



CUMBRIA VICTIMS CHARITABLE TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the period ended 31 March 2024

Registered Charity Number 1160978

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CUMBRIA VICTIMS CHARITABLE TRUST

For the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

1. THE CHARITY

Cumbria Victims Charitable Trust (CVCT) was registered on 19 March 2015 by the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered number 1160978. Administration is carried out by one of the Trustees (Christopher Armstrong) from his home address, which has been registered with the Charity Commission as the Charity's base.

2. THE OBJECTS OF THE CHARITY

The charitable objectives of the CVCT are:

- To promote, for the benefit of the public, the efficiency of the police and other agencies providing services to victims in Cumbria by working in partnership with them to promote and improve services for victims of crime.
- To promote and improve services for victims of crime.
- To relieve persons who are in conditions of need, hardship and distress or sickness as a result of being a victim, a witness or otherwise being affected by crime.

The Trustees believe that the activities of the Charity during the report period have addressed these objectives.

3. THE TRUSTEES

During the report period, the Trustees of the CVCT were:

Annette Hennessy	Christopher Armstrong
Glenys Marriott	Venetia Young
Marcia Reid Fotheringham	Natalie Bradbury

As a CIO Foundation Model, the members of the Charity are the Trustees. As well as the usual responsibilities of Trustees, their duties include ensuring that the Board is composed of sufficient suitably qualified people to provide good governance. Trustees serve for 3 years before the need for re-election and there is no upper limit. As of 31 March 2024 current terms of office of the Trustees are:

To 31 March 2025	Annette Hennessy	Venetia Young	Natalie Bradbury
To 31 March 2026	Christopher Armstrong		
To 31 March 2027	Glenys Marriott	Marcia Reid Fotheringham	

Trustees come from across Cumbria, with the Board continuing to be possessed of a real depth and breadth of knowledge about the County and its communities. All members of the Board are active in making a difference across a broad spectrum of work, in health, mental health, with victims, in domestic violence, with offenders and diversity. Whilst Board meetings do focus on the work of the Trust, they also provide a rich source of intelligence and generative thinking, about all of the work we do in Cumbria, and the wider world.

The Trustees met as a Board on 4 occasions, mostly by videoconference, to consider applications for funding and to transact other business. However, to ensure speedy decisions on applications for urgent funding, most applications were dealt with by email between the Trustees, resulting in the majority of decisions being made within 5 days of receipt of the application. In addition to meeting as a Board, Trustees also came together on 4 occasions as an independent Scrutiny Panel assessing the level of care Cumbria Constabulary offers to victims of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

4. THE CHARITY'S VISION AND VALUES

4.1 Our Vision and Values

Our vision is:

- To build a lasting, sustainable impact on the lives of persons who are in conditions of need, hardship, distress or sickness as a result of being a victim or witness, or being affected by crime in Cumbria;
- To promote awareness of the impact of crime and improvement in the services for victims of crime;
- By working with others, grant-giving and building a sustainable charity.

Our values can be expressed thus:

CVCT is a County-wide charity that supports a wide range of victims of crime in a way that is timely, effective, compassionate and fair, and which makes a difference to their lives.

4.2 Development Plan

Although we are a small charity, with a very specific and targeted remit, we have always thought it important to have a plan. Without a plan or route map, it is difficult to know if you are achieving your objectives or reaching your destination. Our 3 year Development Plan to work towards our vision is simple, with 3 key strategies:

- Stability – to demonstrate good governance and accountability,
- Funding – to achieve funding continuity,
- Impact – to develop and grow the impact of the charity.

Each strategy is considered from 4 angles:

- Processes,
- Financial capability,
- Communications,
- Relationships.

The Plan is reviewed each year to ensure that everything remains on target. The review at the end of March 2024, the end of the first year of the current Plan, indicated that the charity remained on target and focussed on its objectives

5. OUR ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

5.1 Development Plan Review

5.1.1 Stability

- Feedback from Cumbria Community Foundation, from discussion among Trustees and from those who have sponsored applications has led to changes in the criteria and decision making process. Active consideration is being given to the amounts of individual grants made.
- An audit of our governance processes against CVS standards is planned for next year. We remain confident that we are operating in line with Charity Commission requirements and guidance.
- The Charity's narrative is maintained on the website, through social media and through Trustee contacts and meetings.
- Communication channels are active through a wide variety of Trustee links, police relationships and the Victims Quality Champion within the Office of the Cumbria Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.
- Board members are not afraid to challenge each other or in meetings with others. We need to consider that we may need to find an additional Trustee.

5.1.2 Funding

- The fund held on behalf of the Charity by Cumbria Community Foundation has not yet been exhausted, although estimates suggest it may be so during 2024-2025. Plans are therefore in place to transfer more funds to CCF when required.
- A review of networks has developed recently through our involvement as the independent VAWG Scrutiny Panel. Building networks remains a continuing focus for us.
- Visible stories of the impact of grants are still slow to come through. Where we do receive feedback from or on behalf of victims, this goes onto our website and into our Annual Report.

5.1.3 Impact

- Through our work on the VAWG Panel, with the Victims Quality Champion and with Cumbria Community Foundation, we have positive working relationships based on mutual trust and integrity which have led to a collaborative, developmental approach to the work.
- The referrals this year have decreased slightly, despite continued efforts to publicise CVCT, but there is still a steady flow of applications. We appreciate the work that our link CCF officer Sarah Thompson has done to help with this. Latterly discussions have taken place to raise the CVCT profile on the Constabulary intranet.
- Expanding victim care is still work in progress but through the work on the VAWG Panel, coupled with the grants made, we believe we are making a significant contribution to victim care in Cumbria.

5.2 Partnerships

The Trustees of Cumbria Victims Charitable Trust recognise that partnership working is the best way to deliver an enhanced service for victims of crime, and seek to expand and develop such partnerships. These are the bodies with which we work most closely.

5.2.1 Cumbria Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

The Charitable Trust was formed when the then Police & Crime Commissioner for Cumbria identified a means whereby the scope of victims' services in Cumbria might be enhanced by the involvement of an independent voluntary body, able to operate without the constraints often met by statutory entities. To support this initiative both he and his successor in office allocated funds from the budget devolved by central government for victim care. It is from this funding that CVCT allocates grants to vulnerable victims to help them to cope with, and recover from, the impact of the crime they have experienced. The Trustees therefore value the well-established partnership that has developed with the Commissioner and his staff and hope to build on it in future, for the benefit of victims of crime. A particularly valuable relationship has been established with Sandra Radcliffe, the Victims Quality Champion, with whom we work closely in the VAWG Scrutiny Panel.

5.2.2 Cumbria Police

Trustees welcome the increasing focus nationally on providing care and support for victims of crime, whose lives have been sorely affected by their experiences. For too long comfortable words have not been followed by robust action and it is pleasing to see that this is changing. We therefore welcome the introduction of the Victims' Code and hope that it will carry the force of law so that all agencies are made to focus on the care they give to victims as they travel through the criminal justice system and beyond, and are held accountable for their performance.

A particular national focus during 2023-2024 has been on the way in which agencies deliver the requirements of the Code to female victims of violence – the Violence Against Women and Girls initiative (VAWG). CVCT Trustees have been pleased to be invited by Cumbria Police and the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner to provide an independent perspective on the way in which Cumbria's police officers discharge their duties under the Code. We understand that not all forces have been prepared to open themselves to independent scrutiny and it is very much to the credit of Cumbria Police that it has wholeheartedly embraced not only the duties expected but also the implications of an independent scrutiny. We are aware that significant resource has been devoted to creating a culture which espouses the need to support victims and we have been extremely impressed with the seriousness with which Constabulary officers and staff have approached the task. It is a commitment led from the top, with dedicated senior officers delivering the message to all areas of the force. We are pleased to be involved in this important area and commend Cumbria Police for showing the way to enhanced victim care.

5.2.3 Cumbria Community Foundation

CVCT Trustees all being busy people, for practical purposes CVCT commissioned Cumbria Community Foundation (CCF) to administer the grant fund on its behalf. Guidance on how to make grant applications, and the criteria that apply, appear on both the CVCT and CCF websites. Applications are directed to CCF where, by contact with the sponsor of the application (usually an independent case worker with knowledge of the applicant's circumstances) any necessary queries are resolved and further information sought. An anonymised application form, with an assessment by the CCF Grants Officer, is then sent to Trustees who make the final decisions on grants. This arrangement continues to work well. We are particularly grateful to our CCF contact Sarah Thompson, who often has to make extensive enquiries in order to provide the information needed for Trustees to make an appropriate decision.

5.2.4 Other partnerships

Although grants are primarily made to individual victims of crime, we recognise that some victims are unable to engage with the application process. In this regard we have from time to time commissioned victim-focussed bodies as our agent, providing them with funds from which they can make small emergency grants to victims who turn to them for help. In the past we have provided funds for Safety Net and the Birchall Trust, both of which support victims of rape and sexual abuse. This year we provided a grant to Victim Support to enable them to provide basic mobile telephones to victims of domestic abuse whose own devices have been taken or destroyed by perpetrators, thus enabling the victims still to contact the police or other support network. Victim Support workers are also frequent sponsors of applications for grants, providing an essential step in the process of helping victims to recover.

Our involvement with these respected bodies has had a positive spin-off for Trustees by expanding their knowledge of both formal investigative processes and the impact and prevalence of particular offences. This more detailed information, added to the already-diverse background of CVCT Trustees (including criminal justice, medicine, psychology), gives the Board further in-depth knowledge and experience which they can bring to bear on their work.

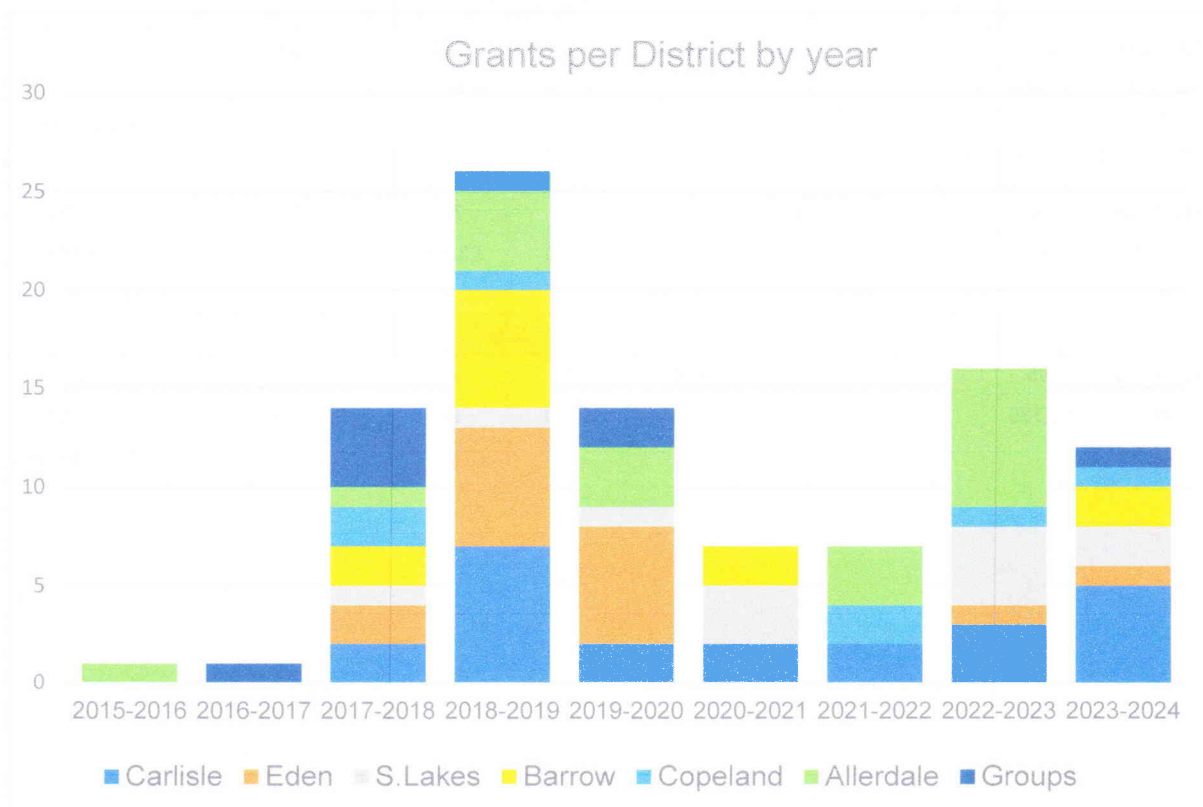
5.3 Grants

Details of the applications received during the year appear in the tables below. Notwithstanding the changes in local government areas, we have continued to use the previous Districts for ease of comparison.

Despite on-going efforts to advertise the existence of the Fund across the County, including through our website (<https://cumbriavictimstrust.org.uk>) and active use of our X (Twitter) account (@CumbriaVictimsCT) - which has nearly 1300 followers, the number of applications remains relatively low and indeed was slightly down on the previous year. This is the case even from areas where levels of deprivation might indicate a greater need from victims of crime. Part of the explanation could be the existence of other funds specifically available in those areas or the availability of funds to address pure economic need, a factor beyond our more limited remit.

Applications remain predominantly from victims of domestic violence, where perpetrators have wrecked homes and women and children have had to leave with few, if any, possessions. Nevertheless Trustees are anxious that the Trust should not be seen as purely a DV funder and it is keen to encourage applications from the vulnerable victims of other types of crime. To this end it continues to make substantial efforts to raise awareness of the Fund among those organisations that are likely to come into contact with victims of crime, including asylum seekers and refugees, and to encourage them to support applications falling within our published criteria.

The Charity remains of the view that providing direct practical help for individual victims is a better use of its funds than providing grants to organisations for their own use, although we have in the past funded organisations to act as agent for CVCT, applying the same criteria, particularly where individual victims may not be able to apply for help in the usual way. We believe this is an effective way of supporting vulnerable victims of crime.



	Carlisle Received /granted	Eden Received /granted	S.Lakes Received /granted	Barrow Received /granted	Copeland Received /granted	Allerdale Received /granted	Groups Received/granted Totals	individuals Received/granted Totals
Numbers Amount	2015-2016							
						1/1		1/1
								£1947
								Totals £1947
Numbers Amount	2016-2017							
							1/1	8/7
							£2000	£18000
								Totals £20,000
Numbers Amount	2017-2018							
	2/2	2/2	2/1	3/2	3/2	2/1	4/4	14/10
	£7,21	£72	£2,000	£560	£406	£1,340	£9,100	£5,754
								Totals £14,854
Numbers Amount	2018-2019							
	9/7	7/6	3/1	8/6	2/1	5/4	1/1	34/25
	£2,435	£2,018	£250	£2,220	£2,176	£1,756	£1,500	£10,855
								Totals £12,355
Numbers Amount	2019-2020							
	2/2	7/6	3/1	13/10	0/0	3/3	2/2	29/21
	£850	£379	£275	£2,320	0	£800	£1,737	£4,624
								Totals £6,361
Numbers Amount	2020-2021							
	2/2	0/0	3/3	2/2	0/0	0/0	1/0	7/7
	£1,219	0	£1,520	£850	0	0	0	£3,589
								Totals £3,589
Numbers Amount	2021-2022							
	2/2	0/0	1/0	0/0	2/2	3/3	0/0	8/7
	£1,290	0	0	0	£755	£1,251	0	£3,296
								Totals £3,296
Numbers Amount	2022-2023							
	4/3	1/1	4/4	1/0	1/1	7/7	0/0	18/16
	£830	£81	£1,221	0	£280	£3,106	0	£5,518
								Totals £5,518
Numbers Amount	2023-2024							
	5/5	1/1	2/2	4/2	1/1	0/0	1/1	13/11
	£1,785	£500	£725	£654	£500	£0	£1,500	£4,164
								Totals £5,664

5.4 CVCT Criteria and Guidance

Behind every application there is a tale of need and we see each one as an opportunity to learn. As part of this thinking, we continuously review both our processes and our grant criteria as new issues come to light. Consequently, during the year, we made further slight adjustments to the criteria used to guide both applicants (and those who support them) and our decisions. Regrettably there remains plenty of evidence of need in the County, and valiant efforts are being made, especially through the Community Foundation, to address this where possible. However most of it is beyond the remit of the Trust which must, of necessity, focus on helping victims recover from the effects of crime and not of their circumstances.

GRANT CRITERIA AND GUIDANCE

WHO WILL WE HELP?

Victims of crime or anti-social behaviour **who reside in Cumbria** and who

- are in urgent need, distress, hardship or sickness as a result of crime; *and*
- are vulnerable; *and*
- need help to cope, to recover, or to avoid re-victimisation; *and*
- have limited resources and little or no other funding available to them.

PRIORITIES

The priorities of the Trustees are:

- To promote the **safety** of the victim;
- To relieve **urgent** need or distress;
- To provide essential **basic** requirements, eg relating to washing, cooking and sleeping.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

- The application must be supported by an independent case worker or professional involved with the case. The role of the sponsor is to ensure the application contains all relevant information and meets the CVCT guidelines, and to help the applicant to prioritise need.

To provide CVCT Trustees with the information necessary to enable them to make a decision, and thus to maximise the possibility of a successful outcome, it is strongly recommended that, in completing a grant application, the starting point should be what are the victim's basic requirements (bearing in mind these criteria) rather than focussing on the prima facie maximum grant.

- Proof of a conviction is not essential, nor is reporting the crime to the police. In the absence of such proof, a reasonable belief by the sponsor that the applicant is the victim of a crime is acceptable.
- There should be a close connection, both as to cause and in time, between crime and application.
- Where a grant is made, CVCT, via CCF, will usually pay suppliers / contractors direct.
- Payments will not be made to, or on behalf of, third parties who are not direct victims.
- There is no minimum or maximum award amount and CVCT reserves the right to make any award it sees fit. However, as a guide, grants typically range from £200 to £700, depending on the applicant's needs.
- CVCT Trustees have complete discretion and reserve the right to consider any factors they deem relevant.

CVCT WILL NOT NORMALLY FUND

- Furniture, carpets and household items, other than basic essentials relating to washing, cooking and sleeping. These must represent best quality low budget items – premium models will not be supported.
- CCTV.
- Damage to motor vehicles.
- Uninsured loss.

Trustees may be willing to consider such matters if the applicant can establish that exceptional circumstances justify an award,

CVCT WILL NOT FUND

- Debt, whether incurred by the victim or someone else.
- Counselling / therapy.
- Education / training.
- Overseas travel, expeditions.
- Statutory agencies, or administrative equipment or general expenses for other bodies.

5.5 Feedback

- We have gathered feedback over the year on some of the grants made, which has been most welcome, and evidences that the funds provide much needed items at a time of distress. We continue to debate how we might improve this, but we are aware that our grants form only a small part of the work of CCF and victim care in Cumbria.
- The number of applications does not fully reflect the number of direct and indirect victims who have benefitted from CVCT grants. In 2023-2024, the number benefitting was more than double the number of applications.
- Some quotes from, or on behalf of, recipients of CVCT grants:

Context: Applicant needed to move due to high risk domestic abuse. She needed beds and bedding for the children plus help with removal costs.

Quote: “(The grant) reduced the stress of moving when there was little money. It also made a big impact to the children’s lives to get a new bed and bedding. Thank you for being so helpful and for being so generous”.

Context: CVCT provided funds to Victim Support to purchase basic mobile telephones, to be given to victims of domestic or sexual abuse.

Quote:

“(This funding) will really assist some of our most vulnerable victims in Cumbria to remain safe and remain in contact with support / emergency services if their mobiles are damaged by their abuser or taken by police for digital forensic checks”.

Context: Grant provided for purchase of camera to enable victim of on-line child grooming to engage in a positive activity as a means of recovering from severe emotional and mental impact.

Quote: “X will enrol on the level 2 photography course at college. (X is) very grateful for such a great camera to start her photographic education.”

Since it was established in 2015, the Trustees believe that the Charity has grown and developed to have an influence and an impact on victim care in Cumbria. This can be seen through our work with the Constabulary and the OPFCC on VAWG and the numbers of victims and families we have supported through grants.

5.6 In summary

As Trustees we remain of the view that the combination of small amounts of funding, at the right time, in quick time, provides the most valuable support to victims. We aim to communicate a decision on each application within 5 days of receipt and at times we have done so within 24 hours. This pragmatic, practical intervention provides much more than the money, it also indicates kindness and hope, at a very grim, hard time for individuals.

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted” Aesop

An unanticipated outcome has been that these small grants can also support the frontline workers, in what can be a relentless struggle to help victims to recover from the impact of crime and (at times) the criminal justice system.

6. THE FUTURE

As we look to the future for the Trust our priorities remain to:

- Increase referrals from vulnerable victims of all kinds of crime;
- Continue to collect feedback from recipients to evidence the impact of grants;
- Take appropriate opportunities to engage in the debate about how victim care might be improved;
- Further develop the Trust's scope.

We remain keen to work with partners across Cumbria, both statutory, such as the PFCC and the Police, and the Third Sector, to collaborate and share understanding about victim care in Cumbria. We are also committed to monitoring the provision of victims' services and to making informed comment, based on our combined experience, where that is appropriate.

The Trustees have considered their activities in the light of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and believe that those activities have complied with the guidance.

7. THE CHARITY'S FINANCES AND RESERVES

The Charity was established as an independent charitable trust to help provide additional services for victims and, in time, generate additional income to supplement the funding provided by the Ministry of Justice for victims' services. The aspiration is that funding from the Charity will assist in expanding existing services and supporting the needs of victims of crime and anti-social behaviour who reside in Cumbria.

The Trustees of CVCT acknowledge with thanks the support of the Cumbria Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and also that of the Cumbria Community Foundation.

Other income streams continue to be sought and donations have been received from time to time. The Charity continues to seek to raise its profile as a means of generating both additional income and further appropriate applications for funding.

In view of the fact that the Charity is largely a grant-making body, and carries no overheads, the Trustees have decided that it is not necessary at this stage to have a Reserves Policy. However, this matter will be kept under regular review.

Signed on behalf of Cumbria Victims Charitable Trust

Allenbury

Trustee

C. J. Amphlett

Trustee

Date: 5 JUNE 2024

Independent Examiner's Report

to

The Trustees of Cumbria Victims Charitable Trust

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Independent Examiner

The charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of Independent Examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

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

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Acthave not been met or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Name in Full:

JANE ELIZABETH VICKERS, CIPFA

Address:

**11 The Nurseries
Linstock
CARLISLE
CA6 4RR**

Date:

29-5-2024

CUMBRIA VICTIMS CHARITABLE TRUST

Receipts and Payments Account 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

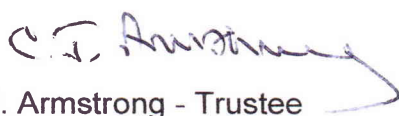
Registered Charity Number 1160978

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
Receipts			
Bank interest	2231.61		2231.61
Donations	<u>84.09</u>		<u>84.09</u>
	2315.70		2315.70
Payments			
Website	99.00		99.00
Professional fee	50.00		50.00
Grant - Victim Support	1500.00		1500.00
Videoconference licence	<u>143.88</u>		<u>143.88</u>
	1792.88		1792.88
Net Receipts	522.82		522.82
Cash funds brought forward	<u>69622.69</u>		<u>69622.69</u>
Cash funds at 31 March 2024	<u>70145.51</u>		<u>70145.51</u>

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES as at 31 March 2024

Cash at Bank	70145.51
Cash fund at 31 March 2024	<u>70145.51</u>

Approved by the Trustees on 5 JUNE 2024 and signed on their behalf by


C. J. Armstrong - Trustee