

Charity Registration No: 1158874

ARTS & HERITAGE ALLIANCE MILTON KEYNES

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 05 APRIL 2025

ARTS & HERITAGE ALLIANCE MILTON KEYNES

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ARTS & HERITAGE ALLIANCE MILTON KEYNES

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 05 APRIL 2025

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 05 April 2025.

Objectives and Activities

The charitable aims of the alliance are :

- 1) To promote arts and heritage for the benefit of the public in Milton Keynes in particular but not exclusively by supporting and representing the arts and heritage sector through promotion, representation and development.
- 2) To work in partnership with other like-minded organisations to achieve joint goals that further the charitable purpose.

Arts and Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes is an alliance of over 40 cultural sector members, working collaboratively to ensure culture is at the heart of the growing city of Milton Keynes. There is emphasis on the areas of Cultural Advocacy, Inclusion and Diversity together with a Schools alliance to promote the importance of creative skills for children and young people.

The Alliance promotes, supports and celebrates the diversity of Milton Keynes culture by engaging with events held by underrepresented communities. It acts as a bridge between the cultural sector and diverse communities to build social cohesion through culture.

The Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit is at the forefront of our work and the trustees have due regard to the guidance when exercising their powers and duties.

Achievements and Performance

Aim 1: Sustainability and Development of AHA-MK as a Sector Support Organisation

In 2024/25, AHA-MK continued to strengthen its role as the central support organisation for Milton Keynes cultural sector. We delivered a range of forums, communications, CPD opportunities, and direct support activities designed to enhance sector connectivity, build resilience, and extend our reach.

To support Membership, we delivered two full forums during the year, alongside four newsletters, which continued to be a key communication channel across the network. Member support expanded through two member meetings, a sector social event in July, and specialist gatherings such as two Marketing and Audience Development meetings and four Cultural Leaders Meetings. These provided strategic touchpoints and opportunities for collaboration and problem-solving.

Professional development grew significantly this year. We delivered a CPD Case for Support training programme, AI risk and funding training, and specialist marketing support took place in February 2025 with Sophie and Cerys from Destination MK. These sessions aimed to address sector-wide capacity gaps and align with evolving digital and funding landscapes.

Community engagement remained a priority. We provided over 15 hours of one-to-one support focused on cultural heritage storytelling and grassroots organisational development specifically around supporting ACE funding applications. We also saw an increase in community attendance at meetings and training sessions, demonstrating improved engagement and reach.

Early work has begun on shaping a new Community Membership level which will be developed through a new funding project with School of Social Entrepreneurs in 2026-27 to build capacity to support informal cultural organisations more effectively, enabling them to access AHA-MK resources and contribute their perspectives.

Digital resources and social media output increased through the support and skills of Camille Poole, broadening access to sector information for both members and non-members

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Aim 2 – MAKE: Connecting Children, Young People, Education and Culture Partnership and Sector Connectivity

The MAKE programme continued to support strong links between cultural organisations, creative industries and the education sector. Four MAKE partnership meetings were delivered in March, July, October and January, bringing together 46 participants and generating valuable cross-sector connections.

Our Learning and Inclusion Manager engaged approximately 440 learners across a range of education settings, reflecting a growing demand for cultural learning opportunities. MAKE newsletters saw continued growth, with 321 subscribers and an increased open rate of 43–47%.

Participants consistently reported that MAKE meetings broadened their understanding of local cultural work, offering insights into community-led initiatives and cultural diversity. The feedback demonstrates the programme's value in raising awareness, connecting practitioners and strengthening the cultural education ecosystem.

Key achievements included contributions to the Cornerstones Meeting in July and MK Gallery Inclusion Training, ongoing support for Supplementary Schools, and work on a new Toolkit developed with funding from the Foyle Foundation. Work also progressed on Creative Industries career profiles and early discussions around Youth Parliament consultation. CPD for MAKE partners continued to focus on diversity and inclusion, in direct response to teacher requests.

Cultural Apprenticeship Pilot Programme

As part of widening access for young people across Milton Keynes, AHA-MK delivered a 15-month Cultural Apprenticeship Pilot Programme in partnership with Milton Keynes City Council, Creative Alliance, MK Gallery Bletchley Park, and Milton Keynes Theatre.

Programme Purpose

The pilot aimed to:

- Create pathways for young people into the cultural sector
- Address under-representation in arts and heritage roles
- Expand apprentices' experience beyond their host organisation
- Develop a cohort of young ambassadors for culture in Milton Keynes

Three Level 3 apprentices were placed:

Evie Spillings, Events Assistant, Bletchley Park
 Joshua Yon, Digital Marketer, MK Gallery
 Remi Ajibola, Cultural Learning & Participation Officer, Milton Keynes Theatre

Each apprentice completed over 1,400 hours of work experience, supplemented by Creative Alliance's structured training. The apprentices made significant contributions to their host venues.

MK Gallery saw a 1086% increase in TikTok engagement, new digital engagement strategies, and high-response audience surveys; staff noted Joshua's skills filled a critical digital gap

Bletchley Park reported transformative growth in Evie's confidence and project management capabilities, including delivering major events such as the National Cipher Challenge and Women in Intelligence events.

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 05 APRIL 2025

Milton Keynes Theatre benefited from Remi's work on youth programmes, new partnerships, and leadership in developing content and delivering sessions.

All venues confirmed they would host an apprentice again, citing increased inclusivity, organisational learning, and widened access to cultural careers.

Apprentice Development

Apprentices reported:

- Increased confidence and professional identity
- Greater awareness of the breadth of cultural careers in Milton Keynes
- Significant growth in communication, planning, and collaborative working
- Improved understanding of creative sector pathways

Two apprentices received distinctions; Evie progressed to a full-time role at Bletchley Park; Joshua gained full-time employment in digital marketing; Remi continues to work on youth programmes with MKT.

Extended Cultural Experiences

AHA-MK curated monthly cross-sector visits introducing apprentices to:

- Milton Keynes Museum
- MK Gallery and MK Calling Exhibition
- The Stables and IF Festival programming
- Dreamsai and the Shirdi Sai Temple
- Milton Keynes Community Foundation
- Backstage tours and sessions at MK Theatre

These visits built sector knowledge, strengthened confidence, and fostered advocacy for Milton Keynes's cultural ecosystem.

Learning & Recommendations

Key lessons included

- Strong sector appetite for apprenticeship opportunities
- Need for a more structured and consistent training provider
- Importance of transport, hosted visits, and professional networking opportunities
- Apprenticeships as a successful alternative pathway for those not entering higher education
- Clear communication requirements should be set from the outset

This programme demonstrated a powerful, scalable model of young people's engagement in culture that AHA-MK hopes to expand.

Aim 3: Fundraising Support

This year AHA-MK prioritised addressing the sector-wide skills gap in fundraising. We provided more than 20 hours of one-to-one community mentorship on evidence gathering, reporting, and evaluation, including support for ACE applications by individual creatives and community groups.

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 05 APRIL 2025

Match Funding Applications

As part of our Organisational Development Grant work, AHA-MK pursued several match-funding opportunities.

Successful Applications

- Community Foundation (£20K): joint application with an artist exploring work with the Blue Light Sector, school engagement, and artist sustainability. AHA-MK delivered evaluation sessions to support the project
- Q Alliance (£4K): to support their cultural work.
- ACE/Lottery (5 applications reviewed): AHA-MK supported 5 applications with community members, but were not written into the bids; one is known to be successful.

This match-funding activity has strengthened partnerships, increased our organisational visibility, and supported grassroots capacity building.

Aim 4: Supporting Emerging Artists

AHA-MK delivered work designed to bring artists together, identify needs, provide mentoring, and improve progression pathways within Milton Keynes. Two Artist Feedback meetings took place, alongside three meetings supporting a proposed new community art and dance venue. We gathered evidence in July 2024 and presented findings back to artists and creatives in September 2025 with the aim of developing a programme of support over the autumn of 2025.

Five Spotlight organisations contributed to the sessions, and 10 hours of one-to-one support were delivered. This included supporting one artist through six mentorship sessions and putting in a funding application with Honey Mosaics to Community Foundation.

AHA-MK also met with ACE on three occasions regarding creative sector development and consulted with Gateway Arts, MKAC, Black Sheep Collective, MK Gallery, Arts for Health, and the Fringe Festival to ensure a joined-up approach. A potential sponsorship offer emerged from these conversations.

Aim 5: Collaborative Comms Group for Culture

Work continued to strengthen shared marketing and communications across the sector. We delivered two forums and three marketing meetings. A Meet and Greet event—rescheduled twice due to external factors will now take place in February 2025.

The sector's clash diary is now regularly included in the newsletter. A draft Audience Matrix has been produced, though progress is paused due to reduced engagement from key members. A proposed citywide Cultural Brochure has secured positive sector support, and quotes have been gathered for next steps.

Aim 6: Data Collection

AHA-MK refreshed its sector-wide data collection process, aligning with NPO, Audience Agency, and MDO requirements. Vital Elements questions were distributed across Member groups, Cultural Leaders, Marketing Groups, and Trustees, with the final report delivered from the Community Foundation.

A new AHA-MK Data Questionnaire has been developed for distribution incorporating sector feedback. We also raised the sector's profile through participation in three tech and community business events and contributed cultural insights from the entire sector to discussions on the MK50 City Plan.

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 05 APRIL 2025

Challenges Encountered

AHA-MK has faced several challenges over the past year:

1 Leadership Changes

We experienced the departure of our Chair twice within one year, which created periods of transition and uncertainty. Fortunately, Emma Courtney and Rob Gifford have stepped in to support the Vice-Chair and Treasurer roles, providing stability. Additionally, we have recruited four new trustees who have applied for interview, strengthening governance capacity

2 Limited Access to Infrastructure Funding

Infrastructure grants available to cultural organisations remain limited. In 2023, a bid to IPSOS was unsuccessful, and a potential NPO application was constrained by MK's urban classification, as the programme required rural-based organisations. We continue to research alternative infrastructure grants and support opportunities. ACE have indicated the possibility of an infrastructure application in 2026; careful planning will be needed to avoid clashes with other organisation funding cycles.

3 Business and Technology Networking Challenges

Networking with business and tech partners was difficult without a specific project or funding to anchor the collaboration. While investing time in making connections is valuable, it can be challenging to translate this into actionable projects or partnerships without clear opportunities for joint work. Sustained discussion and follow-up are required to convert networking into tangible outcomes for the sector.

Financial Review and Reserves Policy

Total Funds at 5th April 2025 were £31,197 , however, the trustees are aware that £22,904 of this is represented by restricted funds, the expenditure of which is carefully monitored throughout the year.

In the year to 5th April 2025, membership fees added to the unrestricted funds , as all expenditure was able to be paid out of restricted funds due to overhead support and organisation grants from Milton Keynes City Council. Unrestricted funds at the year end were £8,293 (£5,663 5th April 2024)

There is a reliance on funding from Milton Keynes City Council, but the trustees are confident this will continue for the foreseeable future as there is strong collaboration with the Council on mutual projects and objectives.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Arts and Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission under number 1158874. It is governed by a constitution dated July 2014, with an amendment February 2018 and January 2020.

Trustees are recruited through an open call, charity contacts and membership ; their appointment is confirmed at the Annual General Meeting. The maximum number of trustees is ten and the minimum is five. They meet regularly throughout the year.

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 05 APRIL 2025

Trustees

The Trustees at the date of this report are as follows :

Simon Kearey	Chair	appointed 4th August 2025
Emma Courtney	Vice Chair	
Robert Gifford	Treasurer	
Victoria Gibb		
Lakshmana Kastala		
Yvonne Owour		
Julie-Anne Dawes		appointed 25th March 2025
Afreen Akhter Patel		appointed 24th March 2025

The following Trustees resigned during the period :

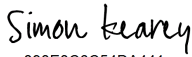
Anna Francesca Skelton	Chair	resigned 6th February 2025
Laura Margaret Keen	Treasurer	resigned 6th February 2025
Hannah Olarewaju		resigned 25th November 2024
Amanda Louise Farr		resigned 6th February 2025

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safe guarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps or the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Report above.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees

DocuSigned by:

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Chair : Simon Kearey

Date : 11th December 2025.

ARTS & HERITAGE ALLIANCE MILTON KEYNES

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity (" the Trust ") for the year ended 05 April 2025.

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.

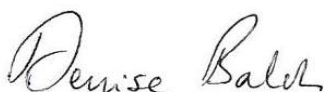
Independent examiner's statement

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.

Signature:



Name:

Denise Balch

Qualification:

A.C.A

Address:

15 Towcester Road
Old Stratford
Milton Keynes
MK19 6AN

Date:

3rd February 2026

ARTS & HERITAGE ALLIANCE MILTON KEYNES

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 05 APRIL 2025

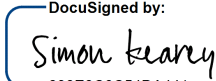
	Notes	£	£	2025 £	2024 £
Incoming resources		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
Grants received	3	-	97,825	97,825	46,720
Membership		2,630		2,630	3,850
		-			
Total		2,630	97,825	100,455	50,570
Resources expended					
Project Delivery		-	58,941	58,941	21,916
Staff costs	2	-	47,813	47,813	14,276
Office costs		-	2,419	2,419	2,230
Bookeeping and payroll			3,193	3,193	
Consultancy		-	-	-	2,754
Forum costs		-	867	867	434
Insurance		-	752	752	750
Training		-	1,445	1,445	52
Independent Examination		-	750	750	660
		-			
Total		-	116,180	116,180	43,072
Net income/(expenditure)		2,630	(18,355)	(15,725)	7,498
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total funds brought forward		5,663	41,259	46,922	39,424
Total Funds carried forward at 05 April 2025	6	8,293	22,904	31,197	46,922

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BALANCE SHEET AS AT 05 APRIL 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Current Assets			
Debtors	4	34,597	7,686
Cash at bank and in hand		12,681	56,378
		<u>47,278</u>	<u>64,064</u>
Creditors : amounts falling due within one year	5	16,081	17,142
		<u></u>	<u></u>
Total Net Assets		<u>31,197</u>	<u>46,922</u>
Funds of the Charity	6		
Restricted		22,904	41,259
Unrestricted		8,293	5,663
		<u></u>	<u></u>
Total Funds		<u>31,197</u>	<u>46,922</u>

Approved on behalf of all the trustees and authorised for issue on 11th December 2025.

DocuSigned by:

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Chair : Simon Kearey

DocuSigned by:

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Treasurer : Robert Gifford

ARTS & HERITAGE ALLIANCE MILTON KEYNES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 05 APRIL 2025

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Preparation

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice : Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) and with the Charities Act 2011.

There have been no changes to accounting estimates in the reporting period and no material prior year errors have been identified.

INCOMING RESOURCES

Recognition of incoming resources

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

1. the charity becomes entitled to the resources;
2. it is more likely than not that the trustees will receive the resources;
3. the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Offsetting

There has been no offsetting of assets and liabilities, or income and expenses, unless required or permitted by the FRS 102 SORP.

Grants and donations

Grants and donations are only included in the SoFA when the general income recognition criteria are met.

Government grants

The charity has received government grants in the reporting period.

Contractual Income and performance related grants

This is only included in the SoFA once the charity has provided the related goods or services or met the performance related conditions.

EXPENDITURE AND LIABILITIES

Liability recognition

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 can be measured with reasonable certainty.

Grants with performance conditions

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

Creditors

The charity has creditors which are measured at settlement amounts less any trade discounts.

Debtors

Debtors are measured on initial recognition at settlement amount after any trade discounts. Subsequently, they are measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be received.

ARTS & HERITAGE ALLIANCE MILTON KEYNES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 05 APRIL 2025

2 Staff Costs

	2025 £	2024 £
Salaries	46,458	13,860
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)	<u>1,355</u>	<u>416</u>
	<u>47,813</u>	<u>14,276</u>

The average number of employees during the year was as follows :

	2025 £	2024 £
	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>

3 Government Grants

Grants were received from Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) for the following

	2025 £	2024 £
Apprenticeship scheme	32,097	21,680
Operational Grant	20,000	7,500
Director/ Overhead Funding	<u>10,228</u>	<u>3,290</u>
	<u>63,325</u>	<u>32,470</u>

Further details regarding funds are shown in note 6

4 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade Debtors	34,597	6,934
Prepayments	<u>-</u>	<u>751</u>
	<u>34,597</u>	<u>7,685</u>

5 Creditors : amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	12,972	11,974
Accruals	1,560	4,515
Taxation and social security	<u>1,549</u>	<u>653</u>
	<u>16,081</u>	<u>17,142</u>

ARTS & HERITAGE ALLIANCE MILTON KEYNES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 05 APRIL 2025

6 (a) Movement in funds during the current reporting period

Restricted Funds:	Balance 01/04/24 £	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Balance 31/03/25 £
MAKE projects	2,623	-	(2,623)	-
Apprenticeship scheme	26,454	32,097	(58,551)	-
Heritage Lottery Fund	11,470	13,750	(15,878)	9,342
MKCC Director/overhead support	712	10,228	(10,940)	-
MKCC Organisation Grant	-	20,000	(11,438)	8,562
Artist project	-	10,000	(5,000)	5,000
Q Alliance	-	2,000	(2,000)	-
Foyle Foundation	-	9,750	(9,750)	-
	41,259	97,825	(116,180)	22,904
General Funds	5,663	2,630	-	8,293
Total Funds	46,922	100,455	(116,180)	31,197

6 (b) Movement in funds during the previous reporting period

Restricted Funds:	Balance 01/04/23 £	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Balance 31/03/24 £
MAKE projects	5,069	-	(2,446)	2,623
Programme of Change	1,632	-	(1,632)	-
Apprenticeship scheme	26,000	21,680	(21,226)	26,454
Heritage Lottery Fund		13,750	(2,280)	11,470
MKCC/Director overhead support		3,290	(2,578)	712
MKCC Organisation Grant		7,500	(7,500)	-
Magic Little Grant		500	(500)	-
	32,701	46,720	(38,162)	41,259
General Funds	6,723	3,850	(4,910)	5,663
Total Funds	39,424	50,570	(43,072)	46,922

6 (c) Restricted Funds

MAKE Projects

Make is the Milton Keynes Cultural Education Partnership, with it's vision to work together to nourish and support the creative skills and cultural wellbeing of Milton Keynes children and young people, being part of a national movement of Cultural Education Partnerships to deliver creative thinking at the heart of education.

Programme of Change

A two year project funded by Milton Keynes Community Foundation, to build cultural inclusion and diversify the cultural ecology of Milton Keynes, focusing on the importance of connectivity, building bridges and trusted relationships between the cultural sector and communities.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 05 APRIL 2025

6 (c) continued

Artswork

Funding from Artswork to develop a MAKE website as a central portal for the MK Cultural Education Partnership network. This included arts and heritage resources for teachers, cultural sector education offers, and a platform for connection and information between the cultural sector and education sector.

Apprenticeship Scheme

Funds from MKCC as part of our inclusion and diversity strategy.
Following applications for on-the-job training for an apprentice, it was decided to support the following three cultural organisations ; Bletchley Park, MK Gallery and Milton Keynes Theatre.

HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund)

Funding from MK Musuem for projects involving inclusion and engagement with underrepresented communities.

Organisation grant

Funds from MKCC for traing and promoting in the following three areas ;
Inclusion and Diversity
Cultural and Creative Education
Cultural Advocacy

14 Transactions with trustees and related parties

14 (a) Trustee remuneration and benefits

None of the trustees have been paid any remuneration or expenses, or received any other benefits from the charity or a related entity.

14 (b) Transactions with related parties

There have been no related party transactions in the current and prior year reporting periods.