

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1159890

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023
FOR
READING FORCE**

Carter & Coley
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READING FORCE

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READING FORCE

CHAIR'S REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

This has been a significant year for Reading Force (RF). We emerged from the pandemic, during which demand for RF resources had been consistently strong, with a validated sense of the important role we can and do play in the lives of military families.

We have responded by: managing increased demand; developing a more formal structure for our operation and improving our organisational efficiency; expanding the breadth and depth of what we do; involving new colleagues, at all levels, and considering how we are to be funded in future.

Although these developments have taken place within a difficult economic climate, when individual disposable income is under pressure, opportunities for public charitable giving have reduced and organisational budgets are being closely monitored, I believe we are now in a strong position to face the future.

Responding to increased demand

Demand for our materials has increased and pleasingly (as we have learned from monitoring, through ongoing questionnairing and feedback both digitally and through our ambassadors) this comes primarily through military families recommending us to each other. Our range of high-quality resources draws consistently positive feedback, and offering access through social media, particularly Facebook and LinkedIn (the latter has been a significant area of growth), is consistently raising our profile within the Forces world.

With more families seeking our support, we have also been victims of our own success. Our total income over the reporting period was £218,979 (2022 £256,638). Our total expenditure was £283,736 (2022 £222,604).

While facing a reduced income, we did manage to give out roughly the same number of books over the past financial year but at cost that was £4,000 lower; this was due to effective negotiation on prices and buying larger quantities from a smaller range of publishing houses. It should be noted that we always buy the books we send out, albeit at significantly reduced prices, as a point of principle. We believe that publishers should be paid for the resources we donate as the income they receive from us supports the maintenance and development of what they produce, on which we in turn rely.

Our main expenditure variable, in comparison with the last reporting year, is wages, on which we spent £195,266 (2022 £136,905). There were no significant increases in the cost of distribution or delivery of our materials as we made no significant changes to formatting.

A revised organisational structure

Increased demand led to pressure on what had been fairly informal management structures and methods of communication, which had expanded from a long-standing team of four into a team of eight.

During this reporting period we put a lot of consideration into the need for revised structures to meet our needs, to avoid duplication of tasks and ensure clearer lines of reporting and accountability. Our trustees were closely involved in the development of our plans.

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Through our discussions we decided to build in greater organisational connectivity and so encourage fluidity of ideas. We formalised our structures, implementing regular online leadership team meetings and line-manager meetings, a monthly all-staff meeting and much wider organisational sourcing of ideas. We decided to organise our first strategy day to review our operation, with the plan for this to be led by trustees rather than staff, to promote objectivity.

Expanding the breadth and depth of what we offer

1. The range of services offered by Reading Force

The bedrock of what we do remains family scrapbooks sent to military families, either at home or through their school. But the range of our activities has also broadened, and new initiatives begun in the previous reporting period have become firmly established and are now growing.

The book clubs we set up during lockdown are growing, with increasing demand for membership. Active monitoring has shown us that the profile of those joining is different from patterns within civilian book clubs in wider society. Those applying to Reading Force tend to join in order to link with others from a military background, rather than to read per se. It follows that given the significant benefits that come from being readers, as evinced through a range of related research, our opportunity to reach those in the Forces whose reading habit is not strong, is a really significant one.

2. Complete coverage of the UK

It had been a long-term ambition of the founder to offer Reading Force in Northern Ireland, and work towards this began in 2021, with significant progress in this reporting period. We received a significant grant from the National Lottery Communities Fund (Northern Ireland) which began in January 2023, for work with veterans in the province.

In NI, military status, past or present, is not publicly acknowledged, and even within families the information that someone is in the Forces may not be shared. It follows that due to security considerations, our method of operation in NI must be different from the rest of the UK, as we cannot operate through schools - rather through military units, social service support and relevant charities.

The award, which began in January 2023 (thus two payments of £25,000 were received within this reporting period) enabled the appointment of a NI ambassador and an extensive programme of outreach in the province. The project has been very well received, and we have followed our usual *modus operandi* by seeking to collaborate with organisations and support services already working with the military, offering them a useful additional resource for those they serve. Reading Force has been welcomed and is now firmly embedded within NI.

3. Keeping research at the heart of what we do

Monitoring and analysing our impact consistently underpins what we do. We continue to reflect on our effectiveness and capture involvement in various ways: through scrapbooks returned to us for affirmation and comment; through feedback to our ambassadors; through intermediaries we work with (e.g. the various military charities with whom we collaborate) and through formal market research. We routinely ask recipients to fill out simple questionnaires that record their involvement and are heartened both by their comments on how they benefit, and their affirmation of what we offer.

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During the reporting period we developed a further range of questionnaires to monitor involvement. Our plan is now to build on this programme with formal academic analysis of our progress and impact, in order to disseminate our effectiveness through publication and relevant conferences. In the wider economic and business environment, where corporate social responsibility needs to be evidenced rather than just felt, this is timely and appropriate.

Staffing

1. Recruitment of staff

We expanded to a team of seven PAYE staff members, with the addition of staff members responsible for book clubs and our central administrative hub, and we have two additional members of staff giving their time. This is a rise of approximately £58,000 compared to the previous year. The director of Reading Force does not charge for her time, and we were joined in this reporting period by a newly retired finance director (recruited from one of our sponsors), who also generously donates his time.

Reasons for the increase in staffing costs include the arrival of a key team member to be our Office Administrator and operate an online hub every day of the week. This colleague joined the team in November 2022 and prior to that, and during her induction process, other team members worked extra hours to establish her in role. We have found this central hub, available every day, to be a huge asset. Her role, both in the nature of the way it is structured, and her practical way of carrying it out, has improved operational clarity, reduced duplication of tasks and improved organisational efficiency.

We have received specific support for staffing particular roles. We received a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund (Northern Ireland) for the role of the NI Ambassador. The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (AFCFT Sustaining Support) provided financial support towards two staff roles (Veterans' Ambassador and Office Administrator). We have also received grants from Lest We Forget Association and Veterans' Foundation for our Veterans' Ambassador role for 2023/24 (so this is not yet spent).

Looking forward, we are comfortable with the current size of Reading Force and do not plan to expand our staffing further. Rather we plan to increase our reach through establishing collaborating relationships with other organisations who support the same beneficiaries, and thus securing wider reach for our organisation for low additional financial outlay.

Trustees and patrons

We also sought to improve the support and wider reputation of what we do through increased patron and trustee involvement.

In 2022 we gained a new trustee, and on his advice sought to raise the profile of what we do by developing more public support for our charity. He suggested that we recruit the support of high-profile patrons. We took his advice and now have a team of six patrons, all highly relevant to a charity that encourages reading (four are very well-known writers), to the educational opportunities we support and the importance of reaching military children through schools (we include the former headteacher of the secondary school in Aldershot that was crucial to our establishment) and those keen to support the significant contribution that the military make to wider society (a prominent actor/presenter who is very committed to Forces welfare).

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

Funding

Funding remains our most consistent issue as we seek to maintain a free service to military families. The climate for this is difficult, with economic conditions meaning that more families are looking to us for support, and at the same time organisations that have funded us in the past are under pressure with more applications to manage, with charitable budgets facing greater scrutiny.

While we remain grateful for all donations, our long-term ambition is to develop our reserves, and to seek core funding that is not restricted to how it can be used.

For the reporting period we received restricted funds of £119,095 which amounts to 66% of income. Restricted funds include:

- Veterans' Foundation grant £30,000 for book clubs
- Annington, who fund the RF ambassador in Scotland and the north of England
- The National Lottery Communities Fund (NI), which supports RF in Northern Ireland
- AFCFT Sustaining Support - we received a final grant instalment for two staff roles

Our unrestricted income (i.e. core funding) in the reporting period was £62,231, which made up 34% of our income.

Looking to the future, we began to consider a more formal structure for our funding sourcing, with the possible employment of a Fundraising Manager, to identify and oversee opportunities.

Looking to the future

We end this reporting period with our structures and processes in better shape, and our vision for the future clarified. We continue to feel valued for what we do, and the most consistent message received by us from those we support is of appreciation. The following quotations come from responses to our ongoing Reading Force survey, managed online:

'We think Reading Force is amazing, we found out about it before my husband's deployment and have found it really helpful to have something to focus our conversation as my 4 year-old struggled to adjust to talking to Daddy on a video call. It has also been educational. Thank you!'

'This is such a fabulous organisation and the surprise of new books really brightens all of our days, especially when Daddy is away during the week or deployed for several months. It makes us feel supported as a forces family and reminds us of that support every time we reread the books. Thank you!'

I close by thanking our staff, trustees and patrons for their commitment to the charity, and state again that we approach our future with confidence.

Rev'd Professor Alison Baverstock, Chair of Trustees
12 December 2023

READING FORCE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 June 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

Our constitution states that the purposes of Reading Force are:

1. To advance education by encouraging families to read together for pleasure and talk about a book by providing advice and assistance and materials to support shared reading activities.
2. To promote and protect good health by using reading as a means of mitigating stress and increasing communication and good family relationships following separation due to training, deployment, postings and mobility.

The activities carried out for the public benefit of the charity are for all British Armed Forces families and their children, including reservists, veterans and injured personnel, living in the UK and overseas.

The trustees always ensure that the strategies and activities we undertake are in line with our charitable objects and aims. Our long-term aim that shapes our annual activities is to extend and deepen the relationship we have with Forces personnel and families, to ensure our project reaches the awareness of all and invites them to become involved. We seek to support the social, emotional and mental wellbeing of the Forces community through shared-reading and effective communication.

How we work

Strategies we employ to achieve the charity's aims and objectives are to:

- Work with support workers of Forces families: schools; welfare and community organisations and other agencies and charities devoted to the support of the Forces
- Reach Forces families themselves to explain the benefits of Reading Force and support participation
- Influence policy makers and those offering financial and administrative support to the Forces community
- Act as a lobbying force to ensure the particular needs and issues of Forces families remain in the forefront of public consciousness

We offer and provide:

- Advice on the benefits of involvement in reading for pleasure
- Materials to support families taking part in Reading Force
- Related activities such as author tours in schools and weekend/holiday workshops in approved activity centres
- Related advice on policy through presentations at key forums and conferences

Public benefit

The trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit in planning these activities for the year and reviewed the guidance at trustee meetings.

READING FORCE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities

Forces families offered Reading Force and resources report positively on the experience:

"Archie enjoyed the story and read it to his dad (away on training) via WhatsApp, as well as his brother and sister."

"I can express my feeling about what I liked about the book. I also like it because it helps me calm down when I am stressed about something that has happened in the day."

Giving books to Forces children

With the cost-of-living crisis, UK military commitments related to war in Ukraine and other associated military activity in this reporting year, we have seen a significant increase in book requests from families. Within families who purchase books (and we know many do not), reduced spending capacity means books buying is often one of the first things to be cut. In our communications to families, we have signposted them to local libraries, charity shops, book swaps, and of course, encouraged them to request their Reading Force books and resources. This has involved an increase in RF working time spent on selecting, packing and despatching books. Currently we have maintained our capacity to pack an individually chosen title for each child.

This year we posted over 3,700 books, scrapbooks and journals directly to Forces children, from babies to teens and young adults, at home. An additional 600 books and scrapbooks were given to Forces children at family events or by welfare outreach workers, as a valuable additional resource, to support the families they are working with.

Throughout the year we ran book giveaways on social media including: Friday/weekend selections; at Christmas through our annual ABC Advent Book Calendar (giving books to families every day in the build up to Christmas - a challenging time for many Forces families), and on World Book Day in March we ran a book giveaway marathon. Feedback from families about the giveaways is positive - the surprise factor is enjoyed by children and young people and it is a fun way to promote reading for pleasure.

"I love everything offered by Reading Force and how much you bring families together over the love of storytelling and reading together. It's amazing!" Drumfork Community Centre

"Elizabeth enjoyed the book so much that she bought two more in the series with her own money. Thank you for sending us the book to share. We loved it and it finally got Elizabeth into reading chapter books." Mum

"I loved the book. Thank you for sending it to me. It was my favourite book by far!" Elizabeth

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Our primary aim is, through involvement in shared reading, to improve communication and support connectedness within military serving and veteran families (with both immediate and extended family), and we observe this taking place through feedback and scrapbook analysis. These books are used in a variety of ways: shared together at home with parents and siblings; read over video calls to deployed parents, and vice versa depending on children's ages; with cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents when on holiday or visiting them, or over the phone; reading the book independently at home, then talking about it with the rest of the family who have also read it independently; reading a chapter aloud a day. While taking part in shared-reading, the project gives a boost to everyone's literacy, which cross-disciplinary research has consistently shown is a proven benefit to the development of effective individuals.

Military families routinely experience separations, often at short notice, due to training, deployment and moves, and this can be an anxious time for everyone, particularly children. Books can be shared during absences, and help to combat separation anxiety and the tensions associated with moving home and school. Sharing books also works well during good times as a joint family activity, providing continuity and shared experience contributing to overall wellbeing. As highlighted in previous reports, we know from research by The National Literacy Trust that children owning books has a significant and direct impact on their attitude to reading, raised literacy ability, and reading confidence. The NLT's 'Children and young people's reading in 2023' report however shows concerning trends:

- Just 2 in 5 (43.4%) children and young people aged 8 to 18 said they enjoyed reading in their free time in 2023. This is the lowest level since we first asked the question in 2005.
- There has been a 26% decrease in the number of children and young people aged 8 to 18 who read daily in their free time since 2005 (decreasing from 38.1% to 28.0%).
- Nearly three times as many children and young people who perceived their reading environment to be supportive said they enjoyed reading compared with those who perceived it to be less supportive (63.9% vs. 25.4%), while twice as many read daily in their free time (41.7% vs. 17.7%)

Children 'reading for pleasure' is the single most important factor for children becoming readers, and as ever we are resolutely determined to get books into the hands of Forces children. We continue to monitor our efforts and the associated impact through surveys, the outcomes of which are published in academic journals, and through seeking feedback directly from families:

"We do read a lot - but this made us talk about the book more than we normally do. I am a teacher and a parent and I think Reading Force is fab."

"Thank you for all you do; it is truly amazing the way you promote reading and its ability to build bonds."
With our core focus on providing books, we are very grateful to the Chelford House Christian Fellowship Trust for continuing their generous grant towards the cost of books for the 8th year running.

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

Resources for Forces families

During this reporting period over 21,000 signature Reading Force scrapbooks were given to families for them to complete together. In addition to being sent out with posted books, these were distributed via around 300 organisations including schools, welfare and other charities supporting Forces families, at author events, pre-deployment briefings and family days. We offer families two kinds of scrapbook - one for young children up to and including those aged seven, and one for children aged eight to eighteen, thereby involving children of all ages and encouraging shared reading between siblings, as well as between parents and children. Every scrapbook contains a 'free book' postcard, which families are invited to post and then receive a book, for each child, to share and use to begin their Reading Force activity. Each year our certificate, awarded to families who have completed and submitted their scrapbook to the biannual scrapbook competitions, is updated and positively acknowledges and affirms children's Forces identity. All scrapbooks sent to us for evaluation, both to offer feedback and enable us to confirm to sponsors how their money has been spent, are returned via recorded delivery, to ensure safe transit back to the family.

Combining the scrapbook and the book

Not every family utilises the scrapbook (wishing simply to chat about the book), but many do, filling it with the family's thoughts and opinions about the book shared. These act as prompts to talk about the book, engage, draw and be creative, and become a record of the shared family experience. We have an increasing number of families who have made several scrapbooks in recent years (for some this increased further during lockdown) and these are kept by them as special mementos.

"Completing the scrapbook, all four of us sat at our table - moved house/country two weeks ago and Daddy leaving in three days for six months. A lovely memory captured in a moment of time. The essence of Reading force - bringing families together. Thank you."

Teen Journal

The teen journal, designed by teens from military families for teens in military families, continues to grow in reach, and we gave out around 5,000 to young adults during this year. We have worked with Nosy Crow publishers to provide new titles for 11+ children and young people which are being well received with the journal. In particular, schools have reported that some year-groups remain behind in their expected literacy levels since the pandemic. In May 2023 we worked with the Community Development Worker in Aldershot to organise an author event with award-winning author Tom Palmer for Year 7s from several schools, and transitioning Year 6s, to boost reading for pleasure at the start of secondary education. Each child received a journal and book.

"Many thanks to Reading Force and Tom Palmer for putting together such a fantastic author event. The young people we really engaged, especially the young people from Talavera Junior School who found the experience of visiting a secondary school for the first-time enthralling. Many of the young people discovered Reading Force for the first time and are now fully engaged in the journals and were so excited to receive their first book, signed by Tom. The children are still talking about it. Once again thank you for everything you do for service pupils and the opportunity this offers them especially during difficult times. When money is tight and new books are a low priority, for some of our young people this is the first time they have received a brand new book." Sarah Magee, Community Development Worker, Aldershot

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Reading Force Art Competition

Following our successful writing competition in 2022 we launched a My Forces Life Art Competition earlier this year. The competition was open to children and adults, and invited the community to submit art works about their Forces life. We received a very strong response; 130 highly creative and expressive entries from all age categories. We had an esteemed panel of judges made up of award-winning illustrators: Cressida Cowell, Mini Gray, Tony de Saulles, Olaf Falafel, Eleanor Taylor, and BFBS Radio Presenter Natasha Reneaux. A gallery of entries was posted on our website. We wish to thank Bolt Burdon Kemp, Nosy Crow Books, and Daler Rowney for sponsoring this competition and making it possible.

Book Clubs

Our book clubs are thriving and are much in demand. Our Book Club Ambassador supports volunteers to set up and run the book clubs and we provide each member with three free books, for different ages and stages: young children, juniors, seniors, and adult groups. Immense thanks to the Veterans' Foundation who have supported the book clubs.

"The ladies are really grateful for Reading Force and said that they'd actually started reading more in general since the book club began." Adult book club member

"We talked more - two members of our club were new to the patch and our patch is quite isolated so this this helped them settle. We started by talking about the book and then went on to general chatting. After the club we knew each other better. We want to do another one! I think everyone enjoyed it." Senior book club member

"I loved book club ... I can't wait for book club to continue."

Support for tri-service families

With around 50% of RF families being Army-based, a large part of our work takes place in collaborations, such as the Army Welfare Service. We are grateful for the grant awarded by ABF The Soldiers' Charity who continue to support RF with our core running costs to enable us to reach greater numbers of Army families. Army&You magazine, run by the Army Families Federation, have continued to feature the Reading Force book club column in each issue where Reading Force Army children provide book reviews, also an article about the RF book clubs.

RAF Community Development Workers continue to be supplied with books and scrapbooks as part of their outreach support to families. The RAF Families Federation magazine, Envoy, continues to feature a 'Reading Force Book Corner' in which RAF children review a new book release.

We are grateful to the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity and Greenwich Hospital for their continued support. Our partnership with Storybook Waves has been running successfully since 2015. Storybook Waves gives the opportunity for Naval personnel who are scheduled to be away at sea on tours of duty to record a story for their family. This is carried out by Chaplaincy centres and after editing and with the addition of sound effects, a personalised recording is sent to their child(ren) for them to listen to whilst they are away. As part of the joint project, a copy of the picture book recorded and a Reading Force scrapbook is given out with the recording.

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

The Naval Families Federation magazine, Homeport, continues to feature a 'Reading Force and Homeport Book Reviews' page in which Naval children review a new book release.

Veterans

We have always included military veterans and their families within our beneficiaries, and sought to challenge the notion that veterans are only older former military personnel, whereas they come in all ages, include both men and women, and include those with young families.

Our grateful thanks also goes to the funders who have supported this work with veterans . We have been able to work with veteran organisations in Scotland since late 2020 (Veterans' Foundation), since early 2021 in Northern Ireland (Irish Ex-Services Trust, AFCFT Positive Pathways, and Veterans' Foundation), and in England & Wales in mid-2022 (AFCFT Sustaining Support programme).

In this reporting period we sought to expand our involvement, and at the same time work in Northern Ireland, which due to different security conditions and awarenesses needed a different approach, requiring us to work through military charities, units and veteran support organisations rather than through schools, which would not have been appropriate there. We applied for, and secured, a significant grant to support this work from the National Lottery Communities Fund (Northern Ireland) which enabled the funding of a NI Ambassador, based in the province, particularly responsible to extend this work. As part of this development we put together a steering committee of relevant individuals, based in NI, and together produced a reading resource for individual veterans, which has had a wider usefulness among military personnel, particularly when offered in conjunction with the opportunity to join a Reading Force book club. Feedback gained through online questionnaires has been very positive, and will enable us to further develop this resource in future:

"Thanks for this. I enjoyed filling it in - gave me a good sense of having done something."

"Since joining a club I read more than I did before and I noticed that my speaking got better...I don't know if that is due to the reading or knowing that I'm going to be giving my view on the book to the group..."

"It helped me organise my thoughts and prompted me to recall some things so it is very useful"

"More space for writing please. My writing is quite large and so I can't get much in each box."

"Maybe more space for books. I have filled mine up quickly."

We now also have a dedicated Reading Force Veterans Ambassador who is working with other organisations and forging networks to better reach and support veterans. Online presentations, in-person meetings, and invitations to give out RF resources at stands at events are important opportunities to network with other veteran support charities and make further contacts.

"Glad to see veterans and their families getting better notice"

"It's a way of filling your head with other things less unpleasant than the things that take up residence uninvited"

READING FORCE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Principal funding sources

Funders

Funding remains a challenge. Our costs have risen - in particular our book buying costs, due to demand and to the rise in book costs, and this in turn has impacted the amount of funding we are seeking. However, we are proud to receive the support and generous donations and grants from ABF The Soldiers' Charity, Annington, Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, Bolt Burdon Kemp LLP, Chelford House Christian Fellowship Trust, Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity with Greenwich Hospital, The Gibraltar Heritage Trust, Lest We Forget Association, The National Lottery Communities Fund (Northern Ireland), and the Veterans' Foundation.

We are grateful for all this support and shared vision in honouring the Armed Forces Covenant and delivering a service proven to be a great benefit to Forces families and veterans' families. We remain committed to continuing to offer the Reading Force shared reading initiative to support all serving Forces families, reservists and veterans.

Reserves policy

The Charity aims to retain sufficient unrestricted reserves to enable it to carry out its activities for a period of six months in the unlikely event that no new funds become available.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

Reading Force was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2015 and is governed by its Constitution.

Safeguarding policy

Reading Force exists to support the well-being of tri-service British Forces children and families through shared-reading and increased communication. We believe that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind in any situation. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and give equal priority to keeping all children and young people safe regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Our child protection and safeguarding policy relates to all children up to and including age 18, and applies to all Reading Force staff, volunteers, and anyone working with the charity.

Organisational structure

Structure

The Board of Trustees currently has a membership of 8 people, one of whom acts as Chair. The Board is in regular communication and meets as required. The Board is responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the organisation and for robust governance and rigorous financial management. The Director holds the day-to-day responsibility for the operational management of the organisation. Team Managers are responsible for the day-to-day provision of services. Recommendations by the Director and Team Managers are referred to the full Board meeting for decision.

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. Where particular risks are identified and recorded, the Board oversee and review such matters and determine any appropriate actions. The following are deemed to be key risks for the Charity:

1. Reliance on external funding - The charity relies on the donations and grants provided by external funders and donors in order to continue to operate and provide its charitable services.
2. Working with children - the trustees recognise the possibility that as a charity working with children any risk of harm would need to be reported. Appropriate mitigations are in place as demonstrated in the Safeguarding policy section above.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1159890

Principal address

10 Homersham Road
Kingston Upon Thames
Surrey
KT1 3PN

Trustees

Rev'd Prof A M Baverstock
The Rt Hon. The Baroness Stuart of Edgbaston (resigned 14/10/2022)
Ms L Taylor
Ms J Titterton (resigned 14/10/2022)
J A Lloyd (resigned 30/11/2023)
N W N Jones
The Rt Hon. The Lord Blunkett
L J Titcomb
S Azeem (appointed 23/2/2023)
C Flynn-MacLeod (appointed 13/6/2023)
Ms A Hill (appointed 8/11/2023)

Independent Examiner

Andrew A Clark
Carter & Coley
Chartered Accountants
3 Durrant Road
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH2 6NE

READING FORCE
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 12 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

Rev'd Prof A M Baverstock - Trustee

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF READING FORCE

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Reading Force

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Reading Force (the Trust) for the year ended 30 June 2023.

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 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do 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.

Andrew A Clark

Carter & Coley
Chartered Accountants
3 Durrant Road
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH2 6NE

12 December 2023

READING FORCE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	62,231	119,095	181,326	249,027
Other trading activities	3	35,000	2,076	37,076	7,595
Investment income	4	<u>577</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>577</u>	<u>16</u>
Total		<u>97,808</u>	<u>121,171</u>	<u>218,979</u>	<u>256,638</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	5	9,426	-	9,426	9,997
Charitable activities	6				
Main purpose		<u>165,054</u>	<u>109,256</u>	<u>274,310</u>	<u>212,607</u>
Total		<u>174,480</u>	<u>109,256</u>	<u>283,736</u>	<u>222,604</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(76,672)	11,915	(64,757)	34,034
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		<u>139,282</u>	<u>81,756</u>	<u>221,038</u>	<u>187,004</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>62,610</u></u>	<u><u>93,671</u></u>	<u><u>156,281</u></u>	<u><u>221,038</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

READING FORCE

BALANCE SHEET 30 JUNE 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	11	941	-	941	215
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	12	-	-	-	32,250
Cash at bank		<u>84,699</u>	<u>93,671</u>	<u>178,370</u>	<u>208,900</u>
		84,699	93,671	178,370	241,150
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	13	<u>(23,030)</u>	-	<u>(23,030)</u>	<u>(20,327)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>61,669</u>	<u>93,671</u>	<u>155,340</u>	<u>220,823</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>62,610</u>	<u>93,671</u>	<u>156,281</u>	<u>221,038</u>
NET ASSETS		<u><u>62,610</u></u>	<u><u>93,671</u></u>	<u><u>156,281</u></u>	<u><u>221,038</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

READING FORCE

BALANCE SHEET - continued 30 JUNE 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
FUNDS	14				
Unrestricted funds:					
General fund				62,610	139,282
Restricted funds:					
Annington - Scotland & NE				-	7,320
AFCFT - Force for change - Book clubs				-	8,602
AFCFT - Positive Pathways - NI				-	21,733
Bolt Burdon Kemp - writing competition				-	3,962
Lest We Forget Association - Book clubs				-	10,000
AFCFT - Sustaining Support - England & Wales veterans				29,140	30,139
National Lottery NI				24,955	-
Annington Outward Bound Trust				2,076	-
Veterans' Foundation - Book Clubs				7,500	-
Veterans' Foundation - Veterans				20,000	-
Ambassador					
Lest We Forget - Ambassador				10,000	-
				93,671	81,756
TOTAL FUNDS				156,281	221,038

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 12 December 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:

Rev'd Prof A M Baverstock - Trustee

N W N Jones - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

READING FORCE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Financial reporting standard 102 - reduced disclosure exemptions

The charity has taken advantage of the following disclosure exemptions in preparing these financial statements, as permitted by FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland':

- the requirements of Section 7 Statement of Cash Flows;
- the requirement of paragraph 3.17(d);
- the requirements of paragraphs 11.42, 11.44, 11.45, 11.47, 11.48(a)(iii), 11.48(a)(iv), 11.48(b) and 11.48(c);
- the requirements of paragraphs 12.26, 12.27, 12.29(a), 12.29(b) and 12.29A;
- the requirement of paragraph 33.7.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures and fittings - 33% on cost

Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

READING FORCE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Donations	2,356	16,477
Grants	<u>178,970</u>	<u>232,550</u>
	<u>181,326</u>	<u>249,027</u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
General	90,970	158,876
Chelford House Fellowship - books	3,000	3,000
Book clubs	30,000	15,000
Scotland & NE Ambassador	25,000	25,000
England and Wales Veterans	<u>30,000</u>	<u>30,674</u>
	<u>178,970</u>	<u>232,550</u>

READING FORCE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

3. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Sponsorships	35,000	-
Charitable activities	<u>2,076</u>	<u>7,595</u>
	<u>37,076</u>	<u>7,595</u>

4. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2023	2022
	£	£
Deposit account interest	<u>577</u>	<u>16</u>

5. RAISING FUNDS

Raising donations and legacies

	2023	2022
	£	£
Grant applications	6,125	4,214
Evaluations	<u>3,301</u>	<u>5,783</u>
	<u>9,426</u>	<u>9,997</u>

6. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 7) £	Totals £
Main purpose	<u>149,570</u>	<u>124,740</u>	<u>274,310</u>

READING FORCE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

7. SUPPORT COSTS

	Management £	Other £	Totals £
Main purpose	<u>113,451</u>	<u>11,289</u>	<u>124,740</u>

8. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 30 June 2023 nor the year ended 30 June 2022.

During the year a Trustee was reimbursed for properly incurred expenses on behalf of the Charity totalling £992 (2022 - £279).

9. STAFF COSTS

	2023 £	2022 £
Staff costs		
Total	195,266	136,905
Less Direct costs	69,533	97,265
	-----	-----
Net staff costs	125,733	39,640
	-----	-----
Average monthly staff numbers - administration	6	6

10. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	168,353	80,674	249,027
Other trading activities	7,595	-	7,595
Investment income	<u>16</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>16</u>
Total	<u>175,964</u>	<u>80,674</u>	<u>256,638</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	9,997	-	9,997
Charitable activities			
Main purpose	128,775	83,832	212,607

READING FORCE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

10. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - continued

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Total	<u>138,772</u>	<u>83,832</u>	<u>222,604</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	37,192	(3,158)	34,034
Transfers between funds	<u>28,515</u>	<u>(28,515)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds	65,707	(31,673)	34,034
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	<u>73,575</u>	<u>113,429</u>	<u>187,004</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>139,282</u>	<u>81,756</u>	<u>221,038</u>

11. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures and fittings £
COST	
At 1 July 2022	643
Additions	<u>1,412</u>
At 30 June 2023	<u>2,055</u>
DEPRECIATION	
At 1 July 2022	428
Charge for year	<u>686</u>
At 30 June 2023	<u>1,114</u>
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 30 June 2023	<u><u>941</u></u>
At 30 June 2022	<u><u>215</u></u>

READING FORCE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

12. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade debtors	<u>-</u>	<u>32,250</u>

13. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade creditors	5,157	7,252
Taxation and social security	2,821	2,267
Other creditors	<u>15,052</u>	<u>10,808</u>
	<u>23,030</u>	<u>20,327</u>

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1/7/22	Net movement in funds	At 30/6/23
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	139,282	(76,672)	62,610
Restricted funds			
Annington - Scotland & NE	7,320	(7,320)	-
AFCFT - Force for change - Book clubs	8,602	(8,602)	-
AFCFT - Positive Pathways - NI	21,733	(21,733)	-
Bolt Burdon Kemp - writing competition	3,962	(3,962)	-
Lest We Forget Association - Book clubs	10,000	(10,000)	-
AFCFT - Sustaining Support - England & Wales veterans	30,139	(999)	29,140
National Lottery NI	-	24,955	24,955
Annington Outward Bound Trust	-	2,076	2,076
Veterans' Foundation - Book Clubs	-	7,500	7,500
Veterans' Foundation - Veterans	-	-	-
Ambassador	-	20,000	20,000
Lest We Forget - Ambassador	-	10,000	10,000
	<u>81,756</u>	<u>11,915</u>	<u>93,671</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>221,038</u>	<u>(64,757)</u>	<u>156,281</u>

READING FORCE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	97,808	(174,480)	(76,672)
Restricted funds			
Annington - Scotland & NE	-	(7,320)	(7,320)
AFCFT - Force for change - Book clubs	-	(8,602)	(8,602)
AFCFT - Positive Pathways - NI	-	(21,733)	(21,733)
Bolt Burdon Kemp - writing competition	5,000	(8,962)	(3,962)
Lest We Forget Association - Book clubs	-	(10,000)	(10,000)
AFCFT - Sustaining Support - England & Wales veterans	29,140	(30,139)	(999)
National Lottery NI	24,955	-	24,955
Annington Outward Bound Trust	2,076	-	2,076
Veterans' Foundation - Book Clubs	30,000	(22,500)	7,500
Veterans' Foundation - Veterans Ambassador	20,000	-	20,000
Lest We Forget - Ambassador	10,000	-	10,000
	<u>121,171</u>	<u>(109,256)</u>	<u>11,915</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>218,979</u>	<u>(283,736)</u>	<u>(64,757)</u>

READING FORCE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1/7/21 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 30/6/22 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	73,575	37,192	28,515	139,282
Restricted funds				
Annington - Scotland & NE	24,786	7,320	(24,786)	7,320
Peter Cruddas Foundation - Teen resources	5,976	(5,976)	-	-
AFCFT - Force for change - Book clubs	11,074	(2,472)	-	8,602
AFCFT - Positive Pathways - NI	29,000	(7,267)	-	21,733
Veterans' Foundation - NI	9,593	(9,593)	-	-
Irish Ex Services Trust RBL	13,035	(13,035)	-	-
Armed Forces Education Trust - Teen resources	10,000	(6,271)	(3,729)	-
Veterans' Foundation - England & Wales	9,965	(9,965)	-	-
Bolt Burdon Kemp - writing competition	-	3,962	-	3,962
Lest We Forget Association - Book clubs	-	10,000	-	10,000
AFCFT - Sustaining Support - England & Wales veterans	-	30,139	-	30,139
	<u>113,429</u>	<u>(3,158)</u>	<u>(28,515)</u>	<u>81,756</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>187,004</u>	<u>34,034</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>221,038</u>

READING FORCE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	175,964	(138,772)	37,192
Restricted funds			
Annington - Scotland & NE	25,000	(17,680)	7,320
Peter Cruddas Foundation - Teen resources	-	(5,976)	(5,976)
AFCFT - Force for change - Book clubs	10,000	(12,472)	(2,472)
AFCFT - Positive Pathways - NI	-	(7,267)	(7,267)
Veterans' Foundation - NI	-	(9,593)	(9,593)
Irish Ex Services Trust RBL	-	(13,035)	(13,035)
Armed Forces Education Trust - Teen resources	-	(6,271)	(6,271)
Veterans' Foundation - England & Wales	-	(9,965)	(9,965)
Bolt Burdon Kemp - writing competition	5,000	(1,038)	3,962
Lest We Forget Association - Book clubs	10,000	-	10,000
AFCFT - Sustaining Support - England & Wales veterans	<u>30,674</u>	<u>(535)</u>	<u>30,139</u>
	<u>80,674</u>	<u>(83,832)</u>	<u>(3,158)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>256,638</u></u>	<u><u>(222,604)</u></u>	<u><u>34,034</u></u>

READING FORCE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

15. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 30 June 2023.

READING FORCE

DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	2,356	16,477
Grants	<u>178,970</u>	<u>232,550</u>
	181,326	249,027
Other trading activities		
Sponsorships	35,000	-
Charitable activities	<u>2,076</u>	<u>7,595</u>
	37,076	7,595
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	<u>577</u>	<u>16</u>
Total incoming resources	218,979	256,638
EXPENDITURE		
Raising donations and legacies		
Grant applications	6,125	4,214
Evaluations	<u>3,301</u>	<u>5,783</u>
	9,426	9,997
Charitable activities		
Distribution and delivery	14,802	24,286
Books	16,324	16,264
Production of materials	36,304	38,524
Book club books and distribution	2,051	4,110
Events	2,226	-
Competition	1,723	7,357
Raising awareness and marketing	5,819	18,965
Carried forward	79,249	109,506

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READING FORCE

DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Charitable activities		
Brought forward	79,249	109,506
Support - postage & stationery	788	-
Book club administration	13,286	9,082
Regional Ambassadors	<u>56,247</u>	<u>43,861</u>
	149,570	162,449
Support costs		
Management		
Wages	111,048	38,876
Professional fees	1,717	1,602
Depreciation of tangible and heritage assets	<u>686</u>	<u>214</u>
	113,451	40,692
Other		
Telephone	3,659	2,537
Postage and stationery	1,504	1,934
Sundries	160	-
Travel and subsistence	<u>5,966</u>	<u>4,231</u>
	11,289	8,702
Governance costs		
Wages	<u>-</u>	<u>764</u>
Total resources expended	<u>283,736</u>	<u>222,604</u>
Net (expenditure)/income	<u>(64,757)</u>	<u>34,034</u>

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