

# **THE STRINGCREDIBLES**

**Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts  
for the year ended 31 March 2024**

## **Charity information**

### **Trustees**

Sarah Gee (resigned 19 September 2023), Chair (until 19 September 2023)  
Isabel Churcher (appointed 24 July 2023), Chair (from 19 September 2023)  
Louise Braithwaite (appointed 24 July 2023)  
Michele Deeks (appointed 24 July 2023)  
Seb Lovell-Huckle (from 24 July 2023)  
Eluned Mansell  
Philip Mills  
Sally-Ann Sinclair (resigned 25 May 2023)

### **Charity Name**

The Stringcredibles

### **Charity Number**

1158652 (registered in England and Wales as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

### **Bankers**

Co-operative Bank plc, Delf Way, Skelmersdale. WN8 6GH

### **Independent Examiner**

Emma Bunting, MA, FCCA

### **Charity Principal Address**

55 Bunbury Road, Birmingham, B31 2DS

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

The Trustees of the Charity present their Annual Report and Accounts for the 12-month period ended 31 March 2024.

### **Objectives and Activities**

The objects of the Charity are to advance the education of the public in the art of music, in particular, but not exclusively, by facilitating creative learning experiences which allow participants to discover and develop their individual capabilities, skills and potential.

The Trustees have complied with their duty in Section 17(5) of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to guidance published by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

The objects of the charity have been achieved by:

- Enabling children to be active participants in classical music.
- Encouraging young performers to communicate better through their music.
- Sharing and developing dynamic performance practice among professionals.

### **Activities**

2023 - 2024 has been one of the busiest years to date for The Stringcredibles. We:

- continued to deliver our regular suite of performances - Making Music, Feeling Good, Tunes from the Trenches and Stringlebell Rock;

ran our Apprentice programme for yet another year, in partnership with Services for Education Music Service, Birmingham;

- continued our involvement with Wolverhampton Music Service's Elevate programme;
- delivered CPD for teachers at Milton Keynes Music Education Hub;
- used our Pitch Pace Perform methodology to deliver training at the Toho Gakuen Music School in Tokyo, the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and with the Career Accelerator Fellows at the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra; and
- created a brand new show - The Butterfly Lands - with major support from Arts Council England.

### **Stringcredible Apprentices 2023**

With strong support from the Albert and Eugenie Frost Music Trust for the second year running, our Stringcredible Apprentices programme 2023 was a great success. Our Apprentices programme has been running since 2015, and is designed to

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)**

support young musicians and their performance skills. It allows for the development of young string players in inspirational roles, widens the reach of our performance methodologies programme, creates diverse role models in a very diverse city and support the work of an excellent music hub.

In the autumn term, we took on a new cohort of learners in partnership with Birmingham's Music Service at Services for Education (SFE). Throughout the term we worked with 8 young string quartet players and 4 music teachers. The teachers and young musicians came to see The Stringcredibles perform in a primary school, then learned how to perform the show as brand new quartets. The Stringcredibles trained the quartet of teachers, and then mentored the teachers as they trained up the quartets of young musicians.

Our 8 Apprentices were a culturally diverse cohort of male and female string players, selected by Sally Hobbs (Head of Strings at SFE) as being musicians of promise, who would benefit most from the experience. All participants had been taught by SFE teachers at some/all stages, and were part of either Birmingham Schools String Sinfonia or Birmingham Schools Symphony Orchestra. The project helped them to really hone their performance and public speaking skills, and use these to inspire other children to engage with music.

This year we are proud to have reached:

- 8 young strings players 4 music service teachers
- 8 primary schools
- 2,060 primary school children
- 1,000+ additional instrumental learners

The project has had positive impacts on:

- Primary school children and their experience of, and engagement with, music
- Young musicians and their performance skills
- Music teachers and their ability to reach more schools through delivering ensemble performances
- Young Instrumental learners taught by the music teacher quartet
- Music Education Hub Staff, and their strategic approach to Continuing Professional development and widening participation
- Recruitment of new instrumental learners and encouraging schools to increase and extend music provision.

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)**

### **Pitch Pace Perform**

Our trademark Pitch Pace Perform methodology is still very much a driving thread of our work. Designed to connect performers powerfully with their audiences we have delivered training at the Toho Gakuen Music School in Tokyo, the woodwind department of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, with the Career Accelerator Fellows at the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and with teachers at the Milton Keynes Music Education Hub.

### **Wolverhampton Elevate**

We continue to support Wolverhampton Music Service's fast-track progression programme Elevate. This is an ongoing partnership, delivering workshops in performance and ensemble skills for the young people selected for the programme.

### **The Butterfly Lands**

Considerable time this year has been spent developing our newest show for primary schools, The Butterfly Lands, focusing on migration, connected to the Kindness Curriculum. We have partnered with multiple creatives from composers and poets, to visual artists and academic researchers. The various components of the show were commissioned in the autumn term, and after taking part in workshops and rehearsals with Nate Holder we delivered our first pilot performance was at St Matthew's Church of England school in February 2024. We have had 22 performances funded in the first run of the show, across 4 music hubs - Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Walsall. Seven of these performances took place in this financial year. Our creative partners are:

- Lead partner: Saxophonist Nate Holder
- Composers: Dot Inc, Shruthi Rajasekar, Simmy Singh, Victoria Arlidge, Ryan Linham and Bobbie Jane Gardner
- Poet: Casey Bailey
- Illustrator: Rosie Brooks
- Researcher: Jenny Philimore (Professor of Migration and Superdiversity at the University of Birmingham) with support from student researcher Adam Stanley.

Our funding structure of this project is a combination of support from Arts Council England, trusts and foundations, earned income, and generous individual donors.

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)**

The show has been the catalyst for developing new partnerships, including additional Music Education Hubs and the Schools of Sanctuary networks.

### **Schools and partners**

Schools we have visited with all our projects in this period:

- Warwick Prep School, Warwickshire
- Woden Primary School, Wolverhampton
- Christ Church Primary School, Sparkbrook
- St Jude's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham
- St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Birmingham
- Toho Gakuen Music School, Tokyo
- Ark Tindal School, Birmingham
- Kingsland Primary School, Birmingham
- Hollywood Primary School, Birmingham
- Raddlebarn Primary School, Birmingham
- Penns Primary School, Sutton Coldfield
- Story Wood Primary School, Erdington, Birmingham
- Woodhouse Primary School, Quinton, Birmingham
- St Laurence Church Junior School, Northfield
- St Bernard's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham
- St Clare's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham
- Lightwoods Primary School, Sandwell
- Langley Primary School, Sandwell
- Chandos Primary School, Birmingham
- St Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary School, Birmingham

Organisations we have worked with in this period:

- Services for Education Music Service, Birmingham
- Wolverhampton Music Service
- Sandwell Music Education Hub (SIPS)
- Walsall Music Education Hub
- Milton Keynes Music Education Hub
- City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
- Schools of Sanctuary Networks (Birmingham and Wolverhampton)
- University of Birmingham

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)**

Quotes from our participants:

*"This has been an incredible experience for me. It is something I will never forget. This performance has been the most fun I've had performing ever. Thank you."*  
(Young apprentice)

*"Thank you so much for visiting our school. The feedback has been amazing. Children were inspired, enthused and excited by the music they heard."*  
(Primary school teacher)

*"I learned that it is amazing when people play together."*

*"Music is fun"*

*"You can play with your heart."*  
(Primary school children)

*"Working with phenomenal musicians from The Stringcredibles - their support and encouragement increased my own musical and educational confidence."*  
(Music teacher)

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)**

### **Financial Review**

Income for the year was £45,324 (2023: £11,358), and expenditure was £42,216 (2023: £23,603). The resulting surplus of £3,108 (2023: £12,245 deficit), left the charity with closing funds of £23,082 (2023: £19,974). The surplus was due to new projects starting, with expenditure slightly behind income, plus additional donations.

### **Reserves Policy**

The Trustees have set a policy that committed expenditure does not exceed the value of unrestricted funds, and that the unrestricted funds do not exceed 12 months of planned expenditure. The total unrestricted funds at 31 March 2024 amounted to £22,452 (2023: £19,974); the Trustees consider that the reserves do not exceed what is necessary for the Charity to continue as a going concern and plans are in place to apply the unrestricted funds to the charitable purposes within a reasonable timescale. Restricted funds at 31 March 2024 were £630 (2023: £nil).

### **Going Concern**

The Charity's work is delivered in programmes of work based on funding achieved. It does not, therefore, commit expenditure that is not funded, and at the end of the year had reserves to cover committed expenditure. The Trustees believe that the Charity will be able to meet its ongoing commitments for more than 12 months from the signing of the Balance Sheet, and that it is therefore appropriate to continue accounting on a going concern basis.

### **Structure, Governance and Management**

The Charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which was registered with the Charity Commission on 24 September 2014. It is governed by a constitution using the foundation model dated 22 November 2022. The Trustees make strategic decisions and ensure overall control; they delegate day to day management and delivery of this objective to the Stringcredibles' musicians, who are:

- Catherine Arlidge
- Helen Edgar
- Bryony Morrison
- Amy Thomas

The Trustees during the year under review and up to the date the accounts were approved are listed on page 1.



## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)**

The Board recruits new trustees by assessing the skills required and skills of existing trustees, determining a skills gap and advertising for suitable applicants. New trustees are appointed at duly convened meetings of the board of trustees.

This year has seen board recruitment and development for The Stringcredibles. We advertised for new Trustees and received numerous interesting applications. Following a rigorous recruitment process, we appointed four new Trustees: Louise Braithwaite, Isabel Churcher, Michele Deeks and Seb Lovell-Huckle. They all bring a passion for music and professional and personal insights into the world of The Stringcredibles.

Louise is a professional orchestral performer and has significant experience in project management and board experience. She also brings considerable insight into the issues involved in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for cultural organisations.

Isabel brings many years' experience of Boards locally and nationally. Her professional experience is primarily in heritage and most recently in the Museums team at the Arts Council. Her connection to music is through personal and family interests.

Michele is a psychologist who has run her own consultancy business for many years. She brings a wealth of insight and experience in supporting high performing teams, enabling young people to become more resilient as well as enabling her own three children to explore musical opportunities.

Seb is CEO of The English Symphony Orchestra and was Executive Director of Birmingham Contemporary Music Group from 2019 to 2022. He has significant board experience both as a CEO and as a board member. He brings a particular interest in equitable access to performances and participation, and is a keen amateur cellist.

Eluned Mansell and Philip Mills continue to provide essential board support and particularly continuity, with the introduction of four new trustees.

In September, we said a very fond farewell to Sarah Gee, our Chair who had supported us so well over the years, and during the Covid pandemic. Isabel Churcher was appointed the new Chair. With an interest in Charity governance, Isabel has been leading the Board to ensure that our policies and procedures are all up to date and proportionate to our scale of operation. We have approved a regular cycle of governance updates throughout the year to give us a rhythm to our governance work. This also enables The Stringcredibles players and creatives to focus on their programming and funding applications.

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)**

### **Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities**

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the affairs of the charity and of incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

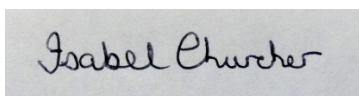
- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that 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 Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the charity's governing document. 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.

### **Declaration**

The Trustees declare that they approved the Trustees' report above on 23 September 2024.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's trustees:



Isabel Churcher  
Chair of Trustees

## **Independent Examiner's Report**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2024 which are set out on pages 12 to 19.

### **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(3) 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;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- 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 Charities 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 the seeking of 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 statement below.

## **Independent Examiner's Report (continued)**

### **Independent Examiner's statement**

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

- which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirement to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act and the regulations made thereunder have not been met;
- to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Emma Bunting, MA, FCCA  
Independent Examiner

Date. 01 October2024

## Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

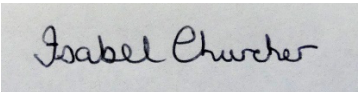
	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2024 Total	2023 Total
INCOME					
Donations & legacies	2	3,713	32,485	36,198	9,558
Charitable activities	3	9,126	-	9,126	1,800
TOTAL INCOME		12,839	32,485	45,324	11,358
EXPENDITURE					
Charitable activities	4	10,361	31,855	42,216	22,103
Governance costs	6	-	-	-	1,500
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		10,361	31,855	42,216	23,603
NET INCOME BEING					
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		2,478	630	3,108	(12,245)
FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD					
FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD		19,974	-	19,974	32,219
FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		22,452	630	23,082	19,974

## Balance Sheet at 31 March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2024 Total	2023 Total
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	7	8,023	-	8,023	4,442
Cash at Bank		14,429	7,305	21,734	17,032
		<u>22,452</u>	<u>7,305</u>	<u>29,757</u>	<u>21,474</u>
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within 1 year					
	8	-	6,675	6,675	1,500
NET CURRENT ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		<u>22,452</u>	<u>630</u>	<u>23,082</u>	<u>19,974</u>
NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		<u>22,452</u>	<u>630</u>	<u>23,082</u>	<u>19,974</u>
FUNDS					
Unrestricted		22,452	-	22,452	19,974
Restricted		-	630	630	-
TOTAL FUNDS	9	<u>22,452</u>	<u>630</u>	<u>23,082</u>	<u>19,974</u>

The notes on pages 14 to 19 form part of these accounts.

These accounts were approved by the Board of Trustees on 23 September 2024 and authorised to be signed by:



Isabel Churcher  
Chair of Trustees

## Accounting Policies

### Note 1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

#### 1.1 Basis of preparation of accounts

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost.

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice.

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn. The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

#### 1.2 Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the Trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist. The Trustees have considered the level of funds and expected income and expenditure for the following 12-month period.

#### 1.3 Incoming Resources

##### ***Recognition of incoming resources***

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when:

- the Charity becomes entitled to the resources,
- it is more likely than not that the Charity will receive the resources, and

## Accounting Policies (continued)

- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

### ***Incoming resources with related expenditure***

Where incoming resources have related expenditure (as with fundraising or contractual income) the incoming resources and related expenditure are reported gross in the SOFA.

### ***Grants and donations***

Grants and donations are only included in the SOFA when the charity has unconditional entitlement to the resources.

### ***Tax reclaims on donations and gifts***

Incoming resources from tax reclaims are included in the SOFA at the same time as the gift to which they relate.

### ***Contractual income and performance related grants***

This is only included in the SOFA once the related goods or services have been delivered.

### ***Volunteer help***

The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the accounts but is described in the Trustees' annual report.

### ***Investment income***

This is included in the accounts when receivable.

## 1.4 Expenditure and liabilities

### ***Liability recognition***

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out funds.

### ***Charitable activities***

These costs relate to the musicians' fees for the provision of concerts, etc..

### ***Governance costs***

These include the costs of the preparation and examination of statutory accounts, the cost of trustee meetings and cost of any legal advice to trustees on governance or constitutional matters.



## **Accounting Policies (continued)**

### ***Grants with performance conditions***

Where the charity gives a grant with conditions for its payment being a specific level of service or output to be provided, such grants are only recognised in the SOFA once the recipient has provided the specified service or output.

### ***Grants payable without performance conditions***

There are only recognised in the accounts when a commitment has been made and there are no conditions to be met relating to the grant which remain in the control of the charity.

### ***Support costs***

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to the activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

## Notes to the Accounts

### Note 2 DONATIONS & LEGACIES

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 Total	2023 Total
Grants	-	32,485	32,485	6,224
Donations	3,227	-	3,227	2,682
Gift Aid	486	-	486	652
Donations & Legacies	3,713	32,485	36,198	9,558

Grants includes £26,035 from Arts Council England.

### Note 3 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 Total	2023 Total
Musical performances	9,126	-	9,126	1,800
Charitable activities	9,126	-	9,126	1,800

### Note 4 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 Total	2023 Total
Musician fees & expenses	6,955	19,125	26,080	14,384
Commissions	-	8,000	8,000	-
Programme materials	-	655	655	4,466
Project management	3,079	4,066	7,145	2,591
Marketing	25	-	25	429
Admin & sundry expenses	302	9	311	233
Charitable activities	10,361	31,855	42,216	22,103

### Note 5 STAFF COSTS

There were no employees during the year (2023: no employees).

### Note 6 GOVERNANCE COSTS

There have been no governance costs during the year (2023: £1,500 Independent Examiner fees).

## Notes to the Accounts (continued)

### Note 7 DEBTORS - amounts falling due within one year

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 Total
Trade debtors	3,095	-	3,095
Gift Aid	4,928	-	4,928
Debtors	<u>8,023</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8,023</u>

### Note 8 Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 Total	2023 Total
Accruals	-	6,675	6,675	1,500
Creditors < 1 year	<u>-</u>	<u>6,675</u>	<u>6,675</u>	<u>1,500</u>

### Note 9 FUNDS

	2023 brought forward	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	2024 carried forward
Unrestricted	19,974	12,839	(10,361)	-	22,452
Restricted					
Migrations	-	26,035	(25,624)	-	411
Apprentices	-	6,450	(6,231)	-	219
	<u>-</u>	<u>32,485</u>	<u>(31,855)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>630</u>
	<u>19,974</u>	<u>45,324</u>	<u>(42,216)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>23,082</u>

Migrations is a programme to deliver experience of live music to primary school children, that also addresses the issues of migration, diversity and inclusion. This is funded by Arts Council England.

Apprentices is a programme designed to support young musicians and their performance skills.

**Notes to the Accounts (continued)**

	2022 brought forward	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	2023 carried forward
Unrestricted	26,974	5,134	(12,134)	-	19,974
Restricted					
Apprentices (Albert & Eugenie Frost Music Trust)	-	4,750	(4,750)	-	-
Power Up (Arts Council England)	5,245	1,474	(6,719)	-	-
	5,245	6,224	(11,469)	-	-
	32,219	11,358	(23,603)	-	19,974

Apprentices is a programme designed to support young musicians and their performance skills.

Power Up includes a grant from Arts Council England of £13,267. This programme builds on the Pitch, Pace, Perform programme by training teachers in four music hubs.

**Note 10 RELATED PARTIES**

One trustee received a gift on retiring (Sarah Gee, £100) (2023: £nil); no trustee received any remuneration in the year (2023: £nil). One trustee was paid expenses in the year (Isabel Churcher £110), (2023: nil).

There were no other related party transactions (2023: £nil).