

Charity no. 1170457

**Spark the Noise**  
**Receipts and Payments Accounts**  
**31 March 2025**

## **Spark the Noise**

### **Reference and administrative details**

**For the year ended 31 March 2025**

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**Charity number** 1170457

**Registered office and operational address** Flat 8  
Chestnut Court  
Middle Lane  
London  
N8 8NU

**Trustees** The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Kelli Blanchett	appointed 1 September 2024
Lorna Gemmell	term ended 1 October 2024
Sarah Higham	appointed 1 September 2024
Roxanne Horton	term ended 1 October 2024
Ishani Jasmin	appointed 1 September 2024
Wai Ting So	appointed 1 September 2024
Daisy Swift	term ended 7 October 2025
Maria Turley	term ended 1 October 2024
Grace Veenman	term ended 1 November 2024
Katie Weeks	appointed 1 September 2024

**Bankers** The Co-Operative Bank  
PO Box 250  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 6WT

**Independent examiners** Godfrey Wilson Limited  
Chartered accountants and statutory auditors  
5th Floor Mariner House  
62 Prince Street  
Bristol  
BS1 4QD

## **Spark the Noise**

### **Report of the trustees**

#### **For the year ended 31 March 2025**

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Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements and the charity's governing document.

#### **Objectives and activities**

##### **Formal purposes (objectives) of the charity, as set out in its governing document**

- 1) To promote equality and diversity for the public benefit, in particular for the benefit of women and girls who are participating or working in music creation and performance, primarily in London but also in the rest of England by:
  - (a) the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of gender; and by
  - (b) advancing education and raising awareness of gender equality.
- 2) To promote the art of music, and to educate in the art of music for the public benefit in particular, but not exclusively, through the provision of (or supporting the provision of) music education activities for girls and women primarily in London, but also in the rest of England, in order to increase the participation of women and girls in music creation and performance, and to build their confidence, self-esteem and musical abilities.

##### **Main activities (the things the charity does in order to achieve the objectives)**

- Participatory music workshops in-person and online; these are aimed at young and adult women, trans people, and non-binary people, with a particular emphasis on those with limited experience of and/or who face additional barriers to participating in music-making;
- Distribution of resources to promote music-making and creativity, with a focus on wellbeing and access, including the provision of instruments and equipment to participants who would otherwise be unable to engage;
- Training and support for volunteers, staff and freelancers in order to build skills, confidence and networks; and
- Advocating for gender equality in music and sharing our practice through conferences, training and the media.

##### **How these activities benefit the public**

- The charity's programmes are open to members of the public. Participants benefit through the development of musical, social and personal skills, increased confidence and self-esteem, and improved understanding of education and career pathways within the music industry; and
- Audiences benefit from attending public showcases and events, both online and in person, which celebrate music created and performed by people who are currently under-represented in music-making and performance.

In setting our objectives and planning our activities, the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

#### **Structure, governance and management**

Spark the Noise is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by a Constitution dated 7 October 2024. The organisation is governed by a Board of Trustees who are appointed by a resolution of the Board, and are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the charity, ensuring it is solvent, well run, and delivering public benefit in line with its charitable objectives.

During the year, the charity completed a transition to a refreshed trustee board following the ending of existing Trustee terms. Trustees were recruited to bring a balance of lived experience reflective of our beneficiaries, alongside skills across charity governance, finance, safeguarding, music industry and education and equality, diversity and inclusion. New trustees received induction support, including an overview of the charity's strategy, finances, policies and regulatory responsibilities.

## **Spark the Noise**

### **Report of the trustees**

#### **For the year ended 31 March 2025**

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The Board meets regularly and maintains oversight of strategy, financial performance, safeguarding, risk management and compliance. Day-to-day management is delegated to the Director, with clear reporting lines and budgetary controls in place. Trustees review budgets, management accounts and material expenditure, and oversee the use of freelancers and consultants to ensure value for money and effective delivery.

The charity maintains key policies and procedures, including safeguarding, financial controls, conflicts of interest, health and safety, and data protection. Trustees regularly review risks to the organisation and take appropriate steps to mitigate them.

#### **Activities, projects or services identified in the accounts**

The year ended 31 March 2025 was a period of consolidation and transition for the charity, following a significant organisational review and strategic development process undertaken in the previous year.

Activity during the year focused on the delivery and completion of the Youth Music-funded **Creative Sound Sessions** programme, embedding learning from this work, continuing the charity's transition to its new name, Spark the Noise, and preparing for the next phase of programme delivery.

The charity continued to operate with a deliberately lean staffing and governance structure, prioritising direct delivery, safeguarding, and financial sustainability during a challenging funding environment for the sector.

#### **Achievements and performance**

##### **Summary of the charity's main achievements**

##### **Programmes**

During the year, the charity delivered the latter stages of **Creative Sound Sessions**, a long-form youth music programme supported by Youth Music. The programme involved regular music education workshops and practice sessions delivered across an 8-month period in a rehearsal space and recording studio in east London, serving 22 young people.

The project was delivered by an experienced team of women, trans and non-binary music leaders, facilitators, wellbeing volunteers and project staff. Young people were supported to co-design elements of the programme, ensuring activities responded to their needs, interests and skill levels.

The programme culminated in a live showcase for 50 friends and family, where participants performed original songs written during the project. Young people were also supported to record their tracks in a professional recording studio, engineered and mixed by women, trans and/or non-binary sound engineers.

##### **Community and youth voice**

A significant focus of the programme was embedding youth voice into our decision-making, programme development and delivery. For the first time, the charity delivered a programme that was both designed and led in part by young people, and actively invited participants to contribute to wider organisational decision-making.

## **Spark the Noise**

### **Report of the trustees**

#### **For the year ended 31 March 2025**

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This included contributing ideas and feedback on future programmes, policy development, and the charity's new name. Young people who engaged in this process reported a stronger sense of belonging and ownership within the organisation.

The trustees recognise that this work provided valuable learning about the balance between youth-led approaches and the need for clear structure and leadership, and this learning is informing future programme design.

#### **Partnerships**

The period included STN's representation at the Girls Rock Camp Alliance international conference in upstate New York. The Head of Programmes and a long-standing volunteer represented the organisation at the event, building relationships with other organisations globally, working at the intersections of music, gender justice and youth work. This is a vital part of our role as the leading UK charity dismantling barriers facing young women, trans and non-binary people in music. We gained useful insights into sector best practices, fundraising and grew opportunities for greater partnership working with other organisations - particularly those based in Europe and South America.

#### **Workforce development**

The charity provided paid, supervised roles and training opportunities for young people interested in developing skills in music leadership and project delivery. These roles included close mentoring and support from senior staff, enabling participants to build confidence, gain practical experience and progress into further employment or training.

Volunteers, freelancers and staff were also supported through training in safeguarding, health and safety, trauma-informed practice, music facilitation and contextual issues affecting the young people the charity works with.

#### **The difference the charity's work has made to beneficiaries**

Evaluation of Creative Sound Sessions was undertaken using a combination of demographic data, self-assessment scales, surveys, group feedback and one-to-one interviews, collected before, during and after the programme.

Key findings indicated that participants:

- Improved their confidence and self-esteem, with 100% reporting positive change;
- Gained new musical and technical skills, including playing instruments, songwriting and performance;
- Developed friendships and a stronger sense of belonging and community; and
- Felt empowered and respected through having an active role in shaping their learning and experiences.

Participants consistently described the programme as supportive, inclusive and enjoyable, and most expressed strong interest in taking part in future Spark the Noise programmes.

The decision to provide long-term instrument loans in response to participant feedback proved particularly impactful, addressing a significant barrier to participation and informing plans to develop a permanent gear-loan offer for future participants and alumni.

## Spark the Noise

### Report of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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The majority of participants experienced intersecting and complex disadvantages, including bullying and exclusion from mainstream education. Participation in the programme supported some young people to re-engage with education and build confidence and resilience, reinforcing the charity's intention to explore more formal referral partnerships in the future.

#### Organisational development and transformation

##### Name change and rebrand

During the year, the charity completed a significant organisational change project to adopt a new name: **Spark the Noise**.

The name change project began in September 2023 and was led by a working group comprising trustees, staff, volunteers, freelancers and young people from the charity's community. The rationale for the change was to better reflect the full range of communities, musical genres and geographical locations served by the charity.

Following consultation and testing with stakeholders, the new name was agreed in October 2024. During the reporting period, the charity worked with Folks, a creative agency based in Norwich, to develop a new visual identity, marketing assets and website. The new website was launched after the reporting period (in April 2025), alongside a coordinated social media campaign and a public launch event (held in May 2025).

Public and partner feedback has been positive, with a significant increase in online engagement following the launch. The charity's legal name has been formally changed to Spark the Noise and this is reflected in Charity Commission records. Systems, domains and communications have been updated accordingly, with mitigations in place to maintain continuity and recognition during the transition period.

The trustees consider the name change to be a key milestone in strengthening the charity's inclusivity, clarity of purpose and long-term sustainability.

##### Planning for enhanced programmes

Alongside programme delivery, the charity used this period to plan for the next phase of its work.

Learning from Creative Sound Sessions highlighted the importance of longer-term engagement, clearer structure, and stronger progression routes for young people. Planning during the year therefore focused on:

- Developing a structured **youth traineeship programme** to support young people aged 18–25 to gain skills in music leadership, facilitation and project delivery through paid roles, mentoring and training; and
- Preparing for a return to **flagship programme delivery**, including the charity's intensive summer music camp model, refined to reflect learning around access, safeguarding, trauma-informed practice and youth voice.

These developments are intended to provide clearer pathways from participation to leadership and employment, and to strengthen the charity's impact over the medium term.

##### Governance, board and staffing transition

The year marked the consolidation of a significant period of organisational change following the departure of founding directors, Trustee terms coming to an end and a formal organisational review.

## Spark the Noise

### Report of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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During this time, the charity transitioned to a new, skilled trustee board, refreshed governance structures, and a revised staffing model responding to the evolving needs of the organisation and its beneficiaries. This included clarifying roles and responsibilities, reducing fixed staffing costs, and maintaining flexibility through freelance and project-based delivery.

By the end of the reporting period, Spark the Noise had a fully constituted board, a clear strategic direction, and an operational structure aligned with its future plans. The trustees consider this consolidation phase critical to positioning Spark the Noise for sustainable growth and renewed fundraising activity

#### Financial review

##### Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the reporting period

Total income for the year was **£24,853**, generated through corporate and individual donations, match funding via The Big Give, Gift Aid, and restricted grants from Arts Council England and Youth Music.

Total expenditure for the year was **£73,026**, reflecting continued investment in programme delivery, consultant fees for music leaders and project staff, and essential support and governance costs including insurance, storage and IT.

The charity therefore recorded a **planned deficit of £48,173** for the year.

The trustees wish to emphasise that this deficit formed part of a **planned three-year strategic investment of a significant unrestricted donation**. The Board consciously authorised a deficit budget to fund this transformation, ensuring the charity has the brand, infrastructure, and governance required for long-term sustainability. These funds have been intentionally deployed to support organisational transformation across four key areas:

- Brand development, including the transition to Spark the Noise;
- Programme development, testing and evaluation;
- Governance and staffing restructuring; and
- Fundraising and organisational development.

At the end of the reporting period, the charity held **cash reserves of £33,229**. The trustees have reviewed financial forecasts and are satisfied that the charity remains a **going concern for at least 12 months** from the date of approval of the accounts.

#### Reserves policy

Spark the Noise has a written Reserves Policy, reviewed annually, which ensures reserves are held to:

- Cover unforeseen day to day operational costs;
- Manage short-term cash flow requirements;
- Meet planned commitments; and
- Meet financial obligations in the event of unplanned closure.

## Spark the Noise

### Report of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2025

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The trustees consider a reserves target equivalent to approximately **three months of core operating costs (£12,000)** to be appropriate. At 31 March 2025, reserves were **above this target** despite the planned use of unrestricted funds to support organisational transformation. The trustees agreed to spend down this excess to ensure core strategic work is achievable in spite of anticipated cash flow shortages between active programme delivery and incoming grants. This reflects and addresses the challenges of securing core cost funding, and ensures staff continue working on strategic planning, evaluation, fundraising and governance. The charity intends to rebuild reserves over the coming years through renewed fundraising activity and programme delivery.

#### Subsequent events (post year end)

Following the end of the reporting period:

- The charity's new website and brand identity under the name **Spark the Noise** were launched in April 2025;
- A public launch event was held in May 2025;
- The charity's legal name was formally changed to Spark the Noise and updated on Charity Commission records; and
- Communications systems, domains and partner communications were updated to reflect the new name.

These events did not affect the financial position at 31 March 2025 but represent a significant milestone in the charity's development.

#### Independent examiners

Godfrey Wilson Limited were re-appointed as independent examiners to the charity during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 29 January 2026 and signed on their behalf by



Sarah Higham - Trustee



Ishani Jasmin - Trustee



## **Independent examiner's report**

### **To the trustees of**

### **Spark the Noise**

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I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Spark the Noise (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2025, which are set out on pages 9 to 12.

#### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

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 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 Act.

#### **Independent examiner's statement**

Godfrey Wilson Limited also carried out a grant audit for the CIO during the reporting period. I confirm that as a member of the ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2024, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

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

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act;  
or
- (2) the 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.

*William Guy Blake*

Date: 29 January 2026

**William Guy Blake ACA**

**Member of the ICAEW**

**Godfrey Wilson Limited**

Chartered accountants and statutory auditors

5th Floor Mariner House

62 Prince Street

Bristol

BS1 4QD

## Spark the Noise

### Receipts and payments account

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
<b>Receipts</b>					
Grants and donations	2	7,598	2,724	10,322	118,023
Individual giving		-	3,880	3,880	2,251
Corporate giving		-	10,000	10,000	-
Other donations and fundraising		-	-	-	484
Gift aid		-	651	651	2,002
<b>Total receipts</b>		<u>7,598</u>	<u>17,255</u>	<u>24,853</u>	<u>122,760</u>
<b>Payments</b>					
Contractor costs		10,680	49,397	60,077	43,082
Venue and room hire		-	2,042	2,042	1,967
Office costs		-	2,878	2,878	1,128
Insurance		-	1,272	1,272	1,154
Equipment and materials		-	510	510	1,217
DBS check		-	-	-	244
Website & IT costs		-	2,397	2,397	170
Communications		-	259	259	195
Training and conferences		-	30	30	294
Transport		-	114	114	179
Food and refreshments		-	57	57	228
Membership		-	-	-	251
Legal and compliance		-	3,325	3,325	714
Miscellaneous		-	65	65	20
<b>Total payments</b>		<u>10,680</u>	<u>62,346</u>	<u>73,026</u>	<u>50,843</u>
<b>Net receipts / (payments)</b>		<u>(3,082)</u>	<u>(45,091)</u>	<u>(48,173)</u>	<u>71,917</u>
<b>Cash funds at 1 April 2024</b>		<u>3,082</u>	<u>78,320</u>	<u>81,402</u>	<u>9,485</u>
<b>Cash funds at 31 March 2025</b>	3	<u>-</u>	<u>33,229</u>	<u>33,229</u>	<u>81,402</u>

## Spark the Noise

### Statement of assets and liabilities

As at 31 March 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Cash funds</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>33,229</u>	<u>81,402</u>
<b>Total cash funds</b>	<u><u>33,229</u></u>	<u><u>81,402</u></u>
<b>Cash funds</b>		
Restricted funds	-	3,082
Unrestricted funds		
General funds	<u>33,229</u>	<u>78,320</u>
<b>Total cash funds</b>	<u><u>33,229</u></u>	<u><u>81,402</u></u>

Approved by the trustees on 29 January 2026 and signed on their behalf by



Sarah Higham - Trustee



Ishani Jasmin - Trustee

## Spark the Noise

### Notes to the financial statements

#### For the year ended 31 March 2025

#### 1. Receipts & payments accounts

Receipts and payments accounts contain a summary of money received and money spent during the period and a list of assets and liabilities at the end of the period. Usually, cash received and cash spent will include transactions through bank accounts and cash in hand.

#### 2. Grants and donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2025 Total £
Youth Music	2,984	-	<b>2,984</b>
Arts Council England	4,614	-	<b>4,614</b>
The Big Give	-	2,724	<b>2,724</b>
	<b>7,598</b>	<b>2,724</b>	<b>10,322</b>

#### Prior period comparative

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2024 Total £
Youth Music	26,852	-	26,852
Sharegive	-	5,000	5,000
Beggars Group	-	11,171	11,171
Thierry Noir	-	75,000	75,000
	<b>26,852</b>	<b>91,171</b>	<b>118,023</b>

#### 3. Movements in funds

	At 1 April 2024 £	Receipts £	Payments £	At 31 March 2025 £
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
Youth Voice	7,696	2,984	(10,680)	-
Album Programming 2022-23	(4,614)	4,614	-	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>3,082</b>	<b>7,598</b>	<b>(10,680)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
General funds	78,320	17,255	(62,346)	<b>33,229</b>
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>78,320</b>	<b>17,255</b>	<b>(62,346)</b>	<b>33,229</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>81,402</b>	<b>24,853</b>	<b>(73,026)</b>	<b>33,229</b>

## Spark the Noise

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

#### 3. Movements in funds (continued)

##### Prior period comparative

	At 1 April 2023 £	Receipts £	Payments £	At 31 March 2024 £
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
Youth Voice	-	26,852	(19,156)	7,696
Album Programming 2022-23	(4,614)	-	-	(4,614)
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>(4,614)</b>	<b>26,852</b>	<b>(19,156)</b>	<b>3,082</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
General funds	14,099	95,908	(31,687)	78,320
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>14,099</b>	<b>95,908</b>	<b>(31,687)</b>	<b>78,320</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>9,485</b>	<b>122,760</b>	<b>(50,843)</b>	<b>81,402</b>

##### Purpose of restricted funds

###### *Youth Voice*

This fund is for a specific programme to deliver a Youth Voice programme.

###### *Album Programming 2022-23*

This fund provides support, activities and events related to the production of an album for the adult community.

#### 4. Trustee' remuneration

Trustees received no expenses, remuneration or benefits in this period.

#### 5. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions during the year.