

The Family Forge

Reference and Administrative details

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Report and Annual Accounts For the period 1st Nov.2023-Oct 31st 2024

Charity Registration 1161900

www.familyforge.org

Registered Address

4 Cobbs Brow Lane
Newburgh
Lancashire
WN8 7ND
07947 853502

Life Skills Centre

128 Sandy Lane
Skelmersdale
WN8 8LH

Trustees

Jocelyn Owens
Michael Turner
Enisa Huso

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The trustees have referred to guidance from the Charities SORP FRSE (effective 1st Jan 2015) while the statement of the accounts is cash- based receipts and payments accounts verified by an Independent Examiner.

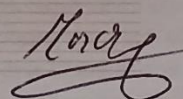
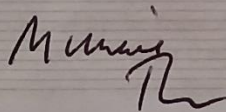
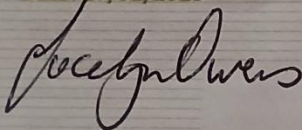
Signed on behalf of all the trustees,

Jocelyn Owens

Michael Turner

Enisa Huso

Date: 17/01/2025



25/4/2025

The Family Forge
Trustees Report
For the period 1st November 2023 – 31st October 2024

Charity Structure/ Governance and Management

The Family Forge became a registered charity in May 2015. It is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and continues to follow the directions of its constitution amended on 25th March 2015. During the period Nov 2023 to the end of Oct 2024, the charity was led by 3 trustees one of whom is also the Life Skills Centre manager- Jocelyn Owens. This manager works on a full-time voluntary basis. She was supported again this year predominantly by 1 skilled paid tutor with 7 voluntary support workers. Two supported physical activity and were drawn from our beneficiary group. Beneficiaries are engaged in informal discussions to influence decision making. There were no changes to the trustees in the past year. The trustees are appointed for three years or until retirement by a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. The maximum number of trustees is three. Decisions are made by a 75% majority of the trustees. One of the trustees was a former beneficiary and appreciates the plight of migrants to the UK.

Training this year was provided in (Paediatric) First Aid to keep up with statutory requirements for one tutor/activity leader and one trustee and was also provided for the two physical activity leaders in First Aid for Sport.

The trustee/ manager's safeguarding knowledge was updated by the reviewing of the Charity safeguarding policy to take account of the new activities in conjunction with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. This included the drawing up of safeguarding leaflets for participants, volunteers and staff outlining behavioural expectations and responsibilities.

No exemptions from disclosure of trustee details apply and no trustee held title to any property belonging to the charity during the period as the charity currently holds no property.

The pay of the language tutors/activity leaders is set with regard to the going rate for private hourly tutors as our activity leaders are self-employed and not employed by the charity. As noted last year the government suitability test for self-employed status was carried out in 2021. There has been no change in pay this year.

Special thanks should be given to Prudence, Judy, Melanie, Andy, Eileen and Sahar and Ayaz and everyone who spared their time and effort to assist in the work this year on a voluntary basis along with special thanks to our donors who made the work possible.

This year the charity was approached by the Duke of Edinburgh regional officer and we were asked to consider becoming a licensed centre to offer D of E to our younger asylum seekers. Since this chimed well with our own objective of encouraging personal development and we already encouraged the acquisition of new skills, voluntary work and sport we concluded that this was a good match for the Family Forge to make as it would give participants a nationally recognised certificate for their efforts. The only addition to our existing activities therefore being an overnight expedition. The licensing and due diligence process was protracted and therefore was not quite complete by the end of our accounting year.

We wrapped up the distribution partnership with SELNET and participation in their digital inclusion program by December 2023 as their laptop quota had been met. Also we became members of the Brick Multi Bank in Wigan for the distribution of surplus goods.

Philip Atherton is the Independent Examiner of our accounts- no fees are incurred: Contact details: 22 Beacon House, 1 Willow Walk, **Skelmersdale**, Lancashire, WN8 6UR Telephone 01695227320

Financial review

Funding this year was received from St John's the Baptist PCC Burscough, the Foyle Foundation, Douglas Valley Outreach, WLBC Community Chest, Corsoraf Charitable Foundation and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Grants with funds still available from the previous year included the Yapp Charitable Trust and the Healthy Neighbourhoods Fund (via the NHS).

Private donations this year formed approximately 3.6% of The Family Forge income; for which, once again we are extremely grateful. Thank you to all our donors.

No reserves are kept at present.

Although the financial situation was improved as compared to the previous year, we were unable to secure enough funds for much paid activity tutor costs so our use of paid tutors was kept at a bare minimum. Funds remain difficult to secure. Volunteer staff however remain highly motivated as it was a very busy year and staff can see the benefits that those attending the centre are receiving and the gratitude is profuse.

Public Benefit Statement

The trustees took into account that any purpose to be considered charitable must be beneficial with any consequent harms not outweighing the benefits and they further acknowledge that these benefits must be identifiable.

To that end:

The swimming activity again was undertaken at a local pool during public swim times ensuring there was always a life guard present beside the charity instructor to reduce any possible harms thus allowing the considerable benefit of providing the opportunity of learning to swim to adult non swimmers.

Gym and football training sessions were also organised under the guidance of the council employed gym trainer and our own qualified gym trainer drawn from our beneficiaries and experienced volunteer football coach again drawn from our beneficiaries. In addition, we ensured they both held current First Aid certificates for Sport related activities. The benefit to our beneficiaries in general being increased physical fitness and improved mental health.

The due diligence process regarding the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme also helped us focus on possible harms by ensuring we updated and prepared information leaflets regarding safeguarding, online abuse and radicalisation, photography, volunteer recruitment, standards of behaviour for participants and staff as-well as staff training requirements for the expedition section. The identifiable benefits of offering the program were also considered - the main additional benefits being the obtaining of a recognised national award for those with no other certificates or qualifications and the integration into mainstream UK youth culture. Other benefits include encouraging a habit of self-giving to the community in voluntary work, improving mental and physical fitness and reducing social isolation. In the following year we plan that the expedition leaders will receive a qualification in Lowland Leading.

Furthermore, no trustee benefitted personally from the activities of the charity except through travel expenses as a result of voluntary working to the amount of £657.47. The expense rate paid is 0.45p/mile. A further £72 was received by the husband of a trustee for Food Safety Tests.

Additionally, the charity assisted in the supply of socks, toothpaste, tooth brushes, toilet paper, dish washing liquid and dishcloths and in some cases sheets to individuals received from the Brick-Multibank in accordance with trustee awareness that charitable activities must benefit the public in general or a sufficient portion of the public with the exception of personal poverty which applied in this case. The poverty of this group is backed up by the fact they only receive Section 95 support from the government.

But the Life Skills Centre itself was open to all although attenders are largely from the asylum and refugee community.

Objectives and Activities

The Family forge was formed to:

- advance education in the specific area of personal and family development,**
- to advance the Christian faith by raising awareness and understanding of Christian beliefs and practices**
- and to advance the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill health, disability, finance and other disadvantage**

November and December 2023 saw the last of the SELNET computer tablets distributed and the ending of the Life in the UK History series and basic digital training. This very popular project raised awareness of the Family Forge's presence within Skelmersdale and increased numbers attending the centre throughout 2024 and beyond. Over 80 tablets were distributed during the length of the whole project.

Christmas saw a full-scale Christmas dinner with turkey, crackers and Christmas pudding provided to all comers (more than 30 people) on the last day before the office closed.

January through July 2024 saw the continuation of our usual seven-point program for the development, wellbeing and integration of our user group.

The office opened on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 10am-4pm for programmed sessions of **1:** ESOL, **2:** support work, **3:** driving theory and **4:** health issue assistance.

Support work included the usual drop in and integration loan applications, West Lancs Home finder applications, emails to the local MP, bank account applications, driving license applications, travel document and universal credit applications, CV compilation, HC2 certificate updating, doctor and dentist registrations, appointments, car travel to appointments where required, ARC card issue resolving, applications for work permitted ARCs and numerous other small services, chats and advice were given including the accessing of services to translate three degree certificates and two ECCTIS applications to verify equivalency of skills for the UK job market with one application process and reference for a beneficiary who desired to attend Loughborough university followed by coaching in English.

5: Cultural Trips were organised to Castlerigg, Cedar Farm Mawdesley, Bolton Abbey, Malham Cove and kayaking at Lake Coniston.

6: Physical activity in the form of football, swimming and gym sessions were also organised – swimming taking place on Fridays predominantly for adult non swimmers.

7: Volunteering- Litter picking and volunteer garden maintenance was also undertaken beginning with clearing ‘our own backyards’ and local streets!! on Tuesday or Fridays in the summer term. The litter picking continued throughout the summer even when the office was closed as this initiative was then taken up and organised by groups of asylum seekers themselves.

Additionally, a bike repair workshop operated on a Wednesday afternoons by our volunteer Andy who was also involved in fund searching, application, purchase and distribution of 12 bicycles to needy recipients. 22 bikes in total were distributed in the year as a few were donated.

July through to our year end (barring the summer break) saw a predominance of assistance with E-visa applications to facilitate those with poor English to negotiate the governments’ new ID/immigration status confirmation system.

Notable events this year included

- a wedding of a past beneficiary and his graduation from a Russel group university which we helped facilitate.
- meeting the wife of a beneficiary and news of the subsequent birth of their first child after a long and protracted but successful family reunion application.
- attending the AGM of the local Parbold Outreach Group as we were asked to speak to introduce and showcase our work through our photo display A Slice of Working Life. Four from the family Forge attended in support and contributed to the event- (two trustees and two beneficiaries) two speaking, one playing the Jews harp and one with a winning poem and photo from a Liverpool photography competition she had entered.
- our own AGM which was attended by three beneficiaries among others who assisted proceedings by providing traditional Iranian food.

Additional work undertaken included voluntary driving accompaniment for 4 individuals and undertaking the long process of becoming a licensed organisation offering the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme.

Inspired by Christian love for all people we at the Family Forge endeavoured to carry out all these activities with great respect for the human person and the desire to see all people grow and flourish. Thus, we are seen as people who care. This is what marks our work out from other similar charities or the state.

Special initiative

Finally, a very special Christian Education Initiative was undertaken for the wider community:

A prayer card was designed, printed and disseminated to Year 9 pupils, via chaplaincies in the Liverpool Archdiocese and the top ten private catholic schools as-well as a handful of other schools promoting two saints known for their purity and or guarding the purity of others, to coincide with their confirmation year. Approximately 5600 prayer cards in total were distributed.

Performance and achievements

During the year the government began to process asylum seekers more quickly so there was a greater and faster turnover of beneficiaries.

Many refugees in the latter part of the year were having problems negotiating the new e-visa system and accessing accommodation and doing all the tasks in the transition period after receiving Leave to Remain. These factors produced a great demand for assistance which meant the office often stayed open until 5 and 6 o'clock in the evening. And a new problem emerged in that we saw for the first time, newly recognised refugees sleeping rough in the streets of Skelmersdale.

Within the charity our administrative systems for processing and recording everyone came under strain too especially when our admin volunteer had to leave due to ill health.

A total of 210 people were served this year through the centre largely through support work and assistance with practical issues. 32 women and 178 men. This was up from 148 during the same period last year- an increase of approx. 33%.

Although the data was incomplete 32 nationalities were recorded. The largest contingents being Iranian 29, Sudanese 25, Afghan 19, Ukrainian 15, Ethiopian and Syrian 12 and Eritrean 11. A further list of nationalities served follows: Vietnamese, Kuwaiti, Romanian, Saudi Arabian, Ecuadorian, Namibian, Burmese, Egyptian, Lebanese, Sierra Leonean, Senegalese, Latvian, Algerian, Iraqi, Gambian, Cameroonian, South Sudanese, Yemen, Mali, Kurds, Nigerian, Bangladeshi, Hungarian, Polish and Jordanian.

Although data was incomplete for 41 persons of the remaining persons 77 were single and 85 were married, other status 7.

The physical health of the group increased as sports participation was up this year largely due to the introduction of football training sessions during the summer term which saw 37 participants, the swimming which had 31 participants. (4 ladies 27 men) and the bike program which facilitated 24 people with greater local mobility.

In addition, some gym training sessions were organised.

The football was organised by a beneficiary – one of two people -who was referred by The Family Forge to Everton in the community where he played for the refugee team even travelling with them to play in London.

The social mobility and mental health of the group improved through the learning of new skills and achievement.

5 practical driving test passes were achieved after specific accompaniment with a Family Forge volunteer. Others were inspired to get driving lessons themselves and many others to undertake the theory driving tests either through direct learning in our classes or through their mobile phone apps. We can say that over the past few years The Family Forge has made driving a realisable aspiration of a great many asylum seekers/refugees in Skelmersdale. The Syrian women housewives even now realising it is a possibility for them too.

Three people had their degree certificates equivalised, two of whom went on to pass their HSE safety certificates and gain an academic white card for electrical engineering later in the autumn (next accounting year) while the other two realised the possibility of attending university for further studies and made progress in their applications.

The health issue support continued to be in great demand - another proof that The Family Forge is directly affecting the health and wellbeing of this group for both dental care and bodily health. The distribution of toothpaste and toothbrushes, soap, socks, washing up liquid, cleaning cloths and single sheets to a good proportion of the membership also assisted in this regard.

There is more work to be done to encourage the take up of voluntary work to support the local community although as mentioned earlier a number of largely Iranian asylum seekers began getting out into the streets taking up the litter picking program of their own volition after the stabbings in Southport to demonstrate they cared and wanted to contribute to society whilst our office was closed.

New ways of volunteering need to be found as opportunities are limited due to a not being able to work with children/ disabled and the aged due to the inability to get DBS checks done, food in charity cafes due to the English level required for Food Safety Certificates (although we offer them for some) or much other charity work due to lack of English again. The gardening can only be undertaken when there is a volunteer supervisor with a car to transport the equipment.

Greater integration was achieved through the English classes, drop in, tablet scheme, CV creation and job applications alongside the history classes, class discussion and the cultural and social trips.

Plans for the future

In the coming year we intend to continue our Seven-point Program, complete the D of E training and registration procedure and embed the Duke of Edinburgh Award within our offering including the undertaking our first D of E Bronze Expedition. This will necessitate the improvement in the volunteering program.

As regards fundraising, we will undertake more research to find funders who will support our whole offering in addition to project funding inspired as The Family Forge is by Christianity. This is needed since at The Family Forge we see that part of the integration process, for members of differing cultures, is to gain an understanding of Christianity, as it is after all the historic culture of this nation and which continues to be the practising religion of many in the UK to its great benefit and to the benefit of individuals.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

The Family Forge

On accounts for the year
ended

31 October 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1161900

Set out on pages

1-2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Responsibilities and
basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/10/2024DD / MM / YYYY.

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

Independent
examiner's statement

~~[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of applicable listed body]]. Delete [] if not applicable.~~

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (~~other than that disclosed below~~ *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Date:

16/04/2025

Name:

Philip Andrew Atherton

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Chartered Accountant ICAEW

Address: 22 Beacon House, 1 Willow Walk, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 6UR

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

The Family Forge

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/11/2023

To

31/10/2024

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Grants	6,000	13,557	-	19,557	12,490
Donations	742	-	-	742	1,836
Amazon Smile	-	-	-	-	5
GAYL	16	-	-	16	19
Gift Aid	-	-	-	-	135
Other	-	-	-	-	105
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	6,758	13,557	-	20,315	14,590
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	6,758	13,557	-	20,315	14,590
A3 Payments					
Staff and Training	1,484	3,284	-	4,768	3,220
Lease Rates Insurance	1,003	3,379	-	4,382	4,363
Gas Electricity Water	911	504	-	1,415	1,642
Computer AVG Broadband	720	125	-	845	701
Office repairs and decorations	319	-	-	319	580
Office equipment including computers	-	-	-	-	97
Educational materials tests	168	182	-	350	1,572
Educational trips	701	47	-	748	1,026
Personal need grants to individuals	62	790	-	852	194
Volunteer travel expenses	448	-	-	448	894
Outdoor classroom and lunches	192	-	-	192	193
Physical activity and swimming (&bikes)	630	500	-	1,130	142
Consumables ink and stationery etc	174	-	-	174	88
Marketing and other	163	8	-	171	848
Sub total	6,975	8,819	-	15,794	15,560
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	6,975	8,819	-	15,794	15,560
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 217	4,738	-	4,521	- 970
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	4,462	571	-	5,033	6,003
Cash funds this year end	4,245	5,309	-	9,554	5,033

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	The Family Forge	4,245	5,309	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	4,245	5,309	-
(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))				
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets			Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

J. Owens
M. Turner

J. OWENS
M. TURNER

25/4/25
25/4/25