

COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER

England & Wales · Charity number 1159940

Details

Other names CDTN

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2015-01-14

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

Contact

Address County Durham Talking Newspaper
Unit 1
City West Business Park
St. Johns Road
Meadowfield Industrial Estate
DURHAM

Phone 01913789051

Email info@cdtn.org.uk

Website www.cdtn.org.uk

Activities

Objects: TO RELIEVE BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED PEOPLE, OR THOSE LABOURING UNDER SOME TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT INCAPACITY OR DISABILITY WHICH MAKES READING A STRAIN, IN COUNTY DURHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS BY THE PROVISION OF AUDIO RESOURCES IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY A TALKING NEWSPAPER.

Activities: CDTN provides weekly audio versions of local newspaper content for the visually impaired in County Durham, and, in some cases, neighbouring areas. Listeners sometimes contribute with their recorded stories or audio-book reviews. The service is run solely by volunteers and is completely free.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Disability, Recreation, Other Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- Durham

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£1,969	£6,657	-	-
2023-12-31	£5,773	£6,211	-	-
2022-12-31	£5,283	£6,243	-	-
2021-12-31	£7,230	£10,043	-	-
2020-12-31	£4,450	£7,013	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
STEPHEN PRIOR	Chair	2015-01-14
ALICE SEVERS		2015-01-14
LEITA PRIOR BA, MA		2015-01-14
Linda Johnson		2019-10-31

Accounts



COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER

CIO Charity: Registered No.1159940

Unit 1, City West Business Park, St John's Road, Meadowfield, Durham, DH7 8ER

T: 07888 645656 E: info@cdtn.org.uk www.cdtn.org.uk

ANNUAL REPORT FOR PERIOD JANUARY 2024 - DECEMBER 2024

Trustees: Stephen Prior (Chair); Alice Severs; Linda Johnson; Leita Prior (Managing Editor/Administrator)

Charitable Objects:

"To relieve blind and partially sighted people, or those labouring under some temporary or permanent incapacity or disability which makes reading a strain, in County Durham and the surrounding areas by the provision of audio resources in particular, but not exclusively, a talking newspaper."

A FREE RESOURCE FOR 100 VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE in COUNTY DURHAM

This period marks the completion of ten years' of continuous operation. CDTN was set up to maintain an existing service that was about to close down along with its former charity provider, and we wanted to keep supporting those service users. Our charity is run entirely by a small group of unpaid volunteers.

Throughout the year CDTN continued to provide a free audio package of local news and feature content for County Durham people who live with sight loss. The news content is sourced mostly from The Northern Echo and covers County Durham only. Content for the 40-minute 'magazine' section of our 80-minute recording is sourced mostly from local and regional publications; the articles we choose are generally to do with local history or nostalgia. Also included are VIP-specific notices and our own interviews or locally relevant packages such as coverage of the annual Durham Miners' Gala.

The recordings – either CDs or USBs— are delivered by Royal Mail free of charge under the 'Articles for the Blind' concession. This year (2024) our recordings have been received by around 90 listeners every fortnight; the average age of our listener body is around 85 years.

CDTN is a member of the Talking Newspaper Federation (TNF) through whom we enjoy a discounted insurance package along with advice and ideas.

THE FINANCES

(See Receipts & Payments Accounts in Appendix below)

Our service is completely free to our users, and we never ask them for donations. Recordings are carried in reusable heavy duty 'wallets' by Royal Mail under the free-of-charge 'Articles for the Blind' concession; listeners also return their postal wallets free of charge

Our operating costs include office rent, blank CDs, replacement postal wallets, insurance, newspapers USB sticks, USB players, office supplies and TNF subscriptions. Only two of our volunteers ever claim expenses (other than where such amounts are donated straight back to the charity).

We receive no grant aid. Our costs are met by (a) the remains of a legacy from former charity VIPS in County Durham which closed in 2014; (b) public donations.

With respect to reserves: we have no employment obligations but our reserves policy states that we should keep at least 6 months' running costs in reserve (to serve notice on our rented accommodation and pay any outstanding volunteer expenses, newspaper bills, etc.). At present this figure would be around £3,000.

Trustees declare they have approved the trustees report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to be 'SP', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

.....
Stephen Prior (Chair of Trustees)
14th October 2025

APPENDIX: RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT
(January 2024 – December 2024)
COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER
CIO Charity: Registered No.1159940

NB All figures to nearest £.

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	Total £	Last year £
Receipts					
Donations	250	-		250	4,000
Legacies	-	-		-	
Recording Income	1,719	-		1,719	1,773
				-	
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	1,969	-		1,969	5,773

Payments					
Office (includes rent, insurance, communications)	3,886	-		3,886	3,886
Recording (includes distributed consumables)	577	-		577	148
Recording and reproduction equipment	85	-		85	
Advertising	-	-		-	
Volunteer expenses	1,720	-		1,720	1,770
Newspapers	389	-		389	408
				-	
Sub total	6,657	-		6,657	6,212

Net of receipts/(payments)	- 4,689	-	-	- 4,689	- 439
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	6,908	-	-	6,908	7,347
Cash funds this year end	2,219	-	-	2,219	6,908

			Endowment £	Total £	Total £
Cash funds					
CAF Bank Account	2,219	-	-	2,219	6,908
		-	-	-	-
Total cash funds	2,219		-	2,219	6,908

			Endowment £	Total £	Total £
Assets retained for the charity's own use					
4 x PCs	-	-	-	-	-
Recording equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Audio reproduction equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Furniture	-	-	-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-



Signed by Chair of Trustees: Stephen Prior, 14th October 2025

Accounts



COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER

CIO Charity: Registered No.1159940

Unit 1, City West Business Park, St John's Road, Meadowfield, Durham, DH7 8ER

T: 0191 378 9051 E: info@cdtn.org.uk www.cdtm.org.uk

ANNUAL REPORT FOR PERIOD JANUARY 2023 - DECEMBER 2023

Trustees: Stephen Prior (Chair); Alice Severs; Linda Johnson; Leita Prior (Managing Editor/Administrator)

Charitable Objects:

"To relieve blind and partially sighted people, or those labouring under some temporary or permanent incapacity or disability which makes reading a strain, in County Durham and the surrounding areas by the provision of audio resources in particular, but not exclusively, a talking newspaper."

A FREE RESOURCE FOR 100 VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE in COUNTY DURHAM

CDTN provides a free, regular audio package of local news and features for people with a visual impairment in County Durham. The news content is sourced mostly from The Northern Echo and covers County Durham only. The 40-minute 'magazine' section of our 80-minute recording comprises a quiz, history/nostalgia features from (mostly) local and regional papers, VIP-specific notices and our own interviews or locally relevant packages such as coverage of the Durham Miners' Gala. Recordings are supplied on CD or memory stick and delivered by Royal Mail free of charge under the 'Articles for the Blind' concession. We send around 90 recordings to listeners every week.

Our charity is run entirely by a small group of unpaid volunteers.

The charity has this year (2023) completed its ninth year. CDTN was set up to maintain a long-running service that was about to end when its former charity provider—VIPs in County Durham—closed with very little notice.

Most of our listeners are around 85 years old. Most lost their sight later in life with many saying they miss reading their favourite paper. These might include The Northern Echo, the Sunday Sun, the Teesdale Mercury, the Chronicle and the Sunday Post (English edition).

In 2020 Covid restrictions did not cause a break in the service, but it meant the loss of around 14 volunteers. We continue to work remotely, meeting only (in a smaller office) to copy and dispatch the recordings. We now have around eight volunteers filling the roles of editor, writer, reader, sound technician and dispatch. The team is led by our managing editor who holds an NCTJ (MA) qualification in bi-media journalism.

CDTN is a member of the Talking Newspaper Federation—a source of ideas, advice and a comprehensive and heavily discounted insurance package.

THE FINANCES

(See Receipts & Payments Accounts in Appendix below)

Our service is completely free to our users, and we never ask them for donations. Recordings are carried in reusable heavy duty 'wallets' by Royal Mail under the free-of-charge 'Articles for the Blind' concession; listeners also return their postal wallets free of charge.

Our operating costs include office rent, blank CDs, replacement postal wallets, insurance, newspapers, USB sticks, USB players, office supplies and TNF subscriptions. Only two of our volunteers ever claim expenses (other than where such amounts are donated straight back to the charity).

We receive no grant aid. Our costs are met by (a) the remains of a legacy from former charity VIPS in County Durham which closed in 2014; (b) public donations. In 2023 we received donations from the F.P. Moore legacy, Rotary Durham, Fred Henderson Ltd, The Shakespeare Temperance Trust and Forest Carbon Ltd.

With respect to reserves: we have no employment obligations but our reserves policy states that we should keep at least 6 months' running costs in reserve (to serve notice on our rented accommodation and pay any outstanding volunteer expenses, newspaper bills, etc.). At present this figure would be around £3,000.

Trustees declare they have approved the trustees report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Prior', with a horizontal line underneath.

Stephen Prior (Chair of Trustees)

25th October 2024

APPENDIX: RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT
(January 2023 – December 2023)
COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER
CIO Charity: Registered No.1159940

NB All figures to nearest £.

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	Total £	Last year £
Receipts					
Donations	4,000	-		4,000	4,346
Legacies	-	-		-	
Recording Income	1,773	-		1,773	937
				-	
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	5,773	-		5,773	5,283

Payments					
Office (includes rent, insurance, communications)	3,886	-		3,886	3,938
Recording (includes distributed consumables)	148	-		148	479
Recording and reproduction equipment	-	-		-	
Advertising	-	-		-	
Volunteer expenses	1,770	-		1,770	1,630
Newspapers	408	-		408	196
				-	
Sub total	6,211	-		6,211	6,243

Net of receipts/(payments)	- 439	-	-	- 439	- 960
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	7,347	-	-	7,347	8,307
Cash funds this year end	6,908	-	-	6,908	7,347

Cash funds			Endowment £	Total £	Total £
CAF Bank Account	6,908	-	-	6,908	7,347
		-	-	-	-
Total cash funds	6,908		-	6,908	7,347

Assets retained for the charity's own use			Endowment £	Total £	Total £
4 x PCs	-	-	-	-	-
Recording equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Audio reproduction equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Furniture	-	-	-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-



Signed by Chair of Trustees: Stephen Prior, 25th October 2024

Accounts



COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER

CIO Charity: Registered No.1159940

Unit 1, City West Business Park, St John's Road, Meadowfield, Durham, DH7 8ER

T: 0191 378 9051 E: info@cdtn.org.uk www.cdt.org.uk

ANNUAL REPORT FOR PERIOD JANUARY 2022 - DECEMBER 2022

Trustees: Stephen Prior (Chair); Alice Severs; Linda Johnson; Leita Prior (Managing Editor/Administrator)

Charitable Objects:

"To relieve blind and partially sighted people, or those labouring under some temporary or permanent incapacity or disability which makes reading a strain, in County Durham and the surrounding areas by the provision of audio resources in particular, but not exclusively, a talking newspaper."

A FREE RESOURCE FOR 100 VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE in COUNTY DURHAM

CDTN provides free, regular audio packages of local news and features for the sole benefit of County Durham's visually impaired. News content is curated from The Northern Echo and other local or regional publications. The 40-minute 'magazine' section of our 80-minute recording comes mostly from the history and nostalgia sections of regional and one or two other print sources. The recordings are supplied on CD or memory stick and delivered by Royal Mail free of charge under the 'Articles for the Blind' concession. We send around 100 recordings to listeners every week.

Our charity is run entirely by a small group of unpaid volunteers.

We set ourselves up as a charity at the end of 2014 in order to maintain a long-running service that was about to end with the abrupt closure of former provider, VIPs in County Durham. Nine years on we continue to keep County Durham's blind and sight-impaired listeners abreast of news relating to their own communities. Local radio and television stations do not offer much of the content that our recordings provide.

Most of our listeners are at least 85 years old. Nearly all have lost their sight later in life with many saying they were once regular readers of one or more of the region's papers: The Northern Echo, the Sunday Sun, the Teesdale Mercury, the Chronicle—and also the popular Scottish Sunday Post (English edition). From these we compile our news and magazine package to include a quiz, opinion pieces and nostalgia and history items.

In 2020, Covid restrictions saw our total volunteer number drop from 20 to eight, with the bulk of the work moved from the office to our respective homes. We continue to work this way, covering the multiple roles of sound technician, reader, copy editor, administrator and despatcher. (Our office is used solely for the copying and despatch of finished recordings.) CDTN's output is overseen by our managing editor who holds an NCTJ (MA) qualification in bimedia journalism.

CDTN is a member of the Talking Newspaper Federation—a source of ideas, advice and a comprehensive and heavily discounted insurance package.

THE FINANCES

(See Receipts & Payments Accounts in Appendix below)

Our services users pay nothing whatsoever for our services and we never ask them for donations. Their recordings travel free via Royal Mail under the 'Articles for the Blind' concession; listeners merely drop their returning postal wallets into a postbox, no stamp required.

Our operating costs include office rent, CDs, postal wallets, insurances, newspapers, USB sticks, USB players, maintenance and purchase of recording and copying equipment, office supplies, computer data protection, telephone and internet and TNF subscriptions. Only two of our eight volunteers claim any reimbursement or travel expenses (other than where such amounts are donated straight back to the charity).

We receive no grant aid. Our costs are met by (a) the dwindling remains of a legacy from former charity VIPS in County Durham which closed in 2014; (b) public donations. In 2022 we received unsolicited donations from Rotary Durham, Fred Henderson Ltd, The Shakespeare Temperance Trust and Forest Carbon Ltd.

With respect to reserves: we have no employment obligations but our reserves policy states that we should keep at least 6 months' running costs in reserve (to serve notice on our rented accommodation and pay any outstanding volunteer expenses, newspaper bills, etc.). At present this figure would be around £4,000.

Trustees declare they have approved the trustees report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees



.....
Stephen Prior (Chair of Trustees)
9th October 2023

APPENDIX: RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT
(January 2022 – December 2022)
COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER
 CIO Charity: Registered No.1159940

NB All figures to nearest £.

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	Total £	Last year £
Receipts					
Donations	4,346			4,346	5,370
Legacies				-	-
Recording Income	937			937	1,860
				-	
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	5,283			5,283	7,230

Payments					
Office (includes rent, insurance, communications)	3,938			3,938	4,599
Recording (includes distributed consumables)	479			479	202
Recording and reproduction equipment				-	-
Advertising				-	-
Volunteer expenses	1,630			1,630	5,020
Newspapers	196			196	222
				-	
Sub total	6,243			6,243	10,043

Net of receipts/(payments)	- 960		-	- 960	- 2,813
A5 Transfers between funds	-		-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	8,307		-	8,307	11,120
Cash funds this year end	7,347		-	7,347	8,307

			Endowment £	Total £	Total £
Cash funds					
CAF Bank Account			-	7,347	11,120
			-	-	-
Total cash funds			-	7,347	11,120

			Endowment £	Total £	Total £
Assets retained for the charity's own use					
4 x PCs			-	-	-
Recording equipment			-	-	-
Audio reproduction equipment			-	-	-
Furniture			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
Total			-	-	-



Signed by Chair of Trustees: Stephen Prior, 9th October 2023

Accounts



COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER

CIO Charity: Registered No.1159940

Unit 1, City West Business Park, St John's Road, Meadowfield, Durham, DH7 8ER

T: 0191 378 9051 E: info@cdtn.org.uk www.cdt.org.uk

ANNUAL REPORT FOR PERIOD JANUARY 2021 - DECEMBER 2021

Trustees: Stephen Prior (Chair); Alice Severs; Linda Johnson; Leita Prior (Managing Editor)

Charitable Objects:

"To relieve blind and partially sighted people, or those labouring under some temporary or permanent incapacity or disability which makes reading a strain, in County Durham and the surrounding areas by the provision of audio resources in particular, but not exclusively, a talking newspaper."

NB: Our current address is as shown above (with effect from 1st January 2022).

A FREE AUDIO RESOURCE FOR 100 VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE ACROSS COUNTY DURHAM

The County Durham Talking Newspaper (CDTN) is here to keep blind and partially sighted people connected to their community. We want our listeners to be able to enjoy access to the county's traditional print press—for both local news stories and certain features and articles. The idea is to replicate, as far as possible, the experience of sitting in a room with a companion as they read local stories and snippets out to you. It is a fact that radio and television do not provide most of the material we record from our region's printed sources. There has been a talking newspaper service covering County Durham for more than 30 years hosted by several consecutive organisations. CDTN has been running the service on a volunteer-only basis since January 2015.

Most of our listeners are at least 85 years old and most lost their sight later in life. Many have said they miss the satisfaction of settling down with their newspaper. Their paper is likely to have been one of several still surviving the general decline in printed news, amongst them The Northern Echo, the Sunday Sun, the Teesdale Mercury, the Chronicle. From these (and a couple of other historically used print sources) we compile a news and magazine package comprising a local news digest; a quiz; entertaining or thoughtful articles; and material of a historical and nostalgic nature.

Until the Covid pandemic struck, our talking newspaper was a weekly production. Several weeks into the first lockdown with all its shieldings, postal hold-ups, volunteer shortages and hygiene precautions we found it necessary to move to a fortnightly despatch. We continue to work this way, not least because listeners say they have come to prefer a less relentless provision: the fortnightly routine reduces pressure on them to listen and return their postal wallets in time for the next edition. We find we can still cover the news through a more vigorous sub-editing of the printed original.

From 2020, Covid restrictions saw our total volunteer number drop from 20 to eight. Our smaller team has continued to work remotely, editing and recording at home then sending files via email to a sound technician for compilation and mastering. Our office continues to serve as a once-a-fortnight despatch centre only. Around eight of us cover the multiple roles of sound technician; copy-and-despatch; reading; admin; and editing.

CDTN is a member of the Talking Newspaper Federation through whom we enjoy not only ideas and advice but a good, heavily discounted, insurance package.

THE FINANCES

(See Receipts & Payments Accounts in Appendix below)

Our services users pay nothing whatsoever for our services and we never ask them for donations. Their recordings travel free via Royal Mail under the 'Articles for the Blind' concession; listeners merely drop their returning postal wallets into a postbox, no stamp required.

Our expenses include rent, CDs, postal wallets, insurances, newspapers, USB sticks, USB players, maintenance and purchase of recording and copying equipment, office supplies, computer data protection, telephone and internet and TNF subscriptions. Only two of our eight volunteers claim any reimbursement or travel expenses (except where these are donated back to the charity).

We receive no grant aid. Our operating costs are met by: (a) the dwindling remains of a legacy from former charity VIPS in County Durham which closed December 2014; (b) payment for recording services provided to Durham County Council ; and (c) public donations. In 2021 we received unsolicited donations from Rotary Durham, Fred Henderson Ltd, The Shakespeare Temperance Trust, Trefoil group (Sedgefield), several listeners and/or their families, one other private benefactor and Forest Carbon Ltd.

With respect to reserves: we have no employment obligations but our reserves policy states that we should keep at least 6 months' running costs in reserve (to serve notice on our rented accommodation and pay any outstanding volunteer expenses, newspaper bills, etc.). At present this figure would be around £4,000.

Trustees declare they have approved the trustees report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees



.....
Stephen Prior (Chair of Trustees)
27th September 2022

APPENDIX: RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT
(January 2021 – December 2021)
COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER
 CIO Charity: Registered No.1159940

NB All figures to nearest £.

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	Total £	Last year £
Receipts					
Donations	5,370			5,370	3,750
Legacies	-			-	-
Recording Income	1,860			1,860	700
				-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	7,230			7,230	4,450

Payments					
Office (includes rent, insurance, communications)	4,599			4,599	4,288
Recording (includes distributed consumables)	202			202	773
Recording and reproduction equipment	-			-	-
Advertising	-			-	-
Volunteer expenses	5,020			5,020	1,349
Newspapers	222			222	603
				-	-
Sub total	10,043			10,043	7,013

Net of receipts/(payments)	- 2,813		-	- 2,813	- 2,562
A5 Transfers between funds	-		-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	11,120		-	11,120	13,682
Cash funds this year end	8,307		-	8,307	11,120

Cash funds			Endowment £	Total £	Total £
CAF Bank Account			-	8,307	11,120
			-	-	-
Total cash funds			-	8,307	11,120

Assets retained for the charity's own use			Endowment £	Total £	Total £
4 x PCs			-	-	-
Recording equipment			-	-	-
Audio reproduction equipment			-	-	-
Furniture			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
Total			-	-	-



Signed by Chair of Trustees: Stephen Prior, 27th September 2022

Accounts



COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER

CIO Charity: Registered No.1159940

Foundation House, St John's Road, Meadowfield, Durham DH7 8TZ

T: 0191 378 9051 E: info@cdtn.org.uk www.cdtan.org.uk

ANNUAL REPORT FOR PERIOD JANUARY 2020 - DECEMBER 2020

Trustees: Stephen Prior (Chair); Alice Severs; Linda Johnson; Leita Prior (Managing Editor)

Charitable Objects:

To relieve blind and partially sighted people, or those labouring under some temporary or permanent incapacity or disability which makes reading a strain, in County Durham and the surrounding areas by the provision of audio resources in particular, but not exclusively, a talking newspaper.

A FREE AUDIO RESOURCE FOR COUNTY DURHAM'S VISUALLY IMPAIRED

This report marks the completion of CDTN's sixth year of operation. The County Durham Talking Newspaper was set up at the end of 2014 to ensure continuity of an established service provided by a previous charity that was about to close down. Aware that the loss of this resource would be badly missed by those who had enjoyed it for 15 or more years, volunteers from the closing charity set up CDTN to keep it going. With many of the same volunteers still recording today, our listeners benefit not only from what the talking newspaper itself provides, but also from a sense of familiarity and stability. The charity has no employees; it is run entirely by volunteers.

CDTN serves more than 100 blind and visually impaired people. Most of our listeners are in their eighties. The service, which is provided entirely free of charge, gives the sight-impaired access to the County's latest news stories and features published by the region's newspapers. The object is to keep our listeners in touch with County Durham's community events, incidents, crime stories, official business and so on. The recordings also provide entertainment and food for thought through a selection of regionally published articles which include nostalgia and history pieces, a quiz, opinions on current affairs, features on famous people, and so on. A great deal of sub-editing is required to achieve a wide representation of the news content; this is overseen by a qualified NCTJ journalist. CDTN is a member of the Talking Newspaper Federation.

The recordings - on CD or memory stick - travel through the post inside a wallet with a reversible label. In order to receive the next edition, recipients drop the wallet back into a postbox with the label reversed to show our address; no postage is necessary as these wallets travel free by first class post under the 'Articles for the Blind' concession.

UNBROKEN SERVICE THROUGHOUT COVID 19 LOCKDOWNS

Until 2020 our talking newspaper was despatched weekly. When the pandemic forced us to make changes to the way we worked we were able to do so without loss to our listeners.

By April 2020 we were already alert to (a) the possible spread of the virus via the surface of the postal wallets; and (b) the difficulties our elderly listeners faced in returning their wallets. (Many rely on a visitor or family member to drop it into the post, especially in winter.) The postal service itself was also erratic.

To deal with the potential danger of virus transmission on our plastic postal wallets we overwrapped them in paper envelopes so listeners could carefully rip the outer cover off and feel confident they were handling an uninfected object. (We also followed all hygiene guidelines during the copying and despatch processes.)

At the same time we moved from the weekly despatch of one talking newspaper to a fortnightly despatch of one talking newspaper plus an extra recording of other material. For the latter we serialised six locally written autobiographies (amongst them famous artist Norman Cornish's 'A Slice Of Life' and veteran journalist Mike Amos's 'Unconsidered Trifles'). These were much appreciated, especially during those periods when hard copies of audiobooks from national sources were made unavailable. Most of our listeners are unable to access online audio material.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Of our 20 volunteers, only eight have had the opportunity to be active throughout 2020. From April we visited our studio/office only when necessary: to process wallets, copy the recordings and despatch them. The editors' scripts were emailed to a small pool of readers with the necessary skills to record at home and their audio emailed to the technician for final production. We are pleased that this arrangement allowed us to avoid any break in our service. But it is unfortunate that around 12 of our excellent volunteers were, in effect, made redundant. All have given great service, some of them for two decades —for CDTN and the County Durham charity that preceded us. How we proceed in the future has yet to be decided.

THE FINANCES

(See Receipts & Payments Accounts in Appendix below)

Our expenses include rent, CDs, postal wallets, insurances, newspapers, USB sticks, USB players, maintenance and purchase of recording and copying equipment, PAT testing; office supplies, computer data protection, telephone and internet.

We receive no grant aid and never ask for donations from our listeners. Our operating costs are met by: (a) the remains of a legacy from former charity VIPS in County Durham upon its closure in December 2014; (b) payment for recording services provided to Durham County Council ; and (c) public donations. In 2020 we refrained from asking for support from our usual generous benefactors (e.g. Brandon and Byshottles Parish Council) sensing that they would be facing more urgent covid-related demands. However we still received unsolicited donations from The Rotary Club of Durham, Fred Henderson Ltd, The Shakespeare Temperance Trust, Durham University's St Cuthbert's Society, several listeners and/or their families, two private benefactors and Forest Carbon Ltd.

Our reserves policy requires that we should keep at least 6 months' running costs in reserve (to serve notice on our rented accommodation and pay any outstanding volunteer expenses, newspaper bills, etc.). At present this figure would be around £4,000. We have no employment obligations.

Trustees declare they have approved the trustees report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees



.....
Stephen Prior (Chair of Trustees)

21 October 2021

APPENDIX: RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT
(January 2020 – December 2020)
COUNTY DURHAM TALKING NEWSPAPER
 CIO Charity: Registered No.1159940

NB All figures to nearest £.

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	Total £	Last year £
Receipts					
Donations	3,750			3,750	3,125
Legacies				-	-
Recording Income	700			700	1,796
				-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	4,450			4,450	4,921

Payments					
Office (includes rent, insurance, communications)	4,288			4,288	4,180
Recording (includes distributed consumables)	773			773	1,219
Recording and reproduction equipment	-			-	364
Advertising	-			-	-
Volunteer expenses	1,349			1,349	1,089
Newspapers	603			603	643
				-	-
Sub total	7,013			7,013	7,496

Net of receipts/(payments)			-	2,562	2,575
A5 Transfers between funds	-		-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end			-	13,682	16,256
Cash funds this year end			-	11,120	13,682

Cash funds			Endowment £	Total £	Total £
CAF Bank Account			-	11,120	13,682
			-	-	-
Total cash funds			-	11,120	13,682

Assets retained for the charity's own use			Endowment £	Total £	Total £
4 x PCs			-	-	-
Recording equipment			-	-	-
Audio reproduction equipment			-	-	-
Furniture			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
Total			-	-	-



Signed by Chair of Trustees: Stephen Prior, 21 October 2021