



**Friends of
Sawbridgeworth Neuro Centres**
Registered Charity number 1167409

**Trustees' Annual Report
for the year ending 31st March, 2025.**

The following report adheres to the guidance given by the Charity Commission. Where a topic was not applicable, the heading is omitted.

I. Background and Summary of The Purposes of The Charity as Set Out in its Governing Document.

Registered as a CIO in 2016, the Friends of Sawbridgeworth Neuro Centres (FSN) is a small charity dedicated to enhancing the lives of adults and young persons with severe and complex neurological conditions. Our client group resides in the neuro-centres because they are unable to function independently at home. In most cases, brain/spinal injury arose either as a result of a traumatic event, such as a stroke, or a car accident or resulted from the onset of a degenerative neurological condition, such as Parkinson's Disease. In all cases, the injury has resulted in significant physical, cognitive, and/or communicative disability; some residents are also in states of low awareness. The centres provide rehabilitation, complex disability management, and/or end of life care as appropriate. We supplement what is provided by the professionals involved.

As formulated in our constitution, the specific, but not exclusive, objectives of the Charity are:

- a) To organize and provide activities in the form of therapy and entertainment
- b) To improve the physical environment, both inside and outside of the centres
- c) To help any resident who lacks funding for whatever reason, by providing clothing or other personal items as shall be deemed appropriate. This should include funding trips out when requested.
- d) To support the recruitment and organization of volunteers who will help to further our objectives
- e) To co-operate with other associations, charities, voluntary bodies, and statutory authorities who can help us to further our objectives in ways that would otherwise not be possible.

II. Summary of The Main Activities in Relation to Those Purposes.

In many ways, objectives a, d and e in our constitution are linked. To provide activities in the form of therapy and entertainment, we approach public and private bodies for support, both financial and in kind, recruit individual volunteers, and make links with other groups who can help us further our objectives. Examples include giving talks to local groups such as rotary clubs, applying for grants from Town Councils or supermarkets, working with school art and music departments for donations of work, as well as tapping into volunteer schemes run by private companies. All these activities allow us to assist the therapy and activities staff with regular sessions on music appreciation, craft, and gardening; to fund equipment for different therapies; to fund specific projects such as music therapy for residents in need; and to fund entertainment of various kinds (see item VI below for detail for the current financial year).

Improvement of the physical environment in which our residents live is a major feature of our work (objective b). Indoors, we provide a range of items, sometimes for public spaces, sometimes for the rooms of individual residents. Since we began, this has included funding a complete sensory room, funding mini-kitchens for staff and relatives, providing artwork, plants and comfortable chairs for public spaces as well as ensuring that residents without resources have attractive rooms. Outdoors, our woodland project continues to be the "jewel in the crown" of our larger scale projects. Having begun with an overgrown area, completely inaccessible to wheelchairs, we have created a woodland garden which extends to half an acre with hard paths through it, plus another half-acre with visual pathways leading to mature trees beyond. Over time, we have developed a maintenance plan involving coppicing where appropriate, clearing new land for replanting, replacing old trees with new native trees and planting ferns and bulbs to create color throughout the year. Picnic tables and benches have been installed along with bird feeders which are regularly stocked. We also continue to contribute to the development and maintenance of the gardens immediately surrounding each building, providing garden furniture as well as plants and assistance with maintenance. Other achievements include the

funding of a playhouse for the children of families and staff as well as a sports area for residents to play games such as boccia.

Since the Friends group was formed, we have helped a small number of residents who arrive at our centres without funds or families to provide the items they need (objective c). After an accident, they may arrive from an intensive care unit in a hospital gown without even a toothbrush. We supply clothes, hairdressing, nice-to-have items for their rooms, and pay for trips out when they are able. Other residents may have families who live a long distance from the centres and do not have the resources to visit.

III. Statement Confirming Whether the Trustees Have Had Regard to The Guidance Issued by The Charity Commission on Public Benefit.

The trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing their aims and objectives, in planning future activities, and in developing their policy for the year.

IV. Policy on grant making and social investment.

Not applicable.

V. Contribution made by volunteers

The charity's volunteers divide into two groups: (i) those who work directly with our client group and are DBS checked and (ii) those who help with occasional fund-raising activities such as running raffles off site. All volunteers are crucial to the functioning of the charity and do a truly wonderful job. Like most other small charities, we are always in need of new volunteers.

VI. Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the current financial year, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society.

During the current financial year, the achievements that we judge to have enhanced the lives of our residents range from large scale projects requiring substantial fundraising to small acts of kindness costing nothing. Some examples include:

Resurfacing the paths in our woodland garden (£17,500). When the pathways through this woodland garden was first laid, environmental issues were given precedence over practicalities. The surface of the paths looked nice but were soon found to be unsatisfactory for large wheelchairs. This year we have resurfaced them with tarmac at a substantial cost but are already noticing the effect. Feedback from families and staff has been overwhelmingly positive and many more residents now have access.

Purchase of a Thera-trainer (£9999): This over-bed cycling machine is a major item which the physiotherapy team had wanted for a long time and was requested by several families. It allows residents who are unable to attend gym sessions to have physiotherapy in their rooms. The physiotherapy team are delighted, as are residents and their families.

Music therapy project (£1000): The grant funding this pilot project was awarded 2 years ago but was spent during the current financial year. A qualified music therapist has worked with the centre's speech and language team to provide group and individual therapy sessions to around 20 residents. It has been hugely successful and we plan to seek more funding.

Funding entertainment for residents (approximately £1000): This year we have funded 2 concerts internally and paid for taxis for residents to attend other events. These were funded by raffles held at two internal events and by a local company.

Helping the activities team and organising internal events (£500+): During the current year, we have purchased musical instruments for use by the residents (via a grant from the local town council), table-top easels, jigsaw puzzles, and other craft materials. In addition, the Friends have helped the activities team with craft groups, music groups, and one-off events. As many of our residents have restricted hand function, being able to provide a one-to-one helper for some makes a huge difference to what the activities team can achieve. We currently have 3 regular helpers with these groups.

Every year, we also recruit local volunteers to sing carols with the residents at Christmas. We also supply tea and mince pies as a social adjunct to the carol singing.

Helping residents who have no funds, family, or friends to support them (minimal cost). Many volunteers have helped with this scheme over the years. It involves collecting and organising donated clothes, monitoring the clothing of those residents on our list and ensuring additional items are purchased. During the year covered by this report, we have provided clothing, hairdressing, and trips out, for 10 residents. We currently have 2 regular volunteer visitors. They are much appreciated by the residents, staff and in one case by a family who live a long way from the centres.

Further development of the woodland garden and grounds. We have recently discovered that many large companies have volunteer schemes. In this year, we had 3 days each involving a different company with numbers ranging from 4 to 15. They have achieved in a day what it would take our own small team a month to achieve. Fences were painted, trees, bushes and bulbs were planted, and much tidying was done. We also have a gardener, paid by the landowner; he does an amazing job.

VII. Summary of fundraising activities

Grants: We received three grants from external sources this year: (i) £2000 from Groundwork UK for improvements in the woodland (ii) £860 from Benevity also for improvements in the woodland (iii) £500 from Sawbridgeworth Town Council for musical instruments for the residents.

Raffles and similar fundraising activities. Over the year, we have raised over £1000 by running raffles at events within the centres. In addition, a company whose employees are colleagues of one of our residents held a raffle on our behalf which raised over £200.

Restricted donations: We received three very generous donations this year, two in memory of residents who recently passed away. The first comprised two donations of £5000 and will fund a beautiful shelter in our woodland. The second, approaching £1000 will be restricted to craft materials. The third from Harlow Tye Rotary Club was to buy a picnic table in the woodland.

Other Donations: We receive a regular donation of £1000 from the Charity, Trees of Chaldean. In addition to the restricted donations listed above, we have received several smaller donations from friends and families of residents, past and present.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CHARITY.

(a) **Type of governing document:** Constitution

(b) **How the charity is constituted:** CIO.

(c) **Method of selecting Trustees:** New Trustees are proposed and appointed by the existing Trustees, following a written protocol based on the Charity Commission guidance and clauses 9 and 10 of our constitution. In particular, the “Fit and Proper persons help sheet and declaration” were incorporated

into our own guiding document. All actions are recorded in writing. In the last year, we have appointed three new Trustees, which has made a huge difference to the success of the charity.

(d) Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees: Being a small charity our Trustees generally come from a pool of individuals who have worked with us as volunteers and know how the charity works. In addition, new trustees are provided with copies of all relevant information on the responsibilities of a Trustee provided by the Charity Commission. They also receive a copy of our charity's constitution, along with all other policy documents and guidance.

(e) Organisational structure: The Trustees meet a minimum of 3 times per year. Extraordinary meetings may be called when required. All minutes are meticulously prepared, approved at the next meeting, signed, and filed. Our constitution provides for votes to be taken by email or phone where decisions on minor issues are required between meetings.

As noted above, we have a written policy for the appointment and induction of Trustees. We have developed a Privacy Policy in accordance with GDPR regulations. Permission forms for use of data on social media are in place. We have taken out the appropriate insurance cover and registered with HMRC to recoup Gift Aid.

We have a formal procedure for seeking funding suggestions from residents, staff, and other interested parties. Any proposal, with its justification, is considered at a Trustees meeting and a response sent to the applicant. We have a formal procedure for acknowledging donations and seeking Gift Aid Information.

(vi) Relationship with any related parties: Since the charity operates within the buildings and on land owned by Ramsay Healthcare and managed by Elysium Healthcare, where appropriate we adhere to the relevant policies and procedures set by the company. In turn, these regulations adhere to CQC requirements and any other legal bodies relevant to employer and service provider. We have a good working relationship with the management of the company, a representative (without voting rights) attends relevant Trustees meetings and our activities are generally viewed as being beneficial to both residents and staff. When we organise an activity, inside or outside of the buildings, proper risk assessments are undertaken and approved by the management. Regarding volunteers, the charity does not approve these without collaboration with the appropriate centre staff. All volunteers are interviewed, formally approved by the company with requisite DBS checks in place.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity name	Friends of Sawbridgeworth Neuro Centres
Other name the charity uses	FSN
Registered charity number	1167409
Charity's principal address	Gardens and Jacobs Neuro Centres, High Wych Road, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, CM21 0HH.

Trustee name	Office (if any)
Sheila Henderson	Chair

Celine Austin	Vice Chair
Sue Gleeson	Treasurer
Nicholas Jardine	Minutes Secretary.
Dee Chaplin	
Eileen Griffiths	
Gill Weeks	
Jeremiah O'Mahony	
Marian O'Mahony	
Sarah Ward	Publicity officer

Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the end of March 2025: We ended the year with a healthy balance of £14,217. See financial and accountant report for further detail.

Policy for holding reserves: No applicable

Reasons for holding zero reserves: Being a small charity with no property or regular staff, there is no need to place substantial sums in reserve. As prudent forward planning, however, our committee never commits sums of money to projects which are not already fully funded.

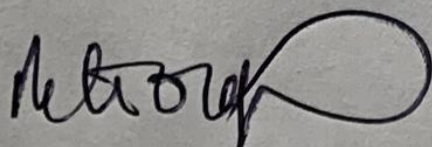
Any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern: Financially, we have no uncertainty about the charity as a going concern. Our group has continued to gain recognition and finds it easier each year to raise funds. Although we have recently appointed 3 new Trustees, two existing members are now finding it difficult to contribute as they used to. Like all small charities, therefore, we continue to need new blood. Given the complex and demanding needs of our residents, the families of our residents often find it hard to take on bigger roles. This means we need to look outside of the centres for volunteers.

Friends of Sawbridgeworth Neuro Centres
Income and Expenditure Account
1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025
Registered Charity No: 1167409

	2024/25 Unrestricted Funds £	2024/25 Restricted Funds £	2024/25 Total Funds £
<u>Receipts</u>			
Donations	1,514.22	780.94	2,295.16
Fundraising Events	873.64		873.64
Gift Aid	2,691.96		2,691.96
Grants		16,418.62	16,418.62
Refunds	100.69		100.69
Total receipts	5,180.51	17,199.56	22,380.07
<u>Payments</u>			
Activities	346.26	483.42	829.68
Entertainment	908.30	18.98	927.28
Equipment	10,057.80		10,057.80
Garden Area	588.89	727.94	1,316.83
Governance costs	1,212.43		1,212.43
Residents Music Therapy		1,000.00	1,000.00
Residents personal care	51.00		51.00
Wildlife Project	148.48	577.55	726.03
Woodland Project	397.36	37,306.94	37,704.30
Opening balance rounding	0.47		0.47
Total payments	13,710.99	40,114.83	53,825.82
Opening balance	9,300.85	36,362.67	45,663.52
Receipts	5,180.51	17,199.56	22,380.07
Payments	13,710.99	40,114.83	53,825.82
Balance	770.37	13,447.40	14,217.77
Petty Cash	-	-	-
Total Assets	770.37	13,447.40	14,217.77

I have reviewed these accounts and confirm that the above Income and Expenditure Account represents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Charity.

I also confirm that FSN is a going concern.



Peter Oldfield BA(hons), ACMA