

# BIRMINGHAM OPEN SPACES FORUM

England & Wales - Charity number 1170171

## Details

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**Other names** BOSF

**Status** Registered

**Legal form** CIO

**Registered** 2016-11-15

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

## Contact

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**Address** School Of Horticulture  
The White House  
Kings Heath Park  
Vicarage Road  
Kings Heath  
B14 7TQ

**Phone** 07882068561

**Email** [INFO@BOSF.ORG.UK](mailto:INFO@BOSF.ORG.UK)

**Website** [www.bosf.org.uk](http://www.bosf.org.uk)

## Activities

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**Objects:** A)TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN THE ENJOYMENT, UNDERSTANDING, APPLICATION AND CONSERVATION OF OPEN SPACES WITHIN THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM.B)TO PROMOTE THE PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE PHYSICAL AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OF BIRMINGHAM.C)TO PROMOTE AND ENHANCE THE OPEN SPACES WITHIN THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM AS RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN THE INTEREST OF SOCIAL WELFARE, TO IMPROVE THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE FOR THE INHABITANTS WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS OR OTHER OPINIONS.

**Activities:** BOSF provides a support network for friends groups. BOSF also offer opportunities for groups & individuals interested in open spaces to share knowledge and experience. This is in the form of regular information digests, funding advice, networking opportunities and training.

## Classification

- **How:** Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** Education/training, Environment/conservation/heritage, Recreation
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

## Geography

- Birmingham City

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£159,707	£190,701	-	-
2024-03-31	£219,666	£187,285	-	-
2023-03-31	£207,946	£183,932	-	-
2022-03-31	£249,164	£135,843	-	-
2021-03-31	£111,859	£86,085	-	-

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
<b>CHRIS BLYTHE</b>	Chair	2015-07-15
Alicia Grande Cristobal		2017-07-10
Christina Nijjar		2023-04-26
EMMA BRIONY WOOLF		2005-01-15
Fran Elder		2023-04-26
Melanie Checkley		2023-04-26
Nathan Worton		2023-04-26
Robert Brown		2023-04-26
Steve Watson		2023-04-26

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# Accounts

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# **Birmingham Open Spaces Forum**

**Trustees' Annual Report and Receipts and Payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025**

**Registered Charity number 1170171**

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## Report of the trustees

The trustees of the Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (“the Charity”) have pleasure in presenting the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comply with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charity’s Constitution.

## Objectives and activities

As set out in its Constitution, the Charity’s objects are:

- (a) To advance the education of the public in the environment, understanding, application and conservation of open spaces within the City of Birmingham.
- (b) To promote the protection, conservation and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Birmingham.
- (c) To promote and enhance the open spaces within the City of Birmingham as recreational facilities in the interest of social welfare, to improve the conditions of life for the inhabitants without distinction of political, religious or other opinions.

The Charity pursues its objects through the following activities:

- Encouraging residents to work together to “adopt” a park or open space to protect, preserve and maintain that space and enjoy, as an individual, the associated wellbeing benefits of doing so.
- Representing and supporting friends and community groups across the whole of Birmingham through training, networking, skill sharing, assistance in fundraising and acting as a collective voice of the volunteers seeking to protect, enhance and enjoy Birmingham’s parks and open spaces.
- Organising social events, including an annual conference and a Christmas lecture with topical speakers along with relevant workshops.
- Promotion of BOSF’s work and the work of our membership on various social media channels.
- Collecting valuable volunteer data from groups and displaying it as an infographic to showcase the great work done by our volunteers.
- Sharing the impact data with Birmingham Parks Service and other influential and strategic partners to illustrate the extent of volunteering and the pragmatic difference it makes to our parks and open spaces.
- Sending regular newsletters to groups and partners.
- Attending a range of environmental groups/forums, including the Birmingham City of Nature Alliance, West Midlands Combined Authority Environmental Group, Midlands Parks Forum and the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces.
- Working closely with partners including Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Tree People, Birmingham & Black Country Wildlife Trust, the Canal & River Trust, the RSPB, the University of Birmingham and Birmingham City University, in the overall pursuit of improvements to the environmental agenda.

In shaping the objectives for each year, and planning ahead, the Trustees take due consideration of the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit, including the guidance “Public Benefit: Running a Charity (PB2)”.

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## Report of the trustees continued

This year allowed us to implement some fundamental changes which confirmed our commitment to making BOSF more accessible to Birmingham's residents. This fundamental and progressive work was carried out alongside our continuing commitment to existing members and all that is involved in such.

Significant happenings during the year included the following;

- A review of our vision, mission and values allowing for more succinct and definitive statements to determine our way of working and why we exist.
- Implementation of our revised membership criteria meaning that barriers to membership were significantly reduced.
- An amendment to our Constitution to allow for an advisory committee chaired by a nominated Trustee and including 2 other nominated Trustees.
- An increase in our membership numbers of 15%.
- The appointment of an Operations Director tasked with reviewing the existing staff structure and operating practices.
- Consolidated the remit of our Committee and appointment of one of our Trustees to oversee it.
- A partnership project with the RHS and HMP Birmingham, where prisoners worked alongside our members in community food growing groups, with the produce eventually being shared across Birmingham.
- Definitive endeavours to better engage food growing communities into our forum, especially allotment associations.
- Continuing engagement work in areas of Birmingham identified as having little access to environmental justice.
- The appointment of our first ambassador acting as a passionate advocate of what we do and encouraging involvement in our charity.
- The commencement of a series of events to commemorate our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a constituted organisation.

## Achievements and performance

### **(A) To advance the education of the public in the environment, understanding, application and conservation of open spaces within the City of Birmingham.**

We believe that an 'open space' is any green area accessible to the local community, and this includes parks, allotments, nature reserves, public open spaces, cemeteries, wildlife corridors, woodlands, playing fields, community gardens and informal green spaces.

Originally, Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF) existed to bring together people across Birmingham with an interest in parks and green open spaces and our work supported groups who wanted to ensure that green open spaces were accessible to people who live and work across the city. We did this, and continue to do so, by providing information to groups and individuals, creating opportunities for groups and individuals interested in open spaces to share skills, knowledge and experience by arranging networking and knowledge exchange events in addition to delivering communications about the environmental agenda and working with partners. During 2024, we challenged ourselves to involve persons and groups whose priorities and passions were not necessarily aligned to ours. Using a mantra of "you

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## Report of the trustees continued

don't know, what you don't know", we extended our community development endeavours to areas of Birmingham identified as having little access to environmental justice and put in place the foundations to realise groups and members from those areas. Particularly significant were the amendments to our membership criteria. Our endeavours saw our membership numbers increase by 15% and establish groups in two areas of the city, (Balsall Heath West and Kings Norton South), where hitherto, we had never had a presence.

As ever, we organised many events for our members to engage with others interested in the environmental sector and the latter part of the financial year saw us embark on a series of events which continued throughout the subsequent financial year to celebrate our 20th anniversary as a constituted organisation. These events included;

- A wassail at Perry Hall Park.
- A commemorative tree planting event at The Dell in Druids Heath.
- An all-day conference
- Monthly newsletters were sent out each month to member groups, Birmingham Council Parks staff and other interested people and partners, advertising events & activities, funding opportunities, training and other useful information.
- After school study groups and nature walks piloted in areas designated as having little access to environmental justice.
- Coffee mornings at Quinton Meadows, Hodge Hill Common, Marsh Hill Allotments, Ward End Park, Selly Oak Park.
- A Christmas Lecture to celebrate, entertain and inspire further our impressive volunteers; the lecture was presented by Professor Silvia Gullino, whose lecture centred on urban challenges and particularly, safety in parks.

### **(B) To promote the protection, conservation, and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Birmingham.**

With support from Birmingham City Council, we continued to operate a 'seed corn fund' for member groups. This provided member groups with a means to apply for funding for projects they wanted to deliver. £30,000 from Birmingham City Council ('BCC') enabled the generation of funds to the value of £229,623 for sites across the city, allowing our members to protect, improve and enhance their respective park and/or open space.

Our Freelance Administrator collected volunteer data from member groups, allowing us to promote the great work and extent of volunteering taking place in Birmingham's parks and open spaces. During the year, member groups undertook **106,410** hours of volunteering work across a range of disciplines with an estimated financial value of **£1,340,766**, which was an impressive 6% increase on financial year 23 – 24. This information is hugely influential and informative to Birmingham Parks Service as well as many other environmental partners, as it is indicative of the high regard that our public spaces have in the affections of Birmingham residents, as well as the overall desire and need to improve on such spaces and utilise them to their full extent. Once again, our excellent data collection is at the heart of our success with funders as well as our influence with strategic partners.

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## Report of the trustees continued

We continued to support the City of Nature Alliance both strategically and as a delivery partner. Using the data and anecdotal evidence collected during the previous financial year, we revised our ways of working to make ourselves more high profile; our team facilitated events and engagement with nature through a series of activities in parks and communal spaces, which promoted interaction with local communities. Our objective was to encourage people to realise the opportunities that lie within local green spaces and in doing so, realise a sense of custodianship and hopefully, membership of our Forum. Complementing this work were the changes to our membership criteria, which removed barriers to membership.

Although we had previously worked with allotment and community food growing groups, we identified that the number of these type of groups within our membership was particularly poor. We formed a more considered relationship with food growers throughout the city by virtue of a project with the RHS and Birmingham HMP. The project saw prisoners grow food produce from seed, and when ready, these plants were delivered to community food growing sites throughout Birmingham. This led to three allotment and community growing spaces contacting us to become members. It also strengthened our partnership with the Birmingham and District Allotment Confederation and Social Farms and Gardens, creating further opportunities to work together and to raise awareness of BOSF membership and its benefits to the food-growing sector. As part of this future work, we benefited from a report undertaken by a student from Birmingham University about the Right to Grow in Birmingham and how difficult it is to access community space to do so.

Unfortunately, Birmingham Council remained in special measures, and we worked to promote the importance of parks and green open spaces with senior Council personnel, making them aware of possible implications that might arise from any pecuniary decisions they considered. We facilitated visits to several of our sites for the Leader of the Council and engaged frequently with local ward Councillors informing them of what we do and how their constituents worked to shape and protect local green spaces. We undertook a survey of our members to establish the impact of cuts to the Ranger Service and reported the findings to Birmingham Council. We created a profile which illustrated, and continues to illustrate, our worth to the Council and the savings that can be made as a result of their support and a limited degree of investment.

We continued to be represented on the Midlands Park Forum and the National Federation of Parks & Green Spaces continuing our national profile. Other organisations we have worked closely with include the Birmingham & Black Country Wildlife Trust, RSPB, National Trust, the University of Birmingham and the City of Birmingham University.

**(C) To promote and enhance the open spaces within the City of Birmingham as recreational facilities in the interest of social welfare, to improve the conditions of life for the inhabitants without distinction of political, religious, or other opinions:**

We continued to secure some funding to allow for the provision of Tai Chi sessions across Birmingham but worked to empower existing members with regard to fundraising for their own financial support to do so. We have continued to

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## Report of the trustees continued

develop support for additional groups working to improve their local streets and areas through ‘Greening the Grey’ the effects of which are to be seen in reductions of litter, minor works, trough planting and improved community cohesion.

More widely, we developed a communications delivery plan which enabled us to better promote our work and that of our members, as well as engage more competently with environmental events, activities and partners. The plan includes a commitment to create and launch a new website in 2025, better able to recruit more members and support existing ones.

## Financial review

Over the year, BOSF received a total income of £159,707. There was an expenditure of £190,701 leaving a shortfall of £30,994 which was supported by our free reserves. The organisation received grants from various funders and these sources of income have allowed us to finance all our activities as well as guarantee a consistent restricted and unrestricted stream of funding.

- £20,000 from William Cadbury in respect of staff costs.
- £10,000 from Garfield Weston for core costs
- £3,600 part payment from the RHS in respect of a partnership food growing project with the RHS & HMP Birmingham.
- £3,859 from Public Health Birmingham to continue the project referred to above during 25 – 26.
- £5,750 from Sport England to work in areas considered to be lacking in environmental justice.
- £9,000 Commonwealth Games Funding to advance our work via a series of events and exhibitions.
- £21,525 from Birmingham City Council to continue providing professional services through the employment of the Community Facilitator for the Future Parks Accelerator Project (FPA but also known as City of Nature Alliance).
- £15,640 from Birmingham City Council to continue collecting and processing valuable data (volunteer hours) from friends’ groups.
- £28,585 from Birmingham City Council to support core costs associated with. providing support to community groups and active citizens to enable them to improve their local environment more effectively by cleaning and greening grey areas of the city.
- £30,000 from Birmingham City Council to work with Get Grants to support effective applications to grants and trusts to improve local parks, allotments and green spaces.
- £2,611 from donations brought about by the endeavours of our Ambassador.
- BOSF also received funds from small funders to provide the delivery of free outdoor tai-chi sessions;
  - National Lottery     £1,575
  - AVFC                     £ 878

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## Report of the trustees continued

### Expenditure

Our overall expenditure increased by just 1.82%, which illustrated our commitment to stabilizing our charity bearing in mind the loss of income associated with the final payment of the Esmee Fairburn fund and our endeavours to find new, core funding. Our staff costs increased by 26% reflecting the additional staff that were employed to work in areas lacking in environmental justice. Associated with having a busier team, were the increases in fundraising, expenses and payroll.

### Overview

2024 – 2025 was a stable year for BOSF which saw us determine our direction of travel and implement a membership structure allowing us to better fulfil our objectives. The continuing endeavours of our insightful Trustees means time has been spent deliberating on risks and probable challenges and their foresight continues to steer BOSF to a place where we are able to sustain ourselves.

Based on the information available in respect of the future, the reviewed forecast and cashflow for March 2025, and the income being generated during the current financial year, Trustees are confident that BOSF has the plans and resources to manage its business risk successfully and to continue delivering its core activities effectively next year.

### Reserves policy

As part of the BOSF's Reserves Policy, BOSF holds a reserves account to ensure that main operations can continue for a period of at least three months and that redundancy costs are covered if funding difficulties arise. At end of March 2025, the account held £47,011. Unallocated reserves at the end of financial year 24 – 25 totaled £101,415. Trustees reviewed the reserves policy and expenditure plans and reserve levels were adjusted in 25 – 26.

### Structure, Governance and Management

BOSF registered as a CIO with the Charities Commission for England and Wales on 15 November 2016.

### Governing Document

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum is a registered Charity governed by its Constitution adopted on 16 February 2016 and amended on 10 July 2017, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

### Appointment of trustees, induction & training

All trustees are elected at a BOSF Annual General Meeting, four of which are recruited specifically for their skills and/or knowledge to allow them to contribute effectively to the Charity's activities and to discharge their obligations as Trustees. In this particular financial year, one of our Trustees, Nicola Brown, stepped down from her role due to caring responsibilities.

In order to keep the Trustees and Friend's groups fully informed of the progress of the projects and to ensure that staff are provided with support and strategic direction, meetings are held monthly, alternating between Trustees only meetings and advisory committee meetings.

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## Report of the trustees continued

### Management and administration

**The Networking & Communications Development Manager's** role is to develop and manage the Forum in line with current aims and objectives as well as raise the profile of BOSF locally and nationally and establish good links with Parks and Open Spaces Community Groups, Birmingham City Council and all interested agencies. Amongst other duties, the manager helps to set up new groups and support existing ones, attends steering group meetings, and give regular update reports and newsletters; organises and runs BOSF annual conference and networking opportunities in Birmingham.

**The Communications Officer's** role is to support the effective promotion of BOSF's aims and objectives using a mix of social media, communications, and marketing channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Website) and attending steering group meetings with partners. In addition, the Communications Officer assists BOSF's member groups on social media and communications.

**The Volunteer Development Co-ordinator's role is** to engage with park users and the wider community to develop opportunities for the community to be more active in their outdoor spaces. This work promotes good health and wellbeing through volunteering to improve spaces and encouraging the taking part in activities that promote self-care. Ideally, this work will generate the formation of Friends Of groups and associated activities creating more inclusiveness in all open spaces which leads to a more positive community feel.

**Freelance administrator** provides administrative support on a part time basis. Her main aim is to gather and compile volunteer data from Friend's groups, produce infographics and give administrative support in meetings.

**The Operations Director** oversees all operations including staff, trustee recruitment, management accounts, project delivery, strategy, fundraising and reporting to the Trustees. This post continues to strengthen our governance as a Charity and indeed as an employer.

The **Trustees** delegate the day-to-day running and administering of the charity and its activities to the Operations Director, the Networking & Communications Development Manager and other members of the staff team.

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**Reference and administrative information**

**Charity Number:** 1170171

**Trustees:**

C Blythe (Chair)  
A Grande Cristobal  
E Woolf MBE  
C Nijjar  
F Elder  
M Checkley  
N Brown (resigned May 2025)  
R Brown  
S Watson  
N Worton

**Registered Office:**

School of Horticulture  
The White House  
Kings Heath Park  
Vicarage Road  
B14 7TQ

**Bankers:**

Unity Trust Bank plc  
Nine Brindley Place  
Birmingham  
B1 2HB

**Independent Examiner:**

Karen Hanlan independent Examiner Ltd  
1 Saracen Close  
Ettington  
CV37 7SZ

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by:

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026

C Blythe  
Chair of Trustees

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**Independent Examiner’s Report to the Trustees of Birmingham Open Spaces Forum on the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (‘the charity’) for the year ended 31 March 2025 which are set out on pages 12 to 15.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (‘the 2011 Act’).

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity’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 2011 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 2011 Act: or
- 2) the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

Karen Hanlan, Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales  
Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Limited  
1 Saracen Close, Ettington, CV37 7SZ

Date:16 January 2026

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## Receipts and Payments Accounts

	Un-restricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2025	Total funds 2024
	£	£	£	£
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
Donations & grants	12,611	33,203	45,814	99,893
Charitable activities	41,360	71,444	112,804	119,105
Bank Interest	1,089	-	1,089	668
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>55,060</b>	<b>104,647</b>	<b>159,707</b>	219,666
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
Fundraising costs	-	23,803	23,803	17,193
Payments for volunteer data collection	12,480	-	12,480	11,260
Staff cost (note 1)	57,386	50,581	107,967	85,238
FRAP project costs	18,368	-	18,368	23,386
Tai Chi Sessions	(38)	7,424	7,386	17,859
Other project costs	1,018	1,760	2,778	3,487
Freelance administrator	-	7,068	7,068	8,939
Consultancy fees	113	-	113	280
Conference & networking events	1,263	-	1,263	11,289
Website/IT costs	1,021	2,510	3,531	3,961
Travel expenses	2,955	160	3,115	2,073
Training	-	-	-	176
Insurance	724	-	724	629
Payroll charges	312	-	312	284
Independent Examiners fee	1,100	-	1,100	1,000
Bank charges	275	-	275	231
AGM costs	418	-	418	-
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>97,395</b>	<b>93,306</b>	<b>190,701</b>	187,285
<b>NET OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS</b>	<b>(42,335)</b>	<b>11,341</b>	<b>(30,994)</b>	32,381
Transfer of funds	(875)	875	-	-
Cash funds at beginning of year	144,625	77,633	222,258	189,877
<b>Cash funds at end of year</b>	<b>101,415</b>	<b>89,849</b>	<b>191,264</b>	222,258

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**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

**Cash at bank and in hand**

	<b>Un- restricted funds £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>2025 Total £</b>	2024 Total £
Unity Trust Current account	54,404	89,849	<b>144,253</b>	196,336
Unity Trust Deposit account	47,011	-	<b>47,011</b>	25,922
<b>Total</b>	<b>101,415</b>	<b>89,849</b>	<b>191,264</b>	<b>222,258</b>

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026

C Blythe  
Chair of Trustees

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## Notes to the financial statements

### 1. Staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses

Staff costs comprise:	<b>2025</b>	2024
	£	£
Salaries	<b>102,346</b>	81,717
Working from home allowance	<b>1,278</b>	864
National Insurance	<b>1,286</b>	225
Pension costs	<b>3,057</b>	2,432
<b>Total</b>	<b>107,967</b>	<b>85,238</b>

The charity's Trustees were not paid nor received any other benefits from employment in the year (2024: £nil). No expenses were reimbursed to Trustees in the year (2024: £nil).

### 2. Fund movements

Funder	Fund purpose	At beginning of year £	Receipts £	Payments £	Transfers £	At end of year £
Awards for All	Volunteer Development Coordinator	5,485	-	(6,741)	<b>1,256</b>	-
John Feeney	Volunteer Development Coordinator	3,945	-	(3,970)	<b>26</b>	-
BCC	Bordesley/Highgate	499	-	(526)	<b>27</b>	-
Sport England	Family Movement in Balsall Heath	6,127	5,750	(8,292)	-	<b>3,585</b>
Various	Thai Chi sessions in parks	9,862	2,453	(7,424)	<b>(195)</b>	<b>4,696</b>
Birmingham Sport Trust	Tai Chi sessions in local parks	239	-	-	<b>(239)</b>	-
William Cadbury Trust	Community Development Coordinator	208	20,000	-	-	<b>20,208</b>
Greening The Grey	Support for groups to clean up open spaces	-	28,585	(34,970)	-	<b>(6,385)</b>
Seedcorn Fund	Funding to support groups with applications for funding	46,860	30,000	(23,803)	-	<b>53,057</b>
Dulverton Trust	Website development	4,328	-	(2,500)	-	<b>1,828</b>
BCC	City of Nature project 2024	80	5,000	(5,080)	-	-
BCC	Community & Prison project	-	3,859	-	-	<b>3,859</b>
BCC	City of Nature project 2025	-	9,000	-	-	<b>9,000</b>
<b>Total restricted funds</b>		<b>77,633</b>	<b>104,647</b>	<b>(93,306)</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>89,849</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
General funds		144,625	55,060	(97,395)	<b>(875)</b>	<b>101,415</b>
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>222,258</b>	<b>159,707</b>	<b>(190,701)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>191,264</b>

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**Notes to the financial statements continued**

Transfers relate to costs in excess of funding transferred from unrestricted funds.

**3. Transactions with related parties**

There were no transactions with related parties during the year that require disclosure in these accounts (2024: none).

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# Accounts

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# **Birmingham Open Spaces Forum**

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## Report of the trustees

The trustees of the Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (“the Charity”) have pleasure in presenting the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comply with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charity’s Constitution.

## Objectives and activities

As set out in its Constitution, the Charity’s objects are:

- (a) To advance the education of the public in the environment, understanding, application and conservation of open spaces within the City of Birmingham.
- (b) To promote the protection, conservation and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Birmingham.
- (c) To promote and enhance the open spaces within the City of Birmingham as recreational facilities in the interest of social welfare, to improve the conditions of life for the inhabitants without distinction of political, religious or other opinions.

The Charity pursues its objects through the following activities:

- Encouraging residents to work together to “adopt” a park or open space to protect, preserve and maintain that particular space and enjoy, as an individual, the associated wellbeing benefits of doing so.
- Representing and supporting friends and community groups across the whole of Birmingham through training, networking, skill sharing, assistance in fundraising and acting as a collective voice of the volunteers seeking to protect, enhance and enjoy Birmingham’s parks and open spaces.
- Organising social events, including an annual conference and a Christmas lecture with topical speakers along with relevant workshops.
- Promotion of BOSF’s work and the work of our membership on various social media channels.
- Collecting valuable volunteer data from groups and displaying it as an infographic to showcase the great work done by our volunteers.
- Sharing the impact data with Birmingham Parks Service and other influential and strategic partners to illustrate the extent of volunteering and the pragmatic difference it makes to our parks and open spaces.
- Sending regular newsletters to groups and partners.
- Attending a range of environmental groups/forums, including the Birmingham City of Nature Alliance, West Midlands Combined Authority Environmental Group, Midlands Parks Forum and the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces.
- Working closely with partners such as Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Trees for Life, Birmingham & Black Country Wildlife Trust, the Canal & River Trust, the RSPB and the University of Birmingham in the overall pursuit of improvements to the environmental agenda.

In shaping the objectives for each year, and planning ahead, the Trustees take due consideration of the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit, including the guidance “Public Benefit: Running a Charity (PB2)”.

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
for the year ended 31 March 2024

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## Report of the trustees continued

This year allowed us to implement some fundamental changes which confirmed our commitment to making BOSF more accessible to Birmingham’s residents. This fundamental and progressive work was carried out alongside our continuing commitment to existing members and all that is involved in such.

Significant happenings during the year included the following;

- The appointment of 7 new Trustees complementing our existing 3 Trustees. The appointments brought new perspective and skills to our organisation and altered the demographics of our Board considerably.
- A comprehensive analysis of the demographics of our membership. This work was undertaken in collaboration with a student based at the University of Birmingham and whilst it elicited little information that we had not already presumed, it gave us insight into where and how we should target our efforts.
- The commencement of a thorough review of our membership criteria and particularly, barriers to membership.
- The appointment of two part time members of staff largely dedicated to encouraging involvement in parks and open spaces in areas of Birmingham considered as having poor access to environmental justice.

## Achievements and performance

### **(A) To advance the education of the public in the environment, understanding, application and conservation of open spaces within the City of Birmingham.**

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF) is a membership organisation that brings together people across Birmingham with an interest in parks and green open spaces. We support groups who want to ensure that green open spaces are accessible to people who live and work across the city. We do this by providing information to groups and individuals. We create opportunities for groups and individuals interested in open spaces to share skills, knowledge and experience by arranging networking and knowledge exchange events. We also produce regular updates about funding sources, training opportunities, events in open spaces and other information of interest to our members.

We believe that an ‘open space’ is any green area accessible to the local community and this includes parks, allotments, nature reserves, public open spaces, cemeteries, wildlife corridors, woodlands, playing fields, community gardens and informal green spaces.

During the year we set up 23 new groups and undertook intensive community development endeavours, the findings of which influenced our membership criteria debate. Other activities continued including an increased social media presence which not only served to celebrate the work and successes of our membership but also acted as the conduit of information relating to the environmental agenda, our partners and the safe use of parks. At the close of the financial year our Twitter followers numbered 3,078, Facebook 2,614 and Instagram 1,242. Visits to our website increased by 4.7% and totaled 162,711.

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## Report of the trustees continued

During the year we organised many social events to bring our members together and provided additional opportunities for our members to meet with others interested in the environmental sector. These events included;

- Online social events taking place in November and January.
- 10 face to face social events took place at a variety of different member sites.
- An all-day conference
- Monthly newsletters were sent out each month to member groups, Birmingham Council Parks staff and other interested people and partners, advertising events & activities, funding opportunities, training and other useful information.
- We celebrated our impressive volunteers at our Christmas Lecture which was attended by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, and the cabinet member for Environment This event also provided a platform for Professor Mike Hardman who lectured attendees about urban food growing and how access to it might transition from informal to formal routes.

### **(B) To promote the protection, conservation, and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Birmingham.**

With support from Birmingham City Council and Get Grants Ltd., we continued to operate a 'seed corn fund' for member groups. This provided member groups with a means to apply for funding for projects they wanted to deliver. £30,000 from Birmingham City Council ('BCC') enabled the generation of funds to the value of £241,749 for sites across the city allowing our members to protect, improve and enhance their respective park and/or open space.

Our Freelance Administrator collected volunteer data from member groups allowing us to promote the great work and extent of volunteering taking place in Birmingham's parks and open spaces. During the year, member groups undertook **105,757** hours of volunteering work across a range of disciplines with a financial value of **£1,269,084**. This information is hugely influential and informative to Birmingham Parks Service as well as many other environmental partners as it is indicative of the high regard that our public spaces have in the affections of Birmingham residents as well as the overall desire and need to improve on such spaces and utilise them to their full extent. Once again, our excellent data collection is at the heart of our success with funders as well as our influence with strategic partners.

We continued to support the City of Nature Alliance both strategically and as a delivery partner. We spent a great deal of time analysing why some areas of the City were largely bereft of environmental justice, (the fair treatment of people of all races, income, and cultures with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies, and their meaningful involvement in the decision-making processes of the government), and the barriers that created this vacuum. Our insight encouraged us to examine our membership criteria and the ways in which we work and as a result, we amended our membership criteria to encourage and allow wider membership. We trialed ways of working in areas of the city designated as having little environmental justice and intend to redefine our vision and strategy to align our work with our findings.

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
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## Report of the trustees continued

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*\*Environmental Justice: the fair treatment of people of all races, income, and cultures with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies, and their meaningful involvement in the decision-making processes of the government),*

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We continued to be represented on the Midlands Park Forum and the National Federation of Parks & Green Spaces continuing our national profile. Other organisations we have worked closely with include Birmingham Parks Service, Birmingham East Regeneration Team, Members, the City of Nature Alliance, Birmingham & Black Country Wildlife Trust, RSPB, National Trust, University of Birmingham and the River Cole & Tyseley Energy Park.

The continuing development of both our good reputation and infrastructure allowed us to collaborate more extensively with partners to develop mutually beneficial projects which bring us closer to our charitable aims and objectives. We strengthened our links with the University of Birmingham by hosting a student placement tasked with a further examination of our membership. We continued to impress upon the Councillors throughout Birmingham and the Cabinet Member for the Environment the importance and significance of our volunteering network and its immense capabilities. These targeted communications have proved to be hugely beneficial considering the appointment of central Government commissioners who were appointed to run the Council in September 2023 following the issue of a Section 114 notice by the Council; our good working relationship has meant that we continued to receive support from Birmingham Council.

**(C) To promote and enhance the open spaces within the City of Birmingham as recreational facilities in the interest of social welfare, to improve the conditions of life for the inhabitants without distinction of political, religious, or other opinions:**

We continued to secure funding allowing for the provision of Tai Chi sessions across Birmingham and sought to establish new walking in nature activity sessions to attract new visitors to our green spaces. The numbers attending those sessions were disappointing however we have taken the feedback gleaned at the sessions and are using this to shape alternative delivery and methods of engagement e.g. moms and tots walks etc. Unfortunately, one of our team was absent from work due to illness for a period of 5 months and although this impacted on our capacity, the remaining staff members were willing and able to work flexibly to ensure that the majority of our usual commitments were honored. We have continued to develop support for additional groups working to improve their local streets and areas through 'Greening the Grey' the effects of which are to be seen in reductions of litter, minor works, through planting and improved community cohesion.

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
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## Report of the trustees continued

### Financial review

Over the year, BOSF received a total income of £219,666. There was an expenditure of £187,285 leaving an operating surplus of £32,381. Our net income has increased by £11,720. The organisation received grants from various funders. These sources of income have allowed us to finance all our activities as well as guarantee a consistent restricted and unrestricted stream of funding.

- £47,143 from Esmee Fairbairn towards unrestricted revenue costs to continue delivering BOSF core activities.
- £5,032 other unrestricted donations including an upfront amount in respect of a project with the RHS delivered during financial year 2024 – 2025.
- £10,000 from Awards for All to pilot community development initiatives in areas identified as having little access to environmental justice.
- £5,000 from John Feeney Trust to provide additionality to the above.
- £10,000 from Garfield Weston to continue our pilot work in the Bordesley and Highgate area.
- £9,188 from Sport England to deliver walking projects as a community development tool.
- £38,920 from Birmingham City Council to continue providing professional services through the employment of the Community Facilitator for the Future Parks Accelerator Project (FPA but also known as City of Nature Alliance). This included backpay of £7,780 in respect of the previous financial year.
- £18,000 from Birmingham City Council to continue collecting and processing valuable data (volunteer hours) from friends' groups. This amount included a late payment of £9,000.
- £28,585 from Birmingham City Council to support core costs associated with providing support to community groups and active citizens to enable them to improve their local environment more effectively by cleaning and greening grey areas of the city.
- £30,000 from Birmingham City Council to work with Get Grants to support effective applications to grants and trusts to improve local parks, allotments and green spaces.
- BOSF also received funds from various Neighbourhood Network Schemes and other small funders to provide the delivery of free outdoor tai-chi sessions;

Yardley Green NNS	£2,460
Perry Barr NNS	£2,320
Tai Chi city support	£ 600
Queens Park Tai Chi	£ 1,785
Sennellys Park Tai Chi	£2,130
Billesley Common Tai Chi	£1,800
Hall Green NNS	£2,580

### Expenditure

Our overall expenditure increased by 1.82%, which illustrates our commitment to consolidating our position following our expansion in the previous financial year. Our staff costs increased by 13.26% reflecting the additional staff that were

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## Report of the trustees continued

employed to pilot work in areas lacking in environmental justice. Associated with having a busier team, were the increases in fundraising, expenses and payroll.

### Overview

2023 – 2024 was a stable year for BOSF and one which gave us the opportunity to reflect on our direction of travel and how we might continue to grow our membership and widen our impact. The continuing endeavours of our insightful Trustees means time has been spent deliberating on risks and probable challenges and their foresight has steered BOSF to a place where we are more able to sustain ourselves.

Based on the information available in respect of the future, the reviewed forecast and cashflow for March 2024, and the income being generated during the current financial year, Trustees are confident that BOSF has the plans and resources to manage its business risk successfully and to continue delivering its core activities effectively next year.

### Reserves policy

As part of the BOSF's Reserves Policy, BOSF holds a reserves account to ensure that main operations can continue for a period of at least three months and that redundancy costs are covered if funding difficulties arise. At end of March 2024, the account held £25,922. Unallocated reserves at the end of financial year 23 – 24 totaled £116,452. Trustees plan to review the reserves policy and expenditure plans and reserves levels may be adjusted as perceptions of risks and other factors change.

### Structure, Governance and Management

BOSF registered as a CIO with the Charities Commission for England and Wales on 15 November 2016.

### Governing Document

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum is a registered Charity governed by its Constitution adopted on 16 February 2016 and amended on 10 July 2017, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

### Appointment of trustees, induction & training

All trustees are elected at a BOSF Annual General Meeting and serve a two-year term. They bring with them skills, knowledge, and experience to contribute to the Charity's activities and to discharge their obligations as Trustees. Recent constitutional changes provided for an increase in the number of our trustees and in doing so, strengthened the skills, expertise and diversity of our Board.

In order to keep the Trustees and Friend's groups fully informed of the progress of the projects and to ensure that staff are provided with support and strategic direction, meetings are held monthly, alternating between Trustees only meetings and advisory committee meetings.

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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## Report of the trustees continued

### Management and administration

**The Networking & Communications Development Manager's** role is to develop and manage the Forum in line with current aims and objectives as well as raise the profile of BOSF locally and nationally and establish good links with Parks and Open Spaces Community Groups, Birmingham City Council and all interested agencies. Amongst other duties, the manager helps to set up new groups and support existing ones, attends steering group meetings, and give regular update reports and newsletters; organises and runs BOSF annual conference and networking opportunities in Birmingham.

**The Communications Officer's** role is to support the effective promotion of BOSF's aims and objectives using a mix of social media, communications, and marketing channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Website) and attending steering group meetings with partners. In addition, the Communications Officer assists BOSF's member groups on social media and communications.

**The Volunteer Development Co-ordinator's role is** to engage with park users and the wider community to develop opportunities for the community to be more active in their outdoor spaces. This work promotes good health and wellbeing through volunteering to improve spaces and encouraging the taking part in activities that promote self-care. Ideally, this work will generate the formation of Friends Of groups and associated activities creating more inclusiveness in all open spaces which leads to a more positive community feel.

**Freelance administrator** provides administrative support on a part time basis. Her main aim is to gather and compile volunteer data from Friend's groups, produce infographics and give administrative support in meetings.

**The Operations Director** oversees all operations including staff, trustee recruitment, management accounts, project delivery, strategy, fundraising and reporting to the Trustees. This post continues to strengthen our governance as a Charity and indeed as an employer.

The **Trustees** delegate the day-to-day running and administering of the charity and its activities to the Operations Director, the Networking & Communications Development Manager and other members of the staff team.

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
for the year ended 31 March 2024

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**Reference and administrative information**

**Charity Number:** 1170171

**Trustees:**

C Blythe (Chair)  
T Clark (resigned 26 April 2023)  
A Grande Cristobal  
E Woolf MBE  
N Brown (appointed 26 April 2023)  
C Nijjar (appointed 26 April 2023)  
F Elder (appointed 26 April 2023)  
M Checkley (appointed 26 April 2023)  
R Brown (appointed 26 April 2023)  
S Watson (appointed 26 April 2023)  
N Worton (appointed 26 April 2023)

**Registered Office:**

School of Horticulture  
The White House  
Kings Heath Park  
Vicarage Road  
B14 7TQ

**Bankers:**

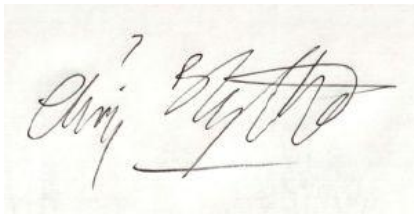
Unity Trust Bank plc  
Nine Brindley Place  
Birmingham  
B1 2HB

**Independent Examiner:**

Karen Hanlan independent Examiner Ltd  
1 Saracen Close  
Ettington  
CV37 7SZ

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by:

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'C Blythe'.

C Blythe  
Chair of Trustees

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
for the year ended 31 March 2024

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## **Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Birmingham Open Spaces Forum on the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Birmingham Open Spaces Forum ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which are set out on pages 12 to 16.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity'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 2011 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 2011 Act: or
- 2) the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.



Karen Hanlan, Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales  
Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Limited  
1 Saracen Close, Ettington, CV37 7SZ

Date: 23/12/2024

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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## Receipts and Payments Accounts

	Un-restricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2024	Total funds 2023
	£	£	£	£
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
Donations & grants	58,575	41,318	99,893	101,553
Charitable activities	60,520	58,585	119,105	106,135
Bank Interest	668	-	668	258
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>119,763</b>	<b>99,903</b>	<b>219,666</b>	<b>207,946</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
Fundraising costs	-	17,193	17,193	19,547
Payments for volunteer data collection	11,260	-	11,260	12,090
Staff cost (note 1)	48,105	37,133	85,238	75,256
FRAP project costs	23,386	-	23,386	13,943
Tai Chi Sessions	35	17,824	17,859	35,601
Other project costs	531	2,956	3,487	4,592
Freelance administrator	31	8,908	8,939	8,838
Consultancy fees	280	-	280	6,254
Conference & networking events	11,289	-	11,289	2,562
Website/IT costs	3,961	-	3,961	836
Travel expenses	1,873	200	2,073	2,344
Training	176	-	176	-
Insurance	629	-	629	557
Payroll charges	284	-	284	284
Independent Examiners fee	1,000	-	1,000	1,000
Bank charges	231	-	231	228
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>103,071</b>	<b>84,214</b>	<b>187,285</b>	<b>183,932</b>
<b>NET OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS</b>	<b>16,692</b>	<b>15,689</b>	<b>32,381</b>	<b>24,014</b>
Transfer of funds	(1,850)	1,850	-	-
Cash funds at beginning of year	129,783	60,094	189,877	165,863
<b>Cash funds at end of year</b>	<b>144,625</b>	<b>77,633</b>	<b>222,258</b>	<b>189,877</b>

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
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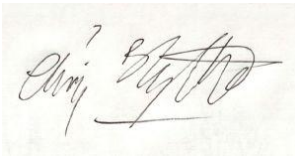
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## Statement of Assets and Liabilities

### Cash at bank and in hand

	<b>Un-restricted funds £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>2024 Total £</b>	<b>2023 Total £</b>
Unity Trust Current account	118,703	77,633	<b>196,336</b>	164,623
Unity Trust Deposit account	25,922	-	<b>25,922</b>	25,254
<b>Total</b>	<b>144,625</b>	<b>77,633</b>	<b>222,258</b>	<b>189,877</b>

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024

C Blythe  
Chair of Trustees

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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## Notes to the financial statements

### 1. Staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses

Staff costs comprise:	<b>2024</b>	2023
	<b>£</b>	£
Salaries	<b>81,717</b>	72,281
Working from home allowance	<b>864</b>	864
National Insurance	<b>225</b>	-
Pension costs	<b>2,432</b>	2,111
Total	<b>85,238</b>	75,256

The charity's Trustees were not paid nor received any other benefits from employment in the year (2023: £nil). No expenses were reimbursed to Trustees in the year (2023: £nil).

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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**2. Fund movements**

<b>Restricted funds</b>		<b>At beginning of year</b>	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>At end of year</b>
<b>Funder</b>	<b>Fund purpose</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
	Volunteer Development					
Awards for All	Coordinator	-	10,000	(4,515)	-	5,485
	Volunteer Development					
John Feeney	Coordinator	-	5,000	(1,055)	-	3,945
BCC	Bordesley/Highgate	-	2,715	(2,216)	-	499
	Criss Cross	-	740	(740)	-	-
Sport England		-	9,188	(3,061)	-	6,127
Selly Oak NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Selly Oak Park	3,307	-	(2,485)	-	822
	Thai Chi sessions in Edgbaston Park					
Edgbaston NNS		440	-	-	-	440
Erdington NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Erdington Park	2,125	-	(1,643)	-	482
	Thai Chi sessions in Hall Green Park					
Hall Green NNS		4,556	2,580	(5,112)	-	2,025
Ladywood NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Ladywood Park	173	-	(60)	-	113
Northfield NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Northfield Park	75	-	-	-	75
Perry Barr NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Perry Barr Park	287	2,320	(1,535)	-	1,072
Yardley Green NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Yardley Park	948	2,460	(1,635)	-	1,773
Birmingham Sport & Physical Activity Trust	Tai Chi sessions in local parks	2,304	-	(2,065)	-	239
William Cadbury Trust	Tai Chi sessions in local parks	243	-	(35)	-	208
	Tai Chi sessions in Sennelleys Park	-	2,130	(980)	-	1,150
	Tai Chi sessions in Billesley Common	-	1,800	(840)	-	960
	Tai Chi sessions in Queens Park	-	1,785	(1,120)	-	665
	Tai Chi support	-	600	(315)	-	285
Greening The Grey	Support for groups to clean up open spaces	4,514	28,585	(34,949)	1,850	-
Seedcorn Fund	Funding to support groups with applications for funding	34,053	30,000	(17,193)	-	46,860
Dulverton Trust	Website development	4,328	-	-	-	4,328
Cona Project	Funding towards FPA programme	2,741	-	(2,661)	-	80
<b>Total restricted funds</b>		<b>60,094</b>	<b>99,903</b>	<b>(84,214)</b>	<b>1,850</b>	<b>77,633</b>

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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**Unrestricted  
funds**

General funds	129,783	119,763	(103,071)	<b>(1,850)</b>	<b>144,625</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>189,877</u>	<u><b>219,666</b></u>	<u><b>(187,285)</b></u>	<u>-</u>	<u><b>222,258</b></u>

Transfers relate to costs in excess of funding transferred from unrestricted funds.

**3. Transactions with related parties**

There were no transactions with related parties during the year that require disclosure in these accounts (2023: none).

**BIRMINGHAM OPEN SPACES FORUM**

England & Wales - Charity number 1170171

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# Accounts

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# **Birmingham Open Spaces Forum**

**Trustees' Annual Report and Receipts and Payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023**

**Registered Charity number 1170171**

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
for the year ended 31 March 2023

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Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
for the year ended 31 March 2023

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## Report of the trustees

The trustees of the Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (“the Charity”) have pleasure in presenting the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comply with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charity’s Constitution.

The Charity was registered on 15 November 2016 and commenced activity once a bank account had been opened and funds transferred from the previous unincorporated charity in February 2019.

## Objectives and activities

As set out in its Constitution, the Charity’s objects are:

- (a) To advance the education of the public in the environment, understanding, application and conservation of open spaces within the City of Birmingham.
- (b) To promote the protection, conservation and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Birmingham.
- (c) To promote and enhance the open spaces within the City of Birmingham as recreational facilities in the interest of social welfare, to improve the conditions of life for the inhabitants without distinction of political, religious or other opinions.

The Charity pursues its objects through the following activities:

- Encouraging residents to work together to “adopt” a park or open space in order to protect, preserve and maintain that particular space and enjoy, as an individual, the associated wellbeing benefits of doing so.
- Representing and supporting friends and community groups across the whole of Birmingham through training, networking, skill sharing, assistance in fundraising and acting as a collective voice of the volunteers seeking to protect, enhance and enjoy Birmingham’s parks and open spaces.
- Organising social events, including an annual conference and a Christmas lecture with topical speakers along with relevant workshops.
- Promotion of BOSF’s work and the work of our membership on various social media channels.
- Collecting valuable volunteer data from groups and displaying it as an infographic to showcase the great work done by our volunteers.
- Sharing the impact data with Birmingham Parks Service and other influential and strategic partners to illustrate the extent of volunteering and the pragmatic difference it makes to our parks and open spaces.
- Sending regular newsletters to groups and partners.
- Attending a range of environmental groups/forums, including the Birmingham City of Nature Alliance, Midlands Parks Forum and the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces.

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## Report of the trustees continued

- Working closely with partners such as Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Trees for Life, Birmingham & Black Country Wildlife Trust, the Canal & River Trust, the RSPB and the University of Birmingham in the overall pursuit of improvements to the environmental agenda.

In shaping the objectives for each year, and planning ahead, the Trustees take due consideration of the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit, including the guidance “Public Benefit: Running a Charity (PB2)”.

As with most other organisations, COVID had required us to respond to emerging situations whereas the financial year April 22 to March 23 allowed time for reflection, contemplation, and the ability to develop a more strategic approach. We analysed the skill set of our board of Trustees, looked at our staff profile and surveyed our members; such a comprehensive review of our entire organisation equipped us with the intelligence to identify areas where we had little influence or sufficient expertise. This wholesale review provided the impetus for many changes within our organisation and at all levels and a great deal of what we must do carries forward to 23 – 24. We believe that the foundations laid during 22 – 23 will allow us to respond at a city level to the challenges of inequality, austerity and climate crisis.

## Achievements and performance

### **(A) To advance the education of the public in the environment, understanding, application and conservation of open spaces within the City of Birmingham.**

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF) is a membership organisation that brings together people in Birmingham with an interest in parks and green open spaces. We support groups who want to ensure that green open spaces are accessible to people who live and work across the city. We do this by providing information to groups and individuals. We create opportunities for groups and individuals interested in open spaces to share skills, knowledge and experience by arranging networking and knowledge exchange events. We also produce regular updates about funding sources, training opportunities, events in open spaces and other information of interest to our members.

We believe that an ‘open space’ is any green area accessible to the local community and this includes parks, allotments, nature reserves, public open spaces, cemeteries, wildlife corridors, woodlands, playing fields, community gardens and informal green spaces.

During the year we set up 14 new groups and undertook intensive community development endeavors, hopefully concluding with the formation of a further 10 groups. Other activities continued including an increased social media presence which not only served to celebrate the work and successes of our membership but also acted as the conduit of information relating to the environmental agenda, our partners and the safe use of parks whilst the effects of the

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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pandemic continued. At the close of the financial year our Twitter followers numbered 2,959, Facebook 2,171 and Instagram 1,129 which were increases on the previous years' activity of 10.5%, 26% and 15.45% respectively. Visits to our website increased by 30% and totalled 155,352.

During the year we organised 12 events which took place at a range of locations and online. Delightfully, we were able to resume two hugely significant and impactful member meetings; our annual conference and our Christmas lecture, both of which had been either suspended during the COVID crisis or done online.

- Online social events took place in May and January.
- 9 face to face social events took place at a variety of different member sites.
- We continued to work in partnership with the Earth Heritage Trust and Lapworth Museum to explore the glacial erratic boulders that were moved to Birmingham by glaciers in the ice age.
- Regular newsletters were sent out each month to member groups, Birmingham Council Parks staff and other interested people and partners, advertising events & activities, funding opportunities, training and other useful information.
- Collaborated with the RSPB on the families into nature project (FINCH), which allowed for the dissemination of educational and recreational nature-based games.
- Provided a platform at our Christmas lecture to Professor Dominique Moran who lectured about carceral geography, and the importance of accessible green space in the successful rehabilitation of prisoners and the wider learnings that can be drawn from her research.

**(B) To promote the protection, conservation, and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Birmingham.**

With support from Birmingham City Council and Get Grants Ltd., we continued to operate a 'seed corn fund' for member groups. This provided member groups with a means to apply for funding for projects they wanted to deliver. £20,000 from Birmingham City Council ('BCC') enabled the generation of funds to the value of £188,723 for sites across the city allowing our members to protect, improve and enhance their respective park and/or open space.

Our Freelance Administrator collected volunteer data from member groups allowing us to promote the great work and extent of volunteering taking place in Birmingham's parks and open spaces. During the year, a total of 137 member groups undertook 97,598 hours of volunteering work across a range of disciplines. This information is hugely influential and informative to Birmingham Parks Service as well as many other environmental partners as it is indicative of the high regard that our public spaces have in the affections of Birmingham residents as well as the overall desire and need to improve on such spaces and utilise them to their full extent. Once again, our excellent data collection is at the heart of our success with funders as well as our influence with strategic partners.

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We continued to support the City of Nature Alliance (previously known as the Future Parks Accelerator Programme) both strategically and as a delivery partner. We consolidated this work by retaining a community development position in the Bordesley and Highgate areas of the city having identified the potential and absolute need for further intensive work despite the wider Alliance project having ceased in those areas.

We continued to be represented on the Midlands Park Forum and the National Federation of Parks & Green Spaces continuing our national profile. Other organisations we have worked closely with include Birmingham Parks Service, Birmingham East Regeneration Team, Members, the City of Nature Alliance, the Earth Heritage Trust, Birmingham & Black Country Wildlife Trust, RSPB, National Trust, NHS Social Prescribing Service, Natural England, Veolia, Community Payback Service and the River Cole & Tyseley Energy Park.

The continuing development of both our good reputation and infrastructure has allowed us to collaborate more extensively with partners to develop mutually beneficial projects which bring us closer to our charitable aims and objectives. During the year, we began planning a large project with the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust and supported a University of Birmingham student placement. We have developed relationships with Councillors to promote the improvement of parks and open spaces and in doing so, influenced the ward planning processes. Of long-term significance was the cultivation of a synergistic relationship with Birmingham Council's Cabinet Member for the Environment; this relationship has allowed us to document the immense volunteering efforts of our members, the potential for further such efforts, and the protection of the Council funding which supports what we do.

**(C) To promote and enhance the open spaces within the City of Birmingham as recreational facilities in the interest of social welfare, to improve the conditions of life for the inhabitants without distinction of political, religious, or other opinions:**

We continued to secure funding allowing for the provision of Tai Chi sessions across Birmingham and we have helped 2 of our members to access funding for similar independently of us. Recognising that Tai Chi attracted new visitors to our green spaces, we began to examine how we might provide other opportunities and amongst many meetings to drive this forward, met with public health representatives about how we might become involved in the roll out of green prescribing as well as tentative planning for walking projects. We have continued to develop support for additional groups working to improve their local streets and areas through 'Greening the Grey' the effects of which are to be seen in reductions of litter, minor works, through planting and improved community cohesion.

Our collective voice was used to positively influence the plans of the Lawn Tennis Association who initially strove to restrict access to tennis courts which had been refurbished. As a result of our endeavours, this is no longer the case.

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## Financial review

Over the year, BOSF received a total income of £207,946. Of this income there was an expenditure of £183,932 leaving an operating surplus of £18,014.

### Income

BOSF's net income has decreased by £41,218. The organisation received grants from various funders. These sources of income have allowed us to finance all our activities as well as guarantee a consistent restricted and unrestricted stream of funding.

- £65,214 from Esmee Fairbairn towards unrestricted revenue costs to continue delivering BOSF core activities. This amount was inclusive of £10,214 which was in addition to our original grant award and given to assist us during the cost of living crisis.
- £1,500 from the Edgar Lawley Foundation unrestricted revenue.
- £4,500 other unrestricted donations
- £4,328 from the Dulverton Trust in respect of a new website and associated training for a staff member.
- £5,000 from the City of Nature Alliance to deliver work in the Bordesley and Highgate areas of Birmingham.
- £25,585 from Birmingham City Council to continue providing professional services through the employment of the Community Facilitator for the Future Parks Accelerator Project (FPA but also known as City of Nature Alliance).
- £9,000 from Birmingham City Council to continue collecting and processing valuable data (volunteer hours) from friends' groups.
- £13,264.84 from RSPB (FINCH project) towards restricted revenue cost for the additional workload carried out by the Operations Manager and the Communications Officer
- £58,585 from Birmingham City Council to achieve the following:
  - provide support to community groups and active citizens to enable them to improve their local environment more effectively by cleaning and greening grey areas of the city.
  - work with Get Grants to support groups making effective funding application to grants and trusts to improve the local community environment (2022 - 2023)
- BOSF also received funds from various Neighbourhood Network Schemes and other small funders to provide the delivery of free outdoor tai-chi sessions 23 different sites.
  - £2,440 from Birmingham Sports & Physical Activity
  - £1,000 from William Cadbury
  - £17,570 from several Neighbourhood Network Schemes.

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During 22- 23 we paid particular attention to our profile and sought to cultivate relationships and partnerships with individuals and organisations with mutual interests. The foundations built and capitalized on during this year will be cornerstones of how we generate income e.g. the work we have begun with the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust.

**Expenditure**

Although some individual elements of our expenditure dropped during 22 – 23, our overall expenditure increased by 35% and this reflects a return to normal working practices following COVID. Our staff costs increased as we were able to employ an additional member of staff (February 2022) and associated with having a busier team, were the increases in fundraising, travel expenses, Tai Chi and conferencing/networking.

**Overview**

2022-2023 has been a very successful year for BOSF and we are very proud of all that we have achieved together. Our Trustees spent time deliberating on probable challenges and their foresight has steered BOSF to a place where we are more able to sustain ourselves.

Based on the information available in respect of the future, the reviewed forecast and cashflow for March 2024, and the income generated during the current financial year, Trustees are confident that BOSF has the plans and resources to manage its business risk successfully and to continue delivering its core activities effectively next year.

**Reserves policy**

As part of the BOSF’s Reserves Policy, BOSF holds a reserves account to ensure that main operations can continue for a period of at least three months and that redundancy costs are covered if funding difficulties arise. At end of March 2023, the account held £25,253.55. Currently free reserves total £129, 783 which exceeds our requirement by £104,530. Trustees plan to review the reserves policy and expenditure plans and reserves levels may be adjusted as perceptions of risks and other factors change.

**Structure, Governance and Management**

BOSF registered as a CIO with the Charities Commission for England and Wales on 15 November 2016.

**Governing Document**

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum is a registered Charity governed by its Constitution adopted on 16 February 2016 and amended on 10 July 2017, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

**Appointment of trustees, induction & training**

All trustees are elected at a BOSF Annual General Meeting and serve a two-year term. They bring with them skills, knowledge, and experience to contribute to the Charity’s activities and to discharge their obligations as Trustees. Recent constitutional changes provided for an increase in the number of our trustees and in doing so, strengthened the skills, expertise and diversity of our Board.

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In order to keep the Trustees and Friend's groups fully informed of the progress of the projects and to ensure that staff are provided with support and strategic direction, meetings are held monthly, alternating between Trustees only meetings and advisory committee meetings.

### **Management and administration**

**The Community Open Spaces Development Manager's** role is to develop and manage the Forum in line with current aims and objectives as well as raise the profile of BOSF locally and nationally and establish good links with Parks and Open Spaces Community Groups, Birmingham City Council and all interested agencies. Amongst other duties, the manager helps to set up new groups and support existing ones, attends Steering group meetings, and give regular update reports and newsletters; organises and runs BOSF annual conference and networking opportunities in Birmingham and helps secure funding, not only to friend's groups, but also the Forum.

**The Communications Officer's** role is to support the effective promotion of BOSF's aims and objectives using a mix of social media, communications, and marketing channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Website) and attending steering group meetings with partners. In addition, the Communications Officer assists BOSF's member groups on social media and communications.

**The Volunteer Development Co-ordinator's** role is to engage with park users and the wider community to develop opportunities for the community to be more active in their outdoor spaces. This work promotes good health and wellbeing through volunteering to improve spaces and encouraging the taking part in activities that promote self-care. Ideally, this work will generate the formation of Friends Of groups and associated activities creating more inclusiveness in all open spaces which leads to a more positive community feel.

**Freelance administrator** provides administrative support on a part time basis. Her main aim is to gather and compile volunteer data from Friend's groups, produce infographics and give administrative support in meetings.

**The Operations Manager** oversees all operations including staff, trustee recruitment, management accounts, project delivery, strategy and reporting to the Trustees. This post continues to strengthen our governance as a Charity and indeed as an employer.

The **Trustees** delegate the day-to-day running and administering of the charity and its activities to the Operations Manager, Community Open Spaces Development Manager and other members of the staff team.

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
for the year ended 31 March 2023

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**Reference and administrative information**

**Charity Number:** 1170171

**Trustees:**

C Blythe (Chair)  
T Clark (resigned 26 April 2023)  
A Grande Cristobal  
E Woolf MBE  
N Brown (appointed 26 April 2023)  
C Nijjar (appointed 26 April 2023)  
F Elder (appointed 26 April 2023)  
M Checkley (appointed 26 April 2023)  
R Brown (appointed 26 April 2023)  
S Watson (appointed 26 April 2023)  
N Worton (appointed 26 April 2023)

**Registered Office:**

School of Horticulture  
The White House  
Kings Heath Park  
Vicarage Road  
B14 7TQ

**Bankers:**

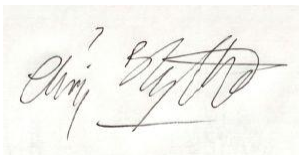
Unity Trust Bank plc  
Nine Brindley Place  
Birmingham  
B1 2HB

**Independent Examiner:**

Karen Hanlan independent Examiner Ltd  
1 Saracen Close  
Ettington  
CV37 7SZ

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by:

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'C Blythe'. There is a small question mark above the first part of the signature.

C Blythe  
Chair of Trustees

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
for the year ended 31 March 2023

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**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Birmingham Open Spaces Forum on the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Birmingham Open Spaces Forum ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which are set out on pages 12 to 16.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity'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 2011 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 2011 Act: or
- 2) the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.



Karen Hanlan, Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales  
Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Limited  
1 Saracen Close, Ettington, CV37 7SZ

Date: 15 January 2024

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
for the year ended 31 March 2023

## Receipts and Payments Accounts

	Un-restricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2023	Total funds 2022
	£	£	£	£
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
Donations & grants	71,215	30,338	101,553	116,960
Charitable activities	34,285	71,850	106,135	132,192
Bank Interest	258	-	258	12
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>105,758</b>	<b>102,188</b>	<b>207,946</b>	249,164
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
Fundraising costs	-	19,547	19,547	6,400
Payments for volunteer data collection	12,090	-	12,090	9,520
Staff cost (note 1)	37,215	38,041	75,256	61,717
FRAP project costs	13,943	-	13,943	19,653
Tai Chi Sessions	477	35,124	35,601	15,743
Project professional fees		-		12,000
Other project costs	3,122	1,470	4,592	775
Freelance administrator	633	8,205	8,838	7,048
Consultancy fees	6,254	-	6,254	-
Conference & networking events	2,562	-	2,562	150
Website/IT costs	836	-	836	163
Travel expenses	2,344	-	2,344	1,187
Insurance	557	-	557	471
Payroll charges	284	-	284	240
Independent Examiners fee	1,000	-	1,000	650
Bank charges	228	-	228	126
Management Fee	(321)	321	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>81,224</b>	<b>102,708</b>	<b>183,932</b>	135,843
<b>NET OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS</b>	<b>24,534</b>	<b>(520)</b>	<b>24,014</b>	113,321
Transfer of funds	4,635	(4,635)	-	-
Cash funds at beginning of year	100,614	65,249	165,863	52,542
<b>Cash funds at end of year</b>	<b>129,783</b>	<b>60,094</b>	<b>189,877</b>	165,863

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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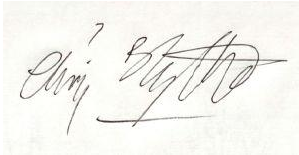
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**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

	<b>Un-restricted funds £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>2023 Total £</b>	<b>2022 Total £</b>
Unity Trust Current account	104,529	60,094	<b>164,623</b>	145,679
Unity Trust Deposit account	25,254	-	<b>25,254</b>	20,184
Cash at bank and in hand	129,783	60,094	<b>189,877</b>	165,863

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024



C Blythe  
Chair of Trustees

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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## Notes to the financial statements

### 1. Staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses

Staff costs comprise:	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£</b>	£
Salaries	<b>72,281</b>	59,263
Working from home allowance	<b>864</b>	710
National Insurance	-	-
Pension costs	<b>2,111</b>	1,744
Total	<b>75,256</b>	61,717

The charity's Trustees were not paid nor received any other benefits from employment in the year (2022: £nil). No expenses were reimbursed to Trustees in the year (2022: £nil).

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**2. Fund movements**

<b>Restricted funds</b>		<b>Balance at beginning of year</b>	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>Transfer</b>	<b>Balance at end of year</b>
<b>Funder</b>	<b>Fund purpose</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Awards for All	Volunteer Group Support	7,410	-	(7,410)	-	-
Selly Oak NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Selly Oak Park	4,282	4,700	(5,675)	-	3,307
Edgbaston NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Edgbaston Park	4,370	-	(3,930)	-	440
Erdington NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Erdington Park	3,840	5,000	(6,715)	-	2,125
Hall Green NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Hall Green Park	4,470	7,870	(7,784)	-	4,556
Ladywood NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Ladywood Park	1,670	-	(1,497)	-	173
Northfield NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Northfield Park	4,370	-	(4,295)	-	75
Perry Barr NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Perry Barr Park	1,810	-	(1,523)	-	287
Yardley Green NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Yardley Park	3,760	-	(2,812)	-	948
Birmingham Sport & Physical Activity Trust	Tai Chi sessions in local parks	-	2,440	(136)	-	2,304
William Cadbury Trust	Tai Chi sessions in local parks	-	1,000	(757)	-	243
Greening The Grey	Support for groups to clean up open spaces	3,624	28,585	(27,695)	-	4,514
Seedcorn Fund	Funding to support groups with applications for funding	23,600	30,000	(19,547)	-	34,053
FINCH RSPB	Engaging communities with their natural heritage	2,043	13,265	(10,673)	(4,635)	-
Dulverton Trust	Website development in 2024	-	4,328	-	-	4,328
Cona Project	Funding towards FPA programme	-	5,000	(2,259)	-	2,741
		65,249	102,188	(102,708)	(4,635)	60,094
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
General funds		100,614	105,758	(81,224)	4,635	129,783
<b>Total</b>		165,863	207,946	(183,932)	-	189,877

Transfers relate to the Finch Project in respect of an agreed fee for access to BOSF data and membership and on-going hosting of an RSPB resource on the website.

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**3. Transactions with related parties**

There were no transactions with related parties during the year that require disclosure in these accounts (2022: none).

**BIRMINGHAM OPEN SPACES FORUM**

England & Wales - Charity number 1170171

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# Accounts

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# **Birmingham Open Spaces Forum**

**Trustees' Annual Report and Receipts and Payments accounts for the period ended 31 March 2022**

**Registered Charity number 1170171**

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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## **Report of the trustees**

The trustees of the Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (“the Charity”) have pleasure in presenting the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 which comply with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charity’s Constitution.

The Charity was registered on 15 November 2016 and commenced activity once a bank account had been opened and funds transferred from the previous unincorporated charity. This took place on 1 February 2019. Prior activity is shown in the accounts of the old charity (Birmingham Open Spaces Forum, registered number 1142231).

## **Objectives and activities**

As set out in its Constitution, the Charity’s objects are:

- (a) To advance the education of the public in the environment, understanding, application and conservation of open spaces within the City of Birmingham.
- (b) To promote the protection, conservation and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Birmingham.
- (c) To promote and enhance the open spaces within the City of Birmingham as recreational facilities in the interest of social welfare, to improve the conditions of life for the inhabitants without distinction of political, religious or other opinions.

The Charity pursues its objects through the following activities:

- Representing and supporting friends and community groups across the whole of Birmingham through training, networking, skill sharing, assistance in fundraising and acting as a collective voice of the volunteers seeking to protect, enhance and enjoy Birmingham’s parks and open spaces.
- Organising social events, including an annual conference where speakers are invited, and relevant workshops offered to attendees.
- Promotion of BOSF’s work on various social media channels.
- Collecting valuable volunteer data from groups and displaying it as an infographic to showcase the great work done by our volunteers.
- Sharing the impactful data with Birmingham Parks Service and other influential and strategic partners to illustrate the extent of volunteering and the pragmatic difference it makes to our parks and open spaces.
- Sending regular newsletters to groups and partners.
- Attending a range of environmental groups/forums, including the Birmingham City of Nature Alliance, West Midlands Parks Forum and the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces.
- Working closely with partners such as Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Trees for Life, Birmingham & Black Country Wildlife Trust, the Canal & River Trust, the RSPB and the University of Birmingham in the overall
- Pursuit of improvements to the environmental agenda.

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
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## **Report of the trustees continued**

In shaping the objectives for each year, and planning ahead, the Trustees take due consideration of the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit, including the guidance “Public Benefit: Running a Charity (PB2)”.

For a large part of the year April 2021 – March 2022, COVID continued to impact on our service. The benefits and delights of Birmingham’s parks and open spaces were heightened during the pandemic and this led to an increase in enquiries particularly from communities who previously, we had little or no engagement with. Measures adopted during the pandemic to bring members together via Zoom proved to be immensely popular and alongside a series of face to face social events, continued to be arranged enabling more members ready access to our networking events. As a result, we sought funding to employ a second community development team member on a part time basis and delightfully, made an appointment in February 2022.

## **Achievements and performance**

### **(A) To advance the education of the public in the environment, understanding, application and conservation of open spaces within the City of Birmingham.**

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF) is a membership organisation that brings together people in Birmingham with an interest in parks and green open spaces. We support groups who want to ensure that green open spaces are accessible to people who live and work across the city. We do this by providing information to groups and individuals. We create opportunities for groups and individuals interested in open spaces to share skills, knowledge and experience by arranging networking and knowledge exchange events. We also produce regular updates about funding sources, training opportunities, events in open spaces and other information of interest to our members.

We believe that an ‘open space’ is any green area accessible to the local community and this includes parks, allotments, nature reserves, public open spaces, cemeteries, wildlife corridors, woodlands, playing fields, community gardens and informal green spaces.

During the year we set up 14 new groups and undertook intensive community development Endeavors, hopefully concluding with the formation of a further 6 groups. Other activities continued including an increased social media presence which not only served to celebrate the work and successes of our membership but also acted as the conduit of information relating to the environmental agenda, our partners and the safe use of parks whilst the effects of the pandemic continued. At the close of the financial year our Twitter followers numbered 2,676, Facebook 1,723 and Instagram 978.

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
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In 2021 - 2022 we organised 11 events which took place at a range of locations and via Zoom. Unfortunately, COVID restrictions meant we were unable to host our annual conference and Christmas lecture.

- Online social events took place in April, May, July 2021 and February 2022
- Face to face social events took place in May, June, July 2021 and January and March 2022 at a variety of different member sites.
- We continued to work in partnership with the Earth Heritage Trust and Lapworth Museum to explore the glacial erratic boulders that were moved to Birmingham by the ice age and our support was integral in helping our partners to secure National Lottery funding to engage community groups and schools with local natural heritage.
- Regular newsletters were sent out each month to member groups, Birmingham Council Parks staff and other interested people and partners, advertising events & activities, funding opportunities, training and other useful information.

**(B) To promote the protection, conservation, and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Birmingham.**

With support from Birmingham City Council and Get Grants Ltd., we continued to operate a 'seed corn fund' for member groups. This provided member groups with a means to apply for funding for projects they wanted to deliver. £10,000 from Birmingham City Council ('BCC') enabled the generation of funds to the value of over £100,000 for sites across the city and in the latter stages of the financial year, we were given a further £20,000 to continue this work which allows our members to protect, improve and enhance their respective park and/or open space.

Our Freelance Administrator collected volunteer data from member groups allowing us to promote the great work and extent of volunteering taking place in Birmingham's parks and open spaces. In 2021/22 a total of 118 member groups undertook 86,537 hours of volunteering work across a range of disciplines. This information is hugely influential and informative to Birmingham Parks Service as well as many other environmental partners, as it is indicative of the high regard that our public spaces have in the affections of Birmingham residents as well as the overall desire and need to improve on such spaces and utilise them to their full extent. Our excellent data collection is at the heart of this financial year's significant successes with funders.

We continued to support the Future Parks Accelerator Programme, both strategically and as a delivery partner, and consolidated our support by becoming an integral partner in the Birmingham City of Nature Alliance, an initiative borne from the Future Parks Accelerator Programme which was funded by the Commonwealth Games Legacy fund administered by Birmingham Council. We continued to be represented on the West Midlands Park Forum and the National Federation of Parks & Green Spaces consolidating our national profile. Other organisations we have worked closely with include, Clean-up UK, Birmingham Trees for Life, the University of Birmingham, the RSPB and the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust.

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**(C) To promote and enhance the open spaces within the City of Birmingham as recreational facilities in the interest of social welfare, to improve the conditions of life for the inhabitants without distinction of political, religious, or other opinions:**

Neighbourhood Network Scheme funding whose specific aim is to develop the support people need to lead happy, independent lives, allowed us to roll out Tai Chi sessions to 27 different parks enabling us to promote the benefits of our parks and open spaces to a new audience. We have continued to develop support for additional groups working to improve their local streets and areas through 'Greening the Grey' the effects of which are to be seen in reductions of litter, minor works, through planting and improved community cohesion.

Although something of a diversification, the success of the Tai Chi programme illustrated how we reached out to new audiences. By facilitating Tai Chi in our parks, we have broadened park usage beyond that which is traditional. More people now appreciate the importance of their park and/or local green space. Going forward we intend to facilitate further park-related activities thereby engaging yet more people and affirming the significance of parks and open spaces in the day to day healthy lives of more Birmingham residents.

## **Financial review**

Over the year, BOSF received a total income of £249,164. Out of this income with an expenditure of £135,843 leaving an operating surplus of £113,321.

### **Income**

BOSF's net income has increased by £137,305. The organisation received grants from various funders. These sources of income have allowed us to finance all our activities as well as guarantee a consistent restricted and unrestricted stream of funding.

- £62,857 from Esmee Fairbairn towards unrestricted revenue cost to continue delivering BOSF core activities.
- £31,950 from Birmingham City Council to continue providing professional services through the employment of the Community Facilitator for the Future Parks Accelerator Project (FPA) and to increase the working hours dedicated to the project from 22.5 to 35 hours per month
- £9,740 from Birmingham City Council to continue collecting and processing valuable data (volunteer hours) from friends' groups.
- £19,932 from Birmingham City Council to employ two volunteer development coordinators to support BOSF's volunteer offer to two key pilot sites
- £2,000 from Birmingham City Council to support the delivery of activities by the Volunteer Development Coordinators, including the purchase of equipment and materials, marketing and publicity and the development and application of the Trackit App.

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- £9,880 from Awards for All to provide volunteer to support and help establish and formalise new friends' groups across Birmingham
- £2,043.17 from RSPS (FINCH project) towards restricted revenue cost for the additional workload carried out by the Operations Manager and the Communications Officer
- £58,585 from Birmingham City Council to achieve the following:
  - provide support to community groups and active citizens to enable them to improve their local environment more effectively by cleaning and greening grey areas of the city.
  - work with Get Grants to support groups making effective funding application to grants and trusts to improve the local community environment (2021-2023)
- £10,000 from Garfield Weston Foundation to provide increased support and 'hand-holding' to new and potential groups in areas with lower social capital
- BOSF also received funds from various Neighbourhood Network Schemes to provide the delivery of free outdoor tai-chi sessions 27 different sites.
  - £2020 Perry Barr NNS
  - £2,120 from Birmingham Settlement (Ladywood NNS)
  - £6,000 from Green Square Accord (Hall Green NNS)
  - £4,240 from Birmingham Disability (Yardley NNS)
  - £5,000 from Witton Lodge (Erdington NSS)
  - £10,000 from Hearth of England Foundation (Edgbaston & Northfield NNS)
  - £4,200 from Selly Oak NNS

During the year BOSF supported the installation of notice boards in several parks to enhance communication with park users and promote local activities, as such, BOSF anticipated and transferred the money for the cost of the notice boards and their installation which was later reimbursed by the Council (£2,327). This has helped to speed the process up and allow an earlier start of the work. Additionally, £6,000 were paid for the service of a Financial Sustainable Adviser who was engaged as a consultant to BOSF to explore sustainable finance for the Birmingham Future Parks Accelerator Project. Lastly, £1,000 was held on behalf of a friend's group until their bank account is opened.

In February BOSF received £192.70 from HMRC as part of covid related statutory Sick Pay for one of the workers.

In addition, BOSF received the following donations:

- £439.04 were received by Friends of Fox Holly when the group finished its activities and close the account

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- £10.56 were donated anonymously via Amazon Smile

21-22 has shown the importance of income diversification to help with the financial sustainability of the organization, therefore this new operating model which involved more bid writing and partnership work will continue to be used to have a more balanced approach to income generation.

### **Expenditure**

BOSF's expenditure increased substantially last year. The nearly 58% increase (£49,758) in the charity expenses is due to the employment of two additional members of staff to support the existing volunteer offer and get a better understanding of volunteer motivations and participation, and the increase of weekly hours of the existing FPA Community Facilitator from 22.5 to 35. In addition, freelance contractor hours also increased to carry out additional responsibilities managing the tai-chi funds and volunteer data. As a result of this, there has been an overall rise in overhead costs, including salaries, national insurance and pension contributions but also, payroll and bank charges.

Project expenses were also much higher than in previous years due to the high number of tai-chi sessions delivered on a weekly basis across Birmingham and engagement sessions provided by the Volunteer Development Coordinators. Professional and fundraising fees have increased because of the work carried out by the Financial Advisor and Get Grants.

### **Overview**

2021-2022 has been a very successful year for BOSF and we are very proud of all that we have achieved together. Despite the great opportunities that the year has offered us, BOSF Trustees are aware that challenges will also arise and continue but Trustees now feel more prepared to face unforeseen situations.

Based on the information available in respect of the future, the reviewed forecast and cashflow for March 2023, and the income generated during the current financial year, Trustees are confident that BOSF has the plans and resources to manage its business risk successfully and to continue delivering its core activities effectively next year.

### **Reserves policy**

As part of the BOSF's Reserves Policy, BOSF holds a reserves account to ensure that main operations can continue for a period of at least three months and that redundancy costs are covered if funding difficulties arise. At the last review done in September 2021, trustees agreed that a transfer of £5,000 to accurately reach the amount stated in BOSF's reserve policy. At end of March 2022, the account held £20,183.75 . The reserves policy will continue to be kept under periodic review and reserves levels may be adjusted as perceptions of risks and other factors change.

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Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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**Structure, Governance and Management**

BOSF registered as a CIO with the Charities Commission for England and Wales on 15 November 2016.

**Governing Document**

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum is a registered Charity governed by its Constitution adopted on 16 February 2016 and amended on 10 July 2017.

**Appointment of trustees, induction & training**

All trustees are elected at a BOSF Annual General Meeting and serve a two-year term. They bring with them skills, knowledge, and experience to contribute to the Charity's activities and to discharge their obligations as Trustees.

In order to keep the Trustees and Friend's groups fully informed of the progress of the projects and to ensure that staff are provided with support and strategic direction, meetings are held monthly, alternating between Trustees only meetings and advisory committee meetings.

**Management and administration.**

**The Community Open Spaces Development Manager's** role is to develop and manage the Forum in line with current aims and objectives as well as raise the profile of BOSF locally and nationally and establish good links with Parks and Open Spaces Community Groups, Birmingham City Council and all interested agencies. Amongst other duties, the manager helps to set up new groups and support existing ones, attends Steering group meetings, and give regular update reports and newsletters; organises and runs BOSF annual conference and networking opportunities in Birmingham and helps secure funding, not only to friend's groups, but also the Forum.

**The Communications Officer's** role is to support the effective promotion of BOSF's aims and objectives using a mix of social media, communications, and marketing channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Website) and attending steering group meetings with partners. In addition, the Communications Officer assists BOSF's member groups on social media and communications and is currently working with young people to increase young people's knowledge, input, and activity in green open spaces.

Two members of part time staff fulfilled their fixed term roles as **Volunteer Development Coordinators** as part of the Future Parks Accelerator programme in August 2021. The success of this work was the foundation for further work and in February 2022, we recruited a further **Volunteer Development Co-ordinator** to engage with park users and the wider community to develop opportunities for volunteering, community management and development of the sites.

**Freelance admin** provides administrative support 1 or 2 days a week. Her main aim is to gather and compile volunteer data from Friend's groups, produce infographics and give administrative support in meetings.

An **Operations Manager** was recruited in November 2021 to oversee operations, staff, budgets, project delivery, strategy and reporting to the Trustees. This post is strengthening our governance as a Charity and indeed as an employer; we now have a suite of policies, key

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performance indicators for ease of reporting to our funders, and a proper structure for the care and oversight of all staff.

The **Trustees** delegate the day-to-day running and administering of the charity and its activities to the Operations Manager, Community Open Spaces Development Manager and other members of the staff team.

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Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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**Reference and administrative information**

**Charity Number:** 1170171

**Trustees:**

C Blythe (Chair)  
T Clark  
A Grande Cristobal  
E WoolfMBE

**Registered Office:**

School of Horticulture  
The White House  
Kings Heath Park  
Vicarage Road  
B14 7TQ

**Bankers:**

Unity Trust Bank plc  
Nine Brindley Place  
Birmingham  
B1 2HB

**Independent Examiner:**

Karen Hanlan independent Examiner Ltd  
1 Saracen Close  
Ettington  
CV37 7SZ

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by:

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023

C Blythe  
Chair of Trustees

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
for the period ended 31 March 2022

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**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Birmingham Open Spaces Forum on the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Birmingham Open Spaces Forum ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2022 which are set out on pages 13 to 16.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity'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 2011 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 2011 Act: or
- 2) the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

Karen Hanlan, Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales  
Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Limited  
1 Saracen Close, Ettington, CV37 7SZ

Date: 29th January 2023

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
for the period ended 31 March 2022

**Receipts and Payments Accounts**

	Un-restricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2022 £	Total funds 2021 £
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
Donations & grants	73,500	43,460	<b>116,960</b>	62,974
Charitable activities	71,564	60,628	<b>132,192</b>	48,870
Bank Interest	12	-	<b>12</b>	15
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>145,076</b>	<b>104,088</b>	<b>249,164</b>	111,859
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
Fundraising costs	-	6,400	<b>6,400</b>	3,007
Payments for volunteer data collection	9,520	-	<b>9,520</b>	8,010
Staff cost (note 1)	45,066	16,651	<b>61,717</b>	43,632
FRAP project costs	19,653	-	<b>19,653</b>	15,326
Thai Chi Sessions	-	15,743	<b>15,743</b>	1,147
Project professional fees	12,000	-	<b>12,000</b>	6,000
Other project costs	775	-	<b>775</b>	1,334
Freelance contractor payments	2,048	5,000	<b>7,048</b>	4,251
Conference & networking events	150	-	<b>150</b>	-
Website/IT costs	163	-	<b>163</b>	672
Travel expenses	794	393	<b>1,187</b>	1,365
Insurance	471	-	<b>471</b>	494
Payroll charges	240	-	<b>240</b>	225
Independent Examiners fee	650	-	<b>650</b>	550
Bank charges	126	-	<b>126</b>	72
Management Fee	(5,385)	5,385	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>86,271</b>	<b>49,572</b>	<b>135,843</b>	86,085
<b>NET OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS</b>	<b>58,805</b>	<b>54,516</b>	<b>113,321</b>	25,774
Transfer of funds	-	-	-	-
Cash funds at beginning of year	<b>41,809</b>	<b>10,733</b>	<b>52,542</b>	26,768
<b>Cash funds at end of year</b>	<b>100,614</b>	<b>65,249</b>	<b>165,863</b>	52,542

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Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

	<b>Un-restricted funds £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>2022 Total £</b>	<b>2021 Total £</b>
Unity Trust Current account	100,614	45,065	<b>145,679</b>	37,370
Unity Trust Deposit account	-	20,184	<b>20,184</b>	15,172
	<hr/>			
Cash at bank and in hand	100,614	65,249	<b>165,863</b>	52,542
	<hr/>			

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023

C Blythe  
Chair of Trustees

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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## Notes to the financial statements

### 1. Staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses

Staff costs comprise:	<b>2022</b>	2021
	£	£
Salaries	<b>59,973</b>	42,369
National Insurance	-	-
Pension costs	<b>1,744</b>	1,263
Total	<b>61,717</b>	43,632

The charity's Trustees were not paid nor received any other benefits from employment in the year (2021: £nil). No expenses were reimbursed to Trustees in the year (2021: £nil).

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**2. Fund movements**

<b>Restricted funds</b>		<b>Balance at beginning of year</b>	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>Balance at end of year</b>
<b>Funder</b>	<b>Fund purpose</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Awards for All Sports	Volunteer Group Support	-	9,880	(2,470)	<b>7,410</b>
Birmingham	Thai Chi sessions in parks	3,600	-	(3,600)	-
Selly Oak NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Selly Oak Park	7,133	4,200	(7,051)	<b>4,282</b>
Edgbaston NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Edgbaston Park	-	5,000	(630)	<b>4,370</b>
Erdington NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Erdington Park	-	5,000	(1,160)	<b>3,840</b>
Hall Green NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Hall Green Park	-	6,000	(1,530)	<b>4,470</b>
Ladywood NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Ladywood Park	-	2,120	(450)	<b>1,670</b>
Northfield NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Northfield Park	-	5,000	(630)	<b>4,370</b>
Perry Barr NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Perry Barr Park	-	2,020	(210)	<b>1,810</b>
Yardley Green NNS	Thai Chi sessions in Yardley Park	-	4,240	(480)	<b>3,760</b>
Greening The Grey	Support for groups to clean up open spaces	-	28,585	(24,961)	<b>3,624</b>
Seedcorn Fund	Funding to support groups with applications for funding	-	30,000	(6,400)	<b>23,600</b>
FINCH RSPB	Engaging communities with their natural heritage	-	2,043	-	<b>2,043</b>
		<b>10,733</b>	<b>104,088</b>	<b>(49,572)</b>	<b>65,249</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
-	General funds	41,809	145,076	(86,271)	<b>100,614</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>52,542</b>	<b>249,164</b>	<b>(135,843)</b>	<b>165,863</b>

**3. Transactions with related parties**

There were no transactions with related parties during the year that require disclosure in these accounts (2021: none).

**BIRMINGHAM OPEN SPACES FORUM**

England & Wales - Charity number 1170171

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# Accounts

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## Birmingham Open Spaces Forum

Trustees' Annual Report and Receipts and Payments  
accounts for the period ended 31 March 2021

Registered Charity number 1170171

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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## **Report of the trustees**

The trustees of the Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (“the Charity”) have pleasure in presenting the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comply with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charity’s Constitution.

The Charity was registered on 15 November 2016 and commenced activity once a bank account had been opened and funds transferred from the previous unincorporated charity. This took place on 1 February 2019 and the accounts for the prior year include activity from that date until 31 March 2019. Prior activity is shown in the accounts of the old charity (Birmingham Open Spaces Forum, registered number 1142231).

## **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

As set out in its Constitution, the Charity’s objects are:

- (a) To advance the education of the public in the environment, understanding, application and conservation of open spaces within the City of Birmingham.
- (b) To promote the protection, conservation and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Birmingham.
- (c) To promote and enhance the open spaces within the City of Birmingham as recreational facilities in the interest of social welfare, to improve the conditions of life for the inhabitants without distinction of political, religious or other opinions.

The Charity pursues its objects through the following activities:

- Representing and supporting friends and community groups across the whole of Birmingham through training, networking, skill sharing, assistance in fundraising and acting as a collective voice of the volunteers.
- Organising social events, including an annual conference where speakers are invited, and relevant workshops offered to attendees.
- Promotion of BOSF’s work on various social media channels.
- Collecting valuable volunteer data from groups and displaying it as an infographic to showcase the great work done by volunteers. Sharing the data with BCC parks to show a wider picture of volunteering in Birmingham’s green spaces.
- Sending regular newsletters to groups and partners.
- Sitting on the Board of different environmental groups/forums, including The Future Parks Accelerator Programme, Birmingham City of Nature Alliance, Greener Birmingham Coalition, Natural Capital Core Delivery Group, West Midlands Park Forum and the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces, amongst others.
- Working close to partners such as Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Trees for Life, Fields in Trust, the Police Partnership Team, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Team4Nature and Waterside Care.

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
Trustees Report and Receipts and Payments Accounts  
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## **Report of the trustees continued**

In shaping the objectives for each year, and planning ahead, the Trustees take due consideration of the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit, including the guidance “Public Benefit: Running a Charity (PB2)”.

The year April 2020 – March 2021 was in many ways defined by the COVID-19 pandemic. As with many organisations, we have adapted our activities to fit changing Covid-19 guidance and regulations, always having in mind the safety and health and wellbeing of our Staff, Trustees and Member Groups.

The Impact of Covid-19 has been felt across the organisation and our member groups, as well as in the activities of many of our partners. Staff have worked from home, and we have made use of the government’s furlough scheme where appropriate. Activities have been delivered remotely where possible, and whilst this has provided challenges, it has also meant that we have had to find new ways of working and increased our online presence.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

**(a) To advance the education of the public in the environment, understanding, application and conservation of open spaces within the City of Birmingham.**

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF) is a membership organisation that brings together people in Birmingham with an interest in parks and green open spaces.

We support groups who want to ensure that green open spaces are accessible to people who live and work across the city. We do this by providing information to groups and individuals. We create opportunities for groups and individuals interested in open spaces to share skills, knowledge and experience by arranging networking and knowledge exchange events. We also produce regular updates about funding sources, training opportunities, events in open spaces and other information of interest to our members.

We believe that an ‘open space’ is any green area accessible to a local community and this includes parks, allotments, nature reserves, public open spaces, cemeteries, wildlife corridors, woodlands, playing fields, community gardens and informal green spaces.

During the first part of 2020/21 we helped to start up 8 new groups across the city, we also made initial enquiries with other possible new groups.

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
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## Report of the trustees continued

Awards through NNS beginning in December 2020 have meant that we have been able to develop Tia Chi sessions with 8 groups across the city, beginning online in early 2021. With support from Birmingham City Council and Get Grants Ltd., we were able to operate a 'seed corn fund' for member groups. This provided member groups with a means to apply for funding for projects they wanted to deliver. £10,000 from Birmingham City Council ('BCC') has enabled the generation of funds to the value of over £100,000 for sites across the city.

In 2020 - 2021 we organised 20 events which took place at a range of times, days and locations, and with a variety of attendees. All events in the year were online due to COVID-19, but we returned to an element of face-to-face meetings from June 2021. We will take our learnings from the pandemic and use these to deliver a combination of face-to-face and online events going forward.

Coffee Mornings online – June 20, July 20 x 3, August 20, September 20 x 2, October 20 x 2, November 20, December 20, January 21, February 21, March 21 = 14

BOSF Tea Times online – November 20, January 21, February 21, March 21 = 4

BOSF Christmas Lecture online – December 2020 - Delivered by Prof. Kathryn Moore of Birmingham City University on the subject of the West Midlands Park.

BOSF AGM online – April 2021 and the one before was January 2020 (so neither of them in this period)

We continued to work in partnership with the Earth Heritage Trust and Lapworth Museum to explore the glacial erratic boulders that were moved to Birmingham by the ice age, back around 450 thousand years ago. The bid to the National Lottery was delayed as a result of the pandemic, but work is progressing again, and the bid has finally been submitted. This is for working with community groups and schools to explore our local natural heritage and create new trails in the south of the city.

BOSF's Communications Officer has continued to increase our social media reach through our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram feeds, as well as keeping the website current. Social media and digital activities have been very important again this year as we have reacted to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our Freelance Administrator has been working hard on collecting volunteer data from groups and displaying this data as an Infographic to be used by BOSF, Friend's groups and partners to show the great work done by volunteers in our parks and open spaces. In 2020/21 a total of 78 groups sent in data, and the total number of separate submissions was 758. This was sent into BCC Parks so that it can be added to their data, to show a wider picture of the extent of volunteering in Birmingham's green spaces.

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
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## **Report of the trustees continued**

BOSF was able to show that 55,226 hours of work was undertaken by volunteers in 2020-2021, but it is thought that it is significantly under-reported and work to encourage recording and submission of volunteer hour's data is continuing. Working with the Future Parks Programme in the city, we also began to trial a mobile phone app for the collection of volunteering information from our groups. This trial continues until January 2022.

Regular newsletters were sent out each month to all groups, BCC Parks staff and all other interested people and groups, advertising events & activities, funding, training and useful information.

**(b) To promote the protection, conservation and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Birmingham.**

Along with Eco Birmingham, the B&BC Wildlife Trust and other groups, BOSF has continued to support the Greener Birmingham Coalition. This is a gathering of many "green" organisations across Birmingham, working together to improve communication and work towards greening up our city. We have also continued to support the Future Parks Accelerator Programme in the city, as a delivery partner, FPA Board member, and employing staff working on FPA. Towards the end of the year, we have also been supporting and being part of the fledgling Birmingham City of Nature Alliance.

We are still working in partnership with the Earth Heritage Trust and Lapworth Museum to explore the glacial erratic boulders that were moved to Birmingham by the ice age, back around 450 thousand years ago. The bid to the National Lottery was delayed as a result of the pandemic, but work is progressing again and the bid has finally been submitted. This is for working with community groups and schools to explore our local natural heritage and create new trails in the south of the city.

We are represented on the Natural Capital Core Delivery Group, West Midlands Park Forum and the National Federation of Parks & Green Spaces. From our national work, we work closely with Fields in Trust, Natural England, adding in the community voice to their Green Infrastructure investigation and continue where possible to maintain these collaborations.

Other organisations we have worked closely with include, Cleanup UK, Birmingham Trees for Life, the Police Partnership Team, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Team4Nature, Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens and KBT Waterside Care.

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
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## Report of the trustees continued

**(c) To promote and enhance the open spaces within the City of Birmingham as recreational facilities in the interest of social welfare, to improve the conditions of life for the inhabitants without distinction of political, religious or other opinions:**

BOSF has continued to work closely with the Parks service of the city council (BCC). Monthly meetings are held with Senior Council staff enabling sharing of information, as well as better cooperation between the council and BOSF. We have continued to develop support for additional groups working to improve their local streets and areas through 'Greening the Grey' activities.

### FINANCIAL REVIEW

Over the year, BOSF received a total income of £111,859 with expenditure of £86,085, leaving an operating surplus of £25,774 of which £7,615 related to restricted funds.

### INCOME

BOSF's net income has increased by £63,970. The organisation received grants from the following funders:

- £15,283.00 from Esmee Fairbairn as Covid-19 Fast Response Grant towards unrestricted core cost.
- £32,000 from Esmee Fairbairn as short-term unrestricted revenue support while BOSF planned a strategic response to the Covid-19 situation and the Future Parks Accelerator Project.
- £25,000 from Birmingham City Council to continue providing professional services through the employment of the Community Facilitator for the Future Parks Accelerator Project
- £8,000 from Birmingham City Council to continue collecting and processing valuable data (volunteer hours) from friend's groups.
- £4,200 from Birmingham Sport and Physical Activity Trust and £7,680 from Selly Oak NNS to reinstate the delivery of free outdoor tai-chi sessions in 7 different sites, including Kings Norton Park, Kings Heath, Perry Hall Park, Billesley Common, Cotteridge Park, Bournville Park and Stirchley Park.

During the year BOSF received £3,811.36 from HMRC as part of the Job Retention Scheme to support the organisation to pay worker's wages as they were unable to work during the coronavirus crisis. The claims contributed to the financial stability of the organisation and the retention of employees during lockdown.

An additional £541 was received from Birmingham City Council for support given to the Future Park Accelerator Project, which included website development work, management of social media and processing survey results.

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## **Report of the trustees continued**

Other income includes £244 from Birmingham City Council for the piloting of an application to record volunteer hours from friend's groups.

## **Expenditure**

BOSF's expenditure increased last year by £11,829. This is due to the employment of two additional members of staff to support the existing volunteer offer and get a better understanding of volunteer motivations and participation. In addition, freelance contractor hours also increased to support online delivery during the pandemic, and to carry out additional responsibilities managing the tai-chi funds and volunteer data.

Project cost and project professional fees were much higher than previous years, because of the reinstatement of Tai-chi sessions and the work carried out by the sustainable financial advisor.

## **Overview**

Like many other UK charities, BOSF faced a number of difficult decisions during the lockdown period; however, thanks to the UK government's Job Retention Scheme and the invaluable support of long-term funders we finished the year in a financially resilient state.

Throughout the year Trustees regularly reviewed BOSF's operations and ways to reduce overhead expenditure, and focused on ensuring an effective and efficient use of resources, especially during the first few months of the pandemic.

In April, one member of staff was furloughed, leaving the charity understaffed. At the same time, the charity also suffered other knock-on effects, such as the increase of workload (policies, safety procedures) and having to come up with new ways of operating, supporting friends groups and delivering projects (online tai-chi, DVDs, video workshops).

2020-2021 has been a very difficult year however BOSF has proved to be a very resilient charity. The challenges and opportunities will continue, but Trustees and staff feel now more prepared to face unforeseen situations.

Based on the information available in respect of the future, and the reviewed forecast to March 2022, Trustees are confident that BOSF has the plans and resources to manage its business risk successfully and to continue delivering its core activities effectively next year.

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## **Report of the trustees continued**

### **Reserves policy**

The Trustees aim to retain sufficient free reserves equivalent to three months general running costs and any winding up costs. Based on projections this amounts to approximately £15,172. Such reserves are held in case of any sudden decline in income or unexpected cost or risk exposure, and to ensure that commitments to meeting contractual obligations to staff, premises and funding partners are met with confidence. Reserves are held in a separate account, Unity Trust Deposit Account. The charity meets its day-to-day working capital requirements through its existing banking facilities and an overdraft has not been requested.

The reserves policy will be kept under periodic review and reserves levels will be adjusted as perceptions of risks and other factors change.

### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

BOSF registered as a CIO with the Charities Commission for England and Wales on 15 November 2016.

#### **Governing Document**

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum is a registered Charity governed by its Constitution adopted on 16 February 2016 and amended on 10 July 2017.

#### **Appointment of trustees, induction & training**

All trustees are elected at a BOSF Annual General Meeting and serve a two-year term. They bring with them skills, knowledge, and experience to contribute to the Charity's activities and to discharge their obligations as Trustees.

In order to keep the Trustees and Friend's groups fully informed of the progress of the projects and to ensure that staff are provided with support and strategic direction, meetings are held monthly, alternating between Trustees only meetings and advisory committee meetings.

#### **Management and administration.**

**The Community Open Spaces Development Manager's** role is to develop and manage the Forum in line with current aims and objectives as well as raise the profile of BOSF locally and nationally and establish good links with Parks and Open Spaces Community Groups, Birmingham City Council and all interested agencies. Amongst other duties, the manager helps to set up new groups and support existing ones, attends Steering group meetings, and give regular update reports and newsletters; organises and runs BOSF annual conference and networking opportunities in Birmingham and helps secure funding, not only to friend's groups, but also the Forum. The Community Open Spaces Development Manager also manages the Communications Officer.

## Report of the trustees continued

**The Communications Officer's** role is to support the effective promotion of BOSF's aims and objectives using a mix of social media, communications, and marketing channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Website) and attending steering group meetings with partners. In addition, the Communications Officer assists BOSF's member groups on social media and communications and is currently working with young people to increase young people's knowledge, input, and activity in green open spaces.

Two new members of staff were employed on a part time basis for six months to support the multi-disciplinary Future Parks Accelerator programme as **Volunteer Development Coordinators**. Their role was to support BOSF's volunteer offer to two key pilot sites, Dawberry Fields and Ward End Park. They worked with park users and the wider community to develop opportunities for volunteering, community management and development of the sites.

**Freelance admin** provides administrative support 1 or 2 days a week. Her main aim is to gather and compile volunteer data from Friend's groups, produce infographics and give administrative support in meetings.

The Trustees delegate the day-to-day running and administering of the charity and its activities to the Community Open Spaces Development Manager and other members of the staff team.

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## Report of the trustees continued

### REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

**Charity Number:** 1170171

#### Trustees:

C Blythe (Chair)	Appointed 11/09/2018	
T Clark	Appointed 11/09/2018	
A Grande Cristobal	Appointed 11/09/2018	
H Sultan	Appointed 17/02/2020	Resigned 17/03/20
E WoolfMBE	Appointed 11/2016 and to the position of Secretary on 11/09/2018	

#### Registered Office:

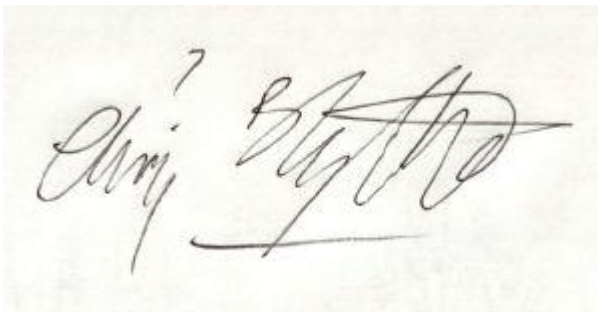
School of Horticulture  
The White House  
Kings Heath Park  
Vicarage Road  
B14 7TQ

#### Bankers:

Unity Trust Bank plc  
Nine Brindley Place  
Birmingham  
B1 2HB

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by:

Date: 26th January 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read 'C Blythe'. There is a small question mark above the first part of the signature.

C Blythe  
Chair of Trustees

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**Independent Examiner’s Report to the Trustees of Birmingham Open Spaces Forum on the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (‘the charity’) for the year ended 31 March 2021 which are set out on pages 13 to 15.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (‘the 2011 Act’).

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity’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 2011 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 2011 Act: or
- 2) the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.



Karen Hanlan, Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales  
Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Limited  
12 Waterloo Close, Wellesbourne, CV35 9JG

Date: 26 January 2022

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
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## Receipts and Payments Accounts

	Un-restricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
Donations & grants	51,094	11,880	<b>62,974</b>	35,233
Charitable activities	48,870	-	<b>48,870</b>	12,500
Other income	-	-	-	-
Bank Interest	15	-	<b>15</b>	156
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>99,979</b>	<b>11,880</b>	<b>111,859</b>	47,889
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
Fundraising costs	3,007	-	<b>3,007</b>	2,550
Payments for volunteer data collection	8,010	-	<b>8,010</b>	7,680
Staff cost (note 1)	40,932	2,700	<b>43,632</b>	41,403
FRAP project costs	15,326	-	<b>15,326</b>	6,645
Thai Chi Sessions	-	1,147	<b>1,147</b>	
Project professional fees	6,000	-	<b>6,000</b>	3,247
Other project costs	916	418	<b>1,334</b>	393
Freelance contractor payments	4,251	-	<b>4,251</b>	4,013
Conference & networking events	-	-	-	2,966
Website/IT costs	672	-	<b>672</b>	2,192
Travel expenses	1,365	-	<b>1,365</b>	1,522
Insurance	494	-	<b>494</b>	605
Payroll charges	225	-	<b>225</b>	330
Independent Examiners fee	550	-	<b>550</b>	550
Bank charges	72	-	<b>72</b>	160
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>81,820</b>	<b>4,265</b>	<b>86,085</b>	74,256
<b>NET OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS</b>	<b>18,159</b>	<b>7,615</b>	<b>25,774</b>	(26,367)
Transfer of funds	<b>4,956</b>	<b>(4,956)</b>	-	-
Cash funds at beginning of year	<b>18,694</b>	<b>8,074</b>	<b>26,768</b>	53,135
<b>Cash funds at end of year</b>	<b>41,809</b>	<b>10,733</b>	<b>52,542</b>	26,768

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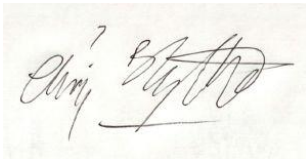
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**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

	<b>Un-restricted funds £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>2021 Total £</b>	<b>2020 Total £</b>
Unity Trust Current account	26,637	10,733	<b>37,370</b>	11,612
Unity Trust Deposit account	15,172	-	<b>15,172</b>	15,156
Cash at bank and in hand	41,809	10,733	<b>52,542</b>	26,768

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022



C Blythe  
Chair of Trustees

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## Notes to the financial statements

### 1. Staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses

Staff costs comprise:	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Salaries	<b>42,369</b>	40,230
National Insurance	-	-
Pension costs	<b>1,263</b>	1,173
Total	<b>43,632</b>	41,403

The charity's Trustees were not paid nor received any other benefits from employment in the year (2020: £nil). No expenses were reimbursed to Trustees in the year (2020: £nil).

### 2. Fund movements

	Balance at beginning of year £	Receipts £	Payments £	Transfer of funds £	Balance at end of year £
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Awards for All – Inspire with Art	8,024	-	(3,118)	(4,906)	-
John Feeny Trust – Young People in Parks	50	-	-	(50)	-
Sports Birmingham – Thai Chi	-	4,200	(600)	-	3,600
Selly Oak NNS	-	7,680	(547)	-	7,133
	<b>8,074</b>	<b>11,880</b>	<b>(4,265)</b>	<b>(4,956)</b>	<b>10,733</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
- General fund	18,694	99,979	(81,820)	4,956	41,809
Total	<b>26,768</b>	<b>111,859</b>	<b>(86,085)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>52,542</b>

### 3. Transactions with related parties

There were no transactions with related parties during the year that require disclosure in these accounts (2020: none).