

SOCIAL LINK

England & Wales · Charity number 1158743

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2014-10-01

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

Contact

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Activities

Objects: 1) TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES AND CARERS THROUGH THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT AND PRACTICAL ADVICE. 2) TO PROVIDE OR ASSIST IN THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIAL WELFARE FOR RECREATION OR OTHER LEISURE TIME OCCUPATION OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEED OF SUCH FACILITIES BY REASON OF THEIR LEARNING DISABILITY WITH THE OBJECT OF IMPROVING THEIR CONDITIONS OF LIFE."LEARNING DISABILITY" MEANS ANY DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY OF THE MIND AND ANY ASSOCIATED CONDITION HOWSOEVER CAUSED AND WHETHER MILD, MODERATE OR SEVERE.

Activities: The charity provides a safe, supported and stimulating environment for adults with learning disabilities to work and grow together and as individuals, thereby helping to build confidence and a sense of self worth, developing independence and realise potential. Social Link helps over 160 adults through its day sessions, drop-ins and evening clubs.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** Disability
- **Who:** People With Disabilities

Geography

- Buckinghamshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£536,127	£510,219	£147,727	8
2024-03-31	£449,373	£482,771	-	-
2023-03-31	£437,358	£450,341	-	-
2022-03-31	£369,938	£387,899	-	-
2021-03-31	£374,524	£333,002	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Carole Harvey		2018-10-31
Christopher Thorn		2024-07-25
Claire Heloise Wheeler		2022-11-23
GLYNIS WISEMAN		2014-08-14
JANET SHUTTLEWOOD		2014-08-14
John Craig Kaye		2025-03-12
LINDA LAURANCE		2026-02-03
Sarah-Louise Fox		2024-09-11

SOCIAL LINK

England & Wales - Charity number 1158743

Accounts



**Trustees' Report and
Financial Statements
for the year ending
31st March 2025**

turning disabilities into **abilities**

Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1158743

Constitution

Social Link was formed on 14th August 2014 and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 1st October 2014 with the Charity Commission. Its purpose is to provide support, practical advice, and social and recreational facilities for adults with learning disabilities in Buckinghamshire.

A revised Constitution, featuring provisions for proxy voting and virtual meetings, was approved by the Board and voting members in July 2021. No further changes have been made to the Constitution since that date.

An introduction from Wendy Dunn, CEO

I am delighted to present you with our 2024/2025 Annual Report. This report provides an overview of the Charity's activities over the past year, alongside a summary and explanation of our current financial position.

In this report:

- **Beneficiaries** refers to those who attend our day and evening projects.
- **Members** refers to you—our supporters—who attend the AGM.
- **The Team** refers to those who work in support of our Beneficiaries.

Never a charity to stand still, this year has seen the further growth of Social Link's provisions, to ensure the continued development of its Beneficiaries, essential for their well-being, social inclusion, confidence and economic participation.

Provisions included:

- The grand opening of our inspirational OpportuniTEA Café – a local community café giving adults with learning disabilities the chance to gain real life work experience and providing a stepping stone to sustainable employment.
- The redevelopment of our gardening service – another offering providing authentic work experience.
- The building of the foundation blocks for our much-needed transitional age service.
- A continued programme of creative new learning and social opportunities within our evening clubs and day projects leading to a healthy increase of Beneficiaries accessing our services.

I am also delighted to report that the year ended in a positive position financially and the Charity, Beneficiaries and Team continue to flourish.

A statement from Claire Wheeler, Chair of the Social Link Board

This is my first year as Chair of the Social Link Board, and it has been both a privilege and honour to serve. As a Board, we are delighted with the continued expansion and development of the Charity under Wendy's inspirational leadership. She is supported by a wonderful leadership Team, including Victoria, and the two Co-ordinators, Jacqui and Hannah, alongside the wider Team who

deliver energetic and engaging sessions for our Beneficiaries. Their collective passion, warmth and care shines through and we thank them for their tremendous efforts this year.

In the Spring, we reviewed our activity against our strategic plan and were very pleased with the targeted progress made across several areas, all of which are detailed in this report. This progress is the result of collaboration and creative thinking among our Beneficiaries, Team, and the Board.

Our Strategic Priorities:

- Establishment of OpportuniTEA Café
- Development of the Gardening Crew
- Increasing the profile of Social Link
- Extending our partnerships
- Establishment of a post-16 transitional service
- Ensuring the future sustainability of Social Link.

These priorities are underpinned by the **four pillars of Social Link**:



The achievements to date against these strategic priorities will be covered in more detail within this document.

Governance and Board Membership

The Social Link Board of Trustees is responsible for the governance of the Charity. This includes ensuring compliance with the constitution and charity law, setting long-term strategy, and holding the CEO and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) accountable for the Charity's performance including; Beneficiary experience, safeguarding, health and safety, financial management, risk identification and legal compliance.

Current Board Members:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| • Claire Wheeler (Chair) | • Carole Harvey |
| • Sarah Fox (Vice-Chair, Coopted) | • Glynis Wiseman |
| • Chris Thorn (Treasurer, Coopted) | • Janet Shuttlewood |
| • Craig Kaye (Coopted) | |

New Board Members (Coopted):

We are delighted to welcome three new Trustees to the Board who bring invaluable business acumen and lived experience of learning disabilities. All three have been co-opted and actively involved over the past 6 to 12 months, already making valuable contributions to the Charity.

- **Chris Thorn** – An experienced CFO at Suez, a recent sponsor of the Charity.
- **Sarah Fox** – A project manager who organised a charity ball in honour of her brother Michael (who had Down's Syndrome), which raised funds to launch the OpportuniTEA Café.
- **Craig Kaye** – A leadership development expert and parent of a daughter with Down's Syndrome.

We also extend heartfelt thanks to Steve Birch, who stepped down this year. Steve was instrumental in shaping the original café business plan and not forgetting his fabulous fundraising 100-mile bike ride!

Team Engagement

In September 2024, a MSc Occupational Psychology student from the University of Hertfordshire conducted a comprehensive staff engagement survey through questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews. The purpose was to understand the Charity from the point of view of the Team and looks to ways to improve their working lives and the service they deliver to Beneficiaries.

Key Highlights:

- The Team reported a strong sense of belonging and purpose in their work.
- The organisational culture was described as supportive, nurturing, and positive, with no areas for improvement in culture identified.



Areas for Development:

- Increased trustee and leadership visibility at all locations.
- Improved communication around funding, goals, and strategy.
- Launch of a Team newsletter.
- Career development opportunities and structured training highlighted.

Team Day

Following the feedback from the survey in March 2025, an interactive and successful Team Day was hosted, led by Wendy, Victoria and Claire. The event focused on sharing best practices, gathering input on fundraising, and presenting the engagement survey findings and actions.

Key actions shared:

- Co-ordinated trustee visits to all service locations
- Overview of sources of income and expenditure
- Overview of strategic aims and 2025+ goals
- A collaborative fundraising ideas session
- Launch of a new staff competency framework and career pathways
- Introduction of new training opportunities.

Our Team participated in workshops on a variety of topics with a view to finding new and fully inclusive ways to deliver activities, make best use of our resources and expertise, also to ensure that Beneficiaries continue to be at the heart of everything. There have been a whole host of ideas on Beneficiary-lead fundraising events for the year ahead too and we look forward to sharing details of those with you next year!

Implementation of the 2024/2025 Strategic Plan to date

(i) Establishment of OpportuniTEA Café

The creation of a café has long been talked about as we have so many Beneficiaries who are capable of working but haven't had the opportunity to gain work experience. In September, that aspiration became a reality as OpportuniTEA Café opened its doors to the public for the very first time at Holmer Green Sports Association (HGSA). After months of preparation and a volunteer day utilising the help of employees from MBNL Ltd (arranged by our very own trustee Sarah Fox) the café space at HGSA was painted, cleaned, prepped and beautified. Many hands made light work, and we would like to thank each volunteer for their time and energy. Special thanks must also be extended to Rob, Karen and the Gardening Crew for making enormous planters for growing herbs, produce and scented flowers for our customers to enjoy while dining on the deck.



OpportuniTEA Café has successfully been operating as a fully functioning café two days a week, building up a local and considerate customer base from Holmer Green and the surrounding villages. The homemade treats and meals as well as the flavoursome barista coffee has been a great attraction for many, but it is the desire to support a charitable enterprise that has built the loyalty.

**"It was great
I give my bacon sarnie
15 out of 10"**
Nathan

**"I loved it, it was yummy,
and I saw my friend
Heather working."**
Sobia

We have had the great pleasure of welcoming our first trainees Heather and Tracy. They have impressed us with their desire to learn and sunny engagement with customers. Already we have more trainees lined up and we hope the café will be the launch pad for their employment journey. Focusing on the Social Link ethos that everybody possesses skills, talents and aspirations, the café is a supportive environment for helping our trainees attain experience and qualifications towards their future employment goals. Emma, our Placement Coach has spent time getting to know our trainees with a view to developing a personalised but comprehensive training programme. Over the next year we aim to extend opening days, increase the number of trainees and continue to delight our customers.

We have some unsung heroes at the café, and those are our army of volunteers who assist Jacqui Fowler and the staff. On a weekly basis they give their time and have nurtured our trainees as well as helping to forge important community links. Thank you to Jackie, Julia, Doreen, Monique, Amanda, Gill, Kate, Sarah, Penny and HGSA's groundsman Neil.

Finally, we would like to highlight the support of Holmer Green Sports Association management and committee who have provided us with a fantastic venue in which to launch our café, and who continue to be patient, understanding and accommodating.

(ii) Development of the Gardening Crew

The gardening service has continued to go from strength to strength. Our gardeners were involved in all aspects of creating the OpportuniTEA Café planters from the concept design to the building, painting and choice of plants, herbs and vegetables to be grown. We would like to thank Huws Gray in Hughenden for their donation of wood and raw materials to build the planters, Briants for the tonne of topsoil they donated, and Amersham Dec for the free paint. Not only did these donations enable the Gardening Crew to feel that they were instrumental in the development of the café project but also that they created a relaxing sensory explosion of colour and fabulous smells for visitors to delight in for years to come.



The Gardening Crew continued throughout the year with their regular contracts with Swarthmore Care Home in Gerrards Cross - an environment the Crew love to frequent and where they get to see first-hand their hard work coming to fruition, Hill House Farm and Stables, Sladmore Farm and Holmer Green Football Club. These fabulous opportunities have assisted in the promotion of a more inclusive and equitable community.

In September the Gardening Crew were joined for the second year in a row by John Scanlon the Managing Director of Suez Recycling and Recovery UK. He managed to escape his office and join our guys in the fresh air, where he was put to work, joining the gang in tidying the grounds of the Holmer Green Sports Association. Thank you, John!

We would like to thank Sally Warminger, Angela Aldessi, Jim Smith, and Lynn O'Regan for investing in our gardening service and for continuing to give our Beneficiaries the opportunity to utilise their skills in such inspiring environments. Our appreciation also goes to our fabulous gardening leadership Team Rob and Karen alongside their incredible gardeners, Shaun, Kevin, Karla, Ryan and Ali, without whom this service wouldn't be possible.

(iii) Increasing the profile of Social Link

We were pleased to launch the new Social Link website at www.sociallinkcharity.org.uk this year. The site was carefully designed to showcase each of the Social Link services and to make navigation to essential information easier. This has had the benefit of boosting our online presence and beneficiary referrals.

Community events have been a key but informal way to promote our Charity within the communities in which we operate, including Music on the Common and Christmas on the Common in Holmer Green. We have also been regular attendees at Buckinghamshire Council provider events keeping Social Link at the forefront for Adult Social Care Commissioners and Management.

(iv) Extending and building our partnerships

During the last year partnership working has continued to be a real focus across all our services.

Jigsaw Theatre Company

The Aylesbury evening club Beneficiaries took part in a singing and dancing collaboration with the theatre company Jigsaw where they, along with six other groups, performed on stage at the Limelight Theatre in Aylesbury. Our Beneficiaries relished the opportunity to learn a dance routine, that they then went on stage to perform in front of a live audience for an afternoon showcase of music, dance and theatre. This was talked about for months after amongst the Beneficiaries and Team, the enjoyment and pleasure gained radiating in abundance.

Thames Valley Police – Cyber Crime Team

The Aylesbury day project welcomed Mark Godsland, the Cyber Crime lead for Thames Valley Police. Mark worked with the Beneficiaries to educate them on how to be safe online, how to add extra security and how to identify scams. These are current issues that our Beneficiaries face daily, so we will aim to have Mark at regular intervals to keep the knowledge learned fresh in their minds.



Red Kite Community Housing

Our relationship with Red Kite Community Housing has continued to flourish with two separate visits to their Loudwater office for our Beneficiaries to find out more about the work they do and getting hands-on with a list of tasks that the Red Kite Team had devised. The reciprocal arrangement was a group of Red Kite volunteers got their walking boots on to accompany our day project Beneficiaries on a local practice hike for their Snowdon Challenge.

NHS Panel

Two of our Beneficiaries, Tony and Anthony, have continued with their invaluable input into the NHS panel, meeting regularly online. They have worked on approving easy-to-read documents for patients which will make all the difference to supporting members of the public with additional needs to understand any medical information being given to them. Tony and Anthony, through this panel, organised a visit from an ambulance crew to Green Street to try and break down some of the fears for adults with learning disabilities in emergency situations. They were fabulous hosts and even got the ambulance crew teaching our Beneficiaries about CPR. Such a fantastic opportunity to increase awareness for both parties on communication and breaking down barriers. Well done Tony and Anthony!

Easy Read

This year we witnessed one of our Beneficiaries, Stefan, receive a well-earned certificate for his successful completion of his two-year journey in learning to read. Stefan was partnered up with a wonderful Easy Read volunteer called Ian, who worked tirelessly to support Stefan with his weekly reading sessions within our day project. They formed a close bond, a partnership of mutual respect, encouragement and determination to succeed. Two years on and to celebrate Stefan's incredible achievement, Councillor Mimi Harker came in with the head of Easy Read and the wonderful Ian to show their support and affirmation. Stefan gave a heartwarming speech about how proud he was of himself for all his hard work and commitment and thanked Ian for his support, calling him 'a helpful friend'. All of Stefan's peers watched him accept his certificate and took part in the celebration - this has now sparked new interest in the Easy Read programme as three more Beneficiaries requested a desire to learn to read too.

National Autistic Society (South Bucks Branch) & South Bucks Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) Support Group

Our operations in the café have enabled us to make important contacts within these organisations. These individuals are knowledgeable and have been keen supporters of the café by hosting special events for their groups. Having these contacts will better enable us to signpost Beneficiaries and their families in future to appropriate help and support.

Holmer Green Sports Association

Holmer Green Sports Association have played a massive role in helping us to get the OpportuniTEA Café successfully off the ground. They have provided us with a clean and safe venue with the added benefit of a brand-new kitchen. The HGSA Committee have welcomed us and share our aim of creating a community hub. We look forward to developing this partnership further.

Holmer Green Village Society

OpportuniTEA Café has been embraced by the local community, and this is in part due to the promotion and events held by Holmer Green Village Society. They have helped to spread the word via their Facebook page, local newspaper and providing us with stalls at events.

(v) Establishment of a post-16 transitional service

Great efforts have been made to build relationships with local specialist schools with a view to developing a transitional service for those young people leaving education. Transitional careers fairs at Stoney Dean School, Aylesbury Gatehouse and Alfriston School were well attended with many students and young adults seeking information on avenues available to them. Employment based



training was a draw for many and has given us the insight to create a future service based on the foundations already created in the café and Gardening Crew.

Planning has begun to provide trial days within our Gardening Crew and café for individuals leaving fulltime education. We hope this will give them a genuine flavour of work-based training and enable them to make an informed choice regarding their next steps.

(vi) Ensuring the future sustainability of Social Link

Each new development, like those described already, and networking opportunity has brought value, insight and learning. All of which undoubtedly contribute to the future sustainability of Social Link in both the long and short term. We are also in conversation with Buckinghamshire Council about extending our lease at Green Street and we continue to seek new opportunities to develop and grow our service in line with our strategic aims.

Overview of Social Link services and activities in 2024/2025

a) Day projects and evening clubs

**"I like Social Link because
I've made friends. The
staff are brilliant."**

Elliot

**"They provide good
activities. I call it my
happy place."**

Caroline

Both the High Wycombe and Aylesbury day projects and evening clubs continue to flourish with a diverse programme of activities created by the Team to ensure all Beneficiaries are given every opportunity to grow and develop with their peers in a safe and supportive environment. Social Link prides itself on pushing against boundaries, creating opportunities, giving individuals the space to grow their self-esteem and confidence and to acquire knowledge and skills to support their personal development, including being safe and making informed choices through adulthood.

Self-learning and development opportunities have included:

- Understanding our emotions
- Understanding the effects of our behaviours on others
- Developing positive relationships
- Keeping mentally and physically active
- Keeping safe online
- Responding to difficult situations
- Learning to love oneself and supporting those around you
- Accepting compliments and recognising achievements
- Meditation – breathing exercises and calming techniques
- Body awareness
- Relaxation techniques and exercises
- Breathwork

Alongside these, Beneficiaries have been able to choose to participate in an array of other learning and development activities:

- Numeracy and literacy through cooking
- Understanding recycling
- Joining the library
- Interactive music with Paul
- Fire Safety
- Poetry writing
- Understanding personal finances, including understanding bank statements
- Healthy and easy-to-repeat cooking sessions
- Independent travel training
- Communication through drama
- The world around us and its history
- Experimenting – learning through science

- Personal safety in the community
- Expression through art and dance
- Work based skills
- Keeping active – walking in nature
- Swimming
- Independence skills
- Literacy development in the newsletter sessions
- Sports competitions between different Social Link services
- Going to the pub!

“I like coming every week because it makes me happy.”

Taira

“I like coming to Social Link to see my friend. I like doing music with Paul and cooking.”

Claire P

The Social Link Team from across all our services strive constantly to empower our Beneficiaries and this they achieve by getting to know individuals and their capabilities as well as providing reassurance and encouragement. The Team not only support our Beneficiaries with sessions, but they also enable our Beneficiaries to take some responsibility over day-to-day activities. Beneficiaries take it in turns to run the afternoon meetings, take the daily register, carrying out office tasks, getting the opportunity to take ownership of some of the charities activities.



We would like to welcome Steph back from maternity leave, after the birth of her beautiful little boy, Lenny. A special mention to Paul, our fabulous music man, whose sessions are filled to the brim with Beneficiaries – often booking up in weeks ahead!

We sadly said goodbye to Hannah Ash in December as her career took her in a new direction. Hannah has returned to studying and is working towards a formal qualification as a Speech and Language Therapist, something that we know she will be amazing at. Hannah will be greatly missed, however we know it's not really goodbye as she will be visiting the evening club in the holidays.

“...dedicated and very caring people and this makes Karen so happy when she comes to Social Link.”

Mrs L, parent

This year Christmas was made extra special with the first ever Social Link nativity. The cast was comprised of unflappable members of our Team and the script thoughtfully crafted by Hannah Smith. Audience participation was loud and merry and it was the perfect way to get everybody; Beneficiaries, the Team and Trustees all in the festive spirit! Next year it will be the turn of our Beneficiaries!



b) Day trip

Southend was the destination of choice for our Day Project Beneficiaries for their annual summer day trip. While this event only happens once a year, it is incredibly important for our Beneficiaries because for some, this will be their only excursion or holiday. Our Team made it as memorable as possible by jam-packing the time available with seaside pastimes and, of course, a traditional fish and chip lunch.



c) Football Teams

The Social Link football Teams continue to go from strength to strength. They are currently competing for a fourth year in the BOBI League and the progression, not only of the Teams, but also of the individual players has been an absolute joy to witness. Our coaches, Andy, Tim and Tom, hosted our special football awards evening at the end of last season attended by all players, their families and friends. Every player was given an individual award reflecting their specific talents and qualities, including awards nominated by the Team coaches. It was a fantastic evening enjoyed by all, lots of fabulous words of encouragement, a real celebration of their achievements alongside fun, laughter and a cheesy disco to end the night.

"Going to the BOBI League and watching our two teams play is truly inspirational, witnessing the growth of the individuals, the way they support one another, gain in confidence, the highs and the lows and their passion to win whilst remaining fair is quite awe inspiring, everyone needs to witness this."

Wendy Dunn

Social Link always encourages individuals to grow, and Tim recently stepped up from being a player to becoming a coach and has taken to his new role like a duck to water. Tim prepares in advance for all matches, keeping his players involved in all his decisions. Tim is constantly heard shouting positive feedback from the side lines and always gathers his Team together at the end to have a de-brief where they congratulate each other on their skills and have a moto of always walking away with a positive attitude.

"Football bring out the joy and lets me meet new people having fun with different people and the happiness of helping others grow as people and as football players."

Liam

"Football is life to me, especially disability football where you're not judged for who you are. You can just come along and meet new people and play the sport you enjoy."

Zak

Our new players Zak and Andrew have both very quickly become an important part of the Teams, sharing their skills and knowledge of the game, making a positive impact. Zak has recently highlighted his desire to undertake his coaching award training too.



We would like to thank Andy, Tom, Tim and Steve for overseeing and managing the Teams, without their passion and willingness to volunteer their time these Teams wouldn't exist.

"I feel the footy is important to me as I get to have a new challenge and play footy with a different teammates and learn new skills."

Dan A

"It is a privilege to play with everybody on the whole team... It is an honour for myself to play for Social Link Fc with such a fantastic bunch of people."

Nick S

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm they have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when meeting the organisation's charitable objectives. The Charity provides valuable advice and support alongside social, recreational, educational, and work-based experiences for adults with learning disabilities in the local area. The activities of the Charity are made available to all who are in need and are affordable to all who qualify. The Trustees regularly review the circumstances of the Charity's Beneficiaries and provides the financial support that is needed with appropriately lower charges in cases of financial hardship.

This year we have supported individuals in exceptional circumstances who have been unable to meet the local authority adult social care funding criteria but who we genuinely believe are at risk of social isolation without the provision of a free service.

Finance Overview

a) Financial report and reserves

In the year 2024/2025, Social Link were successfully awarded £39,833 of grants from a number of grant providers. In past years, competition for grants was fierce and grant providers were very cautious when making awards, but we believe our success has been as a result of the acknowledgement that smaller charities like Social Link are the ones in greatest need of funding due to the continued decline in personal donations.

In the 12 months to the 31st March 2025 Social Link has reported a surplus of £25,908. Like personal households, Social Link has felt the effect of cost-of-living pressures, but attempts have been made to mitigate its impact by managing costs closely, sharing an open dialogue with payees to get the correct rates paid for services and seeking alternative sources of income from grants and fundraising. The COVID Pandemic has had a detrimental effect on our charity finances for the past four years, requiring the need to utilise reserves, so this surplus marks a significant improvement and a period of recovery.

(b) Fundraising

Snowdon Challenge

In June 2024, Beneficiaries excitedly waved off an intrepid Team of climbers from Social Link venturing to north Wales to climb Mount Snowdon (a.k.a. Yr Wyddfa). At over 1000 metres high, across highly challenging terrain, this was no easy feat. Four Beneficiaries, Sarah, Linford, Rachel and Carlos, with the support of staff and leaders at the Charity, all overcame personal challenges to achieve something remarkable. None of our Beneficiaries had ever before attempted a walk of this distance or elevation. They undertook training walks in High Wycombe and the Chilterns for two months in preparation. And so, on the big Snowdon Challenge Day in June, with walking sticks, plasters and water bottles at the ready, they set off for the adventure ahead, with the ascent and descent of Snowdon taking the Team a total of 9 hours.

Carlos kept everybody's spirits high, Linford was like a gazelle making the climb look easy, Rachel chatted her way up keeping everybody engaged and positive, and Sarah took it all in her stride following a recent significant hospital procedure, determinedly making it to just below the summit. All our Beneficiaries were absolute super stars, and their support of each other was incredible to watch. Nobody complained; there were only great big smiles and words of encouragement all-round!

This extraordinary achievement was celebrated in the evening by a well-earned dinner in the local pub, including a few celebratory beers!



We were keen for every single Social Link day project attendee to take on the Snowdon Challenge too - but in their own individual way. Beneficiaries covered the same distance as the mountain climbers but at their own pace in and around the streets and parks of High Wycombe in the months leading up to the climb. For some Beneficiaries it only took them a couple of days to walk 30,000 steps, for others it took a few weeks; the focus was on the accomplishment and not the speed.

"Thank you for believing in my daughter and for offering her the opportunity to try new challenges, too many organisations are risk adverse and don't enable those with learning disabilities to be given the same choices and opportunities you and I are given in our lives."
Parent

Everybody at Social Link would like to send a big thank you to Suez Recycling and Recovery UK, and local firm MCP Property Services for covering the cost of the trip for our climbers. We would also like to thank everybody who sponsored our Beneficiaries and climbing group – your support has been overwhelming! A special thank you too, to the Team who supported the Beneficiaries with taking on this incredible challenge, giving up their time and energy voluntarily, without which this inspiring



opportunity wouldn't have been possible. Thank you Hannah, Kim, Andy, Karen, Richard, Emma, Harriet, Smudge, Lauren and Wendy.

The Snowdon Challenge raised an incredible £6,616 for Social Link, a staggering amount but not as staggering as the strength and courage our Beneficiaries and Team demonstrated during this mammoth expedition.

Sparkle Disco

We held our first ever Sparkle Disco in Aylesbury for adults with learning disabilities from across the area - not just Social Link Beneficiaries. DJ Liam provided the dance-floor fillers and made sure all our disco divas had a great night! The planning for next Sparkle Disco is already underway and scheduled for 5th September and once again we hope it will bring people together in a safe and welcoming environment.

Autumn Raffle

Sadly, the Autumn Thriller had to be cancelled due to low ticket sales, but the raffle went ahead as planned. Despite the cancellation, a total of £1,057 was raised through raffle ticket sales and generous donations.

(c) Donations

Donations continue to be as important as ever, enabling Social Link to go that extra mile for Beneficiaries and their families. Without the wonderful donations we receive, we wouldn't be able to offer such a varied programme and development opportunities. We would like to say our sincerest thanks to Laura Ripley, Lynn O'Regan, Diana Mills, Sue Croucher on behalf of Beyond Finance, Mary Faulkner French and our donor wishing to remain unnamed.

(d) Grants

Social Link continues to apply for grants to support the Charity's income, to make it as affordable as possible for our Beneficiaries and to enable us to increase opportunities. This year we were successfully awarded £39,833 in grants. We would like to say a special thank you to Patricia and the Board at MENCAP (Amersham and Chesham branch), Heart of Bucks, The Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust and The Childwick Trust.

Appreciation

The Social Link Team is renowned for its caring, passion and drive to provide the best service possible for our Beneficiaries. Our Team is always looking to go above and beyond, welcoming new challenges and always thinking creatively to ensure the growth and development of all those who attend our services – it is innate in all of us! Everyone, regardless of role, is essential to the delivery of Social Link services and in ensuring that the Charity continues to provide an exceptional experience for our Beneficiaries. The Board of Trustees and CEO would like to extend a huge thank you to every member



of the Social Link Team for their contributions to the work of the Charity. With regards OpportuniTEA Café, we would like to say a special thank you to Victoria (COO) for her passion, hard work and tenaciousness in bringing this exciting new work-based service that will benefit so many to fruition. It's amazing! We would also like to thank Jacci (Co-Ordinator) who has been a key player in the early stages of the café, fine tuning the processes with her wealth of experience as well as managing the daily operations.

Hannah (Co-Ordinator) has been at the helm of the day services in these early days of the café launch, so we would like to thank her for diligent management ensuring that Beneficiaries and the Team continue to be fully supported. And our thanks to Karen for taking on the increased workload generated from the opening of OpportuniTEA Café.

The CEO, COO and whole Social Link Team would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Trustees past and present for freely giving their time to ensure the Charity is well managed, meets all its legal requirements and continues to provide services that meet the Charity's mission statement and objectives, whilst keeping the Beneficiaries at the heart of all we do.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the Financial Statements

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed subject to any departure disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping 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 Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.



Claire Wheeler,
Chair of Social Link Board of Trustees,



Wendy Dunn,
Chief Executive Officer, Social Link

June 2025

Social Link

	2025	2024
	12 months	12 months
Income from:		
Donations (Note 2)	£11,089	£15,096
Charitable activities (Note 3)	£463,978	£412,640
Other trading activities (Note 4)	£12,441	£6,651
Income from Grants	£47,704	£13,968
Interest (Note 5)	£915	£1,018
Total income	£536,127	£449,373
Expenditure on:		
Raising funds (Note 6)	£3,326	£579
Charitable activities (Note 7)	£506,893	£482,192
Total expenditure	£510,219	£482,771
Net income and movement in funds		
Net income/deficit	£25,908	-£33,397
Movement in other funds	-£13,394	£34,791
Total funds brought forward	£135,213	£133,819
Total funds carried forward	£147,727	£135,213

The notes of pages 23 to 27 form part of these financial statements.

Social Link

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2025

	2025	2024
Intangible fixed assets	£790	£250
Tangible fixed assets	£23,575	£32,020
Fixed Assets (Note 8)	£24,365	£32,270
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 9)	£93,291	£108,559
Prepayments	£4,018	£4,932
Debtors (Note 10)	£47,817	£11,640
	£145,126	£125,131
Current liabilities		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 11)	£21,764	£22,188
Net current assets	£123,362	£102,943
Net assets	£147,727	£135,213
Unrestricted income fund	£91,181	£65,324
Grants - Restricted	£56,546	£53,019
Unrestricted		£16,870
Total funds	£147,727	£135,213

The notes of pages 23 to 27 form part of these financial statements.

Social Link

	2025	2024
Net cash flow from operating activities		
Net income/deficit	£25,908	-£33,397
Movement in debtors and prepayments	-£35,263	-£776
Movement in liabilities	-£424	-£11,112
Movement in grants	-£13,397	£34,791
Capital expenditure	-£2,665	£0
Depreciation	£10,573	£8,444
Net cash movement from operating activities	-£15,268	-£2,050
Cash at the beginning of the year	£108,559	£110,609
Cash at the end of the year	£93,291	£108,559

The notes of pages 23 to 27 form part of these financial statements.

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the 12 months ended 31st March 2025

1. Statement of accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies have been consistently applied. The financial statements also comply with the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities SORP (FRS 102) and with the Charities Act 2022, subject to the following amendment prepared by the Charities SORP-making body in its discussion document which would bring it in line with FRS102 for other organisations. The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

At its meeting it was noted that the SORP Committee had considered the accruals model for grant accounting as a good option. The ability to use the accrual model could help those more familiar with the concept of profit and loss in a commercial entity, including charity Trustees and funders, to better understand a charities financial performance. The recognition of income in advance of related expenditure being incurred can give the impression that the charity's financial position is better than it is and this may impact on funding applications. Conversely, the recognition of related expenditure in future years, creating a deficit position, may be interpreted as the charity being in a less favourable financial position than is the case.

Specifically in the case of Social Link, we have deferred the grant income for our van and copier to be released to match and offset the depreciation of those assets, thereby not creating an income surplus this year and deficits during the following years.

b) Incoming resources

All incoming resources are recorded in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy, and it is probable that the amount will be received. Donations under gift aid together with income tax recoverable are recognised when the donation is receivable.

c) Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs relating to that activity.

The cost of small items of equipment is written off in the year it is incurred.

d) Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligations can be measured with reasonable certainty.

2. Donations

Donations include subscriptions for membership of the charity, gift aid rebates for the football services and the gardening services. Donations were also received from our many kind supporters.

3. Charitable activities

	2025	2024
Evening club revenues	£27,664	£19,683
Gardening services	£16,426	£23,470
Football services	£1,415	£1,020
Day sessions revenues	£407,350	£368,467
Café revenue	£11,123	£0
	£463,978	£412,640

It should be noted that to ensure the financial integrity of both out core services and the café, accounts for the café are held in an entirely separate bank account.

4. Other trading activities

We have held some wonderful fund-raising activities including those organised by our fabulous friends and volunteers. Fund raising has included the Snowdon climb, the Autumn Raffle and the Sparkle Disco.

5. Interest

This comprises income from the charity's bank deposit accounts.

6. Expenditure on raising funds

This represents direct expenditure on fund raising events.

7. Charitable expenditure

	2025			2024		
	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total
Evening Clubs	£11,385	£9,311	£20,696	£12,115	£5,642	£17,757
Gardening Services	£27,493	£5,529	£33,022	£31,184	£14,522	£45,706
Football	£1,255	£476	£1,731	£2,291	£1,067	£3,358
Day Sessions	£283,933	£137,110	£421,043	£283,397	£131,974	£415,371
Café Services	£27,387	£3,014	£30,401			
Total	£351,453	£155,440	£506,893	£329,987	£153,205	£482,192

Support costs, which are mainly the employment costs of the charity's employees, IT, office, insurance and other related costs, are allocated in proportion to the direct costs of the evening clubs, the gardening services, football and the day sessions respectively. Support costs for the café are managed separately.

8. Assets at cost

Intangible Assets

The trademark "Social Link" is held at cost on the balance sheet

	2025	2024
At the beginning of the year	£250	£250
Additions (OpportuniTEA Café trademark registration)	£540	£0
Disposals		£0
At the end of the year	£790	£250

Tangible Assets

	2025	2024
At the beginning of the year	£32,020	£40,464
Additions for the Cafe	£2,125	
Depreciation	-£10,570	-£8,444
Disposals		£0
At the end of the year	£23,575	£32,020

9. Cash at bank and in hand

This comprises bank current and deposit accounts plus petty cash. These are all liquid funds available for immediate use by the charity.

10. Debtors

Debtors comprise outstanding invoices in respect of day session Beneficiaries.

11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year and grants

a) These provisions represent liabilities for services provided but not yet invoiced and accrued costs, all of which have been settled since the year end.

	2025	2024
Trade creditors and accruals	£9,844	£11,372
Consultants	£7,044	£4,671
HMRC	£4,876	£4,869
Pensions	£0	£1,276
	£21,764	£22,188

b) Grants	2024	Grants received in the year	Grants released in the year	2025
Grants for Van (depreciated/grant released over 5 years)	£30,264		-£7,567	£22,697
Grant for photocopier (depreciated/grant released over 3 years)	£1,756		-£878	£878
Grants for Café	£20,999	£23,550	-£18,578	£25,971
Grants for Snowdon Walk	£2,000	£1,625	-£3,625	
Grants for Holidays and Christmas	£3,500	£108	-£1,608	£2,000
Grants for IT	£6,320		-£6,320	
Grants for Core Costs	£5,050	£9,000	-£14,050	
Grants for Gardening		£550	-£550	
Grants for Activities		£5,000		£5,000
	£69,889	£39,833	-£53,176	£56,546

12. Trustees and Governance costs

No remuneration was paid to Trustees neither did they receive re-imbursment of out-of-pocket expenses, but they were reimbursed for purchases made from time to time on behalf of the Charity. There were no Governance costs.

13. Staff costs and volunteers

	12 months 2025	12 months 2024
Salaries and wages	£225,341	£215,071
Social security costs	£16,272	£15,123
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)	£8,713	£8,380
Other employee benefits	£0	£0
Total staff costs	£250,326	£238,574

There are no staff working for the charity whose contracts are with and are paid by a related party

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the reporting period of more than £60,000

TRUE

The total amount paid to key management personnel (includes Trustees and senior management) for their services to the Charity. Key management this year includes the full year of both the Chief Executive and the Chief Operating Officer.

12 months 2025	12 months 2024
£91,983	£90,193

13.2 Average head count in the year

Parts of the charity in which the employees work

Fundraising
Charitable Activities
Governance
Total

2025	2024
Number	Number
8	8
8	8

13.3 There were no ex-gratia payments to employees and others (including Trustees).

13.4 There were no redundancy payments.

13.5 The Charity relies on the generous contribution of time from unpaid volunteers in carrying out its activities. Volunteers provide substantial support to the Beneficiaries at the evening clubs, day sessions, café, football club and trips away. The value of this contribution, which is difficult to measure, is not included as income.

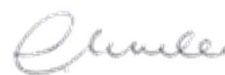
14. Taxation

Social Link is registered as a charity with both the Charity Commission and HM Revenue & Customs and is thus exempt from corporation tax on its income which is applied for charitable purposes.

15. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

Approved by the Trustees on 18/06/25 and signed on their behalf by-



Claire Wheeler MSc, FHE, CPABP – Chair

Address: 3 Bridleways, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6DN



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Independent examiner's report
on the accounts**



**Report to the
trustees/directors/
members of**

Charity Name
Social Link

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st March 2025

Charity no.:

1158743

Company no.:

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended **31 March 2025**.

As the charity's trustees of the Company (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law), you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited for this year under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination, I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act).

**Independent
examiner's statement**

The company's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of ICAEW

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that:

- 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 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

IER

1

October 2018

Signed:	<u>K.D. Bailey</u>	Date:	<u>17/06/2025</u>
Name:	<u>KATHERINE BAILEY</u>		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	<u>Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales</u>		
Address:	<u>9 Wheeler Avenue</u>		
	<u>PENN, HIGH WYCOMBE</u>		
	<u>HP10 8EN</u>		

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

--

SOCIAL LINK

England & Wales - Charity number 1158743

Accounts



Trustees' Report and Financial Statements
for the year ending 31st March 2024

turning disabilities into **abilities**

Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1158743

Constitution

Social Link was formed on 14th August 2014 and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 1st October 2014 by the Charity Commission. Its purpose is to provide support, practical advice and social and recreational facilities for adults with learning disabilities in Buckinghamshire. A revised constitution featuring the opportunity for Proxy Voting and Virtual meetings was approved by the Board and voting members in July 2021. No further changes have been made to the constitution.

A welcome from the Chair and CEO

We are delighted to present you with our 2023/2024 Annual Report.

This report sets out to provide a picture of the charity's activities throughout this period, together with a summary and explanation of our current financial position.

In this report, the term *beneficiaries* refers to those who attend our day and evening projects. *Members* refers to you, those who support the charity and who will be in attendance at the AGM. The *team* refers to those who work in support of our beneficiaries.

An overview of the work of the Social Link Board in 2023/2024

From a Board perspective, we are delighted with the development of the charity under Wendy's continuing inspirational leadership during 2023/2024. At the same time, we acknowledge the energetic support provided to Wendy by the senior leadership team and all those who work to ensure our beneficiaries enjoy the best possible experiences every day. You are a great team.

In the Spring, we agreed a strategic plan to guide the development and future sustainability of the charity over the next three years. This plan has been achieved through the collaboration and creative thinking of beneficiaries, team and the Board. Our strategic plan focuses on the following areas:

- Establishment of the OpportuniTEA Café in Holmer Green
- Development of the gardening project
- Increasing the profile of Social Link
- Extending our partnerships
- Establishment of a post-16 transitional service
- Ensuring the future sustainability of Social Link.

The plan is built around the four Social Link pillars that underpins everything we have set out to achieve:

1. Development – Life-long learning
2. Community and Environment – Volunteering and Outreach
3. Socialisation – Making friends and creating networks
4. Work experience – Being valued

We have also spent time clarifying the role and functions of the Board and anticipating the needs of the Board in the years ahead, including membership and future Board organisation. To this end, we are proposing to extend the Board membership. We remain committed, however, to ensuring a balance between those Board members with lived experience in Social Links' world and those who may have other skills or experiences to support the work of the Board.

The Social Link (SL) Board of Trustees is responsible for the governance of the charity and must ensure that the charity complies with its constitution and charity law. Governance refers to the development of the long-term direction of the charity and holding the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to account for all aspects of the charity's activities - the quality of experience for beneficiaries, safeguarding arrangements, including the health, safety and welfare of all, financial management and legal compliance. Current Board membership includes:

James Boylan (Chair)
Claire Wheeler (Vice-Chair)
Carole Harvey (Treasurer)
Glynis Wiseman
Janet Shuttlewood
Steve Birch

Overview of Social Link's services and activities in 2023/2024

2023/2024 has been another year of challenging external factors. Organisationally, it has been a period of reflection and renewal. Social Link has always prioritised the development of the charity through the involvement of our beneficiaries and those who work with us and our trustees. The starting point during our time of reflection was the identification of the needs, wishes and desires of our beneficiaries. From here, beneficiaries have been encouraged to set their own personal goals and to voice their views on the services they would like to see offered at Social Link, including the opportunity for increased work based opportunities, member blogging rights on the new website, a member forum so that all members voices are heard at board level, a library club and weekends away, ultimately leading the creation of the 2023/2024 strategic plan previously referenced.



a) Day Projects and Evening Clubs

Both the High Wycombe and Aylesbury day projects and evening clubs continue to flourish with a diverse programme of activities created by the team to ensure all beneficiaries are given every opportunity to grow and develop with their peers in a safe and supportive environment.

Social Link prides itself on pushing against boundaries, creating opportunities, giving our individuals the space to grow their self-esteem and confidence and to acquire knowledge and skills to support their personal development, including being safe and making informed choices through adulthood. Self-learning and development opportunities have included:

- Understanding our emotions
- Understanding the effects of our behaviours on others
- Developing positive relationships
- Keeping mentally and physically active
- Keeping safe online
- Responding to difficult situations
- Learning to love oneself and supporting those around you
- Accepting compliments and recognising achievements
- Meditation – breathing exercises and calming techniques
- Body awareness

Alongside these, beneficiaries have been able to choose to participate in an array of other learning and development activities:

- Numeracy and literacy
- Understanding personal finances, including understanding bank statements
- Healthy and easy-to-repeat cooking sessions
- Independent travel training
- Communication through drama
- The world around us and its history
- Experimenting – learning through science
- Personal safety in the community
- Expression through music, art and dance
- Keeping active
- Swimming
- Sports

The Social Link team across all our services strive constantly to empower our beneficiaries and this they achieve by getting to know individuals and their capabilities as well as providing reassurance and encouragement.

Views of beneficiaries and their families

Social Link ensures that beneficiaries are at the very heart of everything we do and we thought you might like to see some comments from our beneficiaries and their families:

"Social Link is a great place for friends to meet. It's a great opportunity to be ourselves and for people with disabilities to get together." **R - Beneficiary**

"Social Link is about the people. It is about making friends and being myself." **H - Beneficiary**

"Social Link is a second family to me." **L - Beneficiary**

"Social Link helps me to be independent. I learn a lot at Social Link. I have started to learn how to read. This means I am more confident." **S - Beneficiary**

"Social Link is such a big help to our children. It has helped my daughter enormously. It gets them thinking about themselves, as individuals and helps them to speak up for themselves where they didn't do that before. It has helped shape her confidence and her independence. It is about looking forwards to the future." **Parent.**

"Thank you for believing in my daughter and for offering her the opportunity to try new challenges, too many organisations are risk adverse and don't enable those with learning disabilities to be given the same choices and opportunities you and I are given in our lives." **Parent.**

b) Day Trips

As in previous years, the summer months included fun-loving daytrips chosen by our beneficiaries: 22 individuals chose to join the Rivertime Boat Trust for a voyage along the Thames starting at Henley. Our beneficiaries loved cruising leisurely down the Thames, waving to every passer-by and even taking part in a small boat race with each other. Thinking this couldn't get any better they made their way to Windsor for a visit to Windsor Castle. Everyone had a fabulous day and continue to talk about all they learned at the castle six months on!

The second trip chosen by beneficiaries was a seaside trip to Brighton. Fish and chips, ice-creams, and feet paddling in the sea made it a wonderful day out with the only complaint being: *"Why couldn't we stay longer?"*

The evening clubs participated too, with one club heading to Chessington World of Adventures, for exhilarating rides and the chance to visit the zoo, and another deciding to opt for two evening trips – they chose to attend the 80's themed Club Tropicana evening at the Town Hall, tutus and leg warmers at the ready - dressed to impress! This was followed by a trip to the panto in December (*Oh yes they did!*)



Day trips may seem a tiny part of what we offer, but for our beneficiaries they are a really important part of our service. For some it may be the only opportunity they get to visit the seaside or enjoy a boat trip. We are thrilled to say that we have already gained £3.5k in grants to cover next years' trips, thanks to Aylesbury Town Council, The Kaye Charitable Trust and The Trees of David Fund.

c) **Football Teams**

The Social Link football teams continue to go from strength to strength. They are currently competing for a third year in the BOBI League and the progression, not only of the teams, but also of the individual players has been an absolute joy to witness. This led to our very first Football Awards ceremony evening at the end of last season attended by all players, their families and friends. Every player was given an individual award reflecting their specific talents and qualities, including awards nominated by the team coaches Andy and Tom. It was a fantastic evening enjoyed by all, lots of fabulous words of encouragement, a real celebration of their achievements alongside fun and laughter and a cheesy disco to end the night.

Our fabulous football coaches also received their reward when they had the great honour of playing football at Wembley! They were invited to take part in a match with a handful of other representatives from organisations across the country. They did us proud and played a full 90-minute match. Well done Tom and Andy.



We have welcomed a couple of new players to the teams, Andrew and Zak, who are already making a positive impact and also a new Volunteer to assist with training sessions, we welcome Steve.

d) **Implementation of the 2023/2024 Strategic Plan to date**

(i) **Establishment of the OpportuniTEA Café in Holmer Green**

With funds successfully raised from the fabulous Latimer Ball, the café project took a giant leap forward when a venue was found in local village sports club, Holmer Green Sports Association (HGSA). HGSA is at the heart of the community with many local residents visiting for sports or social activities and a home for many clubs and associations. HGSA has a fully functioning kitchen which will enable us to provide hands-on training for adults with learning disabilities seeking employment in the hospitality industry.

The HGSA Committee has welcomed us and are keen to see the café and its trainees thrive. They hope to see the venue being used to its full potential while also attracting new members to their various clubs. Our beneficiaries are, of course, looking forward to enjoying a proper coffee when they attend!

The Holmer Green community has shown enthusiastic support for the initiative. As a result, we have had many offers of support and have secured an army of volunteers to help in the café once it opens. While the café is still in its planning and set-up phase, doors will open in September 2024, initially for two days a week as we establish the rhythm and routine of the new café. Beneficiaries will be able to join the café to start work experience from October and from January 2025 (after the installation of a brand-new kitchen) the café will be open four days a week. Our thanks go to Victoria and Laura for their hard work in setting up OpportuniTEA café, and to everyone at HGSA for providing the opportunity to do so.

(ii) Development of the gardening project

Grants and donations to the charity last year enabled us to secure a new gardening vehicle and to create new work opportunities for our gardeners. This has directly led to the growth of this service. The gardening project is a thriving community-based service offering Social Link beneficiaries the opportunity of gaining work-based skills. This year saw the Gardening Crew continue regular contracts alongside new contracts with:

- Swarthmore Care Home, Gerrards Cross
- Hill House Stables, Princes Risborough
- Sladmore Farm, Penn
- Nimble Tree Woods, Penn
- Holmer Green Football Club grounds
- Bucks Reablement Service

We would like to thank Sally Warminger, Angela Aldessi, Jim Smith, Rob Shed, Michele Gasper and Kim Galvani for investing in our gardening service and for giving our beneficiaries the opportunity to practise their new-found gardening skills within such supportive environments. The opportunity to work in new locations has increased the participants confidence, resilience, and self-belief. We aim to increase this fabulous service to three days a week, enabling the opportunities to be open to a greater number of young adults. Our appreciation also goes to Rob, Karen and our fabulous gardeners Shaun, Karla, Ryan, Ali and Kevin without whom this service wouldn't be possible.

(iii) Increasing the profile of Social Link

New Website

A key objective for the year was to build a new website in order to clearly present information about all our services, further increase our profile generally, assist with referrals, provide easier site navigation and to develop opportunities for partnerships. The website will also provide a platform for members to add their own content in future. Really exciting!

(iv) Extending our partnerships

During the last year partnership working has become a real focus across all our services. Not only does it raise the charity's profile, but it also has the potential to increase our chances of gaining donations and grants as well as creating more opportunities for our beneficiaries.



Our Day Projects and Gardening Crew welcomed volunteers and joint working throughout the year from:

- **Suez** - John Scanlon, Suez CEO, joined our gardening crew and helped to clear a plot ready for planting a wildflower bed.
- **Kenvue** (formerly Johnson and Johnson) – Staff from their legal department joined our beneficiaries in the day project preparing for our September Macmillan Coffee afternoon. They helped bake cakes, made decorations and then served guests.
- **Shirley Parsons** – a team of volunteers joined the Aylesbury day project which enabled our beneficiaries to take a trip to Oxford for an educational and fun day out.
- A group of Teenagers from **Action 4 Youth** devised and delivered an interactive session for our beneficiaries as well as making activity packs.

Not only has it been great having a helping hand, but it has given our beneficiaries the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and abilities. An outcome of this has been that our beneficiaries have been invited to work at the Red Kite offices for a day. Watch this space next year!



Numeracy Skills for All in partnership with *Multiply* has remained a regular feature, ensuring a greater number of beneficiaries have had the opportunity to learn and develop their numeracy skills through hands-on cooking sessions. This has been enabled due to our collaborative working with Buckinghamshire Council Adult Learning. The feedback on these sessions from our beneficiaries and team has been incredibly positive, with beneficiaries managing to repeat recipes learned at Social Link at home in their own kitchens. Due to the success of this programme, the partnership has developed further, enabling beneficiaries across both our day projects to experience new opportunities such as self-defence classes and drumming.

Last year we reported on a new literacy partnership we had initiated with the Read Easy Charity. This was established to assist a couple of beneficiaries with achieving their desire to learn to read. We are thrilled to report that not only have their reading skills improved, but Stefan was also invited to talk about his experiences of Read Easy and his remarkable progression at the Read Easy AGM! A huge achievement, well done Stefan! Having witnessed first-hand Stefan's success other members have requested to begin their own Read Easy Literacy journey in the coming months.

NHS Partnership

An appeal went out from South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) for adults with learning disabilities to apply to be part of a panel, advising SCAS on formulating their best practice and policy. This was to include sharing personal experiences and suggesting improvements concerning 999 calls, ambulance emergency transport and pre-booked hospital transport. Two Social Link members, Anthony and Tony, both expressed an interest in applying and had to go through quite an application and approval procedure before being accepted on to the panel. They have been attending formal monthly meetings on zoom with NHS staff, often given questions on the spot, which they navigated with professionalism and provided much appreciated advice. The resulting policy is to be agreed by the NHS board in late July and will be distributed across the whole of SCAS and it will be a requirement that this is followed throughout the NHS. We can't share the policy information before it is agreed but we can say that the quotes in the policy about how patients should be treated in ambulances and hospital came directly from Anthony and Tony. This includes:

"Everyone has their own views and you should not assume someone can't make their own decisions [because they have a learning disability]".

(v) Establishment of a post-16 transitional service

A current aim is to ensure we build relationships with local specialist schools with a view to developing a transitional service for those young people leaving education. To this end, our SL Co-ordinators have been attending school transitions events and once the OpportuniTEA Café is open, specialist schools will be invited to further promote this mutually beneficial partnership.

(vi) Ensuring the future sustainability of Social Link

While the developments described above all have a value in their own right, they are equally making a contribution to ensuring the sustainability of Social Link into the future. A work in progress, of course.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when meeting the organisation's charitable objectives. The Charity is providing valuable advice and support and social, recreational, educational, and work-based experiences for adults with learning disabilities in the local area. The activities of the Charity are made available to all who are in need and are affordable to all who qualify. The Trustees regularly review the circumstances of the Charity's beneficiaries and provide the financial support that is needed with appropriately lower charges in cases of financial hardship.

Finance Overview

a) Financial Report and Reserves

In the year 2023/2024, Social Link were successfully awarded £48k of grants but only £5k of these were for core (general) costs while the remaining £43k was ringfenced for a new vehicle, the new website/IT costs and activities in 2024/2025 including our new Café opening later in 2024. Our net assets have increased to £135k.

As a result, the 12 months to the 31st March 2024 Social Link has reported a deficit of £33k. Like personal households, Social Link has felt the effect of cost-of-living pressures, which for the charity led to a considerable shortfall in expected general grants and donations.

To mitigate the increasingly challenging financial operational environment, an Extraordinary Board Meeting (EBM) was convened in November 2023, with a view to reviewing controllable costs, minimising the anticipated budget shortfall and looking ahead to the 2024/2025 budget.

Following our annual review of costs and charges in March 2024, we have made the smallest possible increases in our charges and have also restructured our services. As a result, the Board has approved a budget for the 2024/2025 financial period where income and expenditure are balanced and not reliant on external support through grants and donations.

b) Fundraising

Social Link's fundraising activities have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels but are on their way to. During 2023 – 2024, £23,650 was received by the charity through joint fundraising activities:

(i) Jumble Sale

Thank you to everybody who supported our jumble sale last April. The fabulous array of donations had the Jumblers rummaging and spending. A very impressive £930 was raised!

(ii) Prudential Ride London

May 2023 witnessed Social Link's Trustee, Steve Birch, sign up and successfully complete the challenge of cycling 100 miles in the Prudential Ride London 100. It was a gruelling bike ride spanning the Surrey Hills and the streets of London. Despite having not ridden a bike for over a year, Steve courageously committed to raising funds for Social Link. Steve successfully raised a whopping £1,752!



(iii) Charity Ball

Early last year we had the pleasure of meeting a group of friends who were looking to support a local charity by hosting a formal ball. This was with a view to raise funds towards a new project or opportunity that would help increase the profile of adults with learning disabilities. A committee was established, and they set to work planning a wonderful September summer ball fundraiser. It really was the Social Link event of the year where 120 like-minded people came together to raise money for the Social Link OpportuniTEA Café project. The highlight of the evening was a singing performance by our very own talented beneficiaries who managed to win the biggest applause of the evening. Three SL beneficiaries joined us for dinner with their glad rags on, Chris – dressed as our very own James Bond, Claire and Alison – the glamorous Bond leading ladies. This incredibly successful and fun event managed to raise a staggering amount of £17k on the night. What a remarkable achievement. We would like to express our sincerest thanks for organising such an incredibly successful event to Sarah Fox, Nicola Vamos and the entire Ball Committee.

(iv) Spindle & Thread Summer Family Festival fundraiser

The Spindle & Thread pub in High Wycombe hosted a summer family fun day in aid of Social Link in August. The day incorporated live music, fairground stalls and games and even a beach and pool to really make you feel like you were on holiday! This successful event managed to raise £1120. We would like to thank Sue Lightbown, Landlady Tina and her dedicated team for organising such a fun and successful community day.

(v) Social Link Christmas Cracker

Social Link hosted its annual Christmas music event for day project members from across the charity at Wycombe Art Centre. There were craft stalls and games, plus the traditional raffle. The event raised £1,084 pounds for our charity.

c) Donations

Donations continue to be as important as ever, enabling Social Link to go that extra mile for beneficiaries and their families. Without the wonderful donations we receive, we wouldn't be able to offer such a varied programme and development opportunities. We would like to say our sincerest thanks to Richard and Sandie Baldwin, Mr Hurd, Bernie Till, Lynn O'Regan, the friends and family of Brian Butler and finally John Scanlon for his private donation and that of his team at Suez.

d) Grants

Social Link continues to apply for grants to support the charity's income, to make it as affordable as possible for our beneficiaries and to enable us to increase opportunities. This year we were successfully awarded £48,259 in Grants. We would like to say a special thank you to The Penn Trust, Patricia and the Board at The Mencap Society (Amersham and Chesham branch) The Kaye Charitable Trust, The Trees of David Trust, the Heart of Bucks, The HR Surgery, John Lewis PLC, Asda, Kenvue, Aylesbury Town Council and St James Place Foundation.

Appreciation

The Social Link Team is renowned for its creativity, passion and drive to provide the best service possible for our members. Our Team is always looking to go above and beyond, welcoming new challenges and always thinking creatively to ensure the growth and development of all those who attend our services – it is at the heart of what we do. Everyone, regardless of role, is essential to the delivery of Social Link services and in ensuring that the Charity continues to provide an exceptional experience for our beneficiaries. The Board of Trustees and CEO would like to extend a huge thank you to every member of the Social Link Team for their contributions to the work of the charity. The Aylesbury Day Project introduced two new members of the team, welcome Jan and Claire.

We would also like to thank all those supporters who have contributed to the activities of the charity over the year, especially Sarah Fox and the Ball Committee, Holmer Green Sports Association, SUEZ, Rivertime Boat Trust, Red Kite Community Housing and MCP and Shirley Parsons.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the Financial Statements

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to:

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

The Trustees are responsible for keeping 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 Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.



**James Boylan,
Chair of Social Link Board of Trustees,**



**Wendy Dunn,
Chief Executive Officer, Social Link**

July 2024

Social Link

Statement of Financial Activities for the 12 months ended 31st March 2024 with comparison to the period ended 31st March 2023.

	2024	2023
	12 months	12 months
Income from:		
Donations (Note 2)	£15,096	£11,971
Charitable activities (Note 3)	£412,640	£390,199
Other trading activities (Note 4)	£6,651	£3,228
Income from Grants	£13,968	£31,746
Interest (Note 5)	£1,018	£214
Total income	£449,373	£437,358
Expenditure on:		
Raising funds (Note 6)	£579	£399
Charitable activities (Note 7)	£482,192	£449,942
Total expenditure	£482,771	£450,341
Net income and movement in funds	-£33,397	-£12,983
Total funds brought forward	£133,819	£111,704
Movement in grants	£34,741	£35,098
Total funds carried forward	£135,163	£133,819

The notes of pages 17 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

Social Link

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024

	2024	2023
Intangible fixed assets	£250	£250
Tangible fixed assets	£32,020	£40,464
Fixed Assets (Note 8)	£32,270	£40,714
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 9)	£108,559	£110,609
Prepayments	£4,932	£4,590
Debtors (Note 10)	£11,640	£11,206
	£125,131	£126,405
Current liabilities		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 11)	£22,188	£33,300
Net current assets	£102,943	£93,105
Net assets	£135,213	£133,819
Unrestricted income fund	£65,324	£98,721
Grants - Restricted	£53,019	£35,098
Unrestricted	£16,870	
Total funds	£135,213	£133,819

The notes of pages 17 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

Social Link

Statement of cash flows for the 12 months ended 31st March 2024 with comparison to the period ended 31st March 2023

	2024	2023
Net cash flow from operating activities		
Net income/deficit	-£33,397	-£12,983
Movement in debtors and prepayments	-£776	£352
Movement in liabilities	-£11,112	£2,023
Movement in grants	£34,791	
Capital expenditure	£0	-£5,366
Depreciation	£8,444	
Net cash movement from operating activities	-£2,050	-£15,974
Cash at the beginning of the year	£110,609	£126,583
Cash at the end of the year	£108,559	£110,609

The notes of pages 17 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the 12 months ended 31st March 2024

1. Statement of accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies have been consistently applied. The financial statements also comply with the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities SORP (FRS 102) and with the Charities Act 2022, subject to the following amendment prepared by the Charities SORP-making body in its discussion document which would bring it in line with FRS102 for other organisations. The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

At its meeting it was noted that the SORP Committee had considered the accruals model for grant accounting as a good option. The ability to use the accrual model could help those more familiar with the concept of profit and loss in a commercial entity, including charity trustees and funders, to better understand a charities financial performance. The recognition of income in advance of related expenditure being incurred can give the impression that the charity's financial position is better than it is and this may impact on funding applications. Conversely, the recognition of related expenditure in future years, creating a deficit position, may be interpreted as the charity being in a less favourable financial position than is the case.

Specifically in the case of Social Link, we have deferred the grant income for our van and copier to be released to match and offset the depreciation of those assets, thereby not creating an income surplus this year and deficits during the following years.

b) Incoming resources

All incoming resources are recorded in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy, and it is probable that the amount will be received. Donations under gift aid together with income tax recoverable are recognised when the donation is receivable.

c) Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs relating to that activity.

The cost of small items of equipment is written off in the year it is incurred.

d) Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligations can be measured with reasonable certainty.

2. Donations

Donations include subscriptions for membership of the charity, gift aid rebates for the new football services and the gardening services. Donations were also received from our many kind supporters.

3. Charitable activities

	2024	2023
Evening club revenues	£19,683	£14,723
Gardening services	£23,470	£15,429
Football services	£1,020	£240
Day sessions revenues	£368,467	£359,807
	£412,640	£390,199

4. Other trading activities

We have held some wonderful fund-raising activities including those organised by our fabulous friends and volunteers. Fund raising has included the annual Christmas Cracker Celebration, The Latimer House Ball, a Jumble Sale, Sponsored Bike Ride, Craft Sale and a fund-raising event at the Spindle & Thread Pub.

5. Interest

This comprises income from the charity's bank deposit accounts.

6. Expenditure on raising funds

This represents direct expenditure on fund raising events.

7. Charitable expenditure

	2024			2023		
	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total
Evening Clubs	£12,115	£5,642	£17,757	£10,694	£4,380	£15,074
Gardening Services	£31,184	£14,522	£45,706	£24,970	£10,226	£35,196
Football	£2,291	£1,067	£3,358	£6,234	£2,553	£8,787
Day Sessions	£283,397	£131,974	£415,371	£277,310	£113,575	£390,885
Total	£329,567	£153,205	£482,192	£319,208	£130,734	£449,942

Support costs, which are mainly the employment costs of the charity's employees, IT, office, insurance and other related costs, are allocated in proportion to the direct costs of the evening clubs, the gardening services, football and the day sessions respectively.

8. Assets at cost

Intangible Assets

The trademark "Social Link" is held at cost on the balance sheet

	2024	2023
At the beginning of the year	£250	£250
Additions	£0	£0
Disposals	£0	£0
At the end of the year	£250	£250

Tangible Assets

	2024	2023
At the beginning of the year	£40,464	£0
Additions - Photocopier		£2,634
- Van		£37,830
Depreciation	-£8,444	
Disposals		£0
At the end of the year	£32,020	£40,464

9. Cash at bank and in hand

This comprises bank current and deposit accounts plus petty cash. These are all liquid funds available for immediate use by the charity.

10. Debtors

Debtors comprise outstanding invoices in respect of day session beneficiaries.

11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year and Grants

a) These provisions represent liabilities for services provided but not yet invoiced and accrued costs, all of which have been settled since the year end.

	2024	2023
Trade creditors and accruals	£11,372	£18,102
Consultants	£4,671	£10,641
HMRC	£4,869	£4,558
Pensions	£1,276	£0
	£22,188	£33,300

b) Grants	2023	Grants received in the year	Grants released in the year	2024
Grants for Van (depreciated/grant released over 5 years)	£30,464	£7,366	-£7,566	£30,264
Grant for photocopier (depreciated/grant released over 3 years)	£2,634	£0	-£878	£1,756
Grants for Café	£2,000	£18,999	£0	£20,999
Grants for Snowdon Walk	£0	£2,000	£0	£2,000
Grants for Holidays and Christmas	£0	£6,344	£2,844	£3,500
Grants for IT	£0	£8,000	-£1,680	£6,320
Grants for Core Costs	£0	£5,550	-£500	£5,050
	£35,098	£48,259	£13,468	£69,889

12. Trustees and Governance costs

No remuneration was paid to Trustees neither did they receive re-imbursement of out of pocket expenses but they were reimbursed for purchases made from time to time on behalf of the charity. There were no Governance costs.

13. Staff costs and volunteers

	12 months 2024	12 months 2023
Salaries and wages	£215,071	£192,625
Social security costs	£15,123	£12,976
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)	£8,380	£7,464
Other employee benefits	£0	£0
Total staff costs	£238,574	£213,065

There are no staff working for the charity whose contracts are with and are paid by a related party

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the reporting period of more than £60,000

TRUE

The total amount paid to key management personnel (includes trustees and senior management) for their services to the charity.
Key management this year includes the full year of both the Chief Executive and the Chief Operating Officer.

12 months 2024	12 months 2023
£90,193	£65,429

13.2 Average head count in the year

Parts of the charity in which the employees work

Fundraising
Charitable Activities
Governance
Total

2024	2023
Number	Number
8	8
8	8

13.3 There were no ex-gratia payments to employees and others (including trustees).

13.4 There were no redundancy payments.

13.5 The charity relies on the generous contribution of time from unpaid volunteers in carrying out its activities. Volunteers provide substantial support to the beneficiaries at the evening clubs, day sessions and trips away. The value of this contribution, which is difficult to measure, is not included as income.

14. Taxation

Social Link is registered as a charity with both the Charity Commission and HM Revenue & Customs and is thus exempt from corporation tax on its income which is applied for charitable purposes.

15. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

Approved by the Trustees on 08/07/24 and signed on their behalf by-



James Boylan – Chair

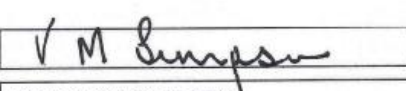
Address: 3 Bridleways, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6DN



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Independent examiner's
report on the accounts**

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name SOCIAL LINK		
On accounts for the year ended	31 ST MARCH 2024	Charity no (if any)	1158743
Set out on pages	1-2		
I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2024			
Responsibilities and basis of report	As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act"). I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.		
Independent examiner's statement	I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect: - accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or - the accounts do not accord with the accounting records I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.		
Signed:			Date: 7 TH JULY 2024
Name:	VERONICA SIMPSON		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	FCCA		
Address:	CLACKS COTTAGE BLACKTHORNE LANE BALLINGER GREAT MISSENDEN HP16 9LN		

Section B Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

IER 105 1000000

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October 2018

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

SOCIAL LINK

England & Wales - Charity number 1158743

Accounts



Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1158743

Trustees Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023

turning disabilities into **abilities**

Constitution

Social Link was formed on 14th August 2014 and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 1st October 2014 by the Charity Commission. Its purpose is to provide support, practical advice and social and recreational facilities for adults with learning disabilities in Buckinghamshire. A revised constitution featuring the opportunity for Proxy Voting and Virtual meetings was approved by the Board and voting members in July 2021, no further changes have been made to the constitution.

Our Vision

A world where people with learning disabilities are valued equally, listened to, empowered to contribute to, and are included within our society.

Our Mission

To provide a safe, supported and stimulating environment for adults with learning disabilities to work and grow together as individuals, thereby helping them to build confidence, resilience and a sense of self-worth, develop independence and realise their potential.

Our Core Values

Putting our beneficiaries first

By providing a service that is led by the needs, ambitions, passions, interests, hopes and dreams of our beneficiaries.

Embracing diversity and individual uniqueness

By celebrating our differences as well as the similarities that bring us together.

Promoting independence and social interaction

By being committed to developing members' enduring life skills through social experience and community membership.

Looking after ourselves and each other

By acting together in a caring, compassionate, considerate, celebratory, tolerant and respectful manner.

Championing equality, inclusion and belonging

By ensuring integration and involvement in communities, and by breaking down barriers which may cause isolation and exclusion.

Aspiring to be better

By ensuring that as an organisation we are responsive to the needs of our beneficiaries, we set no limits on individual growth and potential, we are ambitious for both the charity and its beneficiaries, and that we strive for continuous improvement.

Board of Trustees

The Trustees are:

James Boylan (Chair)
Carole Harvey (Treasurer and Vice Chair)
Glynis Wiseman
Janet Shuttlewood
Umair Manir (Resigned 08/09/22)
Steve Birch (Appointed 26/09/22)
Claire Wheeler (Co-Opted 09/11/22)

Services and Activities

2022/2023 has been a year of re-establishing our core services whilst giving us the opportunity to reflect on our future provisions ensuring they continue to stem from the needs of the charity's beneficiaries. This included the implementation of member keyworker meetings giving all members and their families/carers the platform to voice their needs, wishes and desires and set some of their own goals and objectives for individual growth and development. This alongside a new Member Forum set up to hear the views of the charity's members based around not only the day-to-day structure of Social Link and all it offers, but also around governance and strategic changes. This has given us the information and knowledge needed to continue applying a person-centred approach, guaranteeing members' voices are at the core of all we do, including driving our strategic direction.

Strategic Review

At the beginning of 2022, the Board of Trustees and the whole Social Link Team spent a day together with the aim of reviewing the purpose of the charity and to collectively plan for its future development. This gave us a valuable opportunity to be together to reaffirm the charity's mission statement, aims and objectives.

In March 2023, a follow-up meeting was arranged to enable the Team to gather together (especially important for new Team Members) to start to formulate a strategic plan for the next few years. This was followed up recently by a Trustee and senior management strategy afternoon thus ensuring everyone within the organisation has had the opportunity to play a part in the charity's strategic direction, growth and development, and that the whole organisation is moving forward with a united approach.

Day Projects

The High Wycombe Day Project continues to run five days a week, something that was temporarily implemented during COVID to enable all members to be able to attend safely. Becoming a permanent change has enabled us to offer our support and activities to a greater number of individuals wanting to access our services, particularly young people who are taking their next steps outside of formal education. The addition of these young adults has reinforced the importance of literacy and numeracy sessions which have continued to feature widely throughout our programme of activities. These are often presented in different guises, through cooking sessions, reading of bus timetables when travel training, and writing articles for the Social Link newspaper, to name but a few. These sessions continue to build on and develop skills already gained in educational settings.

The introduction of keyworker meetings has proven to be hugely successful, with a high proportion of objectives agreed in reviews having already been actioned and, on the way, to being achieved. Reading has been a common request amongst members for their individual learning aspirations, especially as struggling with reading impacts on everyday tasks in their daily lives, therefore impeding independence. This has led to a new partnership being forged with the Read Easy Charity. Tutors join us twice weekly to support members on a 1:1 basis with reading at a pace suited to the individual, and thereby steadily building confidence. The implementation of the keyworker meetings has proven to be so successful that this will now be implemented across all the Social Link services. The success of these sessions has recently led to a request from members for a book club!

The Social Link Express newspaper thrives and is continuing to increase the skills of all members involved, particularly their IT and media skills as well as communication and social skills. The peer support that has grown from this activity has been incredible. Members meet and discuss stories for the paper based around current national hot topics, personal news and Social Link news. Members then utilise the skills learnt to create articles, puzzles and artwork via the media platform. The role of editor is rotated. Recently this has progressed further to some members being able to access the platform from their home and enjoy working on editing and writing during their evenings and weekends, when they may be otherwise feeling isolated or at a loss for things to do. These sessions have become extremely popular and are always a hive of activity. A new focus for our budding journalists has been looking at what is in the community, visiting places of interest and to feedback and write about accessibility for those with disabilities - something that is of great importance to our members.

The Aylesbury Day Project continues to flourish, seeing an increase in member numbers and more staff too. We would like to welcome Cally and Katie to the Aylesbury Team. They are already making a real contribution to the sessions offered and to the growth of this service. The Team have recently been focusing on travel training - working towards being able to manage short journeys independently within their own community alongside developing coping strategies to deal with anxieties around traveling at busy times when buses are at their fullest which can be a real barrier to members gaining these important life skills. Another recent area of development is 'wellbeing', particularly around healthy living and healthy minds.

This year, both Day Projects have focused on the education and learning of life skills based around hazard awareness in the community, online and physical safety, as well as understanding rights. The drive behind this is to strengthen knowledge and understanding around practical safeguarding matters that members encounter as they lead their daily lives. This has been achieved through partnership working with Buckinghamshire Council's Trading Standards team. This successful arrangement will continue to feature highly on our future programme of activities. In addition, we are now developing an IT suite where members will be able to regularly put into practise all the safety measures learnt and ensuring they are at the forefront of their minds when using computers within their own homes and social media platforms.

The Social Link Team is renowned for its creativity, passion and drive to provide the best service possible for our members. Our Team is always looking to go above and beyond, welcoming new challenges and always thinking creatively to ensure the growth and development of all those who attend our services – it is at the heart of what we do. Everyone, regardless of role, is essential to the delivery of Social Link services and in ensuring that the Charity continues to provide an exceptional

experience for our members. The Board of Trustees and CEO would like to extend a huge thank you to every member of the Social Link Team for their contributions to the work of the charity.

Evening Clubs

This year, the evening clubs have been able to return to members attending in larger groups every week. This was a very welcome change as members were struggling to cope with only attending alternate weeks. The number of new members has increased greatly since the pandemic and the frequency of evening clubs will be reviewed in the coming year. Evening clubs have seen a change in evening club leaders and we are pleased to welcome Roland and Katie to the Team. Also instrumental to the delivery of these evening sessions are our wonderful volunteers Ron, Chris, Lynne, Susan and Eddie. We would like to express our thanks to them for all their ongoing support.

Independence Groups

Due to the success of the current Independence Group, a second group has been established. This is currently a smaller group where the focus is on increasing independence skills and identifying safe places within their local community.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing has continued to feature highly throughout our services, including our Aylesbury Day Project, giving an increased number of members the opportunities to learn simple coping mechanisms/techniques that can be used anywhere and anytime when anxiety levels are increasing. Opportunities have also been provided to develop skills around supporting one another when facing times of difficulty, including outside of our day services. Members continue to update their journals enabling them to share what they have learned with their friends and families.

Gardening Service

The gardening service continues to be a thriving community-based service offering Social Link members the opportunity of gaining work-based skills. This year saw the Gardening Crew secure a regular contract of work with a local care home (Swarthmore) in Gerrards Cross, alongside continuing opportunities at Hill House Stables in Princes Risborough, Sladmore Farm and Nimble Tree Woods in Penn. We would like to thank Sally Warminger, Angela Aldessi, Jim Smith and Michele Gasper for investing in our gardening service and for giving our members the opportunity to practise their newfound gardening skills within such supportive and dynamic environments. The opportunity to work in locations they have become familiar with has increased participants confidence, resilience, and self-belief.

The Gardening Crew have recently initiated a new partnership with the Buckinghamshire Council Reablement Team, with a view to supporting vulnerable individuals returning home after illness who may be in need of assistance with their gardens. We would like to thank consultants Rob Thomas and Karen Atkins for continuing to drive this valuable service forward, as well as all those members involved.

Sadly, back in March we had all our gardening tools and equipment stolen. But the subsequent reporting of the incident on Facebook and in the Bucks Free Press led to many offers of help from the local community including businesses and residents. Local charity Work Aid were speedy in their response and provided our Gardening Crew with an array of refurbished hand-tools to get them back up and running. We would like to thank Ian Dodimead and Mark Andrews from I AM Gardening for replacing much of our lost equipment including tools and safety wear. Mayor Arif Hussain and Councillor Julia Wassell raised £250 with the help of fellow Councillors to buy us a new lawn mower which our gardeners were very pleased to receive. Further thanks to Mr David Evans for his financial donation and Mr Cross for giving us a strimmer. The response to our plight was amazing and for which we are very grateful.



Last year, our aim for this service was to raise enough funds to secure a gardening vehicle to enable this innovative service to expand and allow greater numbers of members to access it. We are thrilled to say that we secured the funding from various grants and incredible donations, taking receipt of a wonderful six-seater gardening vehicle in March. This will now enable us to grow the gardening service from two days a week to a five-day service over the next 12 months. Moreover, young people leaving horticulture courses and wanting to take their next steps into the world of employment will greatly benefit from this being a steppingstone towards their future goals.

Football Teams

The Social Link football teams continue to go from strength to strength. They compete in the BOBI League and are currently second place in both their divisions. The growth and development of the Teams has been incredible and a real joy to witness. The football teams started as an idea from a very tenacious Social Link member (Tom) who, alongside a member of the Social Link Team (Andy), began running weekly training sessions. Not only have Andy and Tom flourished in the management of the football teams but they have also attained a recognised coaching qualification. As a result of this, another one of the players (Tim) has also taken the decision to train for his coaching qualification. This is something Tim would never have entertained previously, but having gained in confidence and developed new leadership skills when stepping up to manage a team, he now feels ready.

For the rest of the players, the opportunities that have arisen for them have been many: the development of social skills, communication, and teamwork skills, along with development of technical football skills. We are grateful to one parent – *you know who you are* - who continues to attend every game and has been so delighted by her son's involvement and development that she sends Social Link a monthly donation to assist with any costs associated with running these teams. Thank you!

Leadership and Management Structure

The last 12 months have seen a considerable Board of Trustees focus on the leadership and management arrangements within the Charity to ensure both its growth and development and in the services provided for members, as well as the sustainability of Social Link into the future. We are certain that with the appointment of two new wonderful Co-ordinators and a Chief Operating Officer (COO) that the charity now has an organisational structure which will serve it well in the future.

Co-ordinators

During the last year the Board of Trustees worked with the CEO to review the leadership and management structure of Social Link to ensure that the right people in the right roles are available to support the work of the charity. This has led to the appointment of the Co-ordinators, Jacci and Hannah, who have been instrumental in the enhancement and expansion of the day provision. Benefits of their appointment have been the re-introduction of services removed during the pandemic and improved communication within the Team through regular meetings. Jacci and Hannah have both been leading on member development as well as team development. They have spent time getting to know the Team well and have developed a clear understanding of their strengths and how to apply them for the benefit of the Charity and its members. They have both made an impressive start in their new roles.

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

The Board of Trustees has been conscious for some time about the need to ensure that the CEO has appropriate strategic and operational support to enable her to fulfil her leadership and management functions. We were delighted that Victoria Fallon was appointed to the role of Chief Operating Officer (COO). In her new role, Victoria supports the CEO to jointly provide strategic leadership of Social Link services and to deputise for her in her absence. Victoria also jointly oversees the successful development and delivery of new and existing Social Link projects and services. In her new role, she has already made a significant impact to the life of a charity in a short space of time.

Partnerships

Action 4 Youth

An enthusiastic group of teenagers from Action 4 Youth joined our day project and created, planned and implemented activities for our members. This proved to be a very successful day, with both the young people and our members benefiting from this wonderful collaboration. Following on from this, the group went on to raise funds for us, but in addition, one of the individual students went a step further and took the initiative to complete a run in his own time raising a wonderful £50 for Social Link.

Red Kite Housing

This year we welcomed a team of staff from Red Kite Community Housing who accompanied us for a day as part of their charitable activity. The Red Kite staff supported our Team and members with the tidying up of a community garden and the building of bird boxes. Again, this has been a really positive piece of collaborative working and networking opportunities enjoyed by all involved.

Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA)

Through a partnership with the Berkshire College of Agriculture, Social Link was lucky enough to gain a workplace student for five months. Adam flourished during his time at Social Link and was a real asset to our members and Team during this time. Adam is going on to complete his training in Health and Social Care and due to the success of his placement is keen to continue attending Social Link as a volunteer, with the aim of becoming a support worker in future. This has been a real success, which will hopefully lead to further student placements.

Multiply

This year saw the development of yet another amazing partnership between the Buckinghamshire Council's Education Department and Social Link. Social Link won a bid to run a new government funded programme to help adults improve their numeracy skills. The sessions included cooking sessions with a difference. Members were split into two groups, one group going a supermarket to purchase ingredients and the other group being sent out to other supermarkets to compare prices. The groups then reviewed their findings and compared prices to find out which supermarket was the most cost effective. These sessions occurred over a series of weeks and proved to be very popular among members. This partnership is set to continue, with a tutor and our Team working together. Thank you to Sarah for implementing and creating these sessions so quickly and for making them so enjoyable.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when meeting the organisation's charitable objectives. The Charity is providing valuable advice and support and social, recreational, educational, and work-based experiences for adults with learning disabilities and difficulties in the local area.

The activities of the Charity are made available to all who are in need and are affordable to all who qualify. The Trustees regularly review the circumstances of the Charity's beneficiaries and provide the financial support that is needed with appropriately lower charges in cases of financial hardship.

Fundraising

Social Link's fundraising activities have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels but are well on their way to doing so. The Social Link quiz held in Aylesbury was well attended and raised just under £600. We would like to thank Paul Giles for hosting a very entertaining and competitive evening. The Christmas Cracker got all our members into the festive spirit while also raising £1700 through raffle ticket sales as well as food and craft stall sales.

Donations

Throughout the year we have been very fortunate to receive the following donations. Without these donations we wouldn't have been able to purchase the little extras that really do make all the difference to the Social Link members. We can't thank these organisations and individuals enough:

- Owen White Solicitors donated second-hand laptops and desktop computers which will be used to create an IT suite for our members to learn IT skills and access online courses
- Deanfield Homes donated money to enable the purchase of Easter gifts for all of our members
- Country Financial donated £250

- Masonic Charitable Foundation / Mr T Mitchell donated £300
- Suez donated £500 to purchase Christmas gifts for all our members
- The sale of a drum kit donated by Mr P Bevins raised £550
- Tylers Green Middle School donated £100 in return for Karen Marrinan, our Financial Controller, auditing their accounts
- KIWA International in Princes Risborough donated a pool table for Wycombe Day Project
- Camaraderie's donation of catering supplies.

Personal:

- Mrs M Hodgson donated £25 raised selling items on Facebook
- £100 personal donation from Mrs O Bruni
- Laura and John Ripley raised £75 for Social Link at a personal celebration
- Mr & Mrs Baldwin £50 donation
- Mrs J Stevenson £50 donation
- Mrs R Lydon £25 donation
- £100 monthly donation from Mrs H Pettifer for the Social Link football teams

Grants

Social Link recognises the need for grants to ensure it can fulfil its day-to-day activities and to support the sustainability and growth of the services it provides. The provision of new services and creative activities incur additional costs but we have applied for and been awarded several grants which provided a financial boost during the year. The Board of Trustees and CEO would like to thank all the wonderful grant providers, without whom we would not be able to provide our members with such a colourful and creative array of skill-developing activities. Thank you to Persimmon Homes, the Tesco Community Fund, Asda Green Token scheme, Mid-Counties Co-op Community Fund, The Bailey Thomas Foundation, The Roland Callingham Foundation, Edward Gostling Fund, Leeds Building Society and Arnold Clark.

A couple of years ago we introduced a fabulous new gardening service enabling Social Link members to gain certificated skills in utilising gardening equipment which they would then go on to use in horticultural activities within the community. This has been incredibly successful for all involved. In order to further develop this innovative service, it was recognised that having our own vehicle would enable this to become a five day-a-week service. We are thrilled to inform you that we were successful in gaining grants and with a fabulous and unexpected donation, this enabled us to take receipt of a wonderful six-seater gardening vehicle in March this year. This really will make such a difference to the development of this service and will enable more members to partake and gain the necessary skills for them to possibly progress to paid employment in the horticulture world. We would like to say a huge thank you to Mobbs Memorial Trust, Amersham and Chesham Branch Mencap, The Percy Bilton Charity, The Shanly Foundation, and Heart of Bucks.

We would like to say a special thank you to Claire and Colin Wheeler for their immense kindness and generosity in enabling the purchase of the additional gardening vehicle.

Future Plans

Social Link is constantly reflecting on, adapting and increasing its offer to ensure the continuing growth and development of its members. Our most recent Member Forum, Team Day and Board of Trustees and Senior Leadership Team strategy afternoon have highlighted the following priorities for the future:

1. To further develop the Gardening Service into a five-day a week service giving it the opportunity to become a standalone income generating entity.
2. To review Social Link's current premises to enable the security and sustainability of the charity's provision.
3. To establish a café to build and develop work experience skills and accredited training in a real-life commercial environment.
4. To implement a transitional age service so that young people leaving education are aware of Social Link and the options available to them. A focus to be placed on building relationships with specialist schools within Buckinghamshire.
5. To continue to develop the Member Forum where members' voices are able to shape the work of the charity and the activities and experiences that are available.
6. To increase the Aylesbury Day provision to two days per week to include an Independence group.
7. To develop a Gaming Club separate to the current evening clubs with a focus on transitional age youngsters and building on their social skills.
8. To build an IT suite to enable the Team to work with groups and individuals to learn and practise online safety, social media platform safety, basic use of a computer etc.
9. To introduce a service to cater for those individuals who require slightly smaller groups and a higher ratio of staff to ensure they are able to participate in and contribute fully to the Social Link activities.
10. The introduction of a book club where members can improve their reading skills, share books with friends and develop a love of reading.

Board Membership

The Board of Trustees has approved a new Recruitment of Trustees policy and procedure. The Board continues to be committed to ensuring it provides high quality governance of the charity. Recently, Claire Wheeler was co-opted as a new board member. Claire is a business psychologist, management consultant, coach and Fellow of Higher Education with more than 20 years of international experience in developing leaders and organisational performance. She is a company director and lecturer at the University of Herts on the MSc course in Business and Occupational Psychology. We are delighted that Claire has agreed to join the Board of Trustees and she has already made a significant contribution to governance activities and the day-to-day work of the charity in the short time she has been with us.

Voting Membership

Voting membership of the charity continues to be open to parents, carers and friends who would like to support our aims. Membership is available for an annual subscription of £25, which entitles the member to vote at the AGM and receive regular newsletters and enables the charity to claim 25% tax rebate under gift aid, where the subscriber is a UK taxpayer.

Financial Update and Risk Review

The Trustees meet regularly to monitor and review the Charity's income, expenditure and cash position. As a Charity which operates services for vulnerable adults, we are very conscious of the potential risks arising from our activities. We have established policies for the operation of our activities which are reviewed and monitored by the Trustees. The charity maintains a risk register which is regularly reviewed and procedures are in place to protect the organisation from financial fraud.

The COVID pandemic was extremely difficult for everyone and presented the Charity and our members with many challenges, which we saw as an opportunity to find different ways to support our members. We followed best practice and regulations to ensure the safety of our member, staff and consultants and this continues to be of paramount importance in our day-to-day work. During the pandemic, we provided enhanced and expanded services including the development of our gardening and our football services. These services have become very popular with our members, who enjoy all the additional opportunities they provide. Our gardening service is now increasing to five days per week to boost opportunities for more members to take part. Our footballers are loving the sport, the exercise, the fun, building a strong fan base of supporters and are doing well in the leagues.

All of these activities have incurred additional costs, but we have applied for and been awarded several grants which provided financial support during the year and will provide further support going forward. Thank you to all those wonderful people who have donated or awarded grants to us. We received £67k of grants during the year, £32k of which has supported our services during the 12 months and £35k which was awarded to enable us to purchase a minibus to support the Gardening Services.

As of 31st March 2023, the charity reported a deficit for the year of £12,988, which reduced our total funds being carried forward to 2023-2024 to £98,721.

Reserves Policy

The finances of the charity and the need for secure future funding are reflected in our Reserves Policy. We understand the challenges in these economic times and the charity works hard to promote our services to minimise risk and to supplement our income through grant funding. The charity has ongoing commitments to run its day and evening sessions, which are a very valuable part of our members' lives. As the charity has grown, it has widened its services to include football and work-based activities within the community. The Trustees recognise that risks may arise and if that should occur that the services might have to be reviewed. The Trustees consider that the current reserves of £98,721 of Unrestricted Funds in the Financial Statements are sufficient. As the charity continues to expand, the Trustees will continue to review the Reserves Policy.

Governance of the Charity

The Trustees take policy decisions on behalf of the Charity at their regular bi-monthly Board meetings. Operational decisions are delegated to our wonderful CEO, Wendy Dunn, who leads all aspects of the Charity's provision. The Chair and CEO meet either virtually or in-person to discuss strategic and

operational matters. The CEO also has an advisory role at Board meetings. The Board would like to thank Wendy for her continuing passionate, determined and exemplary leadership of Social Link. We are very fortunate to have such a dynamic and talented leader.

Trustees are appointed in accordance with the terms of the charity's constitution and the recently reviewed Trustee Appointment Policy. When appointing new Trustees, the charity looks for individuals who have an interest in supporting the work of a charity for adults with learning disabilities, are appreciative of diversity and difference in the world and have the personal qualities to contribute to ensuring the charity is as good as it can be. In addition, in appointing Trustees, the Board is conscious of creating a sustainable Board with a broad skills base to ensure governance of the highest standards. As part of this, all trustees are required to commit to regular training.

Appreciation

This year saw the departure of our creative drama and singing leader Hannah Ash. Hannah successfully gained a teaching support role within a school closer to her home allowing her to spend more precious time with her young family. On a positive note, Hannah continues to run our Aylesbury evening club so it is not quite goodbye. The Day Project members have worked their magic to entice Hannah back in the holidays to run some drama workshops (Sorry Hannah, no escape!). In addition, our very own inspirational music and media Leader Richard Byron sadly retired. Richard has been with Social Link since it began, joining the board of Trustees in its first year, supporting us to shape the fantastic organisation we have today. Richard went on to become an integral part of the Day Project Team providing members with the opportunity to gain media skills, explore their music creativity alongside bringing a sense of fun and vibrancy. The Board of Trustees, Team and members of Social Link would like to express their sincere thanks to both Hannah and Richard and we wish them well in the future. We are pleased to say that both Hannah and Richard have not severed their ties completely and both continue to be regular visitors to Social Link providing additional support and cover when needed.

As with any change, this also brings opportunity. In this case, changes have led to the addition of a new music activity within the Day Project run by Katrina. Kat has started the Singing Star Choir where members are getting the opportunity to learn new material and sing together as a group. Thank you Kat. We look forward to some wonderful future performances. These changes have also led to a new drama group being started, with one of the driving forces being the creation of a performance at our next AGM! This has become a very popular session. Although its content has been kept under wraps, enjoyment from these sessions can be felt around the centre. A special thank you goes to Freedom and Bobby for the delivery of these sessions. Social Link has also gained a new member of the Wycombe Day Project Team. We look forward to utilising Mandy's floristry skills in the future, particularly alongside our gardening project. Welcome to you, Mandy!

The Board of Trustees and CEO would like to express their thanks to all those who have contributed to the work of the Charity during the course of the year. In particular, we would like to highlight the amazing work of the Social Link Team who go above and beyond every day.

All Board members are volunteers and give their time freely to the Charity. Throughout the year, the Board have been ever mindful of the uncertain and stressful environment in which Social Link was operating and so endeavoured to be as supportive as possible of the CEO and the Social Link operational team. The Chair of Trustees and CEO would like to express their appreciation again to past Chairs of the Board of Trustees and previous Board members for their continuing interest in the Charity

and acknowledges that the work of the current Board merely builds on the work of previous Boards. A huge thank you to current Board members for all they do and for their wisdom, energy, support, resilience, commitment, good sense and unfailing good humour at all times. Like the Social Link operational team, Board members have gone above and beyond to provide exemplary governance to ensure that Social Link has emerged as a strengthened organisation during the most challenging of times. A special thank you too to Umair Manir for his contribution to the work of the Board during his time as Trustee.

Chief Executive Officer

Wendy Dunn continues to be the heart and soul of Social Link. The Board of Trustees would like to express its appreciation for all that Wendy has done and continues to do to ensure that some of Buckinghamshire's most vulnerable residents enjoy happy, meaningful, social, educational and fun times in all the ways they are able to experience Social Link. Wendy is relentless in ensuring the best for members within and beyond Social Link. She embodies the values of Social Link and all that the charity strives to be for its members. We are proud to have Wendy as our CEO.

Employees, Leaders, Support Workers, Volunteers and Supporters

Organisations are only as good as the people within them. Social Link has great people. The Board of Trustees and the CEO would like to say thank you to all employees, leaders, support workers, volunteers and supporters for all they contribute. Much of the work of these appreciated colleagues is unseen but the Board recognises their passionate commitment, relentless enthusiasm, resourcefulness, joyfulness, creativity and imagination, compassion and love that everyone brings to work every day. We are proud of all those who contribute to ensuring that members have the best possible experiences every day.

The Board of Trustees and CEO would also like to thank our donors and all the volunteers who have made the successes of the last year possible. Also, thanks to those local businesses who have supported the charity during this very challenging year.

Finally, the Board of Trustees and CEO would like to say a particular thank you to those behind the scenes who ensure that every day runs smoothly and that the financial management of the charity is as good as it can be. So, thank you to Victoria Fallon, Karen Marrinan and Laura Ripley for all you do.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf on 23/06/23 by:



James Boylan, Chair of Board of Trustees

Address: Social Link, 84 Bookerhill Road, High Wycombe, BUCKS, HP12 4EX

Social Link

Statement of Financial Activities for the 12 months ended 31st March 2023 with comparison to the period ended 31st March 2022.

	2023	2022
	12 months	12 months
Income from:		
Donations (Note 2)	£11,971	£8,066
Charitable activities (Note 3)	£390,199	£319,269
Other trading activities (Note 4)	£3,228	£7,454
Income from Grants (prior year included Infection Control and Furlough)	£31,746	£35,136
Interest (Note 5)	£214	£13
Total income	£437,358	£369,938
Expenditure on:		
Raising funds (Note 6)	£399	£1,177
Charitable activities (Note 7)	£449,942	£386,722
Total expenditure	£450,341	£387,899
Net income and movement in funds	-£12,983	-£17,961
Total funds brought forward	£111,704	£129,665
Movement in designated funds	£35,098	
Total funds carried forward	£133,819	£111,704

The notes on pages 17 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

Social Link

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2023

	2023	2022
Intangible fixed assets	£250	£250
Tangible fixed assets	£40,464	£0
Fixed Assets (Note 8)	£40,714	£250
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 9)	£110,609	£126,583
Prepayments	£4,590	£785
Debtors (Note 10)	£11,206	£15,363
	£126,405	£142,731
Current liabilities		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 11)	£33,300	£31,277
Net current assets	£93,105	£111,454
Net assets	£133,819	£111,704
Unrestricted income fund	£98,721	£111,704
Restricted Grants	£35,098	
Total funds	£133,819	£111,704

The notes on pages 17 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

Social Link

Statement of cash flows for the 12 months ended 31st March 2023 with comparison to the period ended 31st March 2022

	2023	2022
Net cash flow from operating activities		
Net income/deficit	-£12,983	-£17,961
Movement in debtors and prepayments	£352	-£5,785
Movement in liabilities	£2,023	-£16,044
Capital expenditure	-£5,366	£0
Net cash movement from operating activities	-£15,974	-£39,790
Cash at the beginning of the year	£126,583	£166,373
Cash at the end of the year	£110,609	£126,583

The notes on pages 17 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the 12 months ended 31st March 2023

1. Statement of accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies have been consistently applied. The financial statements also comply with the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities SORP (FRS 102) and with the Charities Act 2011, subject to the following amendment prepared by the Charities SORP-making body in its discussion document which would bring it in line with FRS102 for other organisations. The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

At its meeting it was noted that the SORP Committee had considered the accruals model for grant accounting as a good option. The ability to use the accrual model could help those more familiar with the concept of profit and loss in a commercial entity, including charity trustees and funders, to better understand a charities financial performance. The recognition of income in advance of related expenditure being incurred can give the impression that the charity's financial position is better than it is and this may impact on funding applications. Conversely, the recognition of related expenditure in future years, creating a deficit position, may be interpreted as the charity being in a less favourable financial position than is the case.

Specifically in the case of Social Link, we have deferred the grant income for our new van and copier to be released to match and offset the depreciation of those assets, thereby not creating an income surplus this year and deficits during the following years.

b) Incoming resources

All incoming resources are recorded in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy and it is probable that the amount will be received. Donations under gift aid together with income tax recoverable are recognised when the donation is receivable.

c) Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs relating to that activity.

The cost of small items of equipment is written off in the year it is incurred.

d) Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligations can be measured with reasonable certainty.

2. Donations

Donations include subscriptions for membership of the charity, gift aid rebates for the new football services and the gardening services. Donations were also received from our many kind supporters.

3. Charitable activities

	2023	2022
Evening club revenues	£14,723	£7,992
Gardening services	£15,429	
Football services	£240	
Day sessions revenues	£359,807	£311,277
	£390,199	£319,269

4. Other trading activities

Whilst our fund raising activities have been impacted by the pandemic we have been able to hold some very successful events including quiz night, Walk for the Ones We Love and a Musical Christmas Cracker.

5. Interest

This comprises income from the charity's bank deposit accounts.

6. Expenditure on raising funds

This represents direct expenditure on fund raising events which have been limited due to the pandemic.

7. Charitable expenditure

	2023			2022		
	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total
Evening Clubs	£12,059	£4,933	£16,992	£6,900	£3,042	£9,942
Gardening Services	£12,637	£5,169	£17,807			
Football	£197	£80	£277			
Day Sessions	£294,714	£120,551	£415,265	£262,322	£115,635	£377,957
Total	£319,608	£130,733	£450,341	£269,222	£118,677	£387,899

Support costs, which are mainly the employment and related costs of the charity's employees, are allocated in proportion to the direct costs of the evening clubs and the day sessions respectively.

8. Assets at cost

Intangible Assets

The trademark "Social Link" is held at cost on the balance sheet

	2023	2022
At the beginning of the year	£250	£250
Additions	£0	£0
Disposals	£0	£0
At the end of the year	£250	£250

Tangible Assets

	2023	2022
At the beginning of the year	£0	£0
Addition of a Photocopier	£2,634	£0
Addition of a Van for the Services	£37,830	£0
Disposals	£0	£0
At the end of the year	£40,464	£0

9. Cash at bank and in hand

This comprises bank current and deposit accounts plus petty cash. These are all liquid funds available for immediate use by the charity.

10. Debtors

Debtors comprise outstanding invoices in respect of day session beneficiaries and donations receivable.

11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

- a) These provisions represent liabilities for services provided but not yet invoiced and accrued costs, all of which have been settled since the year end.

	2023	2022
Trade creditors and accruals	£18,102	£20,544
Consultants	£10,641	£6,978
HMRC	£4,558	£2,971
Pensions	£0	£784
	£33,300	£31,277

- b) Grants

	2022	Grants received in the year	Grants released in the year	2023
Grants for Van (depreciated/grant released over 5 years)	£0	£30,464		£30,464
Grants for Café		£2,000		£2,000
Grant for photocopier (depreciated/grant released over 5 years)		£2,800	-£166	£2,634
Grants for Gardening and Football		£14,080	-£14,080	£0
Grants for IT and Core Costs		£17,500	-£17,500	£0
	£0	£66,844	-£31,746	£35,098

12. Trustees and Governance costs

No remuneration was paid to Trustees neither did they receive re-imbursement of out of pocket expenses but they were reimbursed for purchases made from time to time on behalf of the charity. There were no Governance costs.

13. Staff costs and volunteers

13.1 Staff Costs

	12 months 2023	12 months 2022
Salaries and wages	£192,625	£140,149
Social security costs	£12,976	£8,579
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)	£7,464	£5,355
Other employee benefits		
Total staff costs	£213,065	£154,083

There are no staff working for the charity whose contracts are with and are paid by a related party

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the reporting period of more than £60,000 TRUE

The total amount paid to key management personnel (includes trustees and senior management) for their services to the charity.

Key management includes the appointment of a Chief Operating Officer.

12 months 2023	12 months 2022
£65,429	£47,277

13.2 Average head count in the year

Parts of the charity in which the employees work

	2023 Number	2022 Number
Fundraising		
Charitable Activities	8	6
Governance		
Total	8	6

13.3 There were no ex-gratia payments to employees and others (excluding trustees).

13.4 There were no redundancy payments.

13.5 The charity relies on the generous contribution of time from unpaid volunteers in carrying out its activities. Volunteers provide substantial support to the beneficiaries at the evening clubs, day sessions and trips away. The value of this contribution, which is difficult to measure, is not included as income.

14. Taxation

Social Link is registered as a charity with both the Charity Commission and HM Revenue & Customs and is thus exempt from corporation tax on its income which is applied for charitable purposes.

15. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf on 23/06/23 by:

James Boylan

James Boylan, Chair of Board of Trustees

Address: Social Link, 84 Bookerhill Road, High Wycombe, BUCKS, HP12 4EX

[20]

Registered office: Social Link, 84 Bookerhill Road, High Wycombe, BUCKS, HP12 4EX
Social-link.co.uk

Charitable Incorporated Organisation: 1158743

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees	SOCIAL LINK		
On accounts for the year ended	31 ST MARCH 2023	Charity no (if any)	1158743
Set out on pages	1-2		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 03 2023

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of The Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

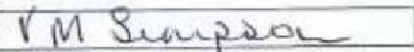
Independent examiner's statement

The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants applicable listed body.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:		Date:	2 nd JUNE 2023
Name:	VERONICA MARY SIMPSON		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	FCCA		

IER

1

Oct 2018

Address: CLACKS COTTAGE BLACKTHORNE LANE
BALLINGER
HP16 9LN

Section B Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

SOCIAL LINK

England & Wales - Charity number 1158743

Accounts



where being you counts

Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1158743

Trustees Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2022

turning disabilities into abilities

Registered office: Social Link, 84 Bookerhill Road, High Wycombe, BUCKS, HP12 4EX
www.social-link.co.uk
[#wherebeingyoucounts](https://www.instagram.com/wherebeingyoucounts)

Trustees Report for the year ended 31st March 2022

Constitution

Social Link was formed on 14th August 2014 and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 1st October 2014 by the Charity Commission. Its purpose is to provide support, practical advice and social and recreational facilities for adults with learning disabilities in Buckinghamshire. A revised constitution featuring the opportunity for Proxy Voting was approved by the Board and members in July 2021, no further changes have been made to the constitution in 2021/2022.

Our Vision

A world where people with learning disabilities are valued equally, listened to, empowered to contribute to, and are included within our society.

Our Mission

To provide a safe, supported and stimulating environment for adults with learning disabilities to work and grow together as individuals, thereby helping them to build confidence, resilience and a sense of self-worth, develop independence and realise their potential.

Our Core Values**Putting our beneficiaries first**

By providing a service that is led by the needs, ambitions, passions, interests, hopes and dreams of our beneficiaries.

Embracing diversity and individual uniqueness

By celebrating our differences as well as the similarities that bring us together.

Promoting independence and social interaction

By being committed to developing members' enduring life skills through social experience and community membership.

Looking after ourselves and each other

By acting together in a caring, compassionate, considerate, celebratory, tolerant and respectful manner.

Championing equality, inclusion and belonging

By ensuring integration and involvement in communities, and by breaking down barriers which may cause isolation and exclusion.

Aspiring to be better

By ensuring that as an organisation we are responsive to the needs of our beneficiaries, we set no limits on individual growth and potential, we are ambitious for both the charity and its beneficiaries, and that we strive for continuous improvement.

Board of Trustees

The Trustees are:

Linda Laurence (Chair - retired 14/07/21)
James Boylan (Chair - appointed 14/07/21)
Carole Harvey (Treasurer and Vice Chair)
Glynis Wiseman
Janet Shuttlewood
Umair Manir
Steve Birch (Co-opted 15/12/21)

Services and Activities

2021/2022 has continued to be a transitional year for Social Link in its journey towards post-COVID recovery and the re-introduction of indoor services when Government advice permitted. The Social Link team has energetically and successfully managed to overcome the most insurmountable of obstacles to continue to motivate, challenge, stimulate and support over 140 Buckinghamshire-based adults with learning disabilities in a range of innovative ways. This has included:

- Provision of indoor activities within size restricted bubbles
- Filming of sessions shared between bubbles, so everyone felt a part of the whole charity
- Walking groups with step challenges and awards
- New sessions created for afternoons to reduce isolation anxieties
- Gardening
- Introduction of mindfulness sessions to support individuals within a group to share and develop coping mechanisms for their anxieties caused by the pandemic and changes to services
- Football training in preparing for future matches
- Demand-led growth of the football teams
- Sponsored walk – creating fundraising opportunities whilst balancing continued restrictions
- Re-introduction of evening social clubs
- Delivery of IT equipment and stationery to members to ensure individuals did not miss out due to personal and family circumstances.

As from April 2021 we were thrilled to announce the re-opening of our indoor Day Projects following government guidance after the second lockdown. The team was swift to ensure the innovative provision of a range of varied, stimulating and physical activities whilst balancing

working in safety bubbles with continuing restrictions. The team worked tirelessly to ensure members were fully supported to understand the importance and relevance of their bubbles and were given extra support with their anxieties around the lack of freedom of movement around the building, and not getting to see all their friends and team members.

We increased the days of provision in High Wycombe from four days a week to five - initially to reduce the numbers of members attending each day for COVID-safety reasons. However, this has been so successful we have continued to run the service on weekdays with a view to gradually increasing the numbers attending each day, thereby giving us the scope to offer our unparalleled services to a greater number of members.

We are pleased to say that there have been many positives despite COVID over the last few years. Social Link continues to attract fabulous individuals to our team who really have member development, needs and wishes at the heart of their work. We were lucky to welcome the addition of four new staff to the day projects: Harriet, Kat, Steph and Sarah K.

The members' own innovative newspaper (retitled last year as *The Social Link Lockdown Times*) has been given a make-over and after a member vote is now called *The Social Link Express*. A new online format was utilised involving members taking turns with writing and typing articles, editing pages and creating puzzles all using ICT skills. Members take responsibility for photocopying and putting the newspaper together each month. They have learned how to email their ideas and photos for the next issue to team member Sarah M. Each session begins with group discussions around Social Link news and more recently current national news, where agreements are made as to what news will feature before roles and responsibilities are assigned. This has resulted in some members progressing to editing pages completely independently and now going on to support and empowering their peers to gain these skills too. A monthly competition is held for members to submit their artwork to feature on the front cover, this has become hugely popular across the whole service. Thank you to Hannah S and Sarah M for developing such a great way for our members to increase their literacy and ICT skills.

Evening clubs both in High Wycombe and Aylesbury were finally able to resume with reduced numbers by dividing the group into two halves with each half attending fortnightly. Both services have seen a change in evening club leaders, with our fabulous media consultant Richard joining the Wycombe team and newcomer Kate joining the Aylesbury team. Welcome to both.

Referrals for both groups have continued to increase despite the lockdown, resulting in a possible need for additional evening clubs over the coming year. This is a real testimony to the success and enjoyment of these clubs but also clearly demonstrates a local need for such services.

Co-ordinators

The beginning of this year saw the appointment of two Service Co-ordinators. Jacci and Hannah are over-seeing the Day Opportunities' provision within Social Link, with a particular focus on our activity offering and how we maximise the development of our members to

ensure we are providing the best service we can to all who attend. Jaci and Hannah went through a four-stage interview process during which time their skills and experience shone through, ensuring their suitability for this crucial new role.

Social Link Football Teams

In response to a tenacious member with a passion for football and coaching plus the need to increase physical fitness after lockdown, 'Social Link FC' was formed. The team set up training sessions in Aylesbury and apprehensively yet excitedly signed up to the BOBI League, one of the largest pan-disability leagues in the country (a football league providing regular football opportunities for children and adults with physical and learning disabilities across Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire).

Due to popular demand and word of mouth, a second team was then formed. The enjoyment this generates has been contagious, even creating a following of supporters who travel far and wide to watch the teams play. We are grateful to one parent – *you know who you are* - who attends every game and has been so delighted by her son's involvement and development that she sends Social Link a monthly donation to assist with any costs associated with running these teams.

For the players, the opportunities that have arisen for them have been many: the development of social skills, communication and teamwork skills, along with development of technical football skills. Indeed, two players are about to embark upon coaching and referee training.

Through passionate conversations between the football team managers and other team members about how wonderful it would be to acquire new football kits, an incredibly generous offer to pay for a new kit for each team came from Owen White Solicitors. The players took great delight in choosing the style and colour and the sense of pride radiated from every player when putting on their new kits for the first time. Some of the players and managers met with Mike Smith from Owen White Solicitors to parade their new kit and to say a huge *Thank You* for this very welcome donation.

Wellbeing

Whilst supporting members with coping with the re-opening of services, being indoors and returning to mixing with larger numbers of people, the team recognised that some individuals were experiencing high levels of anxiety. This started to have a varied impact on their day-to-day activities ranging from being subdued, loss of confidence and lack of desire to engage in sessions previously loved. In extreme cases it affected attendance and created a sudden desire among individuals to isolate themselves even when at home with their families. This led to a member of the Social Link team requesting to gain wellbeing-based training with a view to looking at how we as an organisation support those struggling with anxiety and the feelings that have stemmed from experiencing a pandemic. Relevant training was sought and attended, and wellbeing sessions were introduced to the choice of activities offered to members. Members have been encouraged and supported to share their experiences, keep

journals and learn simple coping mechanisms/techniques that could be used anywhere and at any time when anxiety levels are increasing. This has had such a positive effect on the individuals accessing these sessions and feedback from families has confirmed that coping mechanisms learned are being shared at home. We aim to continue to develop these sessions and also to look at empowering individuals to make changes in their lives through advocacy. We would like to thank consultant Kim Galvani for her passion and determination with developing tailored sessions that promote wellbeing across our service.

New Parent / Carer Support Group

During the pandemic, it wasn't only recognised that members needed some support but also recognised that there was an opportunity to form a parent support group to enable parents and carers to have an opportunity to chat, socialise and share experiences and information. This is currently in the process of being started and will hopefully grow over the coming months. The Board would like to thank Glynis Wiseman for being instrumental in the development of this much needed opportunity for families and carers.

Strategic Review

In March this year, the Board of Trustees and the whole Social Link Team spent a day together with the aim of reviewing the purpose of the charity and to collectively plan for its future development. Previous Chair of Trustees, Linda Laurence, led the morning session and current Chair, James Boylan, led the afternoon session.

By attempting to meet the challenges posed by the pandemic, the charity has had to react in agile and decisive ways. In our post COVID-19 recovery, it was important for the charity to consider lessons learned during this challenging time and to use these to inform actions to enhance our present and future service offering and to ensure the long-term viability of the charity. While the pandemic presented an array of challenges, it also prompted new and innovative ways of working, which were important to capture.

The strategy day gave us a rare opportunity to be together (especially important for new team members) to reaffirm the charity's mission statement, aims and objectives, and to collectively agree strategic developments to ensure Social Link continues to provide the best service it can for all members.

Gardening Service

The Social Link Gardening Service offers members the opportunity of gaining work-based skills and has gone from strength to strength throughout the past year. During this time, the gardening crew has secured a wide range of garden and woodland maintenance contracts.

This year witnessed the crew proudly attain recognised certification in using the hand lawn mowers, leaf blowers and ride-on mowers. The feedback from members and parents of those attending this service continues to be extremely positive. With an emphasis on the acquisition of new skills, this has increased participants' confidence, resilience, and self-belief. Members

have blossomed and developed a strong desire to be part of a working team and to feel useful. Feedback from clients booking the team's services has been equally positive with comments identifying the high standard of work and leading to new word-of-mouth bookings. This wonderful new project has given us the added benefit of an extra income stream too. All work, once checked on completion that it is to the standard required, has been carried out in exchange for a donation to the charity.

We are currently looking at raising funds for the purchase of a specific gardening vehicle to enable this innovative service to expand and allow a greater number of members to access it. We would like to thank consultants Rob Thomas and Karen Atkins for continuing to drive this valuable service forward.

We extend our thanks to all employees, consultants and volunteers involved in organising and providing such wonderful opportunities for the beneficiaries of the charity, particularly going above and beyond during the last year to ensure that the safety of all our vulnerable members and their families was paramount.

Partnerships

LCVR Ltd

The charity continues to gain great benefit from the 9-seater vehicle provided to us by LCVR Ltd in Princes Risborough. The vehicle was upgraded in summer 2020 and continues to be used every day, enabling us to travel further afield and increasing the activities and opportunities on offer to our beneficiaries. A huge thank you again to everyone at LCVR Ltd.

Owen and White Solicitors

We are extremely thankful for the support Owen White Solicitors have given us not only with the purchase of our dazzling new football kits, but also for the invaluable legal support they provided us with this year.

Action for Youth

Wycombe-based teenagers spent time over the college holiday finding out about our charity and used this information to successfully fundraise on our behalf. We are hoping to work with these young volunteers face-to-face this summer.

Woodwork partnership

Chris Davies, a Social Link member, came to us with a new activity idea that he thought would excite our Social Link members and asked if he could be instrumental in the creation and development of a partnership working with a woodwork expert he knew. We supported Chris to launch his idea, mapping out session plans, health and safety processes, risk assessments, and liaising with him and the woodwork specialist Lyn. Chris and Lyn then carried out these sessions in 8-week blocks allowing up to 8 members at a time to join in. The members absolutely love these sessions and have gained and implemented fantastic new skills in drilling, shaving, filing and hammering to make the most wonderful creations. We are currently looking forward to members designing and creating their own re-usable photo frames. The Board would like to thank Chris and Lyn for all their hard work and for pulling together such a creative and innovative programme of activities for the benefit of our

members. We would also like to thank Elizabeth (Chris's sister) for so generously funding the materials needed to run these sessions.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when meeting the organisation's charitable objectives. The charity has continued to provide valuable advice, support and social, recreational, and educational experiences for adults with learning disabilities and difficulties.

During the last year, the charity increased its levels of support to those who needed it, including the addition of wellbeing sessions. The charity received increased referrals as other services were not opening or were being selective in their acceptance criteria. The activities of the charity are made available to all who meet the stated admission criteria.

The Trustees regularly review the circumstances of the charity's beneficiaries and Social Link provides financial assistance where this might be required to enable participation in its activities. Resources, including IT equipment, have also been made available to members where appropriate to ensure their inclusion in the charity's activities.

The Impact of COVID

General Income

The charity has successfully managed to navigate its second year through the pandemic, ensuring that the needs of the beneficiaries continued to be met. However, the pandemic has again had an expected negative impact on our general running costs.

During these last 12 months we have further adapted and developed our services bringing greater opportunities for experiences, learning and integration within local communities. This has resulted in an overall increase in our income both when compared against the previous 13 months and when compared against a pro-rata 12-month period, which is most evident in the increase in our income for our charitable activities.

However, as a consequence of opening indoor services and delivering these services in small "bubbles" our costs have increased significantly too. There is a continued need for higher ratios of staff to members, PPE, individual non-sharing activity resources in addition to extra rent charges for the indoor services. This was anticipated and reported in our previous annual report and financial provisions were made by the Board of Trustees. Last year we welcomed the support via the furlough scheme but this has not continued into this year.

Fundraising

Continued restrictions in place during the last year has meant we were sadly still unable to carry out our usual fundraising activities of pre-pandemic years. We were, however, able to carry out our delightful, sponsored *Walk For The Ones We Love* which raised an incredible £3,800. The walk was a delightful 8-mile walk from Bourne End to Marlow and back, with lots

of smiles and laughter, a welcome picnic in the park at the halfway point - and even a sing-along with Richard and his guitar! We would like to thank all those members, families and team members who took part in our walk or made a donation as part of the event. A special Thank You goes to Sayers Butterworth, The Martins, The Baldwins, and Caroline Picton (one of our members) for such an incredible amount raised.

We also raised a further £3,653 in fundraising from the following organisations and events: High Wycombe Lotto, The Social Link Garden party, The Social Link member Christmas party and incredible eBay sales. Thank you to all who donated such wonderful clothes and toys also to Bobby Faiers for her brilliant packaging and eBay-selling skills.

Donations

Despite yet another challenging year faced, the charity received a wonderful total of £8,066.16 in donations, including tax repayments under Gift Aid. Major donations were gratefully received from Instron, Azdio, Action for Youth, SUEZ Scope, Owen White Solicitors, County Financial, Howe and Co Fish and Chip Van 22, Sarah Turner, John Scanlon, Jennifer Stevenson, The Wray Family Trust, the Davy Family, Mr and Mrs Benton, Bernie Till, Vincent Scaffolding and Deanfield Homes.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who made donations which have supported the charity's activities during a very difficult time.

Grants

Due to the pandemic and rising costs, Social Link has been proactively and successfully seeking grants to support the development of new projects and assist with sustainability. We would like to thank the following organisations for their generosity:

- Chesham, Amersham and District MENCAP
- The Rothschild Foundation

Future Plans

Despite the pandemic, Social Link continues to go from strength to strength and is relentless in seeking to ensure the best provision for our beneficiaries. During the recent strategic review we agreed the following priorities:

1. Gardening Project – To further develop this into a standalone profit generating business unit, including the raising of funds to purchase a gardening vehicle.
2. To build on the current 'wellbeing' member sessions and to consider a potential advocacy service.
3. To continue with the development of a parent support group which would build upon the relationships that have been formed with member families during lockdown. It would provide a source of information to families as well as an opportunity to share experiences in an informal setting. In addition, it could assist in growing the number of Social Link supporters and helpers.

4. A 14-18/19 transitional service to ensure that young people leaving education are aware of Social Link and the options available to them. A focus to be placed on building a relationship with special schools in the county.
5. Supported employment opportunities – working in partnership with Buckinghamshire Council to develop an employment support service to provide opportunities for members and other individuals to learn and develop employment-related skills and enable them to access and retain employment.
6. Member Forum –To continue to develop a Member Forum where members’ voices help to shape the work of the charity and the activities and experiences they are able to enjoy.
7. Member reviews – Every Social Link Day Project member will have a key worker meeting and invite attendees of their choice to discuss service provision and their own aims and objectives they wish to work towards.
8. Café Takeover – Social Link members and team will be taking over the Hills Café in High Wycombe every Thursday afternoon starting from July 2022. This is to build on and develop work experience skills in a real-life commercial set up.
9. Development of the role of Social Link Co-ordinators and appointment of Deputy CEO – The CEO and Board are committed to securing the sustainability of Social Link through these middle and senior leadership roles. Furthermore, the Board is committed to ensuring that the CEO has appropriate leadership and management support to enable her to fulfil her essential duties to the best of her ability.
10. To create and sell a ‘Social Link model’ which could be applied in other locations beyond Buckinghamshire.

Board Membership

The Board of Trustees recently set out and approved a new Recruitment of Trustees Policy and Procedure. The Board is committed to ensuring it provides high quality governance of the charity, including having high quality Board membership. Recently the Board co-opted a new board member, Steve Birch. Steve has considerable experience in the business world which will be invaluable as the charity implements its strategic priorities.

Voting Membership

Voting Membership of the charity has recently increased in numbers and continues to be open to parents, carers and friends who would like to support our aims. Membership is available for a £25 annual subscription, which entitles the member to vote at the AGM and receive regular newsletters and enables the charity to claim a 25% tax rebate under gift aid, where the subscriber is a UK taxpayer.

Financial Update and Risk Review

Due to the COVID pandemic the charity has continued to face many challenges during the 12-month period to the 31st March 2022. We always prioritise the wellbeing of our members and are conscious of the support they need, which in many cases increased as a result of the pandemic. We have followed both best practice and regulations to ensure the safety of our members, staff and consultants whilst still providing continuous, enhanced and expanded

services throughout the year. This has incurred additional costs. As of 31st March 2022, the charity reported a deficit for the year of £17,961, which reduced our total funds carried forward to £111,704.

The Trustees meet regularly to monitor and review the income, expenditure and cash position.

We have applied for and have been notified of the award of several grants which will provide further support going forward. We are confident that we can continue to deliver all our expanded services and will continue to apply for grants to supplement our income and cover our costs.

As a charity which operates services for vulnerable adults, we are very conscious of the potential risks arising from our activities. We have established policies for the operation of our activities which are reviewed and monitored by the Trustees. The charity maintains a risk register which is regularly reviewed. Procedures are in place to protect the organisation from financial fraud.

Reserves Policy

The finances of the charity and the need for secure future funding are reflected in our Reserves Policy.

The charity has ongoing commitments to run its evening clubs and day sessions, which are a very valuable part of our members' lives. The Trustees have decided that the reserves need to be sufficient to cover risks that may arise and should, as a minimum, be sufficient to cover the level of direct expenditure on these activities for a period of four months, that is £111,000 without additional external support. We will continue to apply for further grants to supplement these reserves.

The Trustees consider that the current reserves of £111,704 of Unrestricted Funds in the Financial Statements, are sufficient but the charity continues to need to raise funds each year to meet its future requirements. As the charity continues to expand, and over the coming year with the effects of COVID the Trustees will continue to review the Reserves Policy.

Organisation of the Charity

The Trustees take policy decisions on behalf of the charity at their regular Board meetings. During the pandemic the Board met monthly; since restrictions have eased, the Board has resumed its bi-monthly meetings. Day-to-day decisions continue to be delegated to our wonderful CEO, Wendy Dunn, who leads all aspects of the charity's provision. The Chair and CEO meet weekly virtually or in-person to discuss strategic and operational matters. The CEO also has an advisory role at Board meetings. The Board thanks Wendy for her continuing passionate, determined and exemplary leadership of Social Link.

Trustees are appointed in accordance with the terms of the charity's constitution and the recently reviewed Trustee Appointment Policy. When appointing new Trustees, the charity looks for individuals who have a sensitivity towards adults with learning disabilities and difficulties and are appreciative of diversity and difference in the world. In addition, in appointing Trustees, the Board is conscious of creating a sustainable Board with a broad skills base to ensure governance of the highest standards. All trustees are required to commit to regular training.

Appreciation

Linda Laurence and previous Board members

On 14th July 2021 Linda Laurence resigned from her position of Chair of Trustees and the Board of Trustees. James Boylan was appointed as the new Chair of Trustees with Carole Harvey taking on the additional role of Vice-Chair of Trustees. The Board would like to express its gratitude to Linda for her contribution to the development of Social Link over a number of years, for her wise counsel at all times and for her incisive leadership during troubled times which has enabled Social Link to emerge as a stronger organisation. The Board is also very conscious of its trustee history. Each Board and Trustee cycle builds on the successes of previous Boards and Trustees. The Board would like at this time to remember the contributions of past Trustees who have all contributed to the charity as it is today – Richard and Sandy, Paul, Brian, Jenny and David.

The Board of Trustees

All Board members are volunteers and give their time freely to the Charity. During the year under review the Board was more than ever mindful of the uncertain and stressful environment in which Social Link was operating and so endeavoured to be as supportive as possible of the CEO and the Social Link operational team. The Chair of Trustees would like to express his appreciation again to Linda Laurence for the role model she provided as former Chair of Trustees and to current Board members for their energy, support, resilience, commitment, good sense and unfailing good humour at all times. Like the Social Link operational team, Board members have gone above and beyond to provide exemplary governance to ensure that Social Link has emerged as a strengthened organisation during the most challenging of times.

Chief Executive Officer

Wendy Dunn is the heart and soul of Social Link. The Board of Trustees would like to express its appreciation for all that Wendy has done and continues to do to ensure that some of Buckinghamshire's most vulnerable residents enjoy happy, meaningful, social, educative and fun times in all the ways they experience Social Link. Wendy is relentless in ensuring the best for members within and beyond Social Link. She embodies the values of Social Link and all that the charity strives to be for its members. We are proud to have Wendy Dunn as our CEO.

Employees, Leaders, Support Workers, Volunteers and Supporters

Organisations are only as good as the people within them. Social Link has great people. The Board of Trustees would like to say thank you to all employees, leaders, support workers, volunteers and supporters for all they contribute. Much of the work of these appreciated colleagues is unseen but the Board recognises the passionate commitment, relentless enthusiasm, resourcefulness, joyfulness, creativity and imagination, compassion and love that everyone brings to work every day. We are proud of all those who contribute to ensuring that members have the best possible experiences every day.

The Board of Trustees would also like to thank our donors and all the volunteers who have made the successes of the last year possible. Also, thanks to those local businesses who have supported the charity during this very challenging year.

Finally, the Board of Trustees would like to say a particular thank you to those behind the scenes who ensure that every day runs smoothly and that the financial management of the charity is as good as it can be. So, thank you to Victoria Fallon, Karen Marrinan and Laura Ripley for all you do.

The CEO would also like to say a special thank you to Victoria for her unwavering support, attention to detail and seamlessly stepping into her shoes as and when required. She would also like to thank Karen Marrinan for providing strong day-to-day financial oversight of the charity's activities. Both colleagues provide an important and essential behind-the-scenes role.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to:

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

The Trustees are responsible for keeping 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 Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf on 24/06/22 by:

James Boylan

James Boylan, Chair of Board of Trustees

Address: Social Link, 84 Bookerhill Road, High Wycombe, BUCKS, HP12 4EX

Social Link

Statement of Financial Activities for the 12-month period ended 31st March 2022, the comparison for 2021 is for the 13-month period ended 31st March 2021.

	2022	2021
	12 months	13 months
Income from:		
Donations (Note 2)	£8,066	£10,818
Charitable activities (Note 3)	£319,269	£314,598
Other trading activities (Note 4)	£7,454	£5,415
Income from Infection Control Fund, Grants and Furlough	£35,136	£43,616
Interest (Note 5)	£13	£78
Total income	£369,938	£374,525
Expenditure on:		
Raising funds (Note 6)	£1,177	£444
Charitable activities (Note 7)	£386,722	£333,002
Total expenditure	£387,899	£333,446
Net income and movement in funds	-£17,961	£41,079
Total funds brought forward	£129,665	£88,777
Movement in designated funds		-£190
Total funds carried forward	£111,704	£129,665

The notes on pages 18 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

Social Link

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2022

	2022	2021
Intangible fixed assets (Note 8)	£250	£250
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 9)	£126,583	£166,373
Prepayments	£785	£1,265
Debtors (Note 10)	£15,363	£9,098
	<u>£142,731</u>	<u>£176,736</u>
Current liabilities		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 11)	£31,277	£47,321
Net current assets	<u>£111,454</u>	<u>£129,415</u>
Net assets	<u>£111,704</u>	<u>£129,665</u>
Unrestricted income fund	£111,704	£129,665
Total funds	<u>£111,704</u>	<u>£129,665</u>

The notes on pages 18 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

Social Link

Statement of cash flows for the 12-month period ended 31st March 2022, the comparison for 2021 is for the 13-month period ended 31st March 2021

	2022	2021
Net cash flow from operating activities		
Net income/deficit	-£17,961	£41,079
Movement in debtors and prepayments	-£5,785	£3,865
Movement in liabilities	-£16,044	£10,994
Capital expenditure	£0	£0
Net cash movement from operating activities	-£39,790	£55,938
 Cash at the beginning of the year	 £166,373	 £110,435
 Cash at the end of the year	 £126,583	 £166,373

The notes on pages 18 to 20 form part of these financial statements.

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the 12 months ended 31st March 2022

1. Statement of accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies have been consistently applied. The financial statements also comply with the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities SORP (FRS 102) and with the Charities Act 2011. The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

b) Incoming resources

All incoming resources are recorded in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy and it is probable that the amount will be received. Donations under gift aid together with income tax recoverable are recognised when the donation is receivable.

c) Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs relating to that activity.

The cost of small items of equipment is written off in the year it is incurred.

d) Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligations can be measured with reasonable certainty.

2. Donations

Donations include subscriptions for membership of the charity plus gift aid rebates.

3. Charitable activities

	2022	2021
Evening club revenues	£7,992	£9,238
Day sessions revenues	£311,277	£305,360
	£319,269	£314,598

4. Other trading activities

Our fund raising activities have been impacted by the pandemic.

5. Interest

This comprises income from the charity's bank deposit accounts.

6. Expenditure on raising funds

This represents direct expenditure on fund raising events which have been limited due to the pandemic

7. Charitable expenditure

	2022			2021		
	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total
Evening Clubs	£6,900	£3,042	£9,942	£11,145	£5,672	£16,817
Day Sessions	£262,322	£115,635	£377,957	£209,842	£106,788	£316,630
Total	£269,222	£118,677	£387,899	£220,987	£112,460	£333,447

Support costs, which are mainly the employment and related costs of the charity's employees, are allocated in proportion to the direct costs of the evening clubs and the day sessions respectively.

8. Intangible assets at cost

The trademark "Social Link" is held at cost on the balance sheet

	2022	2021
At the beginning of the year	£250	£250
Additions	£0	£0
Disposals	£0	£0
At the end of the year	£250	£250

9. Cash at bank and in hand

This comprises bank current and deposit accounts plus petty cash. These are all liquid funds available for immediate use by the charity.

10. Debtors

Debtors comprise outstanding invoices in respect of day session beneficiaries and donations receivable.

11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

These provisions represent liabilities for services provided but not yet invoiced and accrued costs, all of which have been settled since the year end.

	2022	2021
Trade creditors and accruals	£20,544	£15,808
Consultants	£6,978	£7,621
HMRC	£2,971	£3,088
Pensions	£784	£804
Deferred income		£20,000
	£31,277	£47,321

	2021	Increase in deferred income	Decrease in deferred income	2022
Deferred Income				
Grants from Heart of Bucks and Rothschild	£20,000		-£20,000	£0
Infection Control Fund from Bucks Council		£13,136	-£13,136	£0
Grant from Mencap		£2,000	-£2,000	£0
Furlough Grant		£11,718	-£11,718	£0
	£20,000	£26,854	-£46,854	£0

12. Trustees and Governance costs

No remuneration was paid to Trustees neither did they receive re-imbusement of out of pocket expenses but they were reimbursed for purchases made from time to time on behalf of the charity. There were no Governance costs.

13. Staff costs and volunteers

13.1 Staff Costs

	12 months 2022	13 months 2021
Salaries and wages	£140,149	£149,253
Social security costs	£8,579	£9,484
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)	£5,355	£5,809
Other employee benefits		£0
Total staff costs	£154,083	£164,546

There are no staff working for the charity whose contracts are with and are paid by a related party

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the reporting period of more than £60,000

TRUE

	12 months 2022	13 months 2021
The total amount paid to key management personnel (includes trustees and senior management) for their services to the charity.	£47,277	£51,217

13.2 Average head count in the year

Parts of the charity in which the employees work

	2022 Number	2021 Number
Fundraising		
Charitable Activities	6	6
Governance		
Total	6	6

13.3 There were no ex-gratia payments to employees and others (excluding trustees).

13.4 There were no redundancy payments.

13.5 The charity relies on the generous contribution of time from unpaid volunteers in carrying out its activities. Volunteers provide substantial support to the beneficiaries at the evening clubs, day sessions and trips away. The value of this contribution, which is difficult to measure, is not included as income.

14. Taxation

Social Link is registered as a charity with both the Charity Commission and HM Revenue & Customs and is thus exempt from corporation tax on its income which is applied for charitable purposes.

15. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

Approved by the Trustees on 24/06/22 and signed on their behalf by-

James Boylan

James Boylan – Chair

Address: 84 Bookerhill Road, High Wycombe, HP12 4EX



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Independent examiner's
report on the accounts**

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

SOCIAL LINK

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31ST MARCH 2022

**Charity no
(if any)**

1158743

Set out on pages

1-2

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31/03/2022

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

V M Simpson

Date:

19TH JUNE 2022

Name:

VERONICA MARY SIMPSON

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

FCCA

Address:

CLACKS COTTAGE BLACKTHORNE LANE

BALLINGER

GREAT MISSENDEN HP16 9LN

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.



SOCIAL LINK

England & Wales - Charity number 1158743

Accounts



Social Link - a Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Registered charity 1158743

Trustees Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 31st March 2021

turning disabilities into **abilities**

Registered office: Social Link, Formosa Barn, Mill Lane, Cookham, SL6 9QT

Tel 0793 2222 453 Email victoriaf@sociallink.org.uk

www.social-link.co.uk

Charitable incorporated organisation 1158743

Trustees Report for the year ended 31st March 2021

Constitution

Social Link was formed on 14th August 2014 and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation by the Charity Commission on 1st October 2014. The purpose of the Charity is to provide support, practical advice and social and recreational facilities for adults with learning disabilities in Buckinghamshire. A revised constitution was approved at last years' virtual General Meeting in July 2020. A notable feature of this was the incorporation of proxy voting into the charity's constitution.

Our Vision

A world where people with learning disabilities are valued equally, listened to, empowered to contribute and included within our society.

Our Mission

To provide a safe, supported and stimulating environment for adults with learning disabilities to work and grow together and as individuals, thereby helping to build confidence and a sense of self-worth, develop independence and realise potential.

Our Core Values

Putting our beneficiaries first

Our service and its development is led by the needs, ambitions, passions, interests, hopes and dreams of our beneficiaries.

Embracing diversity and uniqueness

We celebrate diversity in all that we do.

Promoting independence and social interaction

Developing enduring life skills through social experience and community membership.

Looking after ourselves and each other

By acting together in a caring, compassionate, considerate, celebratory, tolerant and respectful manner.

Championing equality, inclusion and belonging

Ensuring integration and involvement in communities, by breaking down barriers which may cause isolation and exclusion.

Aspiring to be better

Together we will ensure we are an organisation that is responsive to the needs of our beneficiaries, that sets no limits on individual growth and potential, that is ambitious for both the charity and its beneficiaries and that strives for continuous improvement.

Board of Trustees 2020 - 2021

The Trustees are-

Linda Laurance (Chair)
James Boylan (Vice Chair)
Carole Harvey (Treasurer)
Glynis Wiseman
Janet Shuttlewood
Umair Manir (Joined the board 09/12/2020)

Services and Activities Provided

During a challenging year, the Social Link team has indefatigably and successfully managed to overcome the most insurmountable of obstacles to continue to support over 140 Buckinghamshire-based adults with learning disabilities in a range of innovative face-to-face and virtual ways. This has included:

- Daily to weekly phone support to suit individual needs
- Weekly activity packs
- Daily Zoom activity sessions
- Weekly challenges
- Walking milestones including 1:1 walking
- Walking groups *when allowed*
- Gardening
- Football training
- Delivery of IT equipment and stationery to members to ensure individuals were not excluded due to personal and family circumstances.

Indoor day project activities have now resumed following the implementation of appropriate health, safety and welfare measures, including operating in bubbles of eight members. The Social Link team has worked tirelessly to ensure that members have experienced innovative and creative social and learning opportunities throughout the pandemic and that all our members have been able to feel included throughout this challenging time through phone calls, the home delivery of activity packs, virtual interactive sessions on Zoom and the setting of weekly challenges.

The members' own fabulous newspaper, 'The Social Link Times', has been retitled for now 'The Social Link Lockdown Times'. This has provided a platform for members to submit poetry expressing their thoughts and feelings, stories of their personal lockdown experiences, photos illustrating the completion of challenges set, and the sharing of ideas for keeping busy during lockdown, including step-by-step picture recipes. A member Editorial Board was formed and met weekly via Zoom to ensure the regular publication of 'The Social Link Lockdown Times'. This was hugely successful, and feedback was that it was instrumental in the reduction of anxiety and loneliness.

During the pandemic there has been a significant focus on activities relating to health, fitness and healthy minds, including the creation of a 2600 mile walking challenge for the

whole organisation which was the equivalent of us walking to Lithuania and back. This enabled members, supported by their families and carers, to remain active during lockdown.

Evening and weekend Internet gaming sessions were provided, linking members who were at higher risk of facing isolation and enabling them to connect with each other for extra support. These have continued, without the need of being supported by staff.

New Outdoor Service

As restrictions eased after the first lockdown, we recognised the need for members to be together socially with their friends and peers. Virtual services alone were not enough to prevent their anxieties increasing and mental wellbeing from deteriorating. So, recognising that outside was the safest place to be (especially with those who don't necessarily understand social distancing), the idea of a brand new outdoor-only service was proposed. To achieve this, we collaborated with the Wycombe Arts Centre offering to develop their gardens and to provide creative opportunities of engagement in outdoor physical activities in a safe space for our members. This partnership also enabled us to provide a range of outdoor-based activities including art, music, dance alongside horticultural activities to ensure full engagement of all members whatever their talents.

We secured the support of a local building company, A Bone & Son, who kindly donated much-needed large quantities of top soil from another site for our home-made veg boxes, to even out uneven ground and to create a long-needed wheelchair ramp.

We also gained the support from an organisation called Rough Around The Edges, who ensured the gardens were wildlife-friendly and provided us with an opportunity to develop wildlife conservation gardening skills.

The produce that has been grown within this project is now being used in cooking sessions, allowing members to see the produce go from seed to plate, developing their knowledge and interest in food. The members were instrumental in deciding what to grow, sowing and nurturing the fruit, vegetables and herbs from seed, watering, harvesting and then finally cooking what they have grown. This journey together has enabled all of us to better respect, understand and appreciate the wonders of nature and the food that sustains us.

This new outdoor service has proven to be very successful and will be developed further in the year ahead. Feedback from members and their families has been extremely positive, and viewed by many as a lifeline during lockdown. We are very proud of how our imaginative response to the pandemic has strengthened relationships within the charity as well as beyond the charity and how we have added a greener dimension to our work.

Gardening Service

Building on the success of the current Day Project offer, we chose to invest some of our reserves prior to the pandemic into the introduction of a café and gardening service. Due to Covid restrictions, the café project has currently been put on hold. The Gardening Service

has, by contrast, gone from strength to strength. This service provides members with supported employment opportunities, introducing key work-based certificated transferable skills alongside integration into the local community.

During the last year, a core group of five gardeners and a horticulture-trained consultant have supported members of the community with small gardening projects including the tidying of a local community residents' woodland. The feedback from members and parents of those attending these new services has been very positive. With an emphasis on the acquisition of new skills this has increased confidence, resilience, and self-belief. Members have blossomed and developed a strong desire to be part of a working team and to feel useful. Feedback from clients booking the team's services has been equally as positive, with comments identifying the high standard of work and leading to new word of mouth bookings.

This wonderful new project has given us the added benefit of an extra stream of funding. All work, once checked on completion that it is to the standard required, has been carried out in exchange for a donation to the charity. We would like to thank Consultant Rob Thomas for taking the lead and for driving this valuable service forward.

We extend our thanks to all employees, consultants and volunteers involved in organising and providing such wonderful opportunities for the beneficiaries of the charity, particularly going above and beyond during the last year to ensure that the safety of all our vulnerable members and their families was paramount.

Partnerships

As a result of financial challenges caused by the pandemic, our partnership with White Stuff sadly came to an end. However, our close working relationship is continuing to mutual benefit. We would like to thank the team at the Beaconsfield White Stuff store for all their continuing support.

The charity continues to gain great benefit from the 9-seater vehicle provided to us by LCVR Ltd in Princes Risborough. The vehicle was upgraded in summer 2020 and continues to be used every day, enabling us to travel further afield and increasing the activities and opportunities on offer to our beneficiaries. A huge thank you again to everyone at LCVR Ltd.

Proud of Bucks Award

Wendy and the Social Link Team were nominated in the Proud of Bucks Awards in recognition for their efforts during lockdown. They were successful in gaining a Highly Commended Award in the Community Heroes category. Well done to all!

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when meeting the organisation's charitable objectives. The

charity has continued to provide valuable advice, support and social, recreational, and educational experiences for adults with learning disabilities and difficulties.

During the pandemic, the charity increased its levels of support to those who needed it, including 1:1 walking every day for those who were at greater risk of experiencing mental health difficulties. The charity received increased referrals as other services were not opening or were being selective in their acceptance criteria.

The activities of the charity are made available to all who meet the stated admission's criteria. The Trustees regularly review the circumstances of the charity's beneficiaries and Social Link provides financial assistance where this might be required to enable participation in its activities. Resources, including IT equipment, have also been made available to members where appropriate to ensure their inclusion in the charity's activities.

Impact of COVID

General Income

Although the charity has successfully managed to navigate its way through the pandemic ensuring the needs of the beneficiaries have been met, the pandemic has had an expected negative impact on our general running costs.

The need for higher ratios of staff to members, PPE, individual non-sharing activity resources, reduced service provision and income due to restrictions in place, increase in days of provision due to smaller bubbles have all resulted in extra premises and staffing costs. This has meant greater costs will continue into 2021-2022 until restrictions are completely eased. As a result, financial provisions have been made by the Board of Trustees.

Extra support from Buckinghamshire Council were gratefully received when they identified the need for day services to gain additional monetary support from the Infection Control Grants which they received from central government. We would like to thank them for this support which has enabled us to ensure that we continue to maintain Covid safety standards with appropriate PPE and infection control measures.

Fundraising

Due to restrictions in place during the pandemic we have sadly been unable to carry out our usual fundraising activities of previous years. We were, however, successful in gaining £1000 in fundraising from the 2600-mile walking challenge, and an additional bonus from the Give Back 2020 Campaign. We would like to thank all those members, families and team members who took part in our challenge or made a donation as part of the campaign.

We also had a further £3000 in fundraising from the following individuals, organisations and activities: Mr B Oliver and his fellow golfers, Lotto, Amazon smile, and Members Christmas cards. We would like to thank all those involved in all these fundraising events and for your ongoing support.

Ebay sales increased this year due to some wonderful donations of bric-a-brac from friends of Social Link and members of the community. Thank you to all those who donated goods and thank you to Bobby Faiers for her time and dedication in running this service.

Donations

Despite the challenging year faced, the charity received a wonderful total of £10,808 in donations, including tax repayments under Gift Aid. Major donations were gratefully received from White Stuff Beaconsfield, the Premier League, Amanda Hodgson, Jennifer Stevenson, Jan Genders, Bernie Till, Richard and Sandie Baldwin, Mrs Croucher and colleagues at County Financial, Kal Sharif at Universal Pharma and Deanfield Homes. Brian, Delia, Sarah, Matthew and Adam Biley, friends of Russell and Sarah Wiseman, generously donated £4000. We were overwhelmed to receive a further £900 in donations given in memory of Sarah Wiseman, a valued volunteer and member of Social Link who sadly passed away in March 2020.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who made donations which have supported the charity's activities during a very difficult time.

Grants

Due to the pandemic and rising costs, Social Link has been proactively and successfully seeking grants to support the development of new projects and assist with sustainability. We would like to thank the following organisations for their generosity:

- The Rothschild Foundation
- Heart of Bucks
- The National Lottery Community Fund

Future Plans

Despite the pandemic, Social Link continues to go from strength to strength and is relentless in seeking to ensure the best provision for our beneficiaries. The Board of Trustees and Management team recently held a strategy meeting to identify strategic priorities for the future as follows:

1. Gardening Project – To further develop this into a stand-alone profit generating business unit.
2. The provision of additional support for members struggling with anxiety as part of a Healthy Minds programme. We are currently exploring specialised qualifications in this area for specific members of the team to undertake and to cascade knowledge throughout the organisation to the rest of the team members.
3. To compliment Priority 2, the formation of a parent support group would build upon the relationships that have been formed with member families throughout lockdown. It would provide a source of information to families as well as an opportunity to share experiences in an informal setting. In addition, it could assist in growing the number of Social Link supporters and helpers.

4. A transitional service to ensure that young people leaving education are aware of Social Link and the options available to them. A focus to be placed on building a relationship with special schools in the county is central to this aim.
5. Supported employment opportunities – working in partnership with Buckinghamshire Council to develop an employment support service to enable members and others to learn and develop employment-related skills to enable them to access and retain employment.
6. Respite provision – it has been recognised that there is a serious lack of respite provision in Buckinghamshire for adults with learning disabilities. Social Link receives high numbers of requests for weekend breaks. A need has been identified for regular small group person-centred breaks.
7. To create and sell a 'Social Link model' which could be applied in other geographical locations beyond Buckinghamshire.

Board Membership

The Board of Trustees is keen to appoint new trustees with legal, business and marketing / PR experience to diversify the charity's Trustee base and contribute to the sustainability of Social Link in the years ahead. It was agreed that the performance of the Board should be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner should the composition of the Board significantly change.

Operations

Future provision needs were highlighted, discussed and prioritised at the recent board meeting, although it is recognised that the prioritised list may change depending on opportunities arising, and on shifts in the external environment.

Voting Membership

Voting Membership of the charity is open to parents, carers and friends who would like to support our aims. Membership is available for a £25 annual subscription, which entitles the member to vote at the AGM and receive regular newsletters, and enables the charity to claim a 25% tax rebate under gift aid, where the subscriber is a UK taxpayer.

Financial Update and Risk Review

Due to the Covid pandemic the charity has had to face many challenges during the 13-month period to the 31st March 2021. Government regulations required the closure of our indoor services at the end of March. Conscious of the support our clients need, which in many cases increased as a result of the pandemic, we immediately created services online and then, when possible, increased services to include social distance walking and outdoor gardening. We have followed both best practice and regulations to ensure the safety of our clients, staff and consultants whilst still providing continuous services throughout the year.

Providing services under the new regulations, and always with safety of our team and clients in mind, does incur additional costs. To ensure the financial security of Social Link the Trustees met on a fortnightly basis to monitor and review the income, expenditure and cash position. We also applied for, and were awarded, several very welcome grants. As at the 31st March 2021 the charity has a deferred income position of £20,000 and total funds carried forward of £129,666. We are confident that we can continue to deliver all our expanded services and will continue to apply for grants to supplement our income and cover our costs.

As a charity which operates services for vulnerable adults, we are very conscious of the potential risks arising from our activities. We have established policies for the operation of our activities which are reviewed and monitored by the Trustees. The charity maintains a risk register which is regularly reviewed. Procedures are in place to protect the organisation from financial fraud.

Reserves Policy

The finances of the charity and the need for future funding are reflected in our Reserves Policy.

The charity has ongoing commitments to run its evening clubs and day sessions, which are a very valuable part of our clients' lives. The Trustees have decided that the reserves need to be sufficient to cover risks that may arise and should, as a minimum, be sufficient to cover the level of direct expenditure on these activities for a period of four months, that is £111,000 without additional external support. We will continue to apply for further grants to supplement these reserves.

The Trustees consider that the current reserves of £129,666 of Unrestricted Funds in the Financial Statements, are sufficient but the charity continues to need to raise funds each year to meet its future requirements. As the charity continues to expand, and over the coming year with the effects of Covid the Trustees will continue to review the reserves policy.

Organisation of the Charity

The Trustees take policy decisions on behalf of the charity at their regular Board meetings. The last year has seen the board increase their meetings to 4-weekly in order to support the CEO and her team with navigating their way through the pandemic. Day to day decisions continue to be delegated to our CEO who manages all aspects of the charity and who has benefited greatly from weekly discussions with the Chair during this difficult time. Our CEO also attends and provides advice at Board meetings.

Trustees are appointed in accordance with the terms of the charity's constitution. When appointing new trustees, the charity looks for individuals who understand or are involved with adults with learning disabilities and difficulties, and who complement the skills of the existing Trustees. In the past candidates have been drawn from the circle of people who were known to the charity but more recently efforts have been made to widen the search through advertising, mindful of the importance of diversity and inclusion. Formal training is

provided to the Trustees on matters such as safeguarding, and the induction of new Trustees is carried out on a one-to-one basis.

Appreciation

Trustees

On 9 December 2020 Umair Manir was co-opted as a member of the Board of Trustees bringing with him a background in finance and corporate activity, and an understanding of the nature of charitable organisations through his experiences in volunteering. He has brought fresh insights to the work of the Board.

The Board

During the year under review the Board were more than ever mindful of the uncertain environment in which Social Link was operating and so endeavoured to be as supportive as possible of the CEO and the whole operational team. Informal conversations between the Chair and individual Trustees aimed to ensure that Board members also felt supported and that the Board functioned efficiently collectively despite the difficulties of zoom-only meetings. The commitment shown by all the Trustees is greatly appreciated.

Employees, Leaders, Support Workers, volunteers and supporters

The last year has been one of the most challenging years for the charity, facing difficulties that were beyond our control. Despite this, Social Link has demonstrated its resilience and ability to adapt to challenging circumstances, constantly putting the needs and safety of the beneficiaries first. The Trustees and CEO would like to acknowledge the versatility and creativeness that the staff and consultants have shown. We appreciate the continuous support provided by all colleagues and their ceaseless contributions to the development of the charity. Social Link is enriched by the diversity of talent, imagination, energy, compassion, resourcefulness, drive and determination of all those who contribute to the work of the charity.

The Trustees would also like to thank our donors and all the volunteers who have made the success of the last year possible. Also, thanks to those local businesses who have supported the charity during this very challenging year.

A final thanks from the Trustees goes to the management team of Wendy, Victoria and Karen for their passionate and diligent day-to-day leadership which ensures the high quality, highly regarded and highly performing service that is recognised across Buckinghamshire.

Trustees responsibilities in relation to the Financial Statements

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.

- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed subject to any departure disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping 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 Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf on 16/06/21
by:



Linda Laurance – Chair of Trustees:
Address: Formosa Barn, Mill Lane, Cookham, SL6 9QT

Social Link

Statement of Financial Activities for the 13-month period ended 31st March 2021, the comparison for 2020 is for the 12-month period to 29th February 2020

	2021	2020
	13 months	12 months
Income from:		
Donations (Note 2)	£10,818	£6,354
Charitable activities (Note 3)	£314,598	£288,919
Other trading activities (Note 4)	£5,415	£22,072
Income from Infection Control Fund and Furlough	£43,616	
Interest (Note 5)	£77	£463
Total income	£374,524	£317,809
Expenditure on:		
Raising funds (Note 6)	£444	£7,085
Charitable activities (Note 7)	£333,002	£347,540
Total expenditure	£333,446	£354,625
Net income and movement in funds	£41,078	-36,816
Total funds brought forward	£88,777	138,690
Movement in designated funds	-£190	-13,098
Total funds carried forward	£129,665	£88,777

The notes of pages 15 to 18 form part of these financial statements.

Social Link

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021

	2021	2020
Intangible fixed assets (Note 8)	£250	£250
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 9)	£166,373	£110,435
Prepayments	£1,265	£525
Debtors (Note 10)	£9,098	£13,703
	£176,736	£124,663
Current liabilities		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 11)	£47,321	£36,326
Net current assets	£129,415	£88,337
Net assets	£129,665	£88,777
Unrestricted income fund	£129,665	£88,777
Total funds	£129,665	£88,777

The notes on pages 15 to 18 form part of these financial statements.

Social Link

Statement of cash flows for the 13-month period ended 31st March 2021

	2021	2020
Net cash flow from operating activities		
Net income	£41,078	-£36,816
Decrease in debtors and prepayments	£3,866	-£2,383
Increase in liabilities	£10,994	£12,958
Capital expenditure	£0	£0
Net cash provided by operating activities	£55,938	-£26,241
 Cash at the beginning of the year	 £110,435	 £136,676
Cash at the end of the year	£166,373	£110,435

The notes on pages 15 to 18 form part of these financial statements.

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the 13 months ended 31st March

1. Statement of accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies have been consistently applied. The financial statements also comply with the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities SORP (FRS 102) and with the Charities Act 2011. The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

b) Incoming resources

All incoming resources are recorded in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy and it is probable that the amount will be received. Donations under gift aid together with income tax recoverable are recognised when the donation is receivable.

c) Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs relating to that activity.

The cost of small items of equipment is written off in the year it is incurred.

d) Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligations can be measured with reasonable certainty.

2. Donations

Donations include subscriptions for membership of the charity plus gift aid rebates.

3. Charitable activities

	This year	Last year
Evening club revenues	£9,238	£13,667
Day sessions revenues	£305,360	£275,252
	£314,598	£288,919

4. Other trading activities

Our fund raising activities have been impacted by the pandemic.

5. Interest

This comprises income from the charity's bank deposit accounts.

6. Expenditure on raising funds

This represents direct expenditure on fund raising events which have been limited due to the pandemic

7. Charitable expenditure

	This year			Last year		
	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total
Evening Clubs	£11,145	£5,672	£16,817	£9,979	£4,258	£14,237
Day Sessions	£209,842	£106,788	£316,630	£233,623	£99,680	£333,303
Total	£220,987	£112,460	£333,447	£243,602	£103,938	£347,540

Support costs, which are mainly the employment and related costs of the charity's employees, are allocated in proportion to the direct costs of the evening clubs and the day sessions respectively.

8. Intangible assets at cost

The trademark "Social Link" is held at cost on the balance sheet

	This year	Last year
At the beginning of the year	£250	£250
Additions	£0	£0
Disposals	£0	£0
At the end of the year	£250	£250

9. Cash at bank and in hand

This comprises bank current and deposit accounts plus petty cash. These are all liquid funds available for immediate use by the charity.

10. Debtors

Debtors comprise outstanding invoices in respect of day session beneficiaries and donations receivable.

11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

These provisions represent liabilities for services provided but not yet invoiced and accrued costs, all of which have been settled since the year end.

	This year	Last year
Trade creditors and accruals	£15,808	£23,256
Consultants	£7,621	£9,222
HMRC	£3,088	£2,893
Pensions	£804	£765
Deferred income	£20,000	£190
	£47,321	£36,326

	Last year	Increase in deferred income	Decrease in deferred income	This year
Deferred Income				
Grants from Heart of Bucks and Rothschild		£20,000	£0	£20,000
Infection Control Fund from Bucks Council		£31,898	-£31,898	£0
Furlough Grant		£11,718	-£11,718	£0
	£0	£63,616	-£43,616	£20,000

12. Trustees and Governance costs

No remuneration was paid to Trustees neither did they receive re-imbursement of out of pocket expenses but they were reimbursed for purchases made from time to time on behalf of the charity. There were no Governance costs.

13. Staff costs and volunteers

13.1 Staff Costs

	13 months this year	12 months last year
Salaries and wages	£149,253	£128,951
Social security costs	£9,484	£8,462
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)	£5,809	£4,844
Other employee benefits	£0	£0
Total staff costs	£164,546	£142,258

There are no staff working for the charity whose contracts are with and are paid by a related party

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the reporting period of more than £60,000

TRUE

(includes trustees and senior management) for their services to the charity.

13 months this year	12 months last year
£51,217	£47,253

13.2 Average head count in the
Parts of the charity in which the employees
work

Fundraising
 Charitable Activities
 Governance
 Total

13 months this year	12 months last year
Number	Number
4	4
2	2
6	6

13.3 There were no ex-gratia payments to employees and others (excluding trustees).

13.4 There were no redundancy payments.

13.5 The charity relies on the generous contribution of time from unpaid volunteers in carrying out its activities. Volunteers provide substantial support to the beneficiaries at the evening clubs, day sessions and trips away. The value of this contribution, which is difficult to measure, is not included as income.

14. Taxation

Social Link is registered as a charity with both the Charity Commission and HM Revenue & Customs and is thus exempt from corporation tax on its income which is applied for charitable purposes.

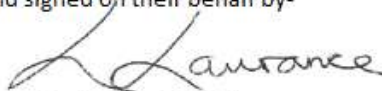
15. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

Approved by the Trustees on 16/06/21 and signed on their behalf by-

Linda Laurance – Chair

Address: Formosa Barn, Mill Lane, Cookham, Berkshire, SL6 9QT





CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the
trustees/directors/
members of**

Social Link

**On accounts for the year
ended**

13 months to 31/03/2021

Charity no.:

1158743

Company no.:

Set out on pages

12 - 18

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the 13 months ended 31/03/2021.

**Responsibilities and basis of
report**

As the charity's trustees of the Company (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law), you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited for this year under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination, I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act).

**Independent examiner's
statement**

The company's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that:

- 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 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:** 10/6/21

Name: Veronica Mary Simpson

Relevant professional qualification Fellow of Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

Address: Clacks Cottage, Blackthorn Lane, Ballinger Common,
Buckinghamshire
HP16 9LN