

## Annual Report 2023-2024

### Introduction by the trustees

As we work through Acts4Sharing's tenth year as a charitable organisation; we have come a very long way, and we continue by GOD's grace to meet the ever-growing demand in the large number of people needing our help, as you will read in this report.

This is always an opportunity to give a big shout out to the wonderful caring staff, our growing number of volunteers, trustees, partner organisations, donors, referral partners and all those associated with A4S to help us meet the charity's objective in bringing relief of poverty, encouragement, love, and compassion to all those who have been referred to us. A big "THANK YOU"!

Over ten years we have seen so many answers to prayers, and we know that what we achieve would not be possible without the faithful prayers and the blessings of almighty GOD. As we look to the future with talk of additional transport we do so with confidence of knowing that if its GOD's work he will provide, he has done it before and he can do it again! Amen.

So read on and be encouraged with the amazing work that GOD is doing through A4S. We hope that you find this report helpful and informative and if you want to know more visit our website: [acts4sharing.org](http://acts4sharing.org)

### Thank you

We thank God, our heavenly Father, for guiding us through another year at Acts4Sharing – “sharing His love in practical ways” across our local community and beyond.

All that we do is founded on prayer, with several still coming together at Hope HQ in person each month to lift everything 'Acts4Sharing' to God in prayer. This includes the ongoing needs for those we are helping, as well as the practical needs and direction for our ongoing work.



We continue to be amazed by the way in which our prayers are answered; how practical items and team members become available at just the right time.

Without God's strength and guidance, we would not be able to reach out like we do. He enables us and for that we are totally thankful.

We are extremely grateful to those who are the hands, feet, and voices enabling the practical ministry to be achieved. By the end of the year, we had 34 signed up volunteers, with many of them giving of their time on a weekly basis.



Without this amazing team, nothing would be accomplished! Team members drive, lift and shift furniture – collecting and delivering from many homes, sort incoming donations and prepare for outgoing deliveries, meet, and pray with clients (and each other) out in the community and at Hope HQ, make tea and coffee! – Every task is important and necessary for the smooth running of Acts4Sharing.

We value those who serve as trustees, our advisor and our landlords, for their hands-on help and behind the scenes support, enabling the charity to continue to run appropriately and efficiently.

We are indebted to those who choose to financially support the work of Acts4Sharing.

We appreciate those who give regularly alongside those who surprise us with one-off gifts.

These donations enable us to cover the many costs associated with renting a building,



running a van, paying one part-time staff member, and supplying the volunteer team with tea and biscuits 😊.

They also enable us to occasionally purchase items such as mattress protectors, and sometimes cover the cost of refurbishing washing machines.

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## Hope HQ and garden

Throughout this year, we have managed to work out of Hope HQ without the need to seek any extra space; this has, at times, required furniture to be pre-loaded into the van ready for the next day's deliveries to provide enough space for incoming donations. We have become masters of 'Tetris' to enable everything to fit in. There have been many times when the words, "it'll be ok, it'll work out, it always does" have been uttered, as we continue to trust God for every need that we have, including the right amount of space!

The Hope HQ team were particularly thankful when a dishwasher was donated and plumbed in for us by a local builder, as they are constantly washing incoming donations ready for being sent out.

The store continues to fill up and empty out on a regular basis as the request for help continues to increase. There are many days when team members enjoy lunch together before heading back out to enable the demand to be met.

We constantly have a steady supply of table lamps, so one of our trustees very cleverly built bespoke shelving to give safer space to store them, and to make them viewable for clients to choose from.

We were receiving less requests for clothing, particularly for children, so we have reduced the amount of clothing in stock. This has enabled us to repurpose the space, giving us room to store the incoming linen and kitchen items whilst they are waiting to be checked and put away.

The garden is mostly enjoyed by the team at coffee and lunch breaks, as well as being a quiet oasis for prayer times. There have been less clients making use of the space this year, but hopefully that will change as it is such a special place to be.

In August, with permission to spread into our neighbour's garden, the team enjoyed a social time together with a barbecue lunch. The weather was kind to us and everyone had an enjoyable time.

We had complete breaks in October and at Christmas when Hope HQ was closed to enable us all to have a much-needed rest. We have also held team breakfast and gone bowling together to enable team building.

The team have undertaken in-house safeguarding training using a tailored, conversational approach to ensure that we all stay safe, and keep our eyes open to any issues we see whilst out in the community,

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## Transport



Other than one unanticipated cost due to problems with the diesel particulate filter the van has continued to serve us well. Passed the MOT first time.

The van has continued to be used every weekday, with deliveries and collections often being done in two shifts, including going out

after the Foodbank runs on Mondays and Wednesdays.

The Christmas morning offering at Poulner Baptist Chapel raised over £20,000 for Acts4Sharing!!! We are now looking to purchase a second van to enable the increase in demand to be met more easily. Thank you to all who donated to this.

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## Local work

During this year, once again, new team members have joined us; two drivers; two van helpers and three to help mostly at Hope HQ. One of these was a client who wanted to help whilst the others were all introduced to us by word-of-mouth. Currently our team is well over 30 strong including trustees, and more if you include those who help behind the scenes repairing furniture and altering bedding in their own homes.

As the work continues to increase, it is wonderful to also have this increase in team to enable the increase in demand to be met without making volunteering an onerous task.

Many of the items we receive are still coming in from part house clearances; doing this is often a great help and source of comfort to the families as they know that their relative's belongings will be making life easier for someone else. Now that we have an updated 'phone we can do

the initial viewings using WhatsApp video calls, saving precious time for our administrator as she does not need to leave the office.

We also continue to have several people who bring their own donations to Hope HQ, inclusive of smaller items of furniture, so not all our donors are logged. We have received donations of items from at least 314 locations which is an increase of 90 compared to last year.

Searching the internet for local charities is still playing a big part in people finding us as well as a few locating us on Facebook. However, the majority of donors find us by personal recommendation.

## Over 314 donors

As the year advanced, we were, once again, aware that we were assisting more people with the household items that they would have struggled to afford. We helped an additional 82 people during the year, which amounts to a further 12% increase. Whilst numbers are important, we need to remember that they represent individuals of every age and background, who without our help may have been left without the basics which most of us take for granted.

## 773 people helped

We aim to show respect, and value to each person that we meet, whether that is out in the community or at Hope HQ. We aim to offer encouragement and love to everyone we serve. For many this is a fresh start following a time of homelessness – this year of the 404 (almost 20% more than last year) homes we visited 120 cited homelessness as the reason for needing help. Over 100 homes were struggling due to poor health; and sadly over 30 homes were helped due to fleeing domestic violence.

## 404 homes

As always, we are privileged to hear the stories behind the difficult situations that are cited on the referral forms. As well as local people we helped others from Ukraine, Russia, Poland, India, Romania, Spain,

Hungary, Belgium, and Asia, some of whom were seeking asylum and a fresh start. We have helped people of all ages, from 'not born yet' up to 102 years old.

People have told us:

"I was very cold, but your help made a very good difference"; "You made it easier to live, the items were a perfect size"; "I was a bit down and depressed, you made a massive difference"; "I was in a rubbish place, but your help was fantastic and I'm a lot happier"; "I was really low, pants! Depressed, your help made loads of difference and I am in a positive place"; "I was a bit down, but you made me realise that people still care about me"; "I was depressed, but you were very helpful and my mental health has improved".

We continue to work closely with our ever-growing team of referral partners who represent all the councils we serve, as well as many NHS staff, churches, schools, Foodbanks, citizens advice centres, Christians against poverty and other charities. They provide the link between us and those we help, many of whom would otherwise 'slip through the net' and continue struggling.

As anticipated, along with the increase in people helped, there has been an increase of at least 5 tonnes of outgoing items, with this year seeing us deliver at least 30 tonnes.

## 30 tonnes

This included 23 fridge freezers, 12 washing machines, 36 microwaves, 54 dining tables and 169 chairs, 131 sofas/armchairs, 85 chests of drawers and 163 beds of varying sizes. The items which we have seen the biggest rise in are the additional 36 beds compared to last year and the additional 14 dining tables.

We also gave away 329 bedding sets, 397 towels, 164 pairs of curtains and 143 cushions! We have seen the biggest rise in the curtains with an additional 38 pairs being given out, along with an additional 28 sets of bedding and 21 towels.

In addition to the items already mentioned, as we collect in and deliver 'everything from a teaspoon to a double bed', there are many other smaller, but just as important things that have passed through

Acts4Sharing on their way out to people in need, including 83 dining sets and 95 cooking sets, 92 lamps, 52 kettles and 42 toasters.

We choose not to provide cookers, other than table top ones, as most cannot afford to have them installed by a professional; so, we have also given out many slow cookers, health grills and air fryers.

The Blessings Box continues to provide those extra items to make a house a home, such as pictures, ornaments, vases, and clocks. Many clients have chosen their own items when they have visited Hope HQ, whilst others chat through on the phone the type of things they would like.

We are fast heading towards our tenth anniversary, which we look forward to celebrating next year. It continues to be a mixed blessing that we are here... it feels crazy that we are still needed, and that the needs of those struggling are continuing to increase, knowing that without us many would be sleeping and sitting on the floor, often in the cold and without any means of cooking and eating. But it remains a privilege to be able to 'Share God's love in practical ways', reaching out to those who need encouragement,

A Bible is still offered to each person we help. Most of the time they are accepted with open arms, and sometimes we are asked to provide one in their first language. Also, at Christmas we were able to offer additional devotional booklets tying in with the birth of Christ.

We have a few boxfuls of Bibles remaining and now know that we can access more before they run out.

We also offer prayer to those we meet; this is now made easier as we always ensure that one of the team out on the van is happy to do this. More often than not, prayer is gladly accepted.

Each week one of our team members takes time to make a follow up phone call, checking to see how our clients are, finding out if they need additional help and offering further prayer should they wish to accept it.

We also continue to be aware of how much our referral partners appreciate all that we do to support their clients. Our partnership with them is highly valued.

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## Funding

All collections and deliveries are made free of charge; everything we provide is given freely. Along with the offer of a Bible and prayer, this continues to make us a unique organisation across the area we serve.

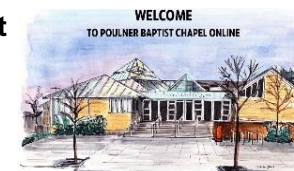
We are totally grateful to every individual, church and organisation who choose to financially provide for this ministry, whether that is on a regular basis or as a one-off gift. Without their support we would not be able to continue.

During this past year we received unexpected gifts which amounted to over £11,000 and an additional support from one church when we had the unforeseen bill on the van.

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## Communication and collaboration

We continue to work closely with **Poulner Baptist Chapel** where many of our volunteers and some of our trustees are members. The mission group continue to provide regular support both in prayer and finance,



We occasionally liaise with the Wardrobe Foundation to receive ladies clothing to pass onto clients when we do not have enough of the right size in stock.

On the other hand, when we had an overwhelming number of coats, we were able to take them to Ringwood library as they were making them available to anyone who needed one (or wanted to swap one).

When we need items for babies, we are now able to link in with Lover baby bank who do their best to provide the items that are needed.



There are occasions when we receive more of a particular item than we need for our clients; we then collaborate with New Forest For Ukraine by passing on much needed items which they send onwards to those still being affected by the war.



The local Facebook group aimed at **Friendship, Kindness and Recycling** has continued to network with us in both provision of items needed as well as Acts4Sharing providing some smaller items to those in need.

In June we were able to join a meeting, arranged by Foodbank, of local NHS staff, mostly social prescribers; this has opened up new opportunities for referrals within our community.



We continue to liaise with **Foodbank**, providing transport for them at least twice a week. We also refer clients to each other as necessary.

Towards the end of 2023 we were delighted to give a couple of young adults the opportunity to volunteer with us for a few weeks, supported by their mentor from MENCAP. They seemed to enjoy their time with us and have been able to add the experience to their CVs.

We linked in with some of the local schools when we downsized our clothing bank, transferring uniform and coats to their individual stocks.

We also continue to liaise with **HOPE** who help older people in the New Forest, passing on the less essential items we receive which they can sell in their shops. In return they have provided us with useful items such as bedding, curtains and crockery.

In December, we worked with **Forestry England** who provided real trees and decorations to some of our clients; it made a huge, happy difference to several families.



We have been members of **Communities First Wessex** since 2014 and are grateful to them for ongoing support and resources.

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## Trustees and advisor

As mentioned last year, we have now added a new trustee to our team. Judy is a very welcome addition and brings practical as well as experiential wisdom.

Most of the trustees have continued to be involved in a hands-on way as and when they are able, as well as supporting from behind the scenes.

We are all thankful to our advisor who keeps us up to date with any changes in regulations for charities.

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## Looking forward

As aforementioned, we are now in the wonderful position of being able to seek out and purchase a second van to help us to keep up with the increase in needs.

We hope to continue to encourage more people to join the volunteer team to help us to spread the load.

In December, we arranged for several local charities and groups to visit the, now empty, Ringwood brewery and then applied to Carlsberg Marstons to consider gifting the site to the town of Ringwood. We trust that if this 'nudge' is what God has in mind that it will eventually become a community hub for the town. All we can say at this point is, "watch this space!"

As we say at the end of every year ...

We look forward to being able to continue to:

- give people the dignity of choosing their own items;
- show people God's love as we share time and skills with them;
- let people know that they are valued as we take time to listen to them.

The financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2024 are available on request to [office@acts4sharing.org](mailto:office@acts4sharing.org)



## **Financial Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2024**

### **Basic Information**

Acts 4 Sharing was registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 28 July 2014 (registration number 1158033).

The Trustees are:

Bev Whalen  
Judy Thomas  
Keith Melrose  
Paul Budgen

Operating Office  
and Registered Office

Hope HQ, 29 Parkside, Ringwood BH24 3SG

Telephone:

07810005763

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## Statement of Financial Activities

### Acts 4 Sharing

#### Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ending 31 March 2024

2022/3 £		Notes	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
<b>Income:</b>					
18,425	Gifts from individuals	1	11,564	200	11,764
6,535	Gifts from churches	2	7,659	21,450	29,109
1,892	Gift Aid recovered	3	1,837	0	1,837
3,000	Grants etc	4	11,705	0	11,705
1,700	Other contributions / donations		475	0	475
<b>31,552</b>	<b>Total income:</b>		<b>33,240</b>	<b>21,650</b>	<b>54,890</b>
<b>Expenditure:</b>					
20,420	Employee costs	5	13,509	5,063	18,572
5,229	Van - running costs and depreciation	6	5,056	1,460	6,516
7,599	Hope HQ expenses	7	7,525	0	7,525
2,228	Admin, insurances and other costs	8	2,749	0	2,749
<b>35,476</b>	<b>Total expenditure:</b>		<b>28,839</b>	<b>6,523</b>	<b>35,362</b>
<b>(3,924)</b>	<b>Surplus / (deficit)</b>		<b>4,401</b>	<b>15,127</b>	<b>19,528</b>
49,280	Balance brought forward:		23,696	21,660	45,356
<b>45,356</b>	<b>Balance in hand at end of year:</b>	9 and 10	<b>28,097</b>	<b>36,787</b>	<b>64,884</b>

### Acts 4 Sharing

#### Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

As at 31 March 2023 (£)		Notes	£
1,260	Assets: Van	11	0
44,096	Balances at Bank	12	64,884
<b>45,356</b>			<b>64,884</b>
0	Current liabilities - Creditors		0
<b>45,356</b>	<b>Net Assets and Liabilities</b>		<b>64,884</b>
23,696	Reserves: Unrestricted	9	28,097
21,660	Restricted	10	36,787
<b>45,356</b>			<b>64,884</b>

The notes are on the next page.

## Disclosures to the above accounts:

- 1 A number of these gifts are regular monthly donations - the remainder being one-off gifts.
- 2 The gift of £21,450 was from Poulner Baptist Chapel's Christmas 2023 offering and is earmarked for an additional van.
- 3 Gift Aid is recovered from qualifying gifts and includes £515 under the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme
- 4 In 2022/23 this grant was from New Forest District Council and was for Hope HQ expenses. In 2023/24, £10,000 was given from the Vernham Hall Gospel Hall Trust as part of the proceeds from the sale of its former premises.
- 5 There is one part time employee. The £5,063 relates to specific gifts for pay and pensions given in previous years.

- 6 Van running costs are as follows:

	<u>2022/23 (£)</u>	<u>2023/24 (£)</u>
Insurances	1,547	1,287
Road Fund Licence	298	323
Servicing / repairs / MOT etc	477	2,689
Fuel	2,088	2,777
Contribution from Foodbank	(1,701)	(1,820)
Depreciation (see note 11 below)	2,520	1,260
	<u>5,229</u>	<u>6,516</u>

- 7 Expenses were as follows:

	<u>2022/23 (£)</u>	<u>2023/24 (£)</u>
Rent	6,000	6,000
Energy, water etc	1,355	1,380
Other costs	244	145
	<u>7,599</u>	<u>7,525</u>

- 8 Included here is the cost of liability etc insurance at £937 (£1,005 in 2022/23).
- 9 The balance on the Unrestricted element of the account can be used for anything considered appropriate by the Trustees and in keeping with the Charity's objects.
- 10 The balances on the Restricted Fund are as follows:

	<u>2022/23 (£)</u>	<u>2023/24 (£)</u>
Van (see note 11)	19,630	21,450
Pay and Pensions (see note 1)	20,400	15,337
	<u>40,030</u>	<u>36,787</u>

- 11 The purchase cost of the van was £12,600. It was depreciated over five years - leaving a book value of nil at 31 March 2024.

- 12 This is made up of:

	<u>2022/23 (£)</u>	<u>2023/24 (£)</u>
Lloyds Bank	46,356	64,884
	<u>46,356</u>	<u>64,884</u>



## Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Charity 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 as at the end of the financial year and of the surplus or deficit of the charity. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to:-

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

The Trustees are also responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with regulations made under the Charities Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are also responsible for the contents of the Trustees' report, and the responsibility of the independent examiner in relation to the Trustees' Report is limited to examining the report and ensuring that, on the face of the report, there are no inconsistencies with the figures disclosed in the financial statements.



Signed on behalf of the Board  
Keith Melrose, Trustee  
21 July 2024

## **Acts 4 Sharing**

### **Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024**

#### **Accounting policies**

The financial statements of the Charity have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and Section 1A of Financial Reporting Standard 102 effective April 2008, as modified by the Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting issued by the Charity Commissioners for England & Wales, under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out in these accounts and as a going concern.

Incoming resources and outgoings are accounted for on an accruals basis.

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. Such funds may be held in order to finance both working capital and capital investment.

There are two restricted funds. These relate to Pay and Pensions (note 5 above and the van (note 6) above. See also note 10 above.

If upon winding up or dissolution of the charity there remain any assets, after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, the assets represented by the accumulated fund shall be transferred to some other charitable body or bodies having similar objects to the charity.

Neither the Trustees nor any persons connected with them have received any remuneration, either in the current year or the prior year

The Disclosures to the Accounts on page 3 should be read alongside these accounting policies.

#### **Reserves policy:**

The Trustees believe that the Charity should hold sufficient balances on its general and other accounts to allow it to continue operating even if there was a significant reduction in the level of giving.

This is the Charity's eighth year of operation in its CIO status, and the Trustees consider there should be a reserve sufficient to cover at least three month's operating costs on expenditure included in the unrestricted element of the accounts. On the basis of current estimates of expenditure in 2024/25, this should be in the order of £18,000 - and the balance at the beginning of the year, at £28,100, is more than adequate.

## **Acts 4 Sharing**

### **Statement of Public Benefit for the year ended 31 March 2024**

The Objects of A4S are as follows:

1. To advance the Christian faith for the benefit of the public in accordance with the basic tenets of historical Biblical Christianity.
2. To prevent and relieve poverty initially in Hampshire and its neighbouring counties by providing: grants, items and services to individuals in need and/or charities, or other organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty.
3. To relieve financial hardship by the recycling and provision of furniture, clothes and other household items.
4. To provide or assist in the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age infirmity or disability, financial hardship or social circumstances with the object of improving their conditions of life.
5. To advance education for persons of any age by providing or assisting in the development of their mental, physical and moral capabilities through leisure time activities and by supporting other charities in England, the UK or abroad.

We consider that Object [1] above passes the “public benefit test” because advancing the Christian religion in our community has a positive impact on the moral and ethical behaviour of those with whom we come in contact. Furthermore, our Christian faith and our relationship with God – as Father, Son and Holy Spirit - gives meaning to our lives and encourages us to live in such a way as to benefit the wider society by being good citizens and following the Bible’s teaching on how we should conduct ourselves in society.

Objects 2 – 5 demonstrate public benefit because A4S:

- provides the basic necessities for those in deprived circumstances who otherwise could not afford to live at the most basic level.
- recycles household goods by redistributing them to those in need thus preventing them going to landfill sites. This has worthwhile environmental benefit.
- benefits those communities by providing better housing and community facilities by the provision of skills, building materials and other resources.
- encourages other organisations with similar objects to work in their own communities so that outside intervention will eventually be reduced.

## Acts 4 Sharing

### Report of the Independent Examiner to the Trustees on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2024

I report on the financial statements of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2024, which are set out in this Financial Report.

#### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner:

The charity's trustees 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(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

#### Basis of independent examiner's report:

My examination was carried out in accordance with the 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 you as 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 next statement.

#### Independent examiner's statement:

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Acthave not been met or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Andrew J Clarke cpfa

The date upon which my opinion is expressed is 1 August 2024.