

# THE POD

England & Wales · Charity number 1161092

## Details

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**Status** Registered

**Legal form** CIO

**Registered** 2015-03-27

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

## Contact

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**Address** C/O Frome Town Hall  
Christchurch Street West  
Frome  
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**Website** [www.thepodcharity.org.uk](http://www.thepodcharity.org.uk)

## Activities

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**Objects:** ?TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT BY PREVENTING PEOPLE FROM BECOMING SOCIALLY EXCLUDED, RELIEVING THE NEEDS OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED AND ASSISTING THEM TO IN-TEGRATE INTO SOCIETY.BEING EXCLUDED FROM SOCIETY, OR PART OF SOCIETY, AS A RESULT OF BEING A MEMBER OF A SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY DEPRIVED COMMUNITY.?

**Activities:** The Pod is a registered charity in Mendip meeting the needs of young carers and people with additional needs aged 8 upwards, and their families. The charity provides safe supportive sociable and enterprising spaces in Frome, as well as providing opportunities and support for members to engage in community initiatives.

## Classification

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- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, Disability, Economic/community Development/employment, Recreation
- **Who:** Children/young People, People With Disabilities, The General Public/mankind

## Geography

- Somerset

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£121,371	£95,078	-	-
2024-03-31	£97,910	£82,490	-	-
2023-03-31	£96,086	£69,938	-	-
2022-03-31	£71,579	£59,658	-	-
2021-03-31	£51,058	£32,201	-	-

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
<b>Moira Spence</b>	Chair	2021-04-20
Emily Denne		2025-12-11
Michael Rhodes		2024-07-09
SARAH DRAKE		2014-12-15

**THE POD**

England & Wales - Charity number 1161092

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# Accounts

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**End of year report & Independently Examined Financial statements**

**For the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**

**Charity number: 1161092**

**The Pod**  
**Reports and Accounting**  
**For the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

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## Trustee report

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Pod Community.

The Pod, now in its eleventh year, continues to thrive despite the many challenges of our current environment locally and nationally. As Chair of The Pod, I am proud to reflect on what has been a truly inspiring and impactful year. From its beginnings in 2013 as a small parent-led initiative, The Pod has grown into a thriving, grassroots charity that continues to stay true to its roots: listening to families, valuing lived experience, and creating inclusive spaces where everyone can belong.

Every service - from Youth Club and Pod Plus to JAMM and Scrapstore - plays a vital role in helping people feel supported, seen, and empowered.

Despite some challenges, such as temporary premises for the Youth Club and the pause on the Workshop programme, our team has responded with flexibility and care. We've embraced the outdoors, added new sessions, and laid the groundwork to double capacity where possible. It's a great example of how we adapt while keeping our focus on the needs of our members.

Our core mission is to reduce social isolation - and I truly believe that's what The Pod does best. Through everything we offer, we bring people together: to learn new skills, find support, share laughter, and build confidence.

Volunteers and members have stepped up in incredible ways - from running craft stalls and community events to representing The Pod as Ambassadors in schools and at careers fairs. This was beautifully evident at our Ten Year Anniversary Party that we held in September, organised by and catered for by our Supporters Club, we got to mingle, chat, and dance together. Sparkly costumes offered additional glitter to a very happy event. This spirit of shared purpose is what makes The Pod so special.

None of this would be possible without our small, dedicated team of staff, our volunteers, our partners, and of course, the families and individuals who trust us to walk alongside them. A heartfelt thank you to every person who contributes to making The Pod a place of connection and joy.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to growing in a way that keeps people at the heart of everything we do. Whether its through new premises, expanded sessions, or deepening community partnerships, we will keep listening, learning, and doing all we can, to help our members reach their potential.

Warm wishes

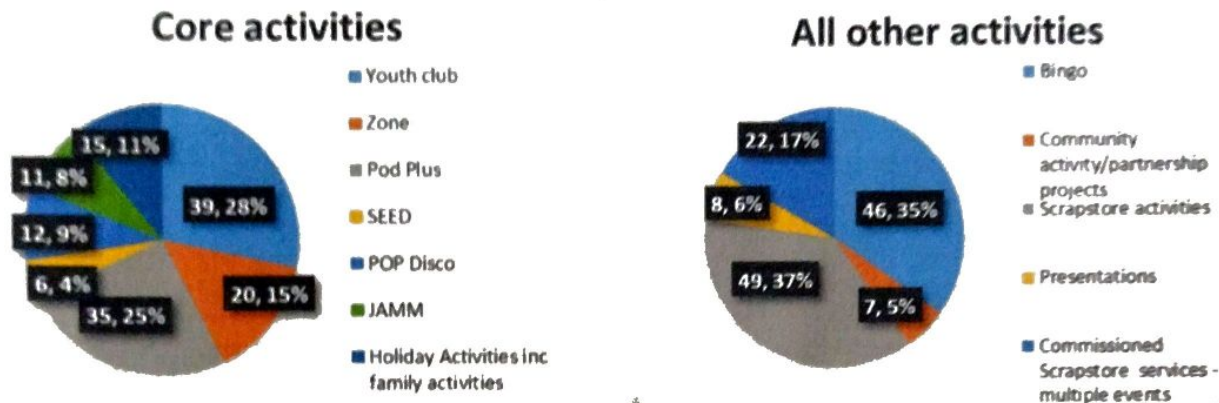


Moira Spence  
Chair of Trustees

**History** - The Pod is a grassroots initiative, founded by parent carers in 2013 in response to a lack of services for disabled children in Mendip. Maintaining a service that is member led is essential in ensuring Pod beneficiaries support one another and reach their full potential.

**Objectives** - (CIO extract) To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.'

The charity achieves this through the following services;



In summary; the number of sessions/activities across the year has increased by 12%, 2025 = 270 (2023/24 = 242) This increase can largely be attributed to commissioned activities.

### Pod Youth Club

The Youth Club welcomes children aged 10 to 17 with additional needs. It meets on Tuesdays from 5:30 to 7:30 pm during term time, with occasional sessions during holidays. The staff-to-child ratio is 1:3, and the team is skilled and experienced, dedicated to helping children reach their full potential. Participants learn important life skills and build friendships. Activities at the Youth Club, as well as all Pod projects, are co-led by the attendees themselves.

This year, favourite activities have largely been outdoors, as the group has been based in temporary, smaller premises for most of the year. This shift has led to more outdoor sessions and smaller group sizes while the project has been in a holding period. Despite this, there remains a lengthy waiting list. Significant efforts have been made this year to engage with waiting families and prepare for doubling the project's capacity when it relocate's back to Vallis Youth Centre in April 2025.

### The Zone

The Zone is a youth club for Young Carers who join between 8-16 years old. The Zone runs on alternate Wednesday evenings in term time and this year the children have enjoyed regular holiday activities. Many but not all the children have a sibling with additional needs, or they may have parents who have long term health conditions that impact their ability for their children to lead normal childhoods. The group are diverse, and the activities chosen to support these needs. Children may come to Zone to enjoy respite from high energy households whereas other young carers who attend prefer high energy, often competitive activities. The children really enjoy their nurturing session alongside trips out which this year included; Trampolining, trips to the cinema pottery painting and cinema.

## **Pod Plus & POP Discos**

The Pod Plus group meets on Mondays from 6:30 to 8:30 pm and is attended by young adults aged 17 to 30. The team provides support at a ratio of 1:5. Activities, often suggested by the members themselves, tend to be creative, and the team aims to facilitate these whenever possible. This year, the group enjoyed outings such as meals out, Ready Steady Cook challenges, afternoon teas with special guests, and visits to Heal outdoor rewilding centre.

The monthly POP Disco remains a highlight on the Pod calendar, with attendance steadily increasing as its reputation grows. The event features a resident DJ, a young man with additional needs, who brings energy and inclusivity to the experience. POP is equally enjoyed by parent carers and personal assistants, who come together for mutual support. Themes for each disco are chosen by the group and have included karaoke, silent discos, and dance tunes.

## **JAMM - Just A Monday Meet-Up**

Our parent support group meets once a month on a Monday from 10-12 noon. We provide a space to pause from stressful lives, a chance for parent carers to take a rare opportunity to sit, reflect and have a chat.

The group welcomes a mix of regular attendees and new parents looking for supportive peer connections and guidance from the Pod team. Conversations often revolve around lived experiences of caring for their child or young adult, sharing ideas on navigating emotional and professional support, education, and funding challenges, or simply providing a welcome distraction. Many meaningful and poignant discussions take place within this supportive space. Testimonials from parent carers highlight the value of this safe, non-judgmental environment, where attendees can openly share emotions and challenges, listen, and offer suggestions based on their own experiences.

## **Workshop**

Originally a "Make & Sell" project, Workshop has evolved into a stand-alone program offering skill-building, social time, and workplace experience. Currently paused (24-25) as we collaborate with the Local Authority and SEN providers to create an accessible day service or short course. This new model will expand opportunities for independence, communication, social, workplace, and confidence skills. Workshop provides a fun, supportive environment to connect with the community and develop skills that can lead to volunteering or employment, including supported opportunities through the Scrapstore project.

## **Pod Scrapstore**

Pod Scrapstore, now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, is developing into a viable business model for Pod which has enabled young adults to gain valuable work experience and serve their community.

- Scrapstore is the ideal vehicle for work experience, training, and potential employment with a role for everyone whatever their level of skill or support needs. Feedback captured reflects that they enjoy feeling responsible and being an expert in something.
- Scrapstore provides the community with a resource for materials that appeal to schools, nurseries, childminders, families and creative people - The public response is strong and supportive. Our customer and supplier base has grown and we are now trading with scrapstores in the South West.

Some volunteers have found certain customer behaviours or expectations challenging. In response, we've introduced training, clear signage, leaflets, and staff badges to help communicate the needs of our team to the public. We work with individuals on specific situations to clarify processes, reduce anxiety, and encourage positive interactions. Regular debriefs after each session allow us to reflect on incidents, learn as a team, and adapt our approach—while recognising that customers may bring their own needs and challenges into the space.

This year Scrapstore has:

- Been commissioned by Frome Town council to provide "Loose Parts Play" materials for the Play Trolley in a local Park.
- Pop Up Play Box Project - Commissioned by Frome Town Council. Members were supported to provide scrap play experiences across parks on Frome during the school holidays.
- Scrap play at the Frome Children's Festival in July, visited by over 100 children.
- Little Scrapstore situated in the town centre continues to thrive. Open to the public for 2hrs weekly and on Independent Market days for 5 hours monthly. The location of the premises has increased the profile of Scrapstore. There is a constant flow of donations from new sources, donors include commercial waste providers.
- Commissioned by The Frome Independent Market, Pod members were supported to run craft activities based on each market's theme using Scrapstore materials. This was an ideal opportunity to spread the word about the project.
- Scrapstore supplied materials to festival and event organizers creating displays, artworks and activities across the town including Terrestrials "Kids Take Over the Town Hall" event.

All Pod projects are led by staff, with volunteers playing a key role in supporting sessions, gaining work experience, and contributing meaningfully to the community. Their involvement helps challenge stereotypes and break down social barriers.

Pod Scrapstore is actively seeking funding and suitable premises to expand. The leadership team is developing governance, policies, and procedures in preparation for a new space. The goal is to open Scrapstore multiple days each week and establish a community base where The Pod can run its projects—potentially in partnership with other organisations.

### **Additional Activities.**

Community partnerships are important to the charity and remain strong. Pod families enjoy taking part, and volunteering at community events. Project members and families are consulted when local events are planned, and the charity has led or taken part in numerous initiatives including:

- Young Drivers School, the Pod community aged 10+ to any age enjoyed driving a car for 30 minutes with a driving instructor. This is an annual favourite and a fantastic opportunity for people to get behind the wheel of a real car who may never experience this independently.
- Volunteers held a stall at the Cheese & Grain Charities Fayre, selling our new hopes and dreams books and running our popular puzzle swap.
- Annual Panto trip. Pod members and Friends of Pod watched the accessible performance of Sleeping Beauty. They had a great time joining in with the stage fun and songs.
- A coach trip to Weymouth for Pod members, families, and friends of Pod. Fun with Sandcastles, fish and chips, pedalos, ice-creams and new friendships. This is an annual favourite for everyone.
- The Pod concluded its 10th birthday with an amazing prom style glitzy party at Foxy's Den. Members, families, supporters, staff and trustees partied the night away. This was largely

made possible through the Supporters group meeting regularly and donating their time and services.

- Pod members and supporters ran stalls at the Carnival Fun Day and Lions Fete's to raise funds but also the profile of the charity.
- The Pod entered the Frome Street Carnival with "Pod The Magic Dragon". This was created by people in our community. The Dragon Team at the carnival were members of Pod Plus and Parent Carers. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening despite the long walk/dance and the entry was well received. There are requests to enter again this year.
- Distributed 60 Circus Starr tickets to the Pod community and Friends of Pod.
- Pod families came together to enjoy the "Slip and Slide" activity in Beckington, a great session with lots of splashing and squealing.
- Pod Plus members and colleagues continue to run "Puzzle Swap" which takes place once a month at the Cheese & Grain, and also at Coffee 1. Puzzles are donated, members run the sale or swap whilst also doing puzzles together. It is a social meet up for many people who lead isolated lives in our community.
- Glastonbury Festival Crowd Marshal Team. A new opportunity to fundraise and experience the festival from a crew perspective. 39 staff, beneficiaries and Friends of Pod were supported to work together. Crowd marshalling is an important art of the infrastructure. 3 shifts of 8 hours per person = 936 volunteer hours (not included in volunteer hours)

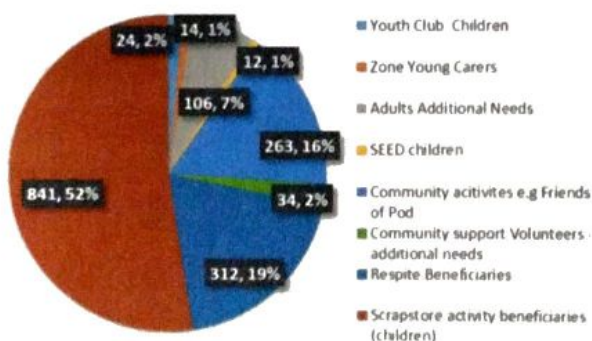
### Community Accessible Bingo

Our weekly bingo runs every Monday evening, (partnership - Cheese & Grain) with thanks to our wonderful group of volunteers, including many with additional needs. The charity runs a small Pop-up café providing the players with affordable snacks and drinks. Volunteers supporting the café may include people from the charity's projects who find it difficult to secure work experience due to their support needs – they appreciate being able to gain valuable work experience alongside their club activities or when they move on from accessing Pod projects to supporting the charity. Volunteers and attendees at the bingo are very proud of their support for the charity, and for many it is the highlight of their week.

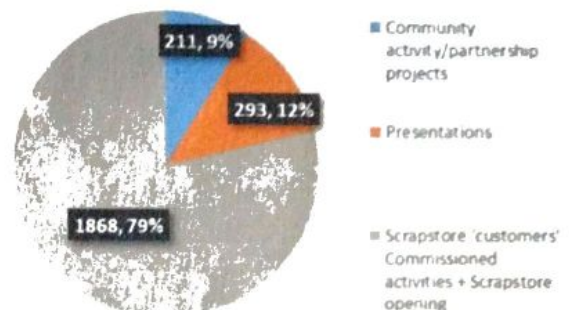
### This years presentations included;

- BBC Radio Somerset, Scrapstore promoted through an interview at the Children's Festival
- Frome Community Lottery presentation following a donation to purchase a Feather Flag which is used in Scrapstore and at all community events.
- Pod ambassadors present to local schools and colleges.
- Frome Job Centre - Improving Lives Event.
- Aspiris Careers Event at the Cheese & Grain.

Direct beneficiaries



Community beneficiaries



The number of direct beneficiaries rose to 1,606 in 2025 (up from 674 in 2024), partly due to improved tracking that now includes wider community impact through broader activities and commissioned projects.

## Impact

This year has brought continued growth across Pod Projects, activities, and community offerings. The charity remains committed to its core values - delivering what our members and wider Pod community truly want. By listening to families and individuals, we are steadily expanding our presence and increasing the range of social opportunities available to all.

Scrapstore continues to grow its customer base, delivering a valued service to the community and a valuable learning opportunity for our members. From the Little Scrapstore concept we have expanded to supply Craft activities at the Frome Independent Market, been commissioned to provide play materials for the Play Trolley in Victoria Park and offered play sessions throughout school holidays in parks around Frome.

This created many more supported work experience opportunities for over-18s, while also raising our visibility in the town and positively impacting society. It helped break down prejudices and misconceptions about the skills and abilities of our Pod community. Pod members are being seen as capable, skilled, and valued. Building on these connections will open doors in the future.

Pod Ambassadors, who volunteer at Scrapstore and other projects have spoken to schools and community groups, are amazing advocates for work of The Pod and its impact on their lives. The praise received for their courage to speak in public and the passion with which they tell their stories and that of the charity, is inspiring. Their enjoyment, pride in the development of skills and self-confidence shines through - all built on the foundation of trust and support they've received from the Pod.

POP Disco brings together individuals from different backgrounds through this vibrant, open-access project. It has become a space where new friendships form and connections grow—many of which continue beyond the event itself. The result is a wider, more inclusive social network for everyone involved. We're confident that, once a month, POP Disco is the most joyful place in Frome!

The experience of our members, families and community matters to us. It is what guides the charity's work and enables us to strive to do more. The success of our projects is founded on building strong trusting relationships with families and members.

Our project teams capture and record special moments or comments from sessions, which we call "gems." These statements highlight the significant progress made by individuals—progress that might seem small to an outsider but represents vital steps toward a more positive life experience. Both the team and peers acknowledge and celebrate each success.

The following testimonials give a picture of the Social Impact of The Pod. We are heartened to hear that they are happier, healthier, and more confident as they form friendships and learn to be independent. Where previously they may have struggled to be accepted and understood.

*My daughter absolutely loves coming to Pod and would be very, very upset if it was to end. If Pod didn't exist, I really don't know what else she would enjoy. It is so good for the young people and its a safe place too. My daughter is a confident young lady and this social gathering is excellent for her mental health as she can mix with other young people.*

*(Nichola, March 2025)*

*My son has limited social contact with his peers so attending Pod has been of great value to him and us as a family. He has made a lot of progress with his conversational skills and Pod has really boosted his confidence.*

*(Beth, March 2025)*

*Pod has made me feel less anxious when meeting new people. If it was not for Pod I would be stuck for things to do and nobody to talk to about my worries. I can see who I want to see and I'm not criticised by others, thank you Pod.*

*(Charlotte 2025)*

*I just wanted to pass on how invaluable the Zone has been for my girls who are young carers within our family. It has given them hours of fun, new friendships and, probably most valuable, time away from home that they may not have had otherwise. The whole team are so supportive of them, an open ear and also supportive to us as parents as well. I couldn't imagine not having this opportunity and outlet for them and they would be absolutely devastated if it ended. I can't say thank you enough for all that people at Zone (and Pod) do for young carers and their families, you're all amazing. Special thanks to Emma for all her hard work and support as well.*

*(Becky 2025)*

*Young carers had been a Godsend for my child. Prior to attending she didn't know anyone in a similar position to her and felt very isolated and lonely. My daughter looks forward to the Zone and wishes it could be weekly. She enjoys the fun packed activities and has made lots of friends. She feels safe with the adults and has developed a level of trust to confide in them when she feels anxious or upset.*

*(Georgina 2025)*

## **The team**

The Pod leadership team includes 1 Founder Charity Manager and 1 Project Development Manager who each work 20 hours a week. Day-to-day management, project development and fundraising is undertaken by this team. Trustees ensure that key policies are in place, reviewed and adhered to, with safeguarding at the top of the agenda. Service delivery is in the skilled hands of employed sessional workers who are often flexible and work across other projects run by the charity or provide cover ensuring no projects are cancelled due to unforeseen staff absences.

The employed team around the projects also include;

Administrator	20 hours per week from January 2025
Pod Youth Club	1 Youth Leader/4 Youth Workers
The Zone	1 Youth Leader/1 Youth Worker
Pod Plus	1 Project Lead/1 Assistant
POP Disco	1 Project Lead/1 Assistant/1 resident DJ*
Scrapstore	1 Scrapstore Co-ordinator

Additionally the charity employs 2 people with additional needs; One produces marketing materials fliers etc and is our resident DJ\* - the other employee supports the monthly bingo. Pod provides a support worker for each employee (funded by the Access to Work scheme)

We value our team of volunteers and are very grateful for the hours they donate. This year volunteer hours totalled an impressive 2487 hours (2024: 2476) The full-time equivalent would be equivalent to 1.3 full time members of staff. These hours are calculated as follows;

596 Core projects requiring volunteer support e.g Pod Plus, POP discos excluding Scrapstore

- 355 Scrapstore e.g Little Scrapstore opening once a week/ market days and popup events
- 320 Community projects e.g Children's festival and seasonal fetes and market stalls
- 920 Weekly Bingo
- 296 Additional hours worked by Leadership team

A total of 52 volunteers supported Pod projects this year, including 34 with additional needs. Their contribution is vital to delivering a diverse range of services. However, the charity relies on paid sessional staff to provide the expertise, consistency, and stability needed to support vulnerable children, adults, families, and to train volunteers. In 2025, salaries accounted for 74% of annual expenditure (down from 79% in 2024).

### **Fundraising**

Following the trustees' decision in 2024 to harness the fundraising expertise within the charity's management team, this internal strategy has continued to yield positive results. At the same time, the charity has been actively preparing for growth, with plans to secure a lease on a premises to house all its projects, including Scrapstore. The aim is to build the necessary resources to enable this move as early as possible, while carefully balancing the needs of existing projects to ensure they are not compromised.

### **Structure and Governance**

The Charity Managers report to the board at every trustee meeting; this report provides up to date information on each project, community activities, safeguarding, finance and anything pertinent at the time. Board meetings generally take place in March, June, September & December - this year all meetings took place face to face. Trustees liaise and individually meet with the charity managers to discuss actions specific to their area of responsibility.

The Charity Manager line manages the administrator and the leadership team support their designated Project Lead workers who in turn provide supervision to the project teams and volunteers.

### **Administration**

**Registered Charity address:** c/o Frome Town Hall, Christchurch Street West, Frome, BA11 1EB

**Banking:** Co-operative bank, Po Box 250, Delf House, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

### **Trustees**

M Spence

S Drake

Z O'Gorman

D Killah

Michael Rhodes (appointed 9 July 2024)

A Clarke (resigned 30 April 2024)

**Payroll:** In-house using Brightpay software.

**Insurance:** Zurich Insurance – Policy renewal date 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

**Unaudited accounts:** Westcotts Chartered Accountants, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5AD

## **Governance**

### **Governing Document:**

The charity formed as a community group on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013 and became a registered charity (CIO) with voting members on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015. If the CIO is wound up; the members of the CIO have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities. Members must be aged 18+ and membership is an annual renewal costing £12 for family membership and £8 for individual adults. The number of members in the year ending 2025 is 90 (2024 - 54)

### **Trustee Appointments:**

Recruiting new trustees to broaden the skillset of the board remains an ongoing priority. While there is no immediate pressure to fill vacancies, the board is committed to maintaining a diverse and well-rounded range of expertise. Trustee skills and board needs are carefully assessed and regularly reviewed using a skills matrix, ensuring balanced, effective, and strategic governance.

The members or the charity trustees may at any time appoint a new charity trustee when there is an identified need. An interested trustee is provided with an 'essential guidance on being a trustee' They will attend a trustee meeting before their first appointment in addition to receiving a copy of the constitution, latest annual report and statement of accounts. *'The 'new trustee' will be provided with a mentor for the first 6 months. During this time the mentor will be available to provide support as required'*

One-third of the charity trustees retire from office at the AGM. If the number of charity trustees is not three or a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one-third shall retire from office. Charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or benefits.

### **Summary of Financial Activities**

We always aim to minimize the cost of our services to disadvantaged families, however we do acknowledge an income made up of voluntary contributions e.g. weekly 'subs' in the reports. In 2024/25 charitable activity and fundraising income generated £27,016 (2024: £16,558)

The charities trading activities generated an additional £19,993 (2024: £12,373) against £5,820 in expenses (2024: £7,215)

The team around Pod maintains excellent relations with its funders and has a good track record with fundraising. Charitable donations and grants given by individuals, groups and grant making bodies totaled £64,365 (2024: £68,974) with a further £9,997 received for commissioned young carers services.

The trustees would like to thank all our funders and donors both large and small for their support which has enabled us to develop and expand our provision. A full list of donors is presented on page 19-20 of this report.

The income for the year ending 31 March 2024 totaled £121,371 (2024: £97,905) against expenditure of £89,258 (2024: £75,277)

## Reserves and Financial Planning Statement

At the end of the 2024/25 financial year, the charity holds unrestricted reserves of £41,546, with a further £50,185 in restricted reserves allocated to core projects and associated core costs.

The Trustees acknowledge the considerable challenges within the current funding environment, including increased competition, the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, and rising demand for services. They will continue to monitor the level of unrestricted reserves, which remain within the target range of £31,500 to £52,500 at year-end. This range represents 3 to 5 months of the charity's annual operating costs for the year ending 2025/26, based on **current** activity levels.

It should be noted that the Trustees have designated a further £30,000 from unrestricted funds specifically for venue hire, in anticipation of securing new premises for the charity in 2025/26.

Looking forward, the Trustees have carefully considered the risks associated with the charity's anticipated growth and strategic "step change" in the coming year. They consider the current level of unrestricted reserves, together with designated funds - appropriate and proportionate, taking into account the projected operating costs and developments planned for 2025/26.

Recognising the growing financial pressures, the Trustees have revised the unrestricted reserves target for the next financial year to between £42,000 and £70,000, which continues to represent 3 to 5 months of projected operating costs.

The charity is in receipt of multi-year funding from the Gosling Foundation and the Barbara Ward Foundation, alongside various one-off grants and individual donations. However, a funding shortfall remains, with a fundraising target of approximately £96,000. Meeting this target is essential to maintain and expand the charity's vital services for vulnerable children, adults, and families.

It is important to note that this target is not solely reliant on grants, reflecting the charity's efforts to build its income from charitable, trading and commissioned activities to reduce dependence on grant funding. In 2024/25, self generated income represented 51% of total income, up from 39% in 2023/24.

This budget projection includes plans to establish a dedicated base for the charity's operations by Autumn 2025, a key strategic goal, though not yet secured.

The Trustees will continue to monitor the fundraising strategy and reserves position throughout the 2025/26 financial year to ensure financial sustainability and delivery of the charity's objectives.

  
..... (Trustee)

## The Pod

### Trustees' Report (continued)

#### Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

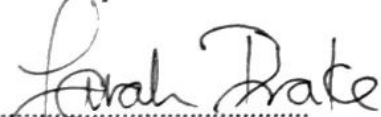
The law applicable to charities requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 15.1.25 and signed on its behalf by:



S Drake  
Trustee

## The Pod

### Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of The Pod

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Pod for the year ended 31 March 2025.

#### Responsibilities and basis of report

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

#### Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of The Pod 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 accounting 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.

AA Liggatt FCA

Independent examiner name

Date: 9.6.2025

## The Pod

### Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	2	25,255	58,537	83,792	74,731
Other trading activities	3	30,147	7,432	37,579	23,174
Total income		55,402	65,969	121,371	97,905
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds		(4,224)	(1,596)	(5,820)	(7,215)
Charitable activities	4	(21,488)	(67,770)	(89,258)	(75,277)
Total expenditure		(25,712)	(69,366)	(95,078)	(82,492)
Net income/(expenditure)		29,690	(3,397)	26,293	15,413
Net movement in funds		29,690	(3,397)	26,293	15,413
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds brought forward		39,707	50,185	89,892	74,479
Total funds carried forward	11	69,397	46,788	116,185	89,892

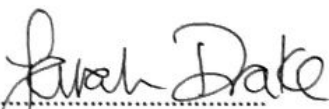
All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.  
The funds breakdown for 2024 is shown in note 11.

## The Pod

(Registration number: 1161092)  
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	8	2,710	2,598
Cash at bank and in hand	9	114,938	89,133
		<u>117,648</u>	<u>91,731</u>
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	10	<u>(1,463)</u>	<u>(1,839)</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>116,185</u>	<u>89,892</u>
<b>Funds of the charity:</b>			
<b>Restricted income funds</b>			
Restricted funds		46,788	50,185
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>			
Unrestricted funds		<u>69,397</u>	<u>39,707</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	11	<u>116,185</u>	<u>89,892</u>

The financial statements on pages 5 to 14 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on ..... and signed on their behalf by:

  
.....  
S Drake  
Trustee

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

#### 1 Accounting policies

##### **Statement of compliance**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the second edition of the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

##### **Basis of preparation**

The Pod meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

##### **Going concern**

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

##### **Judgements**

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

##### **Key sources of estimation uncertainty**

Accounting estimates and assumptions are made concerning the future and, by their nature, will rarely equal the related actual outcome. There are no key assumptions and other sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

##### **Income and endowments**

Voluntary income including donations, gifts, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

##### ***Donations and legacies***

Donations and legacies are recognised on a receivable basis when receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably measured.

##### ***Grants receivable***

Grants are recognised when the charity has an entitlement to the funds and any conditions linked to the grants have been met. Where performance conditions are attached to the grant and are yet to be met, the income is recognised as a liability and included on the balance sheet as deferred income to be released.

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### **Expenditure**

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

#### **Raising funds**

These are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, the management of investments and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

#### **Charitable activities**

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

#### **Taxation**

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

#### **Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

#### **Fund structure**

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds set aside for specific purposes at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### Financial instruments

##### Recognition and measurement

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the amount receivable or payable including any related transaction costs, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Current assets and current liabilities are subsequently measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received and not discounted.

#### 2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Donations and legacies;				
Donations	4,825	638	5,463	9,756
Voluntary contributions	8,651	-	8,651	5,597
Grants, including capital grants;				
Grants from other charities	11,000	57,899	68,899	59,218
Memberships	779	-	779	160
	<u>25,255</u>	<u>58,537</u>	<u>83,792</u>	<u>74,731</u>

#### 3 Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Total 2024 £
Trading income	7,827	1,311	9,138	8,934
Fundraising	15,137	1,751	16,888	10,067
Tuck	698	-	698	734
Scrapstore	6,485	4,370	10,855	3,439
	<u>30,147</u>	<u>7,432</u>	<u>37,579</u>	<u>23,174</u>

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### 4 Expenditure on charitable activities

		Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Charitable activities		19,731	67,585	87,316	73,753
Support costs	5	1,757	185	1,942	1,524
		<u>21,488</u>	<u>67,770</u>	<u>89,258</u>	<u>75,277</u>

#### 5 Analysis of support costs

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Training	320	170	490	325
Finance costs	71	15	86	(13)
Governance costs	1,366	-	1,366	1,212
	<u>1,757</u>	<u>185</u>	<u>1,942</u>	<u>1,524</u>

#### 6 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year (2024: Nil).

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses or any other benefits from the charity during the year (2024: Nil).

#### 7 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Staff costs during the year were:</b>		
Wages and salaries	<u>70,516</u>	<u>59,156</u>

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

	2025 No	2024 No
Average head count of employees	13	13

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year (2024: Nil)

#### 8 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Other debtors	2,710	2,598

#### 9 Cash and cash equivalents

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash on hand	1,094	2,244
Cash at bank	113,844	86,889
	<u>114,938</u>	<u>89,133</u>

#### 10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	983	1,359
Accruals	480	480
	<u>1,463</u>	<u>1,839</u>

#### 11 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<i>General</i>					
General Funds	39,707	55,402	(25,712)	(30,000)	39,397
<i>Designated</i>					
Designated Fund	-	-	-	30,000	30,000
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<u>39,707</u>	<u>55,402</u>	<u>(25,712)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>69,397</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
David Soloman	650	-	(650)	-	-
Frome Town Rotary	393	-	(393)	-	-
MASG	314	-	(314)	-	-

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2024	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
Douglas Arter	63	-	(63)	-	-
FAST	3,042	-	(779)	-	2,263
FTC - Scrapstore	1,732	-	(1,732)	-	-
FTR - Scrapstore	2,000	-	(906)	-	1,094
Leonard Laity Stoate	704	1,200	(523)	-	1,381
Mendip Shape Lottery	169	-	(169)	-	-
Frome Lottery	-	200	(200)	-	-
Frome Town Rotary	750	275	-	-	1,025
Access For All - DWP	(77)	1,752	(1,675)	-	-
Albert Hunt	3,000	-	(750)	-	2,250
Witham Vale - Community	40	1,000	(1,040)	-	-
Swim fundraiser	573	-	(50)	-	523
ASDA PYC	800	-	(800)	-	-
CO-OP fund	638	900	-	-	1,538
Happy Families	-	500	-	-	500
Lions Club	1,000	5,000	(3,977)	-	2,023
Medlock	2,000	-	-	-	2,000
SCF Core	4,309	-	(4,309)	-	-
Sir Jules Thornton	2,000	-	(1,015)	-	985
SC fund	16,878	-	(16,878)	-	-
Van Neste	9,207	-	(5,535)	-	3,672
Barbara Ward	-	5,000	(615)	-	4,385
CIAT	-	1,000	-	-	1,000
Comic Relief	-	4,500	-	-	4,500
FTC - PP Development	-	2,500	-	-	2,500
FTC - Play Trolley	-	3,890	(2,560)	-	1,330
FTC - Seed Pod	-	5,500	(1,629)	-	3,871
10 Year Party	-	1,414	(1,414)	-	-
Glasto Admin	-	700	(700)	-	-
Gosling Foundation	-	6,000	(543)	-	5,457
Ind Market Craft	-	1,752	(1,752)	-	-
KFC Foundation	-	2,500	(2,500)	-	-
SC - Zone	-	9,997	(9,997)	-	-
SCF	-	8,500	(5,859)	-	2,641
Sherborne CC	-	1,850	-	-	1,850
	<u>50,185</u>	<u>65,930</u>	<u>(69,327)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>46,788</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>89,892</u>	<u>121,332</u>	<u>(95,039)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>116,185</u>

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Unrestricted funding to support core activities and charity growth includes grants and donations from the following funders:

£10,000 from Somerset Council - to deliver Young Carers service

£10,000 from Postcode Local Trust

£1,000 from SC & ME Morland

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>General</b>					
General Funds	38,820	42,977	(42,432)	342	39,707
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Children in Need	7,702	-	(7,414)	(288)	-
SCF Discovery	1,408	-	(1,408)	-	-
Gosling Foundation	813	-	(813)	-	-
Local Giving	281	-	(227)	(54)	-
Frome Town Council	2,130	-	(2,130)	-	-
David Soloman	1,500	-	(850)	-	650
Frome Town Rotary	1,187	-	(794)	-	393
MASG	479	-	(165)	-	314
Douglas Arter	500	-	(437)	-	63
FAST	3,489	-	(447)	-	3,042
FTC - Business Plan	900	-	(900)	-	-
FTC - Scrapstore	2,212	232	(712)	-	1,732
FTR - Scrapstore	2,000	-	-	-	2,000
Inner Wheel	1,500	-	(1,500)	-	-
Leonard Laity Stoate	1,000	-	(296)	-	704
Mendip Shape Lottery	1,000	-	(831)	-	169
National Lottery	7,558	-	(7,558)	-	-
Frome Lottery	-	500	(500)	-	-
Frome Town Rotary	-	750	-	-	750
Access For All - DWP	-	485	(562)	-	(77)
Albert Hunt	-	3,000	-	-	3,000
Witham Vale - Community	-	1,000	(960)	-	40
Swim fundraiser	-	1,623	(1,050)	-	573
ASDA PYC	-	800	-	-	800
CO-OP fund	-	638	-	-	638
Happy Families	-	900	(900)	-	-
Lions Club	-	1,000	-	-	1,000
Medlock	-	2,000	-	-	2,000
SCF Core	-	5,000	(691)	-	4,309

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Sir Jules Thornton	-	2,000	-	-	2,000
SC fund	-	25,000	(8,122)	-	16,878
Van Neste	-	10,000	(793)	-	9,207
	35,659	54,928	(40,060)	(342)	50,185
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>74,479</b>	<b>97,905</b>	<b>(82,492)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>89,892</b>

#### 12 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2025 £
Current assets	70,860	46,788	117,648
Current liabilities	(1,463)	-	(1,463)
Total net assets	69,397	46,788	116,185
	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2024 £
Current assets	41,546	50,185	91,731
Current liabilities	(1,839)	-	(1,839)
Total net assets	39,707	50,185	89,892

#### 13 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year (2024: Nil).

**THE POD**

England & Wales - Charity number 1161092

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# Accounts

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**End of year report & Independently Examined Financial statements**

**For the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

**Charity number: 1161092**

# **The Fod**

## **Reports and Accounting**

### **For the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

#### **CONTENTS**

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## **Trustee report**

The Pod is ten years old this year! It fills me with awe and pride to reflect on the journey The Pod has made over the past decade. What started as a vision by a group of intrepid parent carers has developed into a network of connection and support for young people and adults with additional needs and their families in Frome. It is hard to believe that ten years have already passed since those early days of pooling resources to create a youth club. Today, The Pod is a thriving community offering a range of services, identified by the community itself, to enrich the lives of so many.

We are delighted that in our tenth year we have had the honour of being nominated and awarded The Frome Times Group of The Year. We are grateful to all the people who voted to bring us this recognition.

### **Celebrating Ten Years of Impact**

When those dedicated and determined parent carers first gathered ten years ago to create a youth club for young people with additional needs, could they have imagined the vibrant, multifaceted organization The Pod would become?

### **Looking Back and Moving Forward**

Reflecting on our history, our success is built on the dedication of our team and the unwavering support of our community. Our members, volunteers, staff, and supporters have been the backbone of The Pod, ensuring that we can continue to provide high-quality services that meet the evolving needs of our members.

In our drive to ensure that our services meet our members' needs, we have worked hard this year on developing new ways of measuring our impact. This has been a collaborative effort, taking much time and energy, with involvement from all our team and our members together. With these new systems for measuring impact in place, we are ready to learn and adapt to the information they give us.

The year has held challenges. As always, our team has met these challenges with resilience, creativity, and flexibility, finding new ways forward when barriers emerge. We have also focused on securing sustainable funding to ensure that we can continue to grow and thrive.

### **Gratitude and Acknowledgements**

The Pod exists through the hard work, commitment, and passion of our staff, our members and volunteers, our trustees, and the generosity of our donors. I extend heartfelt thanks to you all. To our funders, both large and small, thank you for believing in our mission. Your contributions have made a significant difference in the lives of so many families.

As we move forward, we will continue to strive for excellence in our services, expand our outreach, and foster an even stronger sense of community. Our vision remains clear: to create a society where every person with additional needs feels valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

With heartfelt thanks,

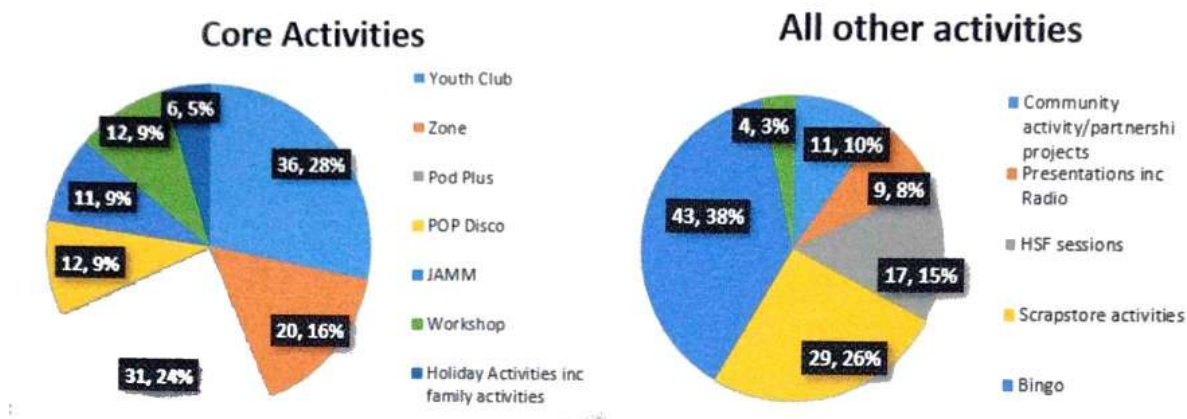


Moira Spence

**History** - The Pod is a grassroots initiative, founded by parent carers in 2013 in response to a lack of services for disabled children in Mendip. Maintaining a service that is member led is essential in ensuring Pod beneficiaries support one another and reach their full potential.

**Objectives** - (CIO extract) To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.'

The charity achieves this through the following services;



In summary; the number of activities has increased by 12%, 2024 = 242 activities (2022/23 = 216)

### Pod Youth Club

The Youth club welcomes children with additional needs aged 10-17 years. The club meets on a Tuesday 5.30-7.30pm in term time and occasionally in the holidays. The staff ratio is 1:3, the team are skilled, experienced and understand how to enable the children to reach their full potential. Children learn important life skills and make friends. Activities in youth club and all Pod projects are co-led by the people who attend the groups. Youth club activity favourites include the sports hall, cooking, seasonal craft and games as well as trips out to the climbing centre and ice skating this year. There continues to be a waiting list, historically children wait more than a year before they can join the group. A consultation with all stakeholders took place in 2023 and a solution has been identified. The Pod is now seeking funding to double the capacity on the youth club and reduce the cost per head to access. Children who reach 17 years may transition into Pod Plus and continue their positive social experiences and friendships.

### The Zone

The Zone is a youth club for Young Carers who join between 8-16 years old. The Zone runs on alternate Wednesday evenings in term time with occasional holiday activities. Many but not all the children have a sibling with additional needs, or they may have parents who have long term health conditions that impact their ability for their children to lead normal childhoods. The group are diverse, and the activities chosen to support these needs. Children may come to Zone to enjoy respite from high energy households whereas other young carers who attend prefer high energy, often competitive activities. The children really enjoy their nurturing session alongside trips out which this year included; Center Parcs, Pumpkin festival, roller skating and a theatre trip.

## **Pod Plus & POP Discos**

The Pod Plus group meets on Mondays from 6.30-8.30pm, young adults aged between 17 + 30 attend. The team provide a ratio of 1:5. Members activity suggestions are creative, and we aim to facilitate these wherever possible; this year the group have enjoyed a casino night, meals out, and ready steady cook. Members created invitations, prepared cream teas and invited their mums in for a Mother's Day celebration.

The monthly POP Disco continues to be a highlight in the Pod calendar for many. The number of beneficiaries from this event has increased significantly. POP disco employs a resident DJ, a young man with additional needs himself. POP is equally enjoyed by parent carers and personal assistants who come together for support. Themes for each event are chosen by the group, ranging from Karaoke, Silent discos, or dance tunes.

## **JAMM – Just A Monday Meet-Up**

Our parent support group meets once a month on a Monday from 10-12 noon. We provide refreshments and a space to pause from stressful lives. This is the chance for parent careers to take a rare opportunity to sit, reflect and have a chat. This may be about their lived experience in caring for their child/young adult or sharing ideas on navigating the challenges of emotional and professional support, education, and funding issues, or just a distraction from that focus. There are many poignant conversations within this supported space. The group attracts a combination of regular attendees and new parents seeking out supportive peer relationships and guidance from the Pod team.

## **Workshop**

The concept of Workshop developed with members voicing they wanted to experience a "Make & Sell" idea; following a successful soap making activity in a project. Workshop has developed into a stand-alone project designed to offer a space to learn new skills, social time to meet friends and an experience of being in a Workplace environment.

It gives it an adult "workplace" feel in preparation for further work experience or employment. Workshop attendees need to follow processes and work as a team to create quality artisan products which they help design e.g. bunting, candles and cards, then sold at local markets to raise funds for the project. Attendees gain experience of running the market stall and interacting with the public, increasing confidence and improving communication and social skills, and it is fun to do!

Workshop needs to be sustainable to guarantee its future, Pod is working with the local authority to develop day services and hope to relaunch late 2024.

## **Pod Scrapstore**

Pod began the Scrapstore journey in response to our community voicing they were unable to find an accessible placement to gain work experience. Pod Scrapstore now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year is developing into a viable social enterprise model for Pod.

- Pod Scrapstore is the ideal vehicle for work experience, training, and potential employment. It offers a role for everyone whatever their level of skill or support needs. Everyone is growing in confidence and learning new skills. Feedback captured reflected they enjoy feeling responsible and being an expert in something.

- Scrapstore provides the community with a resource for materials that appeals to schools, nurseries, childminders, families and creative people - The public response is strong and supportive.

Concerns regarding customers being perceived as challenging can be difficult for members to process. Training and signage (explaining the needs of the staff team to the public) through leaflets and badges, has provided the tools to handle this.

Pod ambassadors have visited local FE Colleges encouraging other young adults to try volunteering. Pupils from Fairfield College came for their first experience of volunteering at Scrapstore, college staff were amazed at the achievements of the young people.

This year Scrapstore has led;

- Two successful Pop-Up events
- Scrap play at the Frome Children's Festival in July, visited by over 100 children.
- A new permanent little Scrapstore in the town centre, affectionately known as "Green Doors" situated in the town centre. Open to the 2hrs weekly and on Independent Market days for 5 hours monthly. The premises has increased the visibility of Scrapstore. There is a constant flow of donations from new sources, many donors include commercial waste providers.
- Scrapstore is commissioned by Frome Town council to provide "Loose Parts Play" materials for the Play Trolley in a local Park.
- Scrapstore supplied materials to festival and event organizers creating displays, artworks and activities across the town.

All projects are coordinated and run by Pod staff, with member volunteers helping to run these sessions and gain further work experience, contributing to the community, and being valued members of society, working to break down stereotypes and social boundaries.

Pod Scrapstore is continuing with its search and funding for larger premises, the leadership team are preparing key governance, policy and procedure in preparation for a new premises for the charity to open Scrapstore, multiple days each week, as well as a community base for The Pod to potentially run its projects from in partnership with other interested parties.

### **Additional Activities.**

Community partnerships are strong and Pod families enjoy taking part, and volunteering at community events. Project members and families are consulted when local events are planned, and the charity has led or taken part in numerous initiatives including;

- Young Drivers School, 26 young people aged 10+ had the opportunity to drive a car for 30 minutes with a driving instructor, it was a fantastic opportunity for people to get behind the wheel of a real car that may never get to experience independently.
- Volunteers held a stall at the Cheese & Grain Christmas Fayre, selling beautiful products produced in Pod Workshop.
- Pod Plus, Pod Youth Club and Zone contributed to a window display at Gorehedge Community room as part of the "Window Wonderland" trail.
- Annual Panto trip. Pod members and Friends of Pod watched the accessible screening of Snow White at the Memorial Theatre (Oh yes, they did!) they had a great time joining in with the stage fun.

- A coach trip to Weymouth for Pod members, families, and friends of Pod. Fun with Sandcastles, fish and chips, sea life centre, ice-creams and new friendships.
- Circus Starr trip with Pod Youth club & Pod Plus, alongside the distribution of 36 tickets to Friends of Pod.
- To celebrate Bonfire Night Frome Town Council ran a Drone Show, the Pod was asked to run an accessible viewing area which was very well received.
- All Pod groups came together to try out the new "Slip and Slide" activity in Wanstrow, a great session with lots of splashing and squealing.
- To celebrate the Kings Coronation, Frome displayed flags for all of the charities and organisations in the town. All clubs got creative and made a flag which was displayed as part of a trail around the town.
- Pod Plus members and colleagues launched a "Puzzle Swap" which takes place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month. Puzzles are donated, members run the sale or swap whilst also doing puzzles together. It is a social meet up for many people who lead isolated lives in our community.
- Pod Scrapstore is featured in an advertising campaign by "Loops" promoting the circular economy in Frome. A leaflet was posted through every door in Frome and the charity feature on a billboard locally.
- Due to Pod's connections to marginalized groups, Somerset Council commissioned the charity to carry out a piece of work to inform eligible groups about the Household Support Fund. The fund had not been taken up by as many people as the local authority intended and we could make these connections and help people get the additional benefit they were entitled to. This was delivered by a member of staff who was supporting our employee through an access to work scheme. The project was successful in providing valuable work experience and also reaching a large number of eligible candidates who have benefitted from having additional income to help with household bills and essential items.
- PYC members were involved in the Kindness festival, they produced beautiful fish made from Scrapstore materials to an artwork named "The Bridge of Kindness" displayed in the Town Hall.

### **Community Accessible Bingo**

The weekly bingo runs every Monday evening, (partnership - Cheese & Grain) with thanks to our wonderful group of volunteers, including learning-disabled adults. The charity runs a small Pop-up café providing the players with affordable snacks and drinks. Volunteers supporting the café include people from the charities projects who find it difficult to secure work experience due to their support needs – they appreciate being able to gain valuable work experience alongside their club activities or when they move on from accessing Pod projects to supporting the charity.

### **Presentations this year included;**

- Frome FM various – all about disability/Frome Times award and love your mind, all about autism.
- BBC Radio Somerset – Scrapstore was promoted through an interview at the Children's Festival.
- Frome Community Lottery presentation following a donation to purchasing sound equipment for Pop Disco.
- 2 Presentations by Pod Plus Volunteers to Further Education colleges about Scrapstore, supported by Pod staff.



in skills and self-confidence is inspiring. They have received high praise from all settings for their courage to do this, which they say has been built on trust for the support they receive from The Pod.

By bringing previously separate groups of people together through the open-access Pop Disco, the charity has opened the doors to new friendships and connections which can and are being transferred outside of the project, creating a wider social network for all who attend. Pop Disco is also the most joyous space in Frome once every month.

The following is a small selection of testimonials from our community. The success of our projects and the experiences of those who attend is founded on building strong trusting relationships with families and members.

Their reported experience is that they are happier, healthier, and more confident as they form friendships and learn to be independent. Where previously they may have struggled to be accepted and understood.

Our project teams capture and record the special moments or comments from sessions we call "gems". Each statement recognises the huge progress made by individuals which may to an onlooker appear trivial. The team and peers recognise and celebrate each success.

#### Feedback from Fairfield College

*"Thank you for the fantastic opportunity to help with setting up Scrapstore. All four students enjoyed the day very much, it was great for us to see them engaging with other volunteers, participating in tasks. Everybody made us feel very welcome. This was an excellent chance for me to observe one of our work skills students to see what sort of work experience he might be interested in. This student has been reluctant in the past, to engage, or even think about the world of work. I know that before he came he was anxious, and worried about the number of people and the noise, in the hall. Due to the approach of several volunteers, he was able to self-regulate and simply got on with the tasks he had been asked to complete. This has now enabled me to approach him and chat about a possible external work experience for the near future."*

#### **The team**

The Pod employs 2 part time Co-Charity Managers who each work 20 hrs wk. Day-to-day management, project development and fundraising is undertaken by the charity managers. Trustees ensure that key policies are in place, reviewed and adhered to, with safeguarding at the top of the agenda. Service delivery is in the skilled hands of employed sessional workers who are often flexible and may work across other projects run by the charity or provide cover ensuring no projects are cancelled due to unforeseen staff absences.

The team around the projects also include;

Administrator	5 hours per week
Pod Youth Club	1 Youth Leader/4 Youth Workers/1 Volunteer
The Zone	1 Youth Leader/1 Youth Worker
Pod Plus	1 Project Lead/1 Assistant/2 x Volunteers
Workshop	1 Project Lead/1 Assistant
Community	24 volunteers inc 3 Young people with additional needs
Scrapstore	1 Scrapstore Co-ordinator/31 volunteers inc 14 adults with additional needs

We value our team of volunteers and are very grateful for the hours they donate. This year volunteer hours totalled an impressive 2476 hours. The full-time equivalent would be equivalent to 1.3 full time members of staff. These hours are calculated as follows;

- 565 Core projects requiring volunteer support; 14 volunteers
- 356 People with additional needs supported to volunteer across a variety of roles e.g. pop-up cafe @ bingo, puzzle club, supporting project teams by organising and running activities in a project and the design and production of marketing materials; 10 volunteers (inc 1 DofE placement)
- 880 Before, during and after the bingo each week; average 20 hours per week; 10 volunteers
- 416 Additional hours worked by 2 x charity managers; average approx. 8hrs week. (2023 – 13hrs)
- 85 People with additional needs supported to run Scrapstore events; 14 volunteers
- 174 Scrapstore support team, many of the adults with additional needs would not be able to run the event without a team member to support them. Support volunteers included local Rotarians, carers, representative from local specialist provision and our own colleagues. 17 volunteers.

Without this invaluable contribution of time and energy, it is abundantly clear we would not be able to run a diverse range of services and support as many families as we do. However, the charity is unable to run its projects without paid sessional staff who provide expertise, consistency and stability for vulnerable children adults, families and training for volunteers. In this year salaries represent 79% of our annual expenditure. (2023 – 67%)

### **Fundraising**

The trustees would like to draw attention to the introduction of an employed fundraiser this year. Due to unforeseen circumstances beyond anyone's control, this role was in existence for only a few weeks. During a period of reflection, the trustees made the decision to direct the skills within the team, thereby strengthening the charity and restructuring the leadership team from the new financial year ending March 2025.

### **Structure and Governance**

The Charity Managers report to the board at every trustee meeting; this report provides up to date information on each project, community activities, safeguarding, finance and anything pertinent at the time. Board meetings generally take place in March, June, September & December - this year all meetings took place face to face however Zoom continues to provide a useful tool for remote access. Trustees liase and individually meet with the charity managers to discuss actions specific to their area of responsibility.

The Charity Managers line manage the administrator and their designated Project Lead workers who in turn provide supervision to the project teams.

## **Administration**

### **Registered Charity address:**

c/o Frome Town Hall, Christchurch Street West, Frome, BA11 1EB

**Banking:** Co-operative bank, Po Box 250, Delf House, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

### **Trustees**

M Spence

S Drake

Z O'Gorman

D Killah (appointed June 2023)

A Clarke (appointed September 2023, resigned March 2024)

**Payroll:** In-house using Brightpay software.

**Insurance:** Zurich Insurance – Policy renewal date 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

**Unaudited accounts:** Westcotts Chartered Accountants, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5AD

**Independent Examination:** A Liggatt, FCA, 16 Sunny Hill, Nunney, BA11 4ND

## **Governance**

### **Governing Document:**

The charity formed as a community group on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013 and became a registered charity (CIO) with voting members on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015. If the CIO is wound up; the members of the CIO have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities. Members must be aged 18+ and membership is an annual renewal costing £12 for family membership and £8 for individual adults. The number of members in the year ending 2024 is 54 (2023 – 61)

### **Trustee Appointments:**

The board of trustees have been through a period of change following the commission of a new governance and operational audit this year, followed by a skills audit in January 2024. Recruiting new trustees that can broaden the skillset of the board is a priority. The members or the charity trustees may at any time appoint a new charity trustee when there is an identified need. An interested trustee is provided with an 'essential guidance on being a trustee' They will attend a trustee meeting before their first appointment in addition to receiving a copy of the constitution, latest annual report and statement of accounts. *'The 'new trustee' will be provided with a mentor for the first 6 months. During this time the mentor will be available to provide support as required'*

One-third of the charity trustees retire from office at the AGM. If the number of charity trustees is not three or a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one-third shall retire from office. Charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or benefits.

## **Summary of Financial Activities**

We always aim to minimize the cost of our services to disadvantaged families, however we do acknowledge an income made up of voluntary contributions e.g. weekly 'subs' in the reports. In 2023/24 charitable activity and fundraising income generated £16,558 (2023: £15,255)

The charities trading activities generated an additional £12,373 (2023: £10,555) against £7,967 in expenses (2023: £4,474)

The team around Pod maintains excellent relations with its funders and has a good track record with fundraising. Charitable donations and grants given by individuals, groups and grant making bodies totaled £68,974 (2023: £70,276)

The trustees would like to thank all our funders and donors both large and small for their support which has enabled us to develop and expand our provision. A full list of donors is presented on page 18-19 of this report.

The income for the year ending 31 March 2024 totaled £97,905 (2023: £96,086) against expenditure of £74,525 (2023: £69,938)

## **Reserves**

The trustees acknowledge the considerable challenges and competition within the current funding climate alongside the cost-of-living crisis and increased demand. The Trustees will continue to monitor the level of unrestricted reserves which should be between £28,750 and £47,916 at year end. This represents 3-5 months of the charities annual operating costs in the year ending 2024/25. Looking forward, the trustees have considered the risks associated with the charity's growth and step change over the course of the next year and consider the unrestricted reserves level at year end is appropriate in these circumstances.

The unrestricted reserves at the end of 2023/24 are £41,546 In addition to a further £50,185 of restricted reserves associated with 5 out of 6 core projects and some core costs.

The projected charity costs in 2024/2025 are £115,000 The charity is in receipt of a multi-year grant from the Gosling Foundation in addition to other one-off grants and donations. There is currently a shortfall and fundraising target of at least £50,000 which will enable us to continue providing and developing essential services for vulnerable children, adults and families.

The Trustees will continue to monitor the fundraising policy and reserves level during the next financial year.

## **Declaration**

Signed and approved by the board on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024

 (Trustee)

## The Pod

### Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of The Pod

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Pod for the year ended 31 March 2024.

#### Responsibilities and basis of report

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

#### Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of The Pod 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 accounting 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.

AA Liggatt FCA

Date: 5.7.2024

## The Pod

### Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	21,658	53,073	74,731	76,759
Other trading activities	21,319	1,855	23,174	19,327
Total income	42,977	54,928	97,905	96,086
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	(4,208)	(3,759)	(7,967)	(4,474)
Charitable activities	(38,224)	(36,301)	(74,525)	(69,938)
Total expenditure	(42,432)	(40,060)	(82,492)	(74,412)
Net income	545	14,868	15,413	21,674
Gross transfers between funds	342	(342)	-	-
Net movement in funds	887	14,526	15,413	21,674
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward	38,820	35,659	74,479	52,805
Total funds carried forward 11	39,707	50,185	89,892	74,479

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.  
The funds breakdown for 2023 is shown in note 11.

## The Pod

(Registration number: 1161092)  
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	8	2,598	303
Cash at bank and in hand	9	89,133	75,651
		<u>91,731</u>	<u>75,954</u>
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	10	<u>(1,839)</u>	<u>(1,475)</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>89,892</u>	<u>74,479</u>
<b>Funds of the charity:</b>			
<b>Restricted income funds</b>			
Restricted funds		50,185	35,659
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>			
Unrestricted funds		<u>39,707</u>	<u>38,820</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	11	<u>89,892</u>	<u>74,479</u>

The financial statements on pages 5 to 14 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on ..... and signed on their behalf by:

  
.....  
S Drake  
Trustee

## **The Pod**

### **Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

#### **1 Accounting policies**

##### **Statement of compliance**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the second edition of the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

##### **Basis of preparation**

The Pod meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

##### **Going concern**

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

##### **Judgements**

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

##### **Key sources of estimation uncertainty**

Accounting estimates and assumptions are made concerning the future and, by their nature, will rarely equal the related actual outcome. There are no key assumptions and other sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

##### **Income and endowments**

Voluntary income including donations, gifts, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

##### ***Donations and legacies***

Donations and legacies are recognised on a receivable basis when receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably measured.

##### ***Grants receivable***

Grants are recognised when the charity has an entitlement to the funds and any conditions linked to the grants have been met. Where performance conditions are attached to the grant and are yet to be met, the income is recognised as a liability and included on the balance sheet as deferred income to be released.

## **The Pod**

### **Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)**

#### **Expenditure**

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

#### ***Raising funds***

These are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, the management of investments and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

#### ***Charitable activities***

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

#### **Taxation**

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

#### **Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

#### **Fund structure**

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### Financial instruments

##### Recognition and measurement

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the amount receivable or payable including any related transaction costs, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Current assets and current liabilities are subsequently measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received and not discounted.

#### 2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Donations and legacies;				
Donations	4,621	5,135	9,756	19,716
Voluntary contributions	5,597	-	5,597	6,057
Grants, including capital grants;				
Grants from other charities	11,280	47,938	59,218	50,560
Memberships	160	-	160	426
	<u>21,658</u>	<u>53,073</u>	<u>74,731</u>	<u>76,759</u>

#### 3 Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Total 2023 £
Trading income	8,934	-	8,934	6,314
Fundraising	8,444	1,623	10,067	8,100
Tuck	734	-	734	672
Scrapstore	3,207	232	3,439	4,241
	<u>21,319</u>	<u>1,855</u>	<u>23,174</u>	<u>19,327</u>

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### 4 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Note	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Charitable activities		36,765	36,236	73,001	67,976
Support costs		1,459	65	1,524	1,962
	5	38,224	36,301	74,525	69,938

#### 5 Analysis of support costs

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Training	325	-	325	745
Finance costs	(40)	27	(13)	38
Governance costs	1,174	38	1,212	1,179
	1,459	65	1,524	1,962

#### 6 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year (2023: Nil).

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses or any other benefits from the charity during the year (2023: Nil).

#### 7 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Staff costs during the year were:</b>		
Wages and salaries	59,156	49,563

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

Average head count of employees	<b>2024</b> No	<b>2023</b> No
	13	10

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year (2023: Nil)

#### 8 Debtors

Other debtors	<b>2024</b> £	<b>2023</b> £
	2,598	303

#### 9 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash on hand	<b>2024</b> £	<b>2023</b> £
Cash at bank	2,244	1,651
	86,889	74,000
	89,133	75,651

#### 10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

Trade creditors	<b>2024</b> £	<b>2023</b> £
Accruals	1,359	995
	480	480
	1,839	1,475

#### 11 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<i>General</i>					
General Funds	38,820	42,977	(42,432)	342	39,707
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Children in Need	7,702	-	(7,414)	(288)	-
SCF Discovery	1,408	-	(1,408)	-	-
Gosling Foundation	813	-	(813)	-	-
Local Giving	281	-	(227)	(54)	-
Frome Town Council	2,130	-	(2,130)	-	-
David Soloman	1,500	-	(850)	-	650
Frome Town Rotary	1,187	-	(794)	-	393

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
MASG	479	-	(165)	-	314
Douglas Arter	500	-	(437)	-	63
FAST	3,489	-	(447)	-	3,042
FTC - Business Plan	900	-	(900)	-	-
FTC - Scrapstore	2,212	232	(712)	-	1,732
FTC - Workshop	2,000	-	-	-	2,000
Inner Wheel	1,500	-	(1,500)	-	-
Leonard Laity Stoate	1,000	-	(296)	-	704
Mendip Shape Lottery	1,000	-	(831)	-	169
National Lottery	7,558	-	(7,558)	-	-
Frome Lottery	-	500	(500)	-	-
Frome Town Rotary	-	750	-	-	750
Access For All - DWP	-	485	(562)	-	(77)
Albert Hunt	-	3,000	-	-	3,000
Witham Vale - Community	-	1,000	(960)	-	40
Swim fundraiser	-	1,623	(1,050)	-	573
ASDA PYC	-	800	-	-	800
CO-OP fund	-	638	-	-	638
Happy Families	-	900	(900)	-	-
Lions Club	-	1,000	-	-	1,000
Medlock	-	2,000	-	-	2,000
SCF Core	-	5,000	(691)	-	4,309
Sir Jules Thornton	-	2,000	-	-	2,000
SC fund	-	25,000	(8,122)	-	16,878
Van Neste	-	10,000	(793)	-	9,207
	35,659	54,928	(40,060)	(342)	50,185
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>74,479</b>	<b>97,905</b>	<b>(82,492)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>89,892</b>

Unrestricted funding to support core activities and charity growth includes grants and donations from the following funders:

Leathersellers £8,500  
 Zion group £500.00  
 Masonic Charitable Trust £1,780  
 SC & ME Morland £1,000

# The Pod

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
<i>General</i>				
General Funds	28,294	37,222	(26,696)	38,820
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
True Colour Trust	1,130	-	(1,130)	-
Children in Need	7,339	10,250	(9,887)	7,702
SCF Discovery	-	5,000	(3,592)	1,408
Gosling Foundation	2,500	-	(1,687)	813
Frome Town Council	880	-	(880)	-
Hartfield Trust	300	-	(300)	-
Local Giving	500	-	(219)	281
Frome Town Council	5,000	-	(2,870)	2,130
Awards of All	1,174	-	(1,174)	-
David Soloman	1,500	-	-	1,500
3H Fund	466	-	(466)	-
Frome Rotary	1,000	-	(1,000)	-
Frome Town Rotary	1,500	-	(313)	1,187
MASG	595	-	(116)	479
Other restricted funds	627	-	(627)	-
Douglas Arter	-	500	-	500
FAST	-	4,034	(545)	3,489
FTC - Business Plan	-	1,800	(900)	900
FTC - Scrapstore	-	5,000	(2,788)	2,212
FTC - Workshop	-	2,000	-	2,000
Inner Wheel	-	1,500	-	1,500
Leonard Laity Stoate	-	1,000	-	1,000
Mendip Shape Lottery	-	1,000	-	1,000
National Lottery	-	9,730	(2,172)	7,558
Friends of Frome Hospital	-	300	(300)	-
Frome Lottery	-	500	(500)	-
Frome Town Rotary	-	500	(500)	-
SSE SCF	-	15,000	(15,000)	-
Witham Farmers	-	750	(750)	-
	24,511	58,864	(47,716)	35,659
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>52,805</b>	<b>96,086</b>	<b>(74,412)</b>	<b>74,479</b>

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### 12 Analysis of net assets between funds

	<b>Unrestricted funds General £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>Total funds at 31 March 2024 £</b>
Current assets	41,546	50,185	91,731
Current liabilities	(1,839)	-	(1,839)
Total net assets	39,707	50,185	89,892

	<b>Unrestricted funds General £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>Total funds at 31 March 2023 £</b>
Current assets	40,295	35,659	75,954
Current liabilities	(1,475)	-	(1,475)
Total net assets	38,820	35,659	74,479

#### 13 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year (2023: Nil).

**THE POD**

England & Wales - Charity number 1161092

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# Accounts

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**End of year report & Independently Examined Financial statements**

**For the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

**Charity number: 1161092**

**The Pod**

**Reports and Accounting**

**For the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

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## Trustee report

It is a great pleasure to be writing this report once again. Reflecting on the activities of The Pod over the last year it is apparent that The Pod continues to maintain its focus on core projects. Alongside this it is responding to important emerging needs in our community.

The gaps in services, support, and infrastructure for people with additional needs are undeniably prevalent yet all too often hidden or ignored. Slowly and carefully The Pod is bringing forward creative and sustaining ways of supporting our members and bridging these gaps. If we remember that each person with additional needs is part of a family and greater community then it is clear that The Pod is creating a supportive framework for families to flourish in a challenging environment.

The Pod's capacity to adapt and change to meet the needs and changing requirements of their membership and community is remarkable. As a charity originally set up to offer a youth club for young people with additional needs it eventually had to face the question of "what happens when the young people are too old for youth club?". So, Pod Plus was created to offer a space for young adults to gather and socialise. As an organisation offering family membership the needs of siblings also became apparent and The Pod was able to develop a provision for them too.

As our young people move further into adulthood the issues of meaningful occupation and employment have emerged. Both the Workshop and our Pod Scrapstore initiatives are community projects set up to address this. They offer our community both creative outlets and the opportunity to develop skills and experience in service provision. The Pod Scrapstore not only meets the needs of our members it is also addressing issues of sustainability reduction of waste by providing scrap for any education, care and community group.

Alongside all of this are the ongoing social opportunities that The Pod Disco and our weekly bingo sessions provide. These give our members the opportunity to come together as a community and offer a much-needed sense of belonging for everyone involved.

Every aspect of The Pod's work requires sensitivity, compassion, and the capacity to work with complexity. The Pod is privileged to have a wonderful team of staff and volunteers who are ever able to work in this way. On behalf of the trustees, I thank everyone involved for their contribution. Thanks also to our membership for their continued presence and engagement with our projects. It is this ongoing feedback and commitment that guides The Pod and helping us to shape our way forward.

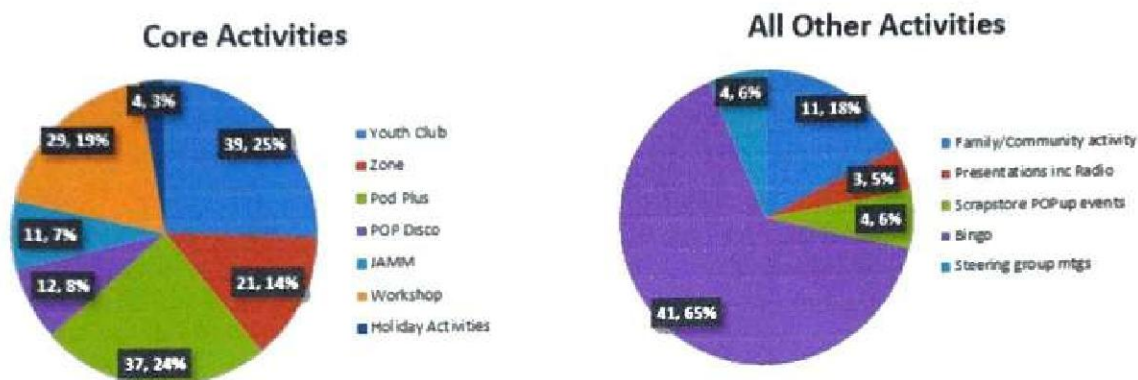


Moira Spence  
Chair of trustees

**History** - The Pod is a grassroots initiative, founded by parent carers in 2013 in response to a lack of services for disabled children in Mendip. Maintaining a service that is member led is essential in ensuring Pod beneficiaries support one another and reach their full potential.

**Objectives** - (CIO extract) To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.'

The charity achieves this through the following services;



### Pod Youth Club

The Youth club welcomes children with additional needs aged 10-17 years. The club meets on a Tuesday evening 5.30-7.30pm in term time and occasionally in the holidays. The staff ratio is 1:3 and the team are skilled, experienced and understand how to enable the children to reach their full potential. Children learn important life skills and make friends, many for the first time. Activities in the youth club and all Pod projects are co-led by the people who attend the groups; youth club activities include sport, cooking, seasonal craft and games as well as trips out. This year the group requested their first taste of a silent disco and really enjoyed it, they love their visits to the local climbing centre. There continues to be a waiting list, historically children wait about 9 months before they can join the group. Children who reach 17 years may transition into Pod Plus and continue their positive social experiences and friendships.

### The Zone

The Zone is a youth club for Young Carers who join between 8-16 years old. The Zone runs on alternate Wednesday evenings in term time with occasional holiday activities. Many but not all the children have a sibling with additional needs, or they may have parents who have long term health conditions that impact their ability to lead normal childhoods. The group are diverse, and the activities chosen to support these needs. Children may come to Zone to enjoy respite from high energy households whereas other young carers who attend prefer high energy, often competitive activities. During the summer holidays the group enjoyed a trip to Wookey Hole. The young people enjoyed being out of their usual environment and seeing the caves. They also enjoyed the old-fashioned arcade and the trip out on organised transport.

## **Pod Plus & POP Discos**

The Pod Plus group continues to run weekly on Mondays from 6.30-8.30pm, the change of time decided, following a members vote. Members activity suggestions are creative and we aim to facilitate these wherever possible; this year we have seen a messy "Table Nachos and Mocktails" evening, Christmas cake icing and trips to Cordero lounge. Theatre trips are very popular with members and carers, the group attended the Memorial Theatre to watch Shrek the Musical, and had a great time, with members dancing in the aisle. This was an inclusive event run by the theatre and enjoyed by all, our event led to the theatre running an accessible panto at Christmas. The group also had an evening at Edventure to try out Pod Workshop. Some Pod Plus members are starting to branch out into the world and try new things as young people transition in from Pod Youth club, this is a sign of success for everyone.

POP Disco, an inspiration from the Pod Plus group, started in May 22 and now runs monthly at the Masonic Hall. It has been a hit with the group since the beginning and the wider community are now discovering the joy of Pod POP. A project led by a volunteer with additional needs; Pod held a competition to design a new logo for POP disco. This branding is now used to promote the project in the community, which is an open access event for anyone aged 16+ with additional needs. This monthly event is equally enjoyed by parent carers and personal assistants who come together for support. Themes for each event are chosen by the group, ranging from Karaoke, Zumba, or music from the movies - Silent Discos remain a firm favourite for everyone. Feedback from the community has been very positive.

## **JAMM - Just A Monday Meet-Up**

The parent support group meets once a month on a Monday from 10-12 noon. We provide refreshments and a space to pause from stressful lives. We occasionally offer a little therapy treat, however, for most of our parent carers just the chance to sit, reflect and have a chat is all they are looking for. There are many regular attendees, although new parents seeking out supportive peer relationships and guidance from the Pod team. There are many meaningful and poignant conversations within JAMM where parent carers value shared experiences when navigating emotional and professional support, education, and funding issues.

## **Workshop**

The concept of Workshop came from discussions in Pod Plus where members wanted to experience a "Make & Sell" idea; following a successful soap making activity in club. Workshop has developed into a stand-alone project which offers a creative space to learn new skills, social time to meet friends and an experience of being in a Workplace environment. This year Workshop has focused on members working together to explore creative opportunities, learning processes and discovering new talents. Within each craft or production process there can be a role for everyone according to their skills, interests, or support needs. Workshop runs weekly on Saturdays from 10-3pm or half days 10-12.30pm. It gives it an adult "workplace" feel in preparation for further work experience or employment. This year Workshop attendees have created wonderful quality artisan products including, bunting, candles and cards; they ran a stall at the Charity Christmas Market in the Cheese & Grain which was a big success. Anyone over 18 with additional needs can attend Workshop, now the group is established we are reaching out to Further Education settings to promote this unique opportunity.

## **Pod Scrapstore**

For those who are unfamiliar with the principle of Scrapstore, it is a warehouse or shop which sells the excess from production, retail, or domestic sources, with the intention that they are used for play art and craft.

Several years ago Pod Plus members began thinking about the gaps in provision locally as they move onto adult services. The possibility of opening a Scrapstore, as a vehicle for work experience, training, and potential employment in the future is coming to fruition with continued support from Bristol Childrens scrapstore who are experts in their field. This year the feedback from 3 more pop up events continues to be fantastic; from children, schools, nurseries, parents, grandparents, and crafty people. Each event reaches more than 300 people in the community. Adults with additional needs are supported by Pod to set/tidy up the events, greet customers, explain Scrapstore, sell bags, direct the public around the space or serve them by cutting fabrics/paper from rolls.

The members experience of working in scrapstore is being captured in our steering group meetings to ensure that Pod listens and learns from the people being supported, ensuring that everyone is happy and developing at a pace that is comfortable. Everyone is growing in confidence and learning new skills. Feedback captured reflected that they had enjoyed feeling responsible, being an expert in something, and the public response was supportive and encouraging. Some expressed concerns that customers were sometimes impatient or rude and the team enabled them with the tools to handle this. The Scrapstore is continuing with a search for sustainable storage, and ultimately a premises when the charity has prepared sufficiently.

## **Other Activities.**

Partnerships are strong and Pod families enjoy taking part, volunteering at community events. Our project members and families are consulted when local events are being planned and we have led or taken part in numerous initiatives.

- Pod Plus at the Children's Festival, supporting children to make necklaces from metal washers decorated with nail varnish. Over 80 children visited our stall supported by 5 Pod Plus members.
- Pod Youth club supported the Lions Club fete by running a human fruit machine stall. Youth club members acted as the wheels on the machine to choose the fruits from brightly decorated boxes. This was thoroughly enjoyed by the everyone.
- The annual trip to 'Palette and Pasture ice cream Parlour' was another great success, 16 families enjoyed meeting up with one another and taking part in the Fairy-tale Trail. 33 people attended in total from across the projects.
- Pod Squad 5k & 1k fun run at the Old Showfield in place of the cancelled Frome town event. A dedicated group of 15 people took part and supported each other in the run, raising over £600 and having lots of fun.
- Frome Town Football club hosted Pod Plus to watch Frome vs Taunton. Pod members were invited to choose the player of the match and had an amazing time.
- Young Drivers School, 25 young people aged 10+ had the opportunity to drive a car for 30 minutes with a driving instructor, it was a fantastic opportunity for everyone to get behind the wheel of a real car and receive a certificate for their efforts. This is an experience many had asked for and looked forward to.

- Pod Plus & Youth Club had an amazing day out at Longleat, this included a bus around the safari park, visit to the house and seeing the Christmas light display.
- Workshop members held a stall at the Cheese & Grain Charities Christmas Fayre, selling the beautiful products they had made, such as candles, cards, Christmas decorations and hand stitched items.
- Pod Plus & Youth Club contributed homemade Christmas cards to the Big Christmas Get Together, helping bring some festive cheer to those in the Community that find Christmas a difficult time.
- Annual Panto trip. 38 members and their family members watched Cinderella at the Memorial Theatre (Oh yes, they did!) and had a great time joining in with the stage fun.
- The Pod Family Silent Disco in February was popular – the event welcomed lots of new faces and was possible with support from Frome Town Rotary.

### Community Accessible Bingo

The weekly bingo runs every Monday evening (in partnership with the Cheese and Grain) Our wonderful group of volunteers who attend is growing, including learning disabled adults. This has included leavers from Pod Plus and Zone projects who wish to continue to be involved with The Pod in a different capacity and continue their own work experience and development. These volunteers help us to run a small café providing the players with affordable snacks and drinks, including healthy options requested by them. This continues to promote community partnership, reduce isolation and to support some of the most vulnerable members of our community to participate.

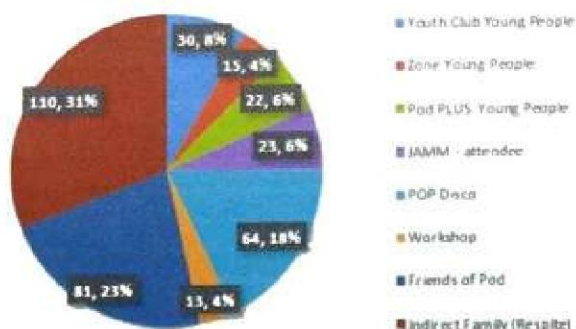
### Presentations this year included;

BBC Radio Somerset - A feature about Scrapstore and the potential impact on Pod members through new opportunities for work experience, alongside the offer to the community.

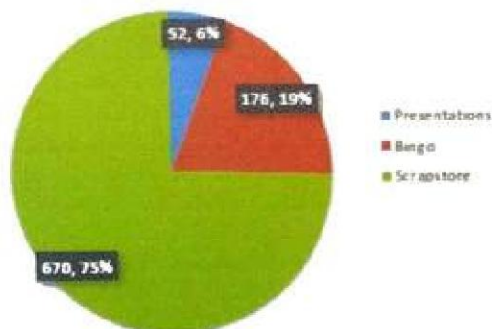
Frome FM - Highlighting the work of Pod through each project and promotion of Scrapstore.

Frome Community Lottery presentation following Silent Disco equipment donation.

**Direct Beneficiaries - core activities**



**People reached in the community**



## **Our impact**

By continuing to listen to our members and their families The Pod has increased its presence in the community and offer of social opportunities for all. Pop Disco has reached into the supported living and residential education settings locally, we now have regular attendees at other projects and new members because of this unique project that is completely open access. The Pod team work hard to break down the hidden social barriers that prevent people with additional needs from trying new things. Building confidence by enabling them to try new things and step out of their comfort zones, in a trusted, safe, supportive environment. It has been a delight for Pod staff and volunteers to see lots of new faces at projects and to be reaching a wider audience.

The following is a small selection of testimonials from our community. The success of our projects and the experiences of those who attend is founded on building strong trusting relationships with families and members. Their reported experience is that they are happier, healthier, and more confident as they form friendships and learn to be independent. Where previously they may have struggled to be accepted and understood.

Our project teams capture and record the special moments or comments from sessions we call "gems". Each statement recognises the huge progress made by individuals which may to an onlooker appear trivial. We recognise and celebrate each success.

*A, who previously had 1-1 support from their carer has been attending Workshop for a year and is now able to stay for short periods without this support and stay focussed on tasks for extended periods of time." This has made a difference to the member through building his confidence, independence, and concentration skills, but also his carer who is able to have time away without worrying.*

*B started attending Workshop following a trial session and as part of her transition from PYC to Pod Plus later this year. She is building confidence in the space and loves being creative.*

*C has really built his confidence in the group at PYC and is trying new activities. He was able to enjoy a trip to the park and connect with others to play alongside them and involve them in his game. He is getting less anxious about time away from parent carers and engaging with staff and volunteers*

*D did well as part of a group, her listening skills have improved a lot.*

*E did really well, she had space to be herself." And "has really gelled with the group.*

*F stated "I was really anxious before we did Scrapstore, but I am really proud of myself and how we all did as a team working together. Even if it is a bit tiring"*

We have also received feedback on the Scrapstore's social impact through our members engaging with the public and championing the rights and needs for adults with additional needs to work and contribute to their community.

*"This is amazing, the town needs this resource, and the volunteers (Pod Members) are brilliant." - Teacher*

*"Without access to these affordable resources I would not be able to run the workshops with parents and families to explore issues such as debt management, loan sharks and other issues which effect the whole family. This is such a valued community resource. I love this project". - CAB community intervention worker.*

To achieve our charity aim, it is important that we continue to create opportunities for the children, young people, and adults across the projects to have their say in the clubs and activities. They help to plan the programme of activities, bring new ideas to the session planning, run their tuck shops and are helping to design new projects.

To effectively serve the members, the charity listens to these experiences and views. Where possible our services evolve as these needs grow or change. The past year has seen this through the development of Pop Disco, Workshop and Scrapstore and will continue.

As is evident from the testimonies above, the variety of activities and projects delivered by the charity enable children, adults, and their carers to be stronger, more confident and to provide peer to peer support.

## **The team**

The Pod employs 2 part time Charity Managers who each work 15 hrs per week. Day-to-day management, project development and fundraising are undertaken by the charity managers. Trustees ensure that key policies are in place, reviewed and adhered to, with safeguarding at the top of the agenda. Service delivery is in the skilled hands of employed sessional workers who are often flexible and may work across other projects run by the charity, or provide cover ensuring that no projects are cancelled due to unforeseen staff absences.

The team around the projects also include;

Administrator	5 hours per week
Pod Youth Club	1 Youth Leader/4 Youth Workers/volunteers
The Zone	1 Youth Leader/Youth Workers
Pod Plus	1 Project Lead/1 Assistant/volunteers
Workshop	1 Project Lead/1 Assistant/volunteers
Community	24 volunteers inc 3 Young people with additional needs
Scrapstore	1 Scrapstore Co-ordinator/31 volunteers inc 14 adults with additional needs

We value our team of volunteers and are very grateful for the hours they donate. This year volunteer hours totalled an impressive 2,483 hours. These hours are calculated as follows;

- 196 Core projects requiring volunteer support; 8 volunteers
- 210 Young people with additional needs supported to volunteer across a variety of roles e.g. running a pop-up cafe in the bingo, supporting project teams by organising and running activities in a project and the design and production of marketing materials; 6 volunteers (inc 1 Duke of Edinburgh placement and one young carer leaver)
- 910 Before, during and after the bingo each week; average 22 hours per week; 10 volunteers
- 618 Additional hours worked by 2 x charity managers; average in excess of 13 hours per week worked.
- 25 Local Rotarians supporting a Pod social event; 8 volunteers
- 220 People with additional needs supported to run Scrapstore events; 10-13 volunteers per scrapstore event x 3; average 55 hours per scrapstore event.
- 304 Scrapstore support team, many of the adults with additional needs would not be able to run the event without a team member to support them. Support volunteers included local rotarians, carers, representative from local specialist provision and our own colleagues; 17 volunteers per event; average 76 hours per event.

Without this invaluable contribution of time and energy, it is abundantly clear we would not be able to run a diverse range of services and support as many families as we do. However, the charity is unable to run its projects without paid sessional staff who provide expertise, consistency and stability for vulnerable children adults, families and training for volunteers. In this year salaries represent 67% of our annual expenditure. (2022 – 68%)

### **Structure, Governance and Administration**

The Charity Managers report to the board at every trustee meeting; this report provides up to date information on each project, community activities, safeguarding, finance and anything pertinent at the time. Board meetings generally take place in March, June, September & December - this year all meetings took place face to face however Zoom continues to provide a useful tool for remote access. Trustees liase and individually meet with the charity managers to discuss actions specific to their area of responsibility.

The Charity Managers line manage the administrator and their designated Project Lead workers who in turn provide supervision to the project teams.

## **Administration**

**Banking:** Co-operative bank, Po Box 250, Delf House, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

**Payroll:** In-house using Brightpay software.

**Insurance:** Zurich Insurance – Policy renewal date 25<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

**Unaudited accounts:** Westcotts Chartered Accountants, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5AD

**Independent Examination:** A Liggatt, FCA, 16 Sunny Hill, Nunney, BA11 4ND

## **Governance**

### **Governing Document:**

The charity formed as a community group on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013 and became a registered charity (CIO) with voting members on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015. If the CIO is wound up; the members of the CIO have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities. Members must be aged 18+ and membership is an annual renewal costing £12 for family membership and £8 for individual adults. The number of members in the year ending 2023 is 61 (2022 – 52)

### **Trustee Appointments:**

The trustee's skillset is regularly reviewed. The members or the charity trustees may at any time appoint a new charity trustee when there is an identified need. An interested trustee is provided with an 'essential guidance on being a trustee' They will attend a trustee meeting before their first appointment in addition to receiving a copy of the constitution, latest annual report and statement of accounts. The trustees have reviewed their recruitment procedure; *'The 'new trustee' will be provided with a mentor for the first 6 months. During this time the mentor will be available to provide support as required'* in addition to explaining existing processes so there is improved clarity moving forward.

One-third of the charity trustees retire from office at the AGM. If the number of charity trustees is not three or a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one-third shall retire from office. Charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or benefits.

## **Summary of Financial Activities**

We always aim to minimize the cost of our services to disadvantaged families however we do acknowledge an income made up of voluntary contributions (weekly 'subs') in the financial reports. In 2022/23 charitable activity income (including fundraising income) generated £15,255 (2022 £15,017)

This is a slight increase on 2021/22 however the Pod is now reporting on a trading arm which generated an additional £10,555 in sales against £4,474 in expenses.

The team around Pod maintains excellent relations with its funders and has a good track record with fundraising. Charitable donations and grants given by individuals, groups and grant making bodies totaled £70,276 (2022: £56,561)

The trustees would like to thank all our funders and donors both large and small for their support which has enabled us to develop and expand our services during this most unprecedented year. A full list of donors is presented on page 10 of this report.

The income for the year ending 31 March 2023 totaled £96,086 (2022: £71,578) against expenditure of £69,938 (2022: £59,658)

## **Reserves**

The trustees acknowledge the considerable challenges and competition within the current funding climate alongside the cost-of-living crisis and increased demand. The Trustees will continue to monitor the level of unrestricted reserves which should be between £22,144 and £36,905 at year end. This represents 3-5 months of the charities annual operating costs in the year ending 2023/24. Looking forward, the trustees have considered the risks associated with the charities growth and step change over the course of the next year and consider the unrestricted reserves level at year end is appropriate in these circumstances.

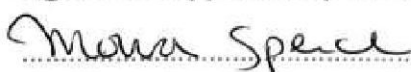
The unrestricted reserves at the end of 2022/23 are £38,820 In addition to a further £35,659 of restricted reserves associated with 5 out of 6 core projects and some core costs.

The projected charity costs in 2023/2024 are £88,574 The charity is in receipt of a multi-year grant from Children in Need in addition to other one-off grants and donations. There is currently a shortfall and fundraising target of at least £56,907 if we are to continue providing and developing essential services for vulnerable children, adults and families.

The Trustees will continue to monitor the fundraising policy and reserves level during the next financial year.

## **Declaration**

Signed and approved by the board on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

 (Trustee)

**The Pod**

**Unaudited Financial Statements**

**31 March 2023**

# The Pod

## Trustees' Annual Report

Year ended 31 March 2023

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The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.

### Reference and administrative details

<b>Registered charity name</b>	The Pod
<b>Charity registration number</b>	1161092
<b>Principal office</b>	C/O Openstorytellers RISE Whittox Lane Frome BA11 3BY

### The trustees

M Spence  
S Drake  
Z O'Gorman  
A Tuffnell

### Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

## The Pod

### Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2023

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The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust Deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 6.6.23 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



S Drake  
Trustee

# The Pod

## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Pod

Year ended 31 March 2023

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I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of The Pod ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2023.

### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

### Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act, or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements 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.

AALiggatt FCA 31 May 2023

Independent Examiner

# The Pod

## Statement of Financial Activities

Year ended 31 March 2023

		Unrestricted funds	2023 Restricted funds	Total funds	2022 Total funds
	Note	£	£	£	£
<b>Income and endowments</b>					
Donations and legacies	4	19,895	56,864	76,759	61,146
Other trading activities	5	17,327	2,000	19,327	10,432
<b>Total income</b>		<u>37,222</u>	<u>58,864</u>	<u>96,086</u>	<u>71,578</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Expenditure on raising funds:					
Costs of other trading activities	6	2,806	1,668	4,474	–
Expenditure on charitable activities	7,8	23,890	46,048	69,938	59,658
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<u>26,696</u>	<u>47,716</u>	<u>74,412</u>	<u>59,658</u>
<b>Net income and net movement in funds</b>		<u>10,526</u>	<u>11,148</u>	<u>21,674</u>	<u>11,920</u>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds brought forward		28,294	24,511	52,805	40,886
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<u>38,820</u>	<u>35,659</u>	<u>74,479</u>	<u>52,806</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 6 to 13 form part of these financial statements.

# The Pod

## Statement of Financial Position

31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	12	303	57
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>75,651</u>	<u>54,794</u>
		75,954	54,851
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	13	<u>1,475</u>	<u>2,045</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>74,479</u>	<u>52,806</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<u>74,479</u>	<u>52,806</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>74,479</u>	<u>52,806</u>
<b>Funds of the charity</b>			
Restricted funds		35,659	24,511
Unrestricted funds		<u>38,820</u>	<u>28,295</u>
<b>Total charity funds</b>	14	<u>74,479</u>	<u>52,806</u>

These financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on .....6.....23 and are signed on behalf of the board by:



S Drake  
Trustee

The notes on pages 6 to 13 form part of these financial statements.

## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2023

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#### 1. General information

The charity is a public benefit entity and a registered charity in England and Wales and is unincorporated. The address of the principal office is C/O Openstorytellers, RISE, Whittox Lane, Frome, BA11 3BY.

#### 2. Statement of compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland', the 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) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Charities Act 2011.

#### 3. Accounting policies

##### Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and liabilities and investment properties measured at fair value through income or expenditure.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

##### Going concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

##### Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

##### Key sources of estimation uncertainty

Accounting estimates and assumptions are made concerning the future and, by their nature, will rarely equal the related actual outcome. There are no key assumptions and other sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

##### Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees to further any of the charity's purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular future project or commitment.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure declared by the donor or through the terms of an appeal, and fall into one of two sub-classes: restricted income funds or endowment funds.

# The Pod

## Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

### Year ended 31 March 2023

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#### 3. Accounting policies *(continued)*

##### Incoming resources

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when entitlement has passed to the charity, it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the charity and the amount can be reliably measured. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- income from donations or grants is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the gift, receipt is probable and its amount can be measured reliably.
- legacy income is recognised when receipt is probable and entitlement is established.
- income from donated goods is measured at the fair value of the goods unless this is impractical to measure reliably, in which case the value is derived from the cost to the donor or the estimated resale value. Donated facilities and services are recognised in the accounts when received if the value can be reliably measured. No amounts are included for the contribution of general volunteers.

##### Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is classified under headings of the statement of financial activities to which it relates:

- expenditure on raising funds includes the costs of all fundraising activities, events, non-charitable trading activities, and the sale of donated goods.
- expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs incurred by a charity in undertaking activities that further its charitable aims for the benefit of its beneficiaries, including those support costs and costs relating to the governance of the charity apportioned to charitable activities.
- other expenditure includes all expenditure that is neither related to raising funds for the charity nor part of its expenditure on charitable activities.

##### Financial instruments

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the amount receivable or payable including any related transaction costs, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Current assets and current liabilities are subsequently measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received and not discounted.

# The Pod

## Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2023

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### 4. Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
<b>Donations</b>			
Donations	1,632	18,084	19,716
Voluntary contributions	6,057	–	6,057
<b>Grants</b>			
Grants receivable	11,780	38,780	50,560
<b>Subscriptions</b>			
Membership	426	–	426
	<u>19,895</u>	<u>56,864</u>	<u>76,759</u>

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
<b>Donations</b>			
Donations	5,293	3,188	8,481
Voluntary contributions	4,290	–	4,290
<b>Grants</b>			
Grants receivable	11,780	36,300	48,080
<b>Subscriptions</b>			
Membership	295	–	295
	<u>21,658</u>	<u>39,488</u>	<u>61,146</u>

### 5. Other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Fundraising	8,100	–	8,100
Tuck	672	–	672
Trading income	6,314	–	6,314
Scrapstore	2,241	2,000	4,241
	<u>17,327</u>	<u>2,000</u>	<u>19,327</u>

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# The Pod

## Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2023

### 5. Other trading activities *(continued)*

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Fundraising	9,663	–	9,663
Tuck	769	–	769
Trading income	–	–	–
Scrapstore	–	–	–
	<u>10,432</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>10,432</u>

### 6. Costs of other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Costs of other trading activities	<u>2,806</u>	<u>1,668</u>	<u>4,474</u>

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Costs of other trading activities	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>

### 7. Expenditure on charitable activities by fund type

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Charitable activities	22,829	45,147	67,977
Support costs	<u>1,061</u>	<u>901</u>	<u>1,961</u>
	<u>23,890</u>	<u>46,048</u>	<u>69,938</u>

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Charitable activities	20,623	37,312	57,935
Support costs	<u>745</u>	<u>978</u>	<u>1,723</u>
	<u>21,368</u>	<u>38,290</u>	<u>59,658</u>

# The Pod

## Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2023

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### 8. Expenditure on charitable activities by activity type

	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs	Total funds 2023	Total fund 2022
	£	£	£	£
Charitable activities	67,977	745	68,722	58,460
Governance costs	–	1,216	1,216	1,198
	<u>67,977</u>	<u>1,961</u>	<u>69,938</u>	<u>59,658</u>

### 9. Analysis of support costs

	Analysis of support costs	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£
General office	707	707	525
Finance costs	38	38	–
Governance costs	1,216	1,216	1,198
	<u>1,961</u>	<u>1,961</u>	<u>1,723</u>

### 10. Staff costs

The total staff costs and employee benefits for the reporting period are analysed as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	<u>49,563</u>	<u>40,620</u>

The average head count of employees during the year was 10 (2022: 10).

No employee received employee benefits of more than £60,000 during the year (2022: Nil).

### 11. Trustee remuneration and expenses

No remuneration or other benefits from employment with the charity or a related entity were received by the trustees (2022: none).

During the year, no expenses were paid to Trustees.

### 12. Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Other debtors	<u>303</u>	<u>57</u>

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## The Pod

### Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

#### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 13. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Trade creditors	995	801
Accruals and deferred income	480	1,244
	<u>1,475</u>	<u>2,045</u>

#### 14. Analysis of charitable funds

##### Unrestricted funds

	At 1 April 2022	Income	Expenditure	At 31 March 2023
	£	£	£	£
General funds	<u>28,294</u>	<u>37,222</u>	<u>(26,696)</u>	<u>38,820</u>

Unrestricted funding to support core activities and charity growth includes grants from the following funders;

Leathersellers	5,000
Dame Violet Trust	1,500
SC & ME Morland	2,000
29 <sup>th</sup> May 1961	1,000

	At 1 April 2021	Income	Expenditure	At 31 March 2022
	£	£	£	£
General funds	<u>17,573</u>	<u>32,090</u>	<u>(21,368)</u>	<u>28,295</u>

##### Restricted funds

	At 1 April 2022	Income	Expenditure	At 31 March 2023
	£	£	£	£
True Colour Trust	1,130	–	(1,130)	–
Children in Need	7,339	10,250	(9,887)	7,702
SCF Discovery	–	5,000	(3,592)	1,408
Gosling Foundation	2,500	–	(1,687)	813
Frome Town Council	880	–	(880)	–
Hartfield Trust	300	–	(300)	–
Local Giving	500	–	(219)	281
Frome Town Council	5,000	–	(2,870)	2,130
Awards for all	1,174	–	(1,174)	–
David Solomon	1,500	–	–	1,500
3H fund	466	–	(466)	–
Frome Rotary	1,000	–	(1,000)	–
Frome Town Rotary	1,500	–	(313)	1,187
MASG	595	–	(116)	479
Other restricted funds	627	–	(627)	–
Douglas Arter	–	500	–	500

# The Pod

## Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2023

### 14. Analysis of charitable funds *(continued)*

FAST	–	4,034	(545)	3,489
Frome Town Council - Business Plan	–	1,800	(900)	900
Frome Town Council - scrapstore	–	5,000	(2,788)	2,212
Frome Town Rotary - workshop	–	2,000	–	2,000
Inner Wheel	–	1,500	–	1,500
Leonard Laity Stoate Trust	–	1,000	–	1,000
Mendip Shape Lottery	–	1,000	–	1,000
National Lottery	–	9,730	(2,172)	7,558
Friends of Frome Hospital	–	300	(300)	–
Frome lottery	–	500	(500)	–
Frome Town Rotary headsets	–	500	(500)	–
SSE SCF	–	15,000	(15,000)	–
Witham farmers	–	750	(750)	–
	24,511	58,864	(47,716)	35,659

	At 1 April 2021	Income	Expenditure	At 31 March 2022
	£	£	£	£
True Colour Trust	3,491	–	(2,361)	1,130
Children in Need	9,001	10,000	(11,662)	7,339
SCF Discovery	2,742	–	(2,742)	–
Bailey Thomas	1,000	–	(1,000)	–
Gosling Foundation	2,500	–	–	2,500
Selwood Rotary	1,000	–	(1,000)	–
Frome Town Council	2,000	–	(1,120)	880
Hartfield Trust	300	–	–	300
Sherborne	437	–	(437)	–
Rotary shop income	267	–	(267)	–
Local Giving	575	–	(75)	500
Somerset Community Foundation	–	5,000	(5,000)	–
Frome Town Council	–	8,000	(3,000)	5,000
Awards for all	–	10,000	(8,826)	1,174
David Solomon	–	1,500	–	1,500
3H fund	–	1,800	(1,334)	466
Frome Rotary	–	1,000	–	1,000
Frome Town Rotary	–	1,500	–	1,500
MASG	–	688	(93)	595
Other restricted funds	–	–	627	627
	23,313	39,488	(38,290)	24,511

# The Pod

## Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2023

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### 15. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Current assets	40,295	35,659	75,954
Creditors less than 1 year	(1,475)	—	(1,475)
<b>Net assets</b>	<u>38,820</u>	<u>35,659</u>	<u>74,479</u>

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Current assets	30,341	24,511	54,852
Creditors less than 1 year	(2,047)	—	(2,047)
<b>Net assets</b>	<u>28,294</u>	<u>24,511</u>	<u>52,805</u>

### 16. Related party transactions.

There were no related party transactions during the year other than those described in note 11 of the accounts.

## **The Pod**

### **Management Information**

**Year ended 31 March 2023**

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**The following pages do not form part of the financial statements.**

# The Pod

## Detailed Statement of Financial Activities

Year ended 31 March 2023

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	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Income and endowments</b>		
<b>Donations and legacies</b>		
Donations	19,716	8,481
Voluntary contributions	6,057	4,290
Grants receivable	50,560	48,080
Membership	426	295
	<u>76,759</u>	<u>61,146</u>
<b>Other trading activities</b>		
Fundraising	8,100	9,663
Tuck	672	769
Trading income	6,314	–
Scrapstore	4,241	–
	<u>19,327</u>	<u>10,432</u>
<b>Total income</b>	<u>96,086</u>	<u>71,578</u>

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## The Pod

### Detailed Statement of Financial Activities *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
<b>Costs of other trading activities</b>		
Trading expenses	3,119	–
Venue hire	1,355	–
	<u>4,474</u>	<u>–</u>
<b>Costs of other trading activities</b>	<u>4,474</u>	<u>–</u>
<b>Expenditure on charitable activities</b>		
<b><i>Activities undertaken directly</i></b>		
Session costs	4,950	5,684
Salaries	49,563	40,620
Venue hire	4,780	5,870
Insurance	591	747
Fundraising	93	610
Transport	962	483
IT expenses	1,266	–
Telephone	504	370
Admin	176	974
DBS checks	144	314
Equipment	3,926	1,279
Tuck	324	490
Advertising and marketing	698	494
	<u>67,977</u>	<u>57,935</u>
<b><i>Support costs</i></b>		
Training	745	150
Contingency	–	375
	<u>745</u>	<u>525</u>
<b>Governance costs</b>		
Accountancy	480	298
Gifts and staff meals	361	–
Cost of meetings	337	–
Bank charges	38	–
Business planning	–	900
	<u>1,216</u>	<u>1,198</u>
<b>Expenditure on charitable activities</b>	<u>69,938</u>	<u>59,658</u>

**THE POD**

England & Wales - Charity number 1161092

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# Accounts

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**End of year report & Independently Examined Financial statements**

**For the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

**Charity number: 1161092**

**The Pod**

**Reports and Accounting**

**For the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

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## Trustees report

This year The Pod emerged from the pandemic stronger as an organisation and is moving into a new phase of development. The Pod staff and volunteers demonstrated amazing flexibility and resilience throughout the extensive periods of lockdown. They were able to adjust their ways of working to maintain many of the essential services. The challenges of providing social support without the possibility of social contact were met with ingenuity and creativity. The input of everyone's contribution to The Pod is greatly appreciated.

These testing times highlighted the significant and important role that the charity plays in the lives of so many young people and their families. The sustained provision of weekly and monthly social support The Pod offers, counters the isolation so often experienced by people with additional needs. The opportunity to meet with others, to have fun and to have a sense of belonging in a group is powerful and life enhancing. The Pod was originally established to offer social connection for teenagers with additional needs. It has progressively built on this through the many ideas and initiatives that come from members, families, and the team around the charity. The original aims are never lost from sight.

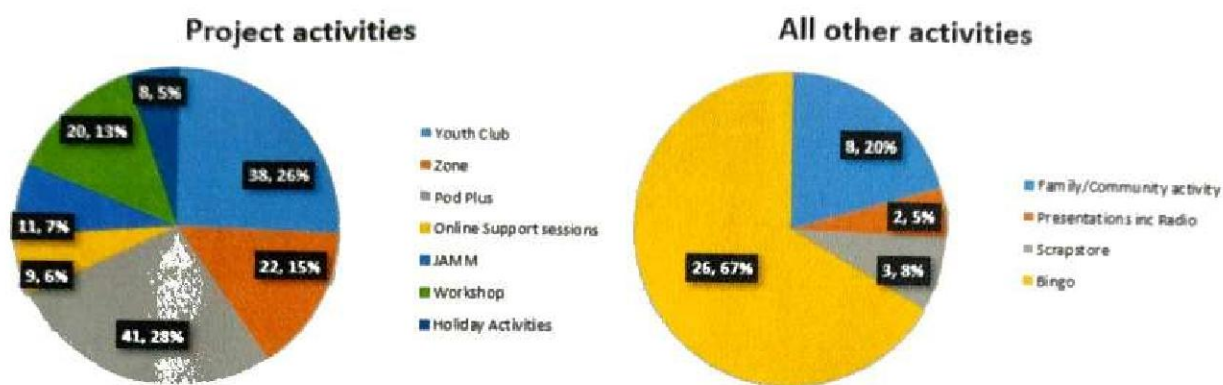
This year has seen the emergence of new activities and ventures. The new projects were being planned pre pandemic and were ready to roll out when the moment was right. It has been important for the trustees and The Pod team that projects were established at a pace that feels manageable and comfortable. Like all small charities the Pod continues to be stretched by demand. Adjustments have been made as the projects have evolved to ensure that they can be accommodated appropriately. The board continues to monitor capacity and look for ways to respond to demand in line with the Pod's objectives and in a way that will ensure sustainability for the community the Pod serves.



On behalf of the Board of Trustees

**History** - The Pod is a grassroots initiative, founded by parent carers in 2013 in response to a lack of services for disabled children in Mendip. Maintaining a service that is member led is essential in ensuring Pod beneficiaries support one another and reach their full potential.

**Objectives** - (taken from CIO) To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.' The charity achieves this through the following services;



### Pod Youth Club

The Youth club welcomes children with additional needs who are aged 10-17 years. The club meets on a Tuesday evening in term time. The ratio is 1:3 and the team are skilled, experienced and understand how to enable the children to reach their full potential. Children learn important life skills and make friends at the youth club, many for the first time. There continues to be a long waiting list; although children may wait about a year before they can join the group they may still access community initiatives with support from the Pod community.

### The Zone

The Zone is a youth club for Young Carers aged between 8-16 years old, recognising that children are unlikely to join the group when they turn 16 but nor will they be asked to leave. The children who access the project maybe have parents who are unwell or be a sibling of a disabled brother or sister. Zone sessions run once a fortnight in term time. The Youth team, work heard to balance the needs of children who may attend for respite and nurturing or perhaps to let off steam.

### Pod Plus

Pod Plus is a social club for adults with additional needs aged 18-30 years. The group meet every Monday evening (exc bank holidays) with the team providing a staff ratio of 1:5, currently 2 members attend with their own carer to support their 1:1 needs. The group enjoy trips out and this year were invited to a behind the scenes tour of ASDA and the local theatre. The adults who attend may transition into Pod Plus when they leave the Pod Youth Club, they learn to be more independent and enjoy being in a 'grown-up' space, often chatting and sharing news over a hot drink aswell as adult craft sessions which led to the development of the new Pod Workshop this year. The Pod Plus group, repeatedly request Silent Discos, which were always very well attended, pre pandemic and again in February 2022. The group are requesting that this becomes a more frequent opportunity for them.

## **JAMM – Just A Monday Meet-Up (Previously named Talking Café)**

As the charity returned to a face-to-face provision the relaunch of the parent support group (which did not exist before lockdown) was considered, a less formal approach was taken to encourage people to drop in with no pressure or expectation to talk if they chose not to. JAMM has been running since August 2021, the group meets once a month on a Monday for a 2-hour session. Parent carers are provided with hot drinks and a safe space to chat about difficulties. We provide a mini therapy treatment free and adult craft. This format has been successful with attendance numbers increasing and new friendships developing.

## **Workshop (NEW)**

Developed by Pod Plus members who previously explored making and selling handmade soap products at a local artisan market in 2019. Members really enjoyed the process of design, making, packaging, and selling their products and wanted to expand the project further.

Pod Workshop launched in September 2021 from these ideas. The project team create opportunities for members to explore a broad range of professional skills from needlework through to embossing and printing. Within each craft or production process there can be a role for everyone according to their skills, interests, or support needs.

Workshop successfully piloted 10 weeks and sessions run in blocks of 10 when funding permits. The project runs on Saturdays from 10-3pm. Members enjoy lunch together and are part of a team that are all working towards being able to create items for sale. As numbers are growing it is hoped the project can be sustainable without funding in the future.

## **Pod Scrapstore (NEW)**

A strong partnership with Frome Town Council has facilitated a scrapstore pilot between the Pod and Children's Scrapstore in Bristol, to develop a new scrapstore in Frome. A scrapstore is a national initiative (social enterprise) which collects items, often commercial that would otherwise be thrown away and sells them on to be reused in art and craft projects.

As with all Pod projects the people who access the projects are consulted and supporting the scrapstore development. The charity successfully ran 3 pop up events in 2021, each event built on the success of the last and footfall increased from 56 through to 159, customers included schools, nurseries, home schooling networks and families. Adults with disabilities can take on a wide variety of roles; greeting customers, selling bags, directing the public, cutting fabrics from rolls, through to taking payments and collecting feedback for evaluation. Scrapstore provides the perfect vehicle for work experience, training, and potential employment for adults with disabilities. The Pod leadership team continues to be supported and mentored by Bristol scrapstore to ensure a future Pod scrapstore can be a sustainable and permanent asset to the community. Pod members reflected on the experience as positive, their comments captured after each session reflected that they had enjoyed feeling responsible, being an expert in something - the public response was supportive and encouraging. The Scrapstore project is continuing with a search for local suppliers and storage and ultimately a premises. However, this would need to be at the right time for the charity and sustainable as a business.

## Other Activities;

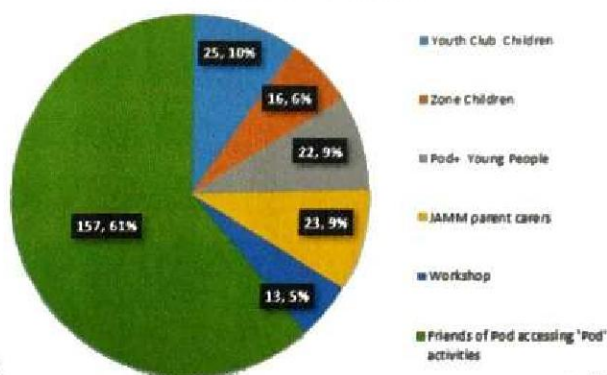
Partnerships are strong, Pod families enjoy taking part, volunteering at community events. Our weekly social groups and families are consulted when local events are being planned and we have led or taken part in numerous initiatives, some of which are listed below;

- Pod facilitated an accessible marquee at a local drone show which saw 5000+ spectators, enabling 38 family members to access an event they would otherwise have felt excluded from. 8 Pod volunteers collected for Frome Town Council and received a share of the donations; however, the primary focus is always to build confidence, self-esteem and enable our community to feel part of their community.
- Pod Youth Club & Pod Plus members ran a stall at the annual Children's Festival, supporting 100+ children to decorate cakes.
- Pod Plus & Pod Youth Club took part in a shared trip to see the Christmas Lights at Longleat during the school holidays.
- Window Wanderland (WW) a firm favourite with all the projects – this year the groups welcomed visitors from WW and helped produce a mural in the town hall.
- Pod families were delighted to access a collaborative Silent Disco with Purple Elephant and Mojo Moves – a firm favourite with members pre pandemic.
- Many of the seasonal activities were still on hold. However, the charity organised a family picnic at a local ice cream parlour, 48 family members from the groups and Friends of Pod came together.
- Pod squad took part in the Frome Marathon with runners placed in 5/10K races.
- Free Circus Starr tickets from a national SEN Circus troupe enabled Pod to send 100 children and family members to the circus, plus 2 minibuses for Pod Plus and Pod Youth club members who enjoyed a fun filled journey at this annual event.
- The Young Carers and Pod Youth club children were fortunate to access holiday activity funding this year, the charity arranged trips out to Bath City Farm, Trampolining, Bowling, visiting Magicians and picnics in the park.

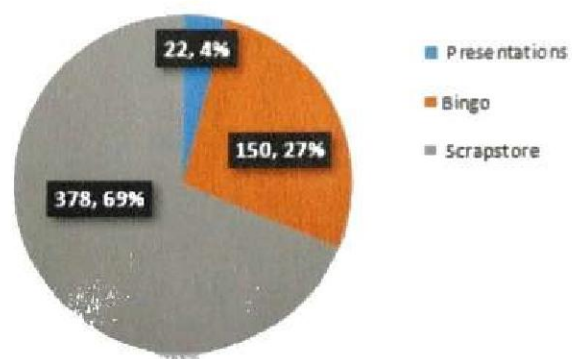
The weekly bingo run by Pod (partnership: Cheese and Grain) reopened in August 2021. The event would not be possible without a growing group of volunteers who attend (including learning disabled adults – not included in volunteer data) We are also now running a small café, providing the players with affordable snacks and drinks, including healthy options requested by them. The bingo continues to promote community partnership, reduces isolation, and supports some of the most vulnerable members of our community who may not access anything else in the town and look forward to sharing their news with the team.

Presentations this year; to the local Masonic Lodge who kindly nominated the Pod as their charity of the year. We were also invited to talk at the YWAF AGM, following a grant received prior to the pandemic supporting the growth of a new social enterprise for Pod.

**Direct Beneficiaries**



**Community accessing core activities**



## Impact

Several adults from supported living provisions in the town have joined the Workshop and are now regular attendees. They have since become Pod Members and access other activities run by the charity.

Workshop members have expressed that having somewhere on a Saturday when many services they can access are closed has really helped them to ease their sense of isolation and increased their friendship group. The project has provided them with opportunities to widen their skillset and take on new hobbies outside of the regular Saturday session.

*"I like that it is inclusive to everyone regardless of their experience or anxiety"*

*"Really nice meeting new people"*

*"It is a place to relax and be creative outside of work"*

*"A good place to sew and meet new people"*

*'C has lots of difficulties at school relating to other people and managing her behaviour. She has lots of additional responsibilities and worries at home. When she is at club she is able to be herself. She feels listened to and doesn't have to worry about things. It is nice seeing familiar people to chat to. She likes doing quieter activities but also enjoyed the walk around the community with the group to get hot chocolate.'*

A small selection of testimonials from young people and families. The success of the projects is founded on strong relationships with families and young people who are happier, healthier, and more confident as they form friendships and learn to be independent where many struggle to be accepted and understood.

The project teams capture and record the gems from the sessions. Each statement acknowledges the huge progress made by an individual that may to an outsider appear to be a small thing;

*"A joined in with the other children tonight – it was the first time in over a year they did something other than craft on their own"*

*"B tried pancakes tonight – he was able to talk about the smell and feel of them and then said they were disgusting!"*

*"C suggested a leaving party for A"*

*"D telling his mum to go – he was fine on his own"*

*"Everyone giving E a spontaneous round of applause for the money raised for the NHS"*

The charity has an excellent reputation and strong partnerships, other groups consult Pod when planning events, ensuring they are accessible for all families.

To achieve our charity aims it is important that the children, young people, and adults that access the projects have a say in their clubs, they help plan the timetable of activities, run their own tuck shop and help to design new projects. Various activities run by the charity enable children, adults, and their carers to be stronger, more confident and to provide peer to peer support.

## **Structure, Governance and Administration**

The Charity Managers report to the board at every trustee meeting; this report provides up to date information on each project, community activities, safeguarding, finance, and anything pertinent at the time. Board meetings generally take place in March, June, September & December - this year all meetings took place face to face however Zoom continues to provide a useful tool for remote access. Trustees liaise and individually meet with the charity managers to discuss actions specific to their area of responsibility. The Charity Managers line manage the administrator and their designated Project Lead workers who in turn provide supervision to the project teams.

The membership forum which would normally take place biannually has not taken place during lockdown in a traditional face-to-face format. The charity has maintained connections with its members, sought views and gathered feedback through events, projects, surveys and direct communication.

## **Staff and Volunteers**

Until Autumn 2021 the Pod employed a Part time Founder Charity Manager (18 hrs week) Trustees increased these core hours from 18 to 30 in November 2021 and now employs a Co-Charity Manager who works alongside the existing charity manager. Additionally, the team around the projects include;

Administrator	5 hours per week
Pod Youth Club	1 Youth Leader / 4 Youth Workers - 1 volunteer
The Zone	1 Youth Leader / 1 Youth Worker - 2 volunteers
Pod Plus	1 Project Lead / 1 Assistant - 4 volunteers
Workshop	1 Project Lead / 1 Assistant - 1 volunteer

The trustees ensure that key policies are in place, reviewed and adhered to, with safeguarding at the top of the agenda. Service delivery is in the skilled hands of employed sessional workers.

We are fortunate to employ a flexible team, who may work across other Pod projects or provide cover support; ensuring that no projects are cancelled due to unforeseen staff absences. Day-to-day management, project development and fundraising are undertaken by the charity managers.

We continue to value our team of volunteers and are very grateful for the hours they donate. This year volunteer hours totalled 392. This is the first time these hours have been calculated and reported on, these hours do not include the charity bingo or pop up scrapstore events which employed a further 28 volunteers and hundreds of additional hours. Without the invaluable contribution of time and energy we would not be able to support as many families as we do. However, the charity is unable to run its projects without paid sessional staff who provide consistency and stability for vulnerable children adults, families, and training for volunteers. This year salaries represent 68% of our annual expenditure. (2020/21 - 84%)

## Administration

### **Charity Registered address:**

C/O Openstorytellers, RISE, Whittox Lane, Frome, BA11 3BY

### **Banking:**

Co-operative bank, Po Box 250, Delf House, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

### **Payroll:**

In-house using Brightpay software.

### **Insurance:**

Zurich Insurance – Policy renewal date 25<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

### **Finance & Independent Examination:**

Exeter Community Accounting, Unit 89792, PO Box 7169, Poole, BH15 9EL.

Although the charity has always arranged an independent audit this is the first year the charity has outsourced its accounts.

## Governance

### **Governing Document:**

The charity formed as a community group on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013 and became a registered charity (CIO) with voting members on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015. If the CIO is wound up; the members of the CIO have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities. Members must be aged 18+ and membership is an annual renewal costing £12 for family membership and £6 for individual adults. The number of members in the year ending 2022 is 52 (2021 – 23)

### **Trustee Appointments:**

The trustee's skillset is regularly reviewed. The members or the charity trustees may at any time appoint a new charity trustee when there is an identified need. An interested trustee is provided with an 'essential guidance on being a trustee' They will attend a trustee meeting before their first appointment; receive a copy of the constitution, latest annual report and statement of accounts.

One-third of the charity trustees retire from office at the AGM. If the number of charity trustees is not three or a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one-third shall retire from office. Charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment. All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or benefits.

<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Dates acted if not whole year</b>
M Melton		
S Drake	Treasurer	
S Bennett	Chair	
A Tuffnell	Secretary	
M Spence		
Z O'Gorman		

## Summary of Financial Activities

We always aim to minimize the cost of our services to disadvantaged families however we do acknowledge an income made up of voluntary contributions (weekly 'subs') in the financial reports. Charitable activity income (including fundraising activity income) significantly reduced during the pandemic however we are delighted to have exceeded our pre covid levels with thanks to trading income (a new social enterprise being developed by the charity) In 2021/22 charitable activity income generated £15,017 (2020/21 £2,296)

The team around Pod maintains excellent relations with its funders and has a good track record with fundraising. Charitable donations and grants given by individuals, groups and grant making bodies totaled £56,561 (2020/21 £43,204)

The trustees would like to thank all our funders and donors both large and small for their support which has enabled us to develop and expand our services during another unprecedented year. A full list of donors is presented on page 14 of this report.

The income for the year ending 31 March 2022 totaled £71,579 (2021: £51,058) against expenditure of £59,658 (2021: £32,201)

## Reserves

The trustees acknowledge the challenges of the current funding climate; increased competition and the unknown implications of Covid-19. The Trustees will continue to monitor the level of unrestricted reserves which should be between £19,750 and £32,917. This represents 3-5 months of the charities annual operating costs in the year ending 2022/23.

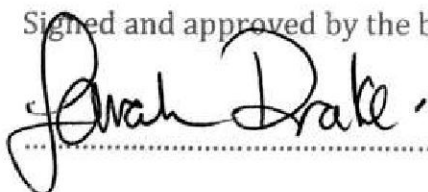
The unrestricted reserves at the end of 2021/22 are £28,294 In addition to a further £24,510 of restricted reserves associated to five out of six projects and some core costs.

The projected charity costs in 2022/2023 are £79,000. The charity has secured a multi-year grant from Children in Need and the Masonic Charitable Trust in addition to other one-off grants and donations. There is currently a shortfall and fundraising target of at least £35,000 if we are to continue providing and developing essential services for vulnerable children, adults and families.

The Trustees will continue to monitor the fundraising policy and reserves level during the next financial year.

## Declaration

Signed and approved by the board on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

 ..... (Trustee)

## The Pod CIO

### Independent examiner's report on the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022

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

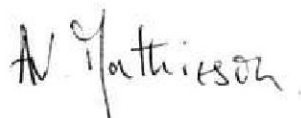
It is my responsibility to:

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

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention 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 Charities Act; and  
to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act  
have not been met.

Signed:



Dated: 28 April 2022

Exeter Community Accounting

# The Pod CIO

## Balance Sheet

as at 31st March 2022

	Notes	Total Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2021 £
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash at Bank and in Hand	5	54,794	40,884
Sundry Debtors	6	<u>57</u>	<u>40,884</u>
		<b>54,851</b>	<b>40,884</b>
<b>Creditors</b>			
Liabilities Falling Due Within One Year	7	2,047	0
		<u>52,804</u>	<u>40,884</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<u><b>52,804</b></u>	<u><b>40,884</b></u>
<b>Funds of the charity</b>			
Unrestricted funds		28,294	17,573
Restricted funds		24,510	23,311
		<u>52,804</u>	<u>40,884</u>
<b>Total Funds</b>		<u><b>52,804</b></u>	<u><b>40,884</b></u>

These financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on 11.6.22 and are signed on behalf of the board by:

Name Arch Drake  
Position  
**TREASURER**

# The Pod CIO

## Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending 31st March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2021/2022	Restricted Funds 2021/2022	Total Funds 2021/2022	Total Funds 2020/2021
<b>Income</b>	2				
Grants Received		11,780	36,300	48,080	37,726
Furlough Grant			-	-	5,559
Donations		5,293	3,188	8,481	5,478
Voluntary Contributions		4,290	-	4,290	799
Membership		295	-	295	132
Tuck		769	-	769	-
Fundraising		9,663	-	9,663	1,365
					-
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>32,090</b>	<b>39,488</b>	<b>71,579</b>	<b>51,058</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>	3				
Charitable activities (including Governance and support costs)		21,369	38,289	59,658	32,201
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>21,369</b>	<b>38,289</b>	<b>59,658</b>	<b>32,201</b>
<b>Net Income/(expenditure)</b>		<b>10,721</b>	<b>1,199</b>	<b>11,921</b>	<b>18,858</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds brought forward		17,573	23,311	40,884	22,027
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>28,294</b>	<b>24,510</b>	<b>52,804</b>	<b>40,884</b>

**THE POD CIO**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**For the year ended 31st March 2022**

**1. Accounting policies**

1.1 These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014

1.2 All Income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities

2 Analysis of Income	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
	2021/2022	2021/2022	2021/2022	2020/2021
	£	£	£	£
Grants Receivable	11,780	36,300	48,080	43,285
	<b>11,780</b>	<b>36,300</b>	<b>48,080</b>	<b>43,285</b>
<b>Donations &amp; Gifts</b>				
Donations	5,293	3,188	8,481	5,478
Voluntary contributions	4,290	-	4,290	799
Membership	295	-	295	132
Fundraising	9,663	-	9,663	1,365
Tuck	769	-	769	-
	<b>20,310</b>	<b>3,188</b>	<b>23,499</b>	<b>7,774</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>32,090</b>	<b>39,488</b>	<b>71,579</b>	<b>51,058</b>

**THE POD**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**For the year ended 31st March 2022**

**3 Analysis of Expenditure**

	Unrestricted Funds 2021/2022 £	Restricted Funds 2021/2022 £	Total Funds 2021/2022 £	Total Funds 2020/2021 £
Salaries	12,909	27,711	40,620	27,239
Insurance	635	112	747	494
Telephone	274	96	370	288
Admin	504	470	973	676
DBS checks	100	214	314	-
Equipment	671	608	1,279	1,071
Venue Hire	1,945	3,925	5,870	1,138
Session Costs	2,192	3,492	5,684	509
Tuck	490	-	490	45
Advertising & Marketing	283	211	494	-
Transport	10	473	483	-
Training	150	0	150	391
Fundraising	610	0	610	350
Contingency	297	78	375	-
Business Planning	-	900	900	-
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>21,069</b>	<b>38,289</b>	<b>59,358</b>	<b>32,201</b>

**4 Accountancy Services**

Independent Examination of the financial statements	100
Other Accountancy Services	200
	<u>300</u>

**5 Cash at bank & in hand at 31 March 2022**

Cooperative Bank Account	52,370
Cash in hand	2,424
	<u>£54,794</u>

**6 Sundry Debtors**

Atlantic Data	<u>£57</u>
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**7 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

Trade Creditors	803
Accruals and deferred income	1,244
	<u>2,047</u>

**THE POD CIO**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**For the year ended 31st March 2022**

<b>Funds</b>	<b>Balance at 01/04/2021</b>	<b>Incoming resources</b>	<b>Resources expended</b>	<b>Balance at 31/03/2022</b>
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>				
General Donations		5,293.00	(5,293.00)	-
Other Income	17,573.00	26,797.09	(16,076.09)	28,294.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,573.00</b>	<b>32,090.09</b>	<b>(21,369.09)</b>	<b>28,294.00</b>

In addition to general donations and income from charitable activities, unrestricted funding has been received from the following funders to support core activities and charity growth;

Sobell Foundation 5,000	£	5,000
Foyle Foundation 4,000	£	4,000
29th May 1961 1,000	£	1,000
Masonic Charitable Trust 1,000	£	1,000

**Restricted Funds**

True Colour Trust	3,490.66	-	2,361.01	1,129.65
Children In Need	9,000.62	10,000.00	11,661.78	7,338.84
SCF Discovery	2,741.54	-	2,741.54	0.00
Bailey Thomas	1,000.00	-	1,000.00	0.00
Gosling Foundaton	2,500.00	-	0.00	2,500.00
Selwood Rotary	1,000.00	-	1,000.00	0.00
Frome Town Council	2,000.00	-	1,120.36	879.64
Hartfield Trust	300.00	-	0.00	300.00
Sherborne	437.08	-	437.08	0.00
Rotary shop income	266.56	-	266.56	0.00
LocalGiving	575.00	-	75.00	500.00
Somerset Community Foundation		5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
Frome Town Council		8,000.00	3,000.00	5,000.00
Awards for all		10,000.00	8,826.00	1,174.00
David Solomon		1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00
3H fund		1,800.00	1,334.41	465.59
Frome Rotary		1,000.00	-	1,000.00
Frome Town Rotary		1,500.00	-	1,500.00
MASG		688.44	93.25	595.19
Unallocated			(627.09)	627.09
	<b>23,311.46</b>	<b>39,488</b>	<b>38,289.90</b>	<b>24,510.00</b>

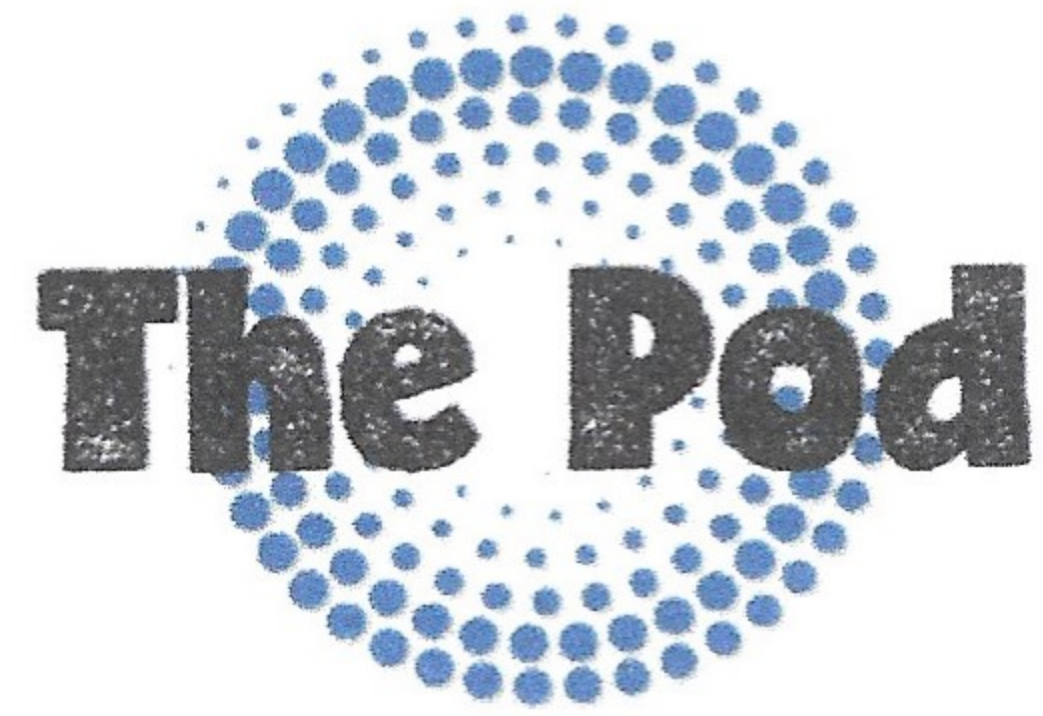
**THE POD**

England & Wales - Charity number 1161092

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# Accounts

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**End of year report & Independently Examined Financial statements**

**For the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

**Charity number: 1161092**

**The Pod**

**Reports and Accounting**

**For the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

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Structure, Governance & Administration	5 - 6
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## Trustee report

During these unprecedented times, the charity has been tested, it has not been straightforward or easy but it has been positive. The pandemic forced us to make decisions that would have taken us much longer to reach, trustees became more involved in day-to-day operations and supported a new administrator, a post which continues to add value to the Pod's resources and ability to support more families.

Looking back at the last year, Pod projects have adapted and moved from weekly social clubs to engagement 7 days a week at the peak of the pandemic without pausing services. The teams have put in place bespoke support for young people and families where this has been needed.

Covid-19 may have tried to slow us all down, but the charity did not slow down, the achievements of young people and teams has been exceptional; a young person's idea led to a published lockdown recipe book including poems and stories, a keepsake from a strange year that will always remind our young people and families of the fun times and that it wasn't all bad.

Zoom became the new normal method of communication. It certainly took some getting used to (I include myself and fellow board members in this too!) but, it has been a pleasure to receive updates on the positive outcomes from all three projects and from the new online talking café.

Welfare check in's, activity pack production and distribution became the new normal, not just for the young people we know but for siblings too. There have been many other highlights I could mention however the one stand out point to myself and the board is the strength and resilience the team and young people have shown over the last 12 months and the difference Pod has made to the families we work with.

As our community recovers the charity will continue to adapt to the long-term effects of Covid-19, we have already begun to evaluate the alternative support methods used in the last 15 months and are taking this learning forward into future activities.

As I look back on the last year, my sixth and final year with Pod it is with so many fond memories. The time has come for me to step down as trustee, but I do so in the full knowledge that Pod will continue to grow from strength to strength. There are many ideas in the pipeline including the scrapstore and make and sell project and I am confident they will be as successful as our current projects with thanks to a committed and loyal team who continue to strive to deliver first class projects with, and not just for our members.

A Liggatt  
Chair of Trustees

**History** - The Pod is a grassroots initiative, founded by parent carers in 2013 in response to a lack of services for disabled children in Mendip. Maintaining a service that is member led is essential in ensuring Pod beneficiaries support one another and reach their full potential.

**Objectives** - (taken from CIO) To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.'

The charity does this by providing the following services;

### **Pod Youth Club**

The Youth club welcomes children with additional needs who are aged 10-17 years. The club would usually meet on a Tuesday evening in term time. The ratio is 1:3 and the team are skilled, experienced and understand how to enable the children to reach their full potential. Children learn important life skills and make friends at the youth club, many for the first time. There continues to be a long waiting list, historically children wait a year before they can join the group. One of the benefits of online support is that the charity has been able to offer support to families on the waiting list. As the youth club has reopened this online support has continued for children on the waiting list. 39 children have benefitted from the youth club support this year.

### **The Zone**

The Zone is a youth club for Young Carers. The team have adjusted the age range from 10-18 to 8-16 years old, recognising that children will not join the group when they turn 16 but nor will we be asking them to leave. Many but not all the children are siblings of disabled children. The team have completed welfare checks, provided online support, and distributed activity packs. 22 children have benefitted from the project this year.

### **Pod Plus**

Pod Plus is a social club for adults with additional needs aged 18-30 years. 20 young people have accessed the group this year which has provided online support every Monday evening, in addition to social media interaction 7 days a week. Team members interacted and set fun challenges which developed into young people setting their own challenges for their peers within a supportive framework using a 'safe' closed platform. The Pod Plus 18-30's group were the main beneficiaries however we received many positive reviews from other families and Friends of Pod who enjoyed the interactions and felt less isolated at home.

### **New - Talking café**

**June 2020**

The Pod received a significant number of new enquiries from new parents needing support, the charity launched a support group for parent carers (of additional needs children) in partnership with Frome Town Council and Health Connectors initially. A consultation is taking place and we have plans to develop the service into a more traditional coffee morning setting.

## Other Activities

This year has been unique and has led to many new initiatives;

- The charity collaborated with Frome Town Rotary and produced a free family treasure hunt for Frome families.
- The projects provided a 1-1 text chatroom, supporting young people's mental health and well-being, developing into a 'text to talk' service which continued for many months for a small group. 1-1 chat helped identify what young people and families needed the online offer to look like.
- Pod took part in a Covid-19 community group forum and cascaded information to the Pod community, this culminated in foodbank referrals and delivery, free cinema and open-air theatre tickets for Pod families.
- Pod Plus produced a lockdown recipe book which sold in the local bookshop.
- Families received Window Wanderland packs and created displays and a final Pod collage.
- Pod Plus members accessed a 10-week next steps program with a new volunteer, this project informed the National Lottery funded NDTI Time to Talk project.

The charity did not organise traditional holiday activities but did maintain connections during the holidays. Being online did not stop the projects from inviting visitors in to add value and teach new skills. Visitors included; a Zumba teacher, Openstorytellers sessions and Gallivanting Goblins theatre workshops.

All seasonal activities were cancelled; however, the groups did organise a combined family picnic at Palette and Pasture ice cream parlour, 48 family members came together. As restrictions lift and events begin, it is hoped the Pod community will be able to take part in seasonal fetes, the Frome marathon and other opportunities where the primary focus is to support families and young people to take part, grow in confidence and feel a part of the community.

The weekly bingo run by Pod, (partnership: Cheese and Grain) remains closed although will reopen shortly we hope. The project which supports learning disabled adults, plays a major part in our community engagement both in terms of fundraising but also reducing isolation and supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Presentations this year included; the Rotary who kindly nominated the Pod as their charity of the year, Children in Need Radio interviews for BBC Somerset and a Frome FM interview and discussion on the impact of Covid on the disabled community.

## Our impact

*'Although 'A' is a relative newcomer he gets so much out of sessions...we have been so impressed with how A was welcomed and settled from the outset and looks forward to sessions. Having everything so organised and with a weekly theme that is made available far in advance is great - it helps us prepare A which in turn helps him get the most out of the meetings'*

*'B' has loved looking at the tasks set on Facebook and misses Pod clubs a lot. It's meant the world to us as a family to have something that B could feel part of as he's never really been able to join a club like other children who just take it for granted'*

*'The Pod groups continue to play a vital part in our family, giving enormous support to our kids, as well as confidence, a safe place to let off steam, and a place to feel valued for who they are'*

*'Other clubs we have tried with 'C' have not been so successful and cause C great anxiety... they are often run by different staff and it is not unusual that C is stressed when I pick up. C wants to go to Pod and is always happy and relaxed when I collect'*

*A young person's acrostic poem*

*P People having fun  
O open to everyone  
D doing lots of fun activities*

*P place to hang out  
L lots of laughs  
U understanding to everybody  
S Something for everyone*

A small selection of testimonials from young people and families. The success of the projects is founded on strong relationships with families and young people who are happier, healthier, and more confident as they form friendships and learn to be independent, outside of education where many struggle to be accepted and understood. The charity has an excellent reputation and strong partnerships, other groups consult Pod when planning events, ensuring they are accessible for all families. One of these partnerships led to the free treasure hunt with around 350 mainstream family members benefitting.

It is important to everyone that the children, young people and adults that access the projects have a say in their clubs, they help choose the activities, run their own tuck shop, and during the pandemic, their interview questions and views helped Pod to recruit a new employee on zoom. The charity has grown significantly but has not lost sight of its roots, Pod activities support whole families to be stronger, more confident and to find and use their voice.

### **Staff and Volunteers**

The Charity employs a Part time Charity Manager (18 hrs) and a part time administrator (5hrs) effective August 2020, in addition to sessional workers as follows.

Pod Youth Club	1 Youth Leader / 4 Youth Workers - 1 volunteer
The Zone	1 Youth Leader / 1 Youth Worker - 2 volunteers
Pod Plus	1 Lead (+ administrator) 1 Club Assistant - 3 volunteers
Community volunteers	1 Gold D of E student

The trustees ensure that key policies are in place, reviewed and adhered to, with safeguarding at the top of the agenda. Service delivery is in the skilled hands of employed sessional workers. Day-to-day management and fundraising is undertaken by a part time Charity Manager. Like all small charities the Pod continues to be stretched by demand and the board continues to look for ways to respond to this demand.

Although the Pod does receive invaluable support from volunteers, the charity is unable to run its projects without paid sessional staff who provide consistency and stability for young people and training for volunteers.

Volunteer numbers are reduced due to less workers being required to deliver online support. Pod Youth Club and Zone supported many new children and focused on employees establishing relationships rather than recruiting volunteers. We continue to value volunteers and are very grateful for the hours they provide. Without their contribution of time and energy we would not be able to support as many families as we do. Salaries represent 84% of our annual expenditure this year. (2019/20 – 77%)

### **Furlough scheme**

The charity made use of the furlough scheme in 3 phases. Out of a team of 10, 6 furloughed at some point. Once new delivery methods were working well the charity manager furloughed for three weeks in four in May and June, returning to part furlough from July to October. For a charity heavily led by a founder charity manager, the trustees saw this as an opportunity to step back, create a new administrator post and test contingency systems. Resources were stretched but this was successful, the charity now has a part time administrator. The new role enabled Pod to increase its reach to more families and create a bespoke service for members who needed this. Apart from a couple of shifts in January while the team renewed their consultation with families, all employees have come off furlough this year.

### **Structure, Governance and Administration**

The Charity Manager reports to the board at every trustee meeting; this report provides up to date information on each project, community activities, safeguarding, finance and anything pertinent at the time. Board meetings generally take place in March, June, September & December, this year all meetings (except March) took place using Zoom technology. Trustees liaise and individually meet with the charity manager to discuss actions specific to their area of responsibility.

The Charity Manager line manages the administrator and 3 Club Leaders who in turn provide supervision to their project teams, made up of employees and volunteers.

A membership forum would usually take place alongside the Annual General Meeting in June, however, this year the trustees agreed to cancel the AGM. Although the usual forum did not take place the annual report was made available to all members and families (including potential beneficiaries) who have been provided with multiple opportunities to tell us what is and is not working for them, the teams have adjusted their activities to incorporate the feedback received from families, children, and young people they support.

### **Administration**

#### **Charity Registered address:**

C/O Openstorytellers, RISE, Whittox Lane, Frome, BA11 3BY

#### **Banking:**

Co-operative bank, Po Box 250, Delf House, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

**Payroll:** In-house using Brightpay software.

**Insurance:** A 3-month extension was granted by Zurich because of the Coronavirus pandemic, the insurance policy renewal date is now the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

## Independent Examiner:

A.E Davies, Chartered Accountant, Gables, Wash Lane, Montacute, Somerset, TA15 6XA

## Governance

### Governing Document:

The charity formed as a community group on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013 and became a registered charity (CIO) with voting members on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015. If the CIO is wound up, the members of the CIO have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities. The number of members in the year ending 2021 is 23 (2020 – 38) The charity has focused on being flexible and adaptable throughout the pandemic and has not charged for 98% of its activities. Our membership is significantly reduced; however, this is not a reflection on capacity or level of support provided.

### Trustee Appointments:

The trustee's skillset is regularly reviewed. The members or the charity trustees may at any time appoint a new charity trustee when there is an identified need. An interested trustee is provided with an 'essential guidance on being a trustee' They will attend a trustee meeting before their first appointment; receive a copy of the constitution, latest annual report and statement of accounts.

As a result of the AGM being cancelled in 2020, trustees agreed they would remain in post. In normal circumstances one-third of the charity trustees retire from office at the AGM. If the number of charity trustees is not three or a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one-third shall retire from office. Charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or benefits.

Trustee	Position	Dates acted if not whole year
M Melton		
S Drake	Treasurer	
A Liggatt	Chair	
A Tuffnell	Secretary	
E Wilson		
S Bennett		

### Summary of Financial Activities

We always aim to minimize the cost of our services to disadvantaged families however we do acknowledge an income made up of voluntary contributions (weekly 'subs') in the financial reports. Charitable activity income (including fundraising) has significantly reduced during the pandemic due to event cancellations and the focus moving to remote forms of support. In 2020/21 charitable activity income generated £2,296.07 (2019/20 £11,580.93)

Fortunately, the charity maintains excellent relations with its funders and has a good track record with fundraising. Charitable donations and grants given by individuals, groups and grant making bodies totaled £43,203.67 (2019/20 £24,941.00)

The trustees would like to thank all our funders and donors both large and small for their support which has enabled us to develop and expand our services during this most unprecedented year. A full list of donors is presented on page 10 of this report.

The income for the year ending 31 March 2021 totaled £51,058.32 (2020: £36,521.93) against expenditure of £32,200.67 (2020: £40,057.90)

### **Reserves**

The trustees acknowledge the challenges of the current funding climate; increased competition and the unknown implications of Covid-19. The Trustees will continue to monitor the level of unrestricted reserves which should be between £16,200 and £27,000. This represents 3-5 months of the charities annual operating costs in the year ending 2021/22.

The unrestricted reserves at the end of 2020/21 are £17,572.96 In addition to a further £23,311.46 of restricted reserves associated with all three projects and some core costs.

The projected charity costs in 2021/2022 are £65,660. The charity has secured a multi-year grant from Children in Need and the Masonic Charitable Trust in addition to other one-off grants and donations. There is currently a shortfall and fundraising target of at least £25,000 if we are to continue providing and developing essential services for vulnerable children, young people, adults and families.

The Trustees will continue to monitor the fundraising policy and reserves levels during the next financial year.

### **Declaration**

Signed and approved by the board on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

.....*Neil Thell*..... (Trustee)

**Independent examiner's report on the accounts of The Pod**

**for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

**Respective responsibilities of the trustees and examiner**

The Charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 these 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent examiners statement**


In the course of 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 41 of the act and

To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act; have 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		Date	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
Name	Andrew Davies		
Profession	Chartered Accountant		
Address	Gables, Wash Lane, Montacute, Somerset TA15 6XA		

**THE POD  
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	TOTAL
<b>INCOME</b>			
<b>CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>			
Parent Contributions	799.00		
Membership	132.00		
Bingo	243.25		
Fund raising	1,121.82		
<b>FURLOUGH GRANT</b>		5,558.58	
<b>DONATIONS</b>			
Friends of Frome Hospital	220.00		
Frome Lions	500.00		
Selwood Rotary	500.00	1,000.00	
Leathersellers	1,500.00		
Morland	1,000.00		
Other donations	287.92	470.00	
<b>GRANTS</b>			
SCF Covid Response		3,000.00	
True Colours Trust		5,000.00	
National Lottery		9,482.00	
Children In Need		12,493.75	
SCF Discovery		3,750.00	
Bailey Thomas		1,000.00	
Gosling Foundation		2,500.00	
Local Giving		<u>500.00</u>	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<u>6,303.99</u>	<u>44,754.33</u>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Wages and salary	741.60	26,496.97	
Insurance		493.61	
Telephone	216.00	72.00	
Administration	245.58	430.89	
Equipment	145.64	925.51	
Venue Hire		1,137.50	
Sessional activities	126.62	382.86	
Training	30.00	361.20	
Fundraising		350.00	
Miscellaneous and tuck	<u>44.69</u>		
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<u>1,550.13</u>	<u>30,650.54</u>	
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<u>4,753.86</u>	<u>14,103.79</u>	
<b>REPRESENTED BY:</b>			
Opening Cash at Bank and in hand	12,819.10	9,207.67	22,026.77
Add: Net Income	<u>4,753.86</u>	<u>14,103.79</u>	<u>18,857.65</u>
Closing Cash at Bank and in hand	<u>17,572.96</u>	<u>23,311.46</u>	<u>40,884.42</u>

Signed AA Lygatt  
TRUSTEE

<b>NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED</b>		
<b>FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021</b>		
	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
<b>INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>		
Tuck shop	702.70	64.50
Contributions	2,874.14	734.50
Membership	276.00	132.00
Bingo	6,044.45	243.25
Childrens festival	10.25	
Marathon	548.13	
Gift aid	98.75	30.00
Mendip Lottery	124.00	440.50
Collection buckets	120.05	
Francis Marathon	111.79	
Silent Disco	538.25	
Amazon smile	11.82	25.38
Makers Market	85.00	
Sales from donated gifts	35.60	124.94
Recipe Book Sales		501.00
<b>Charitable activity - TOTAL</b>	<b>11,580.93</b>	<b>2,296.07</b>
<b>Furlough Reclaim ®</b>		<b>5,558.58</b>
<b>DONATIONS</b>		
Recipe Book Donations ®		
Saputo 240/Rogers 150/Stoney St 50/Rye 30		470.00
Fair Frome		170.00
Friends of Frome Hospital		220.00
Selwood Rotary (1k ® )		1,500.00
Frome Lottery ®	216.00	
Frome Lions		500.00
Leathersellers		1,500.00
Hartfield Trust ®	300.00	
Woodlanders ®	200.00	
Sherborne Classic Cars ®	1,500.00	
Morland	1,000.00	1,000.00
Fryer/Bunce		117.92
<b>GRANTS</b>		
Children in Need ®	9,975.00	12,493.75
Gosling Foundation ®		2,500.00
True Colours Trust ®		5,000.00
Somerset Community Foundation 1.Discovery 2 + Covid®	3,750.00	6,750.00
Frome Town Council ®	2,000.00	
National Lottery Covid response ®		9,482.00
Local Giving ®		500.00
Sobell Foundation	6,000.00	
Baily Thomas ®		1,000.00
<i>® indicates Ringfenced funding</i>		
<b>Grants/Donaton - Total</b>	<b>24,941.00</b>	<b>43,203.67</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>36,521.93</b>	<b>51,058.32</b>