the balance outstanding.

2. Restricted grants received

	2021	2020
	£	£
The National Lottery Community Fund	43,800	45,820
The National Lottery Uplift Fund (Covid-19)	21,494	-
The Tudor Trust	3,968	-
South Yorkshire Community Foundation	700	-
Garfield Weston Foundation	-	15,000
The Edward Gostling Foundation	-	5,000
	69,962	65,820

3. Debtors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Rent prepaid	-	833
	-	833

4. Creditors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Accountancy fee	625	600
Room rent	583	-
Sessional fees	-	1,260
	1,208	1,860

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

5. Independent examination and accountancy services

During the period, the cost of the independent examination and accountancy service was £625 (2020: £600).

6. Trustees' remuneration, benefits and expenses

Other than reimbursement of items purchased on behalf of the charity, there were no payments, remuneration or benefits made to trustees in the accounting period.

7. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

8. Funds held on behalf of third party groups

During the year, the charity received funds from the ACTS 435 charity, to pay over to named individuals. The income was held on behalf of ACTS 435 and is therefore not recognised in the accounts of Romero Communities. A sum of £150 remained in the bank account of Romero at the year end.

In addition, a balance of £280 was due to the Next Steps Project, remaining from a grant received in 2019-20, held on their behalf.

9. Movement in funds

	Opening balance £	Incoming resources £	(Resources expended) £	Fund Transfers £	Closing balance £
Unrestricted funds					
General Fund	5,975	245	(199)	-	6,021
	<u>5,975</u>	<u>245</u>	<u>(199)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,021</u>
Restricted funds					
The National Lottery Community Fund	8,743	43,800	(37,373)	-	15,170
The National Lottery Covid Uplift	-	21,494	(21,494)	-	-
The Tudor Trust	-	3,968	-	-	3,968
S Yorkshire Community Foundation	-	700	(700)	-	-
Garfield Weston Foundation	15,000	-	(2,194)	-	12,806
The Edward Gostling Foundation	5,000	-	(731)	-	4,269
	<u>28,743</u>	<u>69,962</u>	<u>(62,492)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>36,213</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>34,718</u>	<u>70,207</u>	<u>(62,691)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>42,234</u>

ROMERO COMMUNITIES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

10. Restricted Funds

- The National Lottery Community Fund – a five-year Community Fund grant (2019 to 2024) to fund the Support & Guidance service.
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- South Yorkshire Community Foundation – a grant of £700 awarded from the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Fund, to help the charity resume its face-to-face service.
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