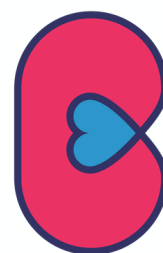




b:friend Annual Report

Nov-23/Oct-24



b:friend

Martin & Dave

“



Martin got in touch b:friend in 2018. He had recently moved to his village and due to being visually impaired he found harder to make new connections. “I was new to the area, and I had limited opportunities to socialise due to my eyesight, and being in a village. I felt I was missing out. I was looking for someone to chat to, to go to a pub quiz with. I am big pub quiz fanatic!”

Martin met his befriender Dave in 2018. Martin said: “This friendship lightened up my life. It opened up a whole new world of possibilities. Dave and I have a lot of fun; we laugh our socks off. We both love music and enjoy going to gigs together. Connecting with b:friend gave me a boost, led to me becoming more confident, it led me to new friendships. It helped me access activities that I thought wouldn’t be available to me. I could even participate in a local radio project through b:friend and trying my hand at broadcasting was a lifelong ambition!

All I can say is thank you...”

”

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A message from our CEO

As I take a moment to reflect on the past year at b:friend, it's clear just how far we've come. We're now firmly rooted in three counties, and the number of people we've reached has taken a real leap forward. But it's not just about growth—it's about how we've grown. We've continued to refine our model, listen carefully to those we support, and explore new, creative ways to tackle loneliness in our communities.

In communities across South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, older neighbours who were once isolated are now laughing over a cuppa at one of our social clubs, chatting with their befriender each week, or getting involved with a project where they can share their experiences and thoughts with their community. These are the moments that matter—and they're only possible thanks to the incredible dedication of our volunteers, the belief of our supporters, and the resilience of our team.

2023/24 has been a year of meaningful growth. We've launched new clubs, explored new ways of connecting people through digital, intergenerational and volunteer-led work, and welcomed more older neighbours into our community than ever before. We've also faced some real challenges, especially around income generation—but we've met those head-on with creativity and collaboration.

Looking ahead, the need for our work is only increasing. With funding cuts looming and the cost of living crisis continuing to hit hard, it's never been more important to build strong, local communities where no one feels forgotten.

Cheers,

Colette Bunker, Chief Executive Officer of b:friend



Vision Mission Values

Vision

At b:friend, our vision is a world where all older neighbours can connect, laugh and inspire others every day.

Loneliness sucks, and we want to help end it. For older people, loneliness is something that doesn't happen overnight, it creeps up on you. It's influenced by life events such as deteriorating health, decreased mobility and the passing away of partners and friends. Having no family close by and having to stop driving (from health or confidence issues) can also lead to an older person spending more time alone in their home. 42% of people over 65 live alone. This is set to rise to over 50% by 2041 (ONS data).

Loneliness can lead to depression, coronary disease, weaker immune systems and dementia – it's as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Not only do we want older people to live longer and healthier lives, we want them to have fun! So we don't take life too seriously and we make sure to challenge stereotypes when it comes to ageing. We also believe that society is missing out on the stories and experiences that older people have to offer. Reconnecting isolated people with their community can lead to younger generations gaining insights and wisdom from their older neighbours.



Vision Mission Values

Mission

Our mission? To facilitate meaningful friendships and enjoyable connections between people and communities



We want to reignite that spark of joy in older people that they may have lost along the way, something that only true friendships can do. So we're not time-limited and we never charge for friendship. That way, both older neighbours and befrienders know that their connection is genuine and long lasting. Real friendship and social connection can create a sense of self-worth, build confidence and resilience and improve mental and physical wellbeing. In many cases, **friendship really can save lives.**

Values

Our values are at the heart of everything we do.

We are...





FUN

No two weeks are the same with b:friend. We celebrate later years and we know from experience that being old in body doesn't mean being old in mindset. Mental wellbeing is our priority, having something to look forward to and having a good old giggle should be something everyone can enjoy.



BOLD

We challenge the stigma around ageing; bingo is banned at b:friend. We'd much rather be cheerleading, boxing or exploring exotic cultures. We never sit still, we are constantly thinking up new, innovative ideas and ways of making older people's lives richer.

DOWN-TO-EARTH

We are firmly rooted in the local community and everything we do is with a strong sense of place. Being led by our community anchors us to our purpose. You'll see no fancy business speak here, we say what we mean and we mean what we say.



EMBRACING

Friendship is for everyone and everyone is welcome at b:friend. We strive to break down divisions created by age, heritage, digital skills and social norms and make sure people feel comfortable to be themselves.

PASSIONATE

The cause drives us and we believe in it whole heartedly. We always have the voice and the best interests of our older neighbours in mind, but you'll never hear us use the word 'beneficiary'. Our older neighbours give as much joy and value back to their befrienders and their communities as they receive.



WHAT WE DO

A year in numbers

by the end of FY 23/24 we have delivered...



35,280

Volunteering hours



14

Social Clubs benefiting

241

older neighbours per week

603

Social Club sessions where no two weeks are the same (that's over 1200 hours of graffiti art, axe throwing, cheerleading, curling, learning morse code, Mardi Gras, and armchair travels to Mexico, China, Peru and Croatia ...plus hundreds more fun sessions!)

709

Active friendships (That's

36,868

cuppas!)



2,891

Friendships created since inception



272

New pairings



WHAT WE DO

A year in numbers

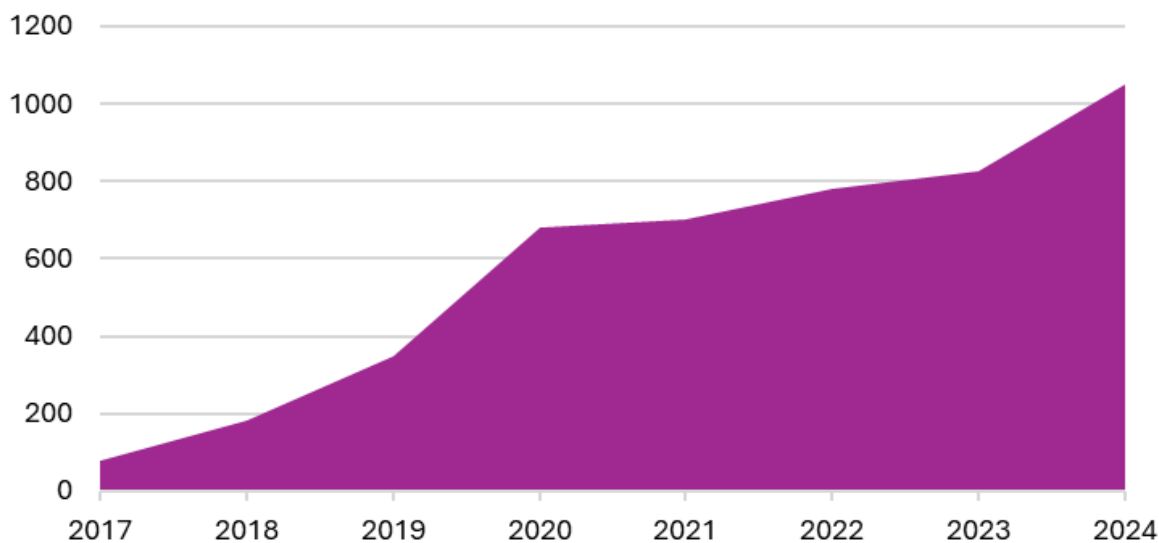


1071

older neighbours engaging on a weekly basis

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
80	180	350	680	700	782	825	1071

Number of older neighbours engaging with b:friend on a weekly basis



Our focus for 23/24



This year, our strategic priorities were: expanding into Nottinghamshire, embedding greater sustainability across our work, and enhancing the volunteer experience. We took a more data-led approach to our work than ever before, with feedback and insight shaping our decisions through:

- New surveys for older neighbours, volunteers and supporters
- Quarterly consultation meetings with our Friends of B:friend group
- Improved digital data monitoring via Google Analytics and other tools
- Support from a PhD student who joined us as a summer intern

We also commissioned an independent evaluation of our befriending model. The results not only affirmed the strength of our approach but gave us valuable ideas for future improvement.

1 Growth into Nottinghamshire

Thanks to the incredible £145,000 raised by Strata during their Charity of the Year partnership with us, we were able to expand our work into Nottinghamshire. After careful analysis of loneliness, deprivation, and service provision data across multiple regions, we identified Nottinghamshire as an area where our support was both needed and wanted. We had already begun receiving referrals and volunteer applications from the area, and our reputation gave us a strong starting point.

- + + We began by recruiting a local Befriending Coordinator and developing relationships in the Mid-Notts area. While initial progress was slow—
- + + volunteers were mostly coming from Nottingham City while referrals stemmed from Mid-Notts—we focused our efforts on raising awareness across both areas to create more balance. By the end of the year, we'd made 49 new pairings and launched a new social club in Kimberley.



Our focus for 23/24

2 Sustainability

Sustainability took centre stage this year—both in how we deliver services and how we fund them. While our befriending model is low-cost and effective, it still requires staff time and isn't infinitely scalable. To address this, we trialled more volunteer-led social clubs. These require staff support to oversee but not to deliver, and they offer a lighter-touch model for areas where we want to expand reach without increasing staff hours.

We created two new volunteer-led clubs in 2024: one launched in Clay Cross by an existing volunteer, and another in Balby which transitioned from staff-led to volunteer-led. Both have thrived, with up to 13 attendees each week. We plan to build on this in 2025 and develop a replicable model that others can use.



On the financial side, we focused on diversifying our income in preparation for the end of our Lottery funding in June 2024. With our Fundraising Manager now fully embedded, the year was about laying solid foundations—building relationships, planning campaigns, refining donor journeys, and improving internal tracking. Everyone across the team played a part, and we're proud to say this whole-team approach helped secure two key multi-year grants: a renewal from The National Lottery and a new award from the Henry Smith Charity. We're incredibly grateful for both.



Our focus for 23/24

3 The Volunteer Journey

Volunteer recruitment has been an ongoing challenge since the pandemic, so this year we invested more time in understanding and supporting our volunteers. We launched a volunteer experience survey, which gave us insights into who our volunteers are, when they're most likely to sign up, how they find us, and what motivates them to get involved.

We also tested new and untried marketing methods—bus ads, beer mats, billboards, and local magazine features among them. With more robust tracking, we now know which channels are worth our time and budget. The results speak for themselves: by year-end, 735 new volunteers had signed up—far surpassing our target of 510.

Survey feedback from longer-serving volunteers revealed a desire for more proactive check-ins. While our team is always available, we recognised that scheduled, intentional check-ins could be helpful. We've now formalised three touchpoints throughout the first year of the volunteer journey, including short surveys where volunteers can reflect on their experience and the impact of their friendship.

We learned that some volunteers were occasionally struggling with boundary-setting over time. In response, we added new content to our induction training focusing specifically on healthy boundaries. We created a simple, accessible leaflet for volunteers and older neighbours to refer to if expectations start to shift. We also introduced a formal offboarding process to support friendships continuing in a lighter-touch way, while ensuring everyone understands the change and feels comfortable.



- + + Alongside this, we have reviewed and created more
- + + induction materials that are accessible in different
- + + ways - now besides the pdf volunteer handbook we
- + + also have the induction slides with videos vols
- + + receive after the induction interview.

HOW DID WE DO?

- We are happy with the results against our 23/24 delivery targets, but there is more work to do. Our efforts in volunteer recruitment have really paid off this year but this doesn't necessarily translate to long-term volunteering, which may be what's affecting the number of older neighbours supported. Next year we will focus more on recruiting and retaining the right volunteers.

Although our general income split is moving in the right direction, more work is needed in building other income streams.

AIM 

OUTCOME 

32%

increase in older neighbours supported (1090 older neighbours engaging on a weekly basis)

30%

Increase achieved (1071 older neighbours engaging on a weekly basis)

85%+

improvement in befriended older neighbours' wellbeing after 6 months

83%

improvement in befriended older neighbours' wellbeing after 6 months achieved



510

Volunteers to be recruited, creating ...

735

Volunteers recruited creating...



12,168

volunteering hours

16,796

volunteering hours



75/25

% split between trusts & foundations (75%) and other income (25%)

79/21

79% trusts & foundations
21% other



HIGHLIGHTS



Intergenerational Connections

This year, we reimagined our much-loved b:heard model to create something brand new: **b:heard in schools**. Traditionally, b:heard has focused on celebrating the stories and experiences of older neighbours with a paying audience, but this time, that audience was a classroom of primary school children in Chesterfield.

We explored what could happen when generations come together, and the results were amazing. Our older neighbours shared memories of their schooldays—chalkboards, school milk, and all—while the children introduced them to the classrooms of today. They even danced together during a ‘brain break’. The experience was moving, joyful, and enlightening for all involved. The children gained insight into older people’s lives, and our neighbours got the chance to feel seen and celebrated. We’ll definitely be doing more of this in the future.



HIGHLIGHTS

New Clubs

Our social clubs continue to go from strength to strength, with four new ones added this year:

- Clay Cross (volunteer-led)
- Bolsover
- Kimberley
- Our first digital club, connecting people online from across the region



A Very Merry Christmas

Following the buzz of our Coronation Party earlier in the year—where many new friendships were formed—we ended 2023 with a spectacular Christmas Party for 180 older neighbours. For many of our older friends, Christmas can be a difficult time, especially for those facing it alone. The party offered a fun and affordable celebration, full of music, dancing and laughter.



“This has been my Christmas, this party, because I'll be at home on my own on the day.”

“It was great that everyone could dance all together, even those in a wheelchair. It was lovely to see. I really appreciated the fact that all the transport was organised—it made it a lot easier.”



HIGHLIGHTS

Connecting through heritage

This year, we were thrilled to join forces with Doncaster and Barnsley Museums to explore how local heritage can help combat isolation and spark meaningful conversations. Together, we introduced new opportunities for older neighbours to connect with their local history—and each other.

As part of the project, our social clubs enjoyed special outings to local heritage sites, while 'museum in a box' kits brought fascinating artefacts right into club settings for hands-on exploration. The partnership even extended into our one-to-one friendships, where befrienders were encouraged to use museum objects as conversation starters—unlocking memories, stories, and new perspectives.

We're grateful to the museums for including us in such a thoughtful and imaginative project. It reminded us just how powerful shared history can be in building connection and belonging.



HIGHLIGHTS

Amazing Fundraisers

This year, we've been blown away by the efforts of some truly inspirational fundraisers:



- Becky, one of our trustees, and her husband Simon walked the West Highland Way in memory of Becky's older neighbour, Brian—raising over £1,000.

- Miriam, a brave volunteer at our Mexborough club (and 72 years young!), leapt 15,000 feet from a plane to raise over £500.



- Sol & James, long-time supporters, took on the ultimate banger rally challenge—driving an old car from England to Croatia with multiple stops and surprises along the way. They raised almost £2,000.



HIGHLIGHTS

Community Fundraisers & Creative Campaigns

As part of our ongoing work to diversify income and raise awareness, we ran several successful campaigns of our own:



Pink & Purple Day

During Befriending Week, we invited our corporate supporters to hold pink and purple-themed events—and they delivered! Four fantastic partners took part, dressing up, decorating offices, and raising vital funds.

The b:friend Cookbook

Part of our mission is to highlight the value and wisdom older people bring to their communities. This year, we brought that to life through our first-ever cookbook—a beautiful collection of recipes and personal stories from our older neighbours. We were supported by a brilliant volunteer publisher, a kind-hearted illustrator, and a generous photographer, all of whom donated their time and talent. Nearly 200 copies were sold!



And finally...

Boosting efficiency through MS365

Thanks to the generous support of our corporate partner eSynergy, we made a big leap in digital transformation this year by migrating to Microsoft 365. This upgrade has significantly improved collaboration across our team, enhanced data security, and streamlined many of our day-to-day processes—helping us work smarter and support more people.



CHALLENGES

As ever, the year came with its share of challenges.



The Lottery Countdown

2023/24 marked the final year of our three-year National Lottery Community Fund grant for our work in South Yorkshire—funding that has been absolutely vital in helping us grow and reach more older neighbours. While we were actively working on a reapplication and exploring other potential sources, there was no guarantee that the gap this funding would leave could be filled.

Despite our focus on income diversification, the size of the Lottery grant meant its loss would have a significant impact. So, even as we gratefully received new support from Strata to help us expand, we carried a sense of uncertainty about the future of our work in South Yorkshire. But one of our core values is to be Bold, and we stuck to that. We carried on delivering as though nothing would change—continuing to grow, to innovate, and to connect more people—while quietly hoping we'd find the funding to sustain it all. It wasn't an easy mindset to manage, but we were open with each other, kept the faith, and morale remained strong.

Thankfully, our optimism paid off. Not only were we successful in securing renewed Lottery funding for 2025, but we also received a transformational three-year grant from The Henry Smith Charity to support our core work—a huge moment for us, and a testament to the strength and impact of what we're building together.

Building a Culture of Individual Giving

One of our ongoing priorities is diversifying income—and individual giving continues to be a tough nut to crack.

Historically, we haven't done much asking. Apart from the occasional challenge event, we've been fairly reserved in encouraging regular or one-off donations. This year, we decided to change that. With help from our partners at Strata, we released a powerful short film highlighting the impact of loneliness at Christmas, and launched a campaign encouraging people to become monthly donors. We also encouraged support through a new paper newsletter. Unfortunately, both campaigns fell flat.

The cost of living crisis may have played a part, but we also recognised we needed to learn more. What motivates someone to give to b:friend? What might hold them back? Off the back of this, we created and distributed a survey to better understand our supporters' views on giving—and this insight will shape our approach going forward.



CHALLENGES

As ever, the year came with its share of challenges.



Tackling Digital Inclusion

Digital exclusion continues to affect many of our older neighbours. In the past we've trialled various projects aimed at improving digital skills, but without sustained funding, it's been difficult to create long-lasting change.

This year, we took a different approach. Rather than delivering digital skills training ourselves, we focused on what we do best—creating social connections. We launched a new digital social club, giving older people a chance to come together online, connect with others, and build confidence with digital tools in a relaxed, friendly space.

We partnered with organisations already doing excellent work in digital inclusion to receive referrals and opened the club to isolated older neighbours we couldn't support in person. While there's been strong interest, regular attendance has been low. Still, we believe it's a valuable addition to our offering, especially for those who may not be able to access in-person support. We'll continue running the club and work on increasing awareness and reducing barriers to participation.



Our plans for 24/25

Looking ahead, our strategic objectives for the year are rooted in four key focus areas:

1 Growing Where Needed

We'll continue to respond to local demand—whether that means more out-of-area pairings, exploring telephone or video befriending, or piloting new ways of delivering our services. Whatever the format, our target is to increase:

- Social club attendance by 33%
- Befriending pairings by 13%

2 Maintaining Service Quality

Even as we grow, we're committed to the high quality of delivery that b:friend is known for. We'll closely monitor processes and feedback, and introduce new volunteer roles to help enhance the experience for both our older neighbours and our volunteers.

3 Team Success

Our team is the heart of b:friend—and we want to keep it thriving. This year, we'll focus on sustaining a positive culture, encouraging development, and creating regular opportunities for staff feedback and involvement in new initiatives.

4 Fundraising & Financial Resilience

Diversifying our income remains critical. For 2024/25, we've set an ambitious fundraising target, aiming for a 75/25 split between trusts & foundations and other income. We'll continue strengthening existing corporate partnerships and building new ones that are aligned with our mission and values.

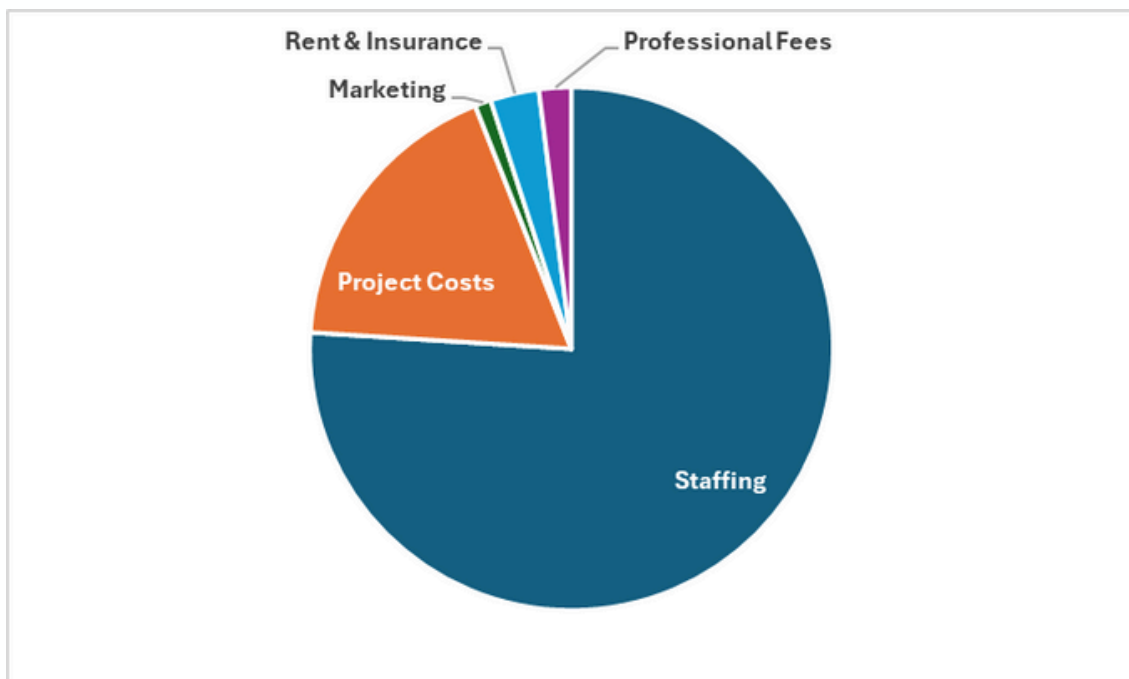
FINANCE

How we spent £1

The majority of our costs are on staffing who deliver our befriending project across the region, support volunteers and older neighbours and make local connections.

The full cost of running a weekly social club for 1 year = £5,533

The full cost of setting up a befriending pairing for 1 year = £230



76%

Staffing

3%

Rent & Insurance

18%

Project Costs

2%

Professional fees

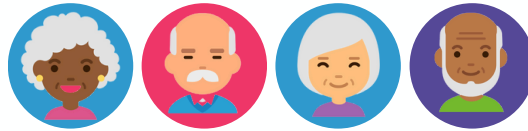
1%

Marketing

OUR IMPACT



Here's a few lovely comments from our befriended older neighbours this year:



++
++
+

It seems like I've known her ages, all we did was laugh. She's a lovely girl

+

I can't believe it's been 2 years! She's so lovely, she's been a real good friend to me. I'm so grateful to you (b:friend) you know. I don't know what I'd do without Sam.

We have good conversation, we are friends. I feel the befriending enlarges my world.

We went to the theatre and it's the first time I have done anything like this in a long time

I don't see anyone. The visits are a cornerstone in a way that it's the only certainty in a week socially. It's a pleasant addition to what I've got which is very sparse

OUR IMPACT



And here's a few from our amazing volunteers...



Sandra is lovely person. When I come to her she always greets me with a smile. We have many topics to talk about 😊. I am very pleased to be paired with Sandra who has become my new friend 🤗

We're building a lovely bond with each other and I feel that I'm really making a difference to her quality of life. We have such a lovely time together... I take cream cakes, which we both enjoy, and we share memories together. We both laugh together too, which is just wonderful

We've chatted about families, pets, past relationships, gardening, price of coffee and tv. Helen's funny and I'm looking forward to building the friendship



OUR IMPACT



At the 6 month mark we are asking more in-depth questions about the volunteers' experiences:

- 86% say they feel their life has become richer since being involved with b:friend
- 71% strongly agree and 29% agree that being involved with b:friend gives them a sense of purpose
- 57% strongly agree and 43% agree that being involved with b:friend gives them a sense of community connection

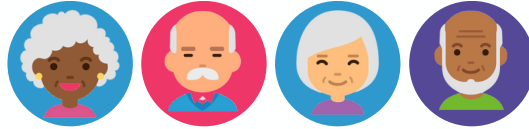


100% of befrienders would consider their older neighbour a friend

OUR IMPACT



SOCIAL CLUBS



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+

It's changed my Mum's life this club. And it makes me so proud when I see her photo (online) doing all the different things (Daughter of a club member)

I can't remember what we did at my first session I just remember laughing because it was the first time I'd laughed in months

I'm making loads of new friends through the group. It makes my day meeting up with all the new friendly people here

It really helped. I'd miss it if I didn't come. It's ever so good, I really enjoy it. You know, most of us there are widows or widowers, and it is something to look forward to, it makes you feel happier. When I go home after a session, I think about it. It's made a big difference to me. I enjoy the crafts, and the activities are interesting. Everybody's friendly to each other. I'd recommend it to others because we all get on and we always have a good laugh!

There is a different activity each week. My mum goes to this club and loves it. She says that it is the highlight of her week; she always comes away happy. (Daughter of a club member)

CASE STUDIES

John & Trevor

When John had to take time off from work due to a heart condition, he started to look for volunteering opportunities he would enjoy to boost his well-being. John said, "I just got in a rut. After being an engineer for 25 years, I was stuck at home all day, doing nothing. I just needed something to do, so I volunteered for a few things."

"b:friend introduced me to Trevor about six months ago, and it's been brilliant. It helps me as much as it helps him. I enjoy his company; he has some great stories to tell. It's like talking to my granddad."

"It helps me as much as it helps him".

Trevor, who suffered a stroke, said catching up with John every week had been a welcomed change as he can't get out as much as he used to. He said, "It's like a bit of fresh air. It's a fresh perspective. We get to talk about different subjects. It's been great."

John added, "It's been good for us both. Just seeing Trevor for an hour a week has really helped my mental health as well. If I'm passing, I pop in to see if he's alright. We're getting beef sandwiches tomorrow!"



CASE STUDIES

Tony & Shaunagh

Tony was referred to b:friend as his wife was moved to a care home, and suddenly living alone and struggling with mobility issues left him feeling isolated. He was looking for a social outlet and a way to make new friends.



Tony and Shaunagh connected through b:friend three years ago. They found they had some unexpected things in common at their first meeting. Tony used to work for the Navy, and Shaunagh's partner was in the army. As Tony's wife was moved to a care home and Shaunagh's partner often worked away from home, they could both relate to coping with not seeing a loved one for longer periods.

“I often forget about it being through b:friend, now it's like I've always known Tony ”

They quickly bonded over shared experiences and jokes. Shaunagh even started to take Tony out for breakfast on the weekends, as due to his reduced mobility he missed going out.

Tony said: “Shaunagh is a lovely young lady with a bubbly personality. I see her every week, we often have breakfast together. It's been really nice chatting to her. We became good friends.” There have been some changes over the months. Tony lost his wife and has been dealing with bereavement, but their weekly catchups over a meal or a coffee continued. Shaunagh even introduced Tony to her partner.

Shaunagh said Tony was becoming more positive as the weeks went by, and Tony felt joyful about connecting with someone and making new friends. The world opened up a bit, and they were both proud to call each other friends. “He's a part of my life now and I genuinely look forward to seeing him every weekend. We both get on really well and it's a pleasure getting to know him and call him my friend,” Shaunagh said. “I often forget about it being through b:friend, now it's like I've always known Tony and me seeing him every week is part of my routine, like visiting my mum or dad to catch-up.”



CASE STUDIES



Janet & Laura

Older neighbour Janet and befriender Laura connected through b:friend over two years months ago.

Janet used to be very active, with a busy social life. She was a keen walker in her free time and always valued her independence.

As her mobility reduced and the pandemic slowed life down, she started to spend more time at home alone. Although she had a supportive family, her friends lived away and could only stay in touch over the phone, which made her feel isolated.

“She’s like a breathe of fresh air”

When she first heard about befriending, Janet was apprehensive as she wasn’t sure if it was for her. Meeting Laura quickly changed this.

“It’s been smashing, Laura is lovely, Janet said. “I find it works two ways, we chat about local history that she finds interesting, as she is not from around here. It is surprising, but we actually both benefit from the chats, and it makes me feel better that I can contribute. I know I’ve got family and some friends, but they are all older. She is outside of that circle and brings a different perspective. She is like a bit of fresh air.

“Laura is a proper friend now. We have a good conflag about everything; it’s lovely.”

Laura said: “I have thoroughly enjoyed the time I have spent getting to know Janet! We have lots of the same interests and I have definitely learned a lot about baking, walking, and the city.

“It has been particularly fascinating to hear about her experiences living in the area for a number of years and better understand the history of where I now live. She has been able to recommend new places to eat that I would never have known about without her!

“It is a lovely part of my day when I get to spend time visiting Janet, and I always leave with a smile. I would recommend befriending to anyone.”

+ +

+ +

+ +

+ +



Our partners

We'd like to extend thanks to the awesome organisations that partner with our project. Their commitment to reducing isolation is significant & we're able to achieve huge impact as a result of their belief in a more connected society.



Our partners



EVERSHEDS
SUTHERLAND



The Company of
Cutlers in Hallamshire
Since 1624

CADDY.



Taylor *Bracewell*
Your solicitors | Your success



Our People: The Team



Colette Bunker,
Chief Executive Officer



Karen Booker,
Befriending Coordinator



Rayella Broomhead,
Programme Manager



Rach Beavon-Baldwin,
Befriending Coordinator



Sara Kopecsni,
Senior Communications Officer



Rachael Mullen,
Befriending Coordinator



Jenny Pitman,
Programme Manager



Helen Twelves,
Fundraising Manager



Maryanne Wylde,
Project Officer



Mollie West,
Befriending Coordinator

Our People: The Board of Trustees



Simon Moxon,
Chair of the Board of Trustees



Clare Legg,
Treasurer



Becky Marlor



Matthew Lollar



Let's end loneliness together, let's b:friend!

b:friend is a charity registered in the UK with registered Charity Number 1171148.



B:FRIEND
(A charitable incorporated organisation limited by guarantee)

**REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2024**

CHARITY NUMBER 1171148

COMPANY NUMBER CE009648

B:FRIEND

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**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD
ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2024**

The Management Committee presents its report and accounts for the year ended 31 October 2024.

Charity information
Management Committee

Simon Moxon
Tara Walker
Clare Legg
Matthew Lollar
Rebecca Roberts

Chairsperson - Appointed April 2023
Treasurer – Resigned March 2024
Treasurer - Appointed March 2024
Non-Executive member
Non-Executive member

Charity Registration number

1171148

Charity registered office
and Operational address

Unit 315
The Workstation
15 Paternoster Row
Sheffield
S1 2BX

Secretary

None

Independent examiner

Xeinadin (Yorkshire) Ltd
Sidings House
Sidings Court
Doncaster
DN4 5NU

Bankers

Santander UK Plc
Doncaster

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2024

Structure, governance and management

Governing Document

The organisation is a charitable incorporated organisation formed on 17 January 2017 and registered as a charity.

The charity was established under a Constitution which establishes the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Constitution.

In the event of the charity being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Recruitment and Appointment of Management Committee

The Trustees of the charity for the purposes of charity law and under the charity's Constitution are known as members of the Management Committee. Under the requirements of the Constitution the members of the Management Committee are elected to serve for a period of three years after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting.

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of the charity are to promote social inclusion amongst elderly persons, in particular, but not exclusive to over 65's, resident in England and Wales and the surrounding areas who are excluded by society, by provision of:

- Befriending services through weekly outreach to individuals.

Such other ways from time to time as the trustees see fit in furtherance with said objects. B:Friend is a not-for-profit organisation.

B:Friend pairs volunteer befrienders with socially isolated older neighbours in the community with the aim of reducing loneliness by reengaging with people and places around them. Our key activities are 1:1 befriending pairings, visiting once a week for a "cuppa" and a chat. B:Friend also provides two hour social clubs, held in various locations that offer peer support through a range of physically and mentally stimulating sessions.

All activities undertaken by the charity are to benefit people in the community, be they volunteers or older neighbours, and all remain equitable with services free at the point of delivery.

Trustees ensure all activities are in accordance with the charity objects outlined in the constitution and are for the public benefit.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2024

Achievements and performance

- In the reporting period, the charity has created over 290 x 1:1 befriending pairings across Doncaster, Barnsley, Sheffield, Rotherham, Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire. In addition to this our team has supported and managed an additional 700 x 1:1 befriending pairings already in existence.
- Facilitated approximately 1008 hours of Social Club activity across the region with weekly activity, peer support and entertainment.
- Collaborated with 89 other charity and community groups, along with statutory health and social care colleagues, on wider social challenges faced across towns and cities we work in.
- Created over 32,160 volunteer hours providing community connection for our isolated older neighbours.

Financial Review

Principal Funding Sources

B:Friend was grateful to receive funding from: The National Lottery Community Fund, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Coalfields Regeneration Trust, South Yorkshire Community Fund, Derbyshire Voluntary Action, Irwin Mitchell, Masonic Charitable Trust, Rank Foundation, Sheffield City Council and Voluntary Action Rotherham.

Reserve Policy

At the start of the financial year, the charity faced a period of funding uncertainty, with the National Lottery grant due to end in June 2024 and the Dearne contract scheduled to conclude in 2025. In response, the Board took a prudent approach to expenditure and held higher reserves to safeguard service continuity. This cautious strategy resulted in a temporary increase in unrestricted reserves beyond the level set out in our reserves policy.

In light of ongoing economic pressures and a challenging fundraising environment across the sector, the Board has since reviewed and updated the charity's reserves policy, increasing the target level from 6 to 9 months of core expenditure. This adjustment better reflects the level of resilience required to manage income volatility and protect the sustainability of our work.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2024

Statement of Management Committee's Responsibilities

Charity law requires the Management Committee to prepare financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the CIO as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial period. In preparing those financial statements, the Management Committee should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the company will continue on that basis.

The Management Committee is responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006 and Charities SORP (FRS102). The Management Committee is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Members of the Management Committee

Members of the Management Committee, who are trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out on page 2.

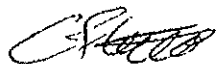
In accordance with charities law, as the CIO's trustees, we certify that:

- so far as we are aware, there is no relevant accounting information of which the charity's independent examiners are unaware; and
- as the trustees of the CIO, we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant accounting information and to establish that the charity's independent examiners are aware of that information.

Approval

This report was approved by the Management Committee on 31/07/25 and signed on its behalf by:

Clare Legg



Treasurer

B:FRIEND

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS

Report to the trustees of B:Friend on the accounts for the period ended 31 October 2024 set out on pages 7 to 15

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this period under section 144(2) of the Act, and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking of explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

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

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

Kelvin Pitton BA FCA
For and on behalf of Xeinadin (Yorkshire) Ltd
Slidings Court
Doncaster DN4 5NU

Dated: 01/08/2025

B:FRIEND

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (Including Income and Expenditure Account)

YEAR ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted Income funds £	Total funds £	Prior year funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES	3				
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and gifts		83,647	140,090	223,737	412,866
Charitable activities		-	-	-	-
Total		83,647	140,090	223,737	412,866
RESOURCES EXPENDED	4				
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		2,812	-	2,812	927
Charitable activities		4,431	310,485	314,916	251,926
Total		7,243	310,485	317,728	252,852
Transfer between funds		-	-	-	-
<i>Net movement in funds</i>		76,405	(170,395)	(93,990)	160,002
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		169,812	232,425	402,237	242,237
<i>Total funds carried forward</i>		246,220	62,030	308,250	402,237

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the period. All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

B:FRIEND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Prior year funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	7	-	1,164	1,164	1,550
<i>Total fixed assets</i>		-	1,164	1,164	1,550
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	8	-	4,290	4,290	3,925
Cash at bank and in hand		246,220	122,192	368,412	465,124
<i>Total current assets</i>		246,220	126,482	372,702	469,049
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year					
	9	-	65,616	65,616	68,360
<i>Net current assets</i>		246,220	60,866	307,086	400,689
<i>Total assets less current liabilities</i>		246,220	62,030	308,250	402,239
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY					
Restricted income funds	10	-	62,030	62,030	242,542
Unrestricted designated funds		69,000	-	69,000	145,000
Unrestricted funds		177,220	-	177,220	14,698
<i>Total funds</i>		246,220	62,030	308,250	402,240

Approved by the trustees on 31/07/2025

Signed:

On behalf of the trustees

B:FRIEND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 2024

1 BASIS OF PREPARATION

Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note to these accounts. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and with the Charities Act 2011.

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

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

INCOMING RESOURCES

Recognition of incoming resources

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when:

- the charity becomes entitled to the resources;
- the trustees are virtually certain they will receive the resources; and
- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Offsetting

There has been no offsetting of assets and liabilities, or income and expenses, unless required or permitted by the FRS 102 SORP or FRS 102.

Grants and donations

Grants and donations are only included in the SoFA when the general income recognition criteria are met.

Contractual income and performance related grants

This is only included in the SoFA once the related goods or services have been delivered.

Gifts in kind

Gifts in kind are accounted for at a reasonable estimate of their value to the charity or the amount actually realised.

Gifts in kind for sale or distribution are included in the accounts as gifts only when sold or distributed by the charity.

Gifts in kind for use by the charity are included in the SoFA as incoming resources when receivable

Donated services and facilities

These are only included in incoming resources (with an equivalent amount in resources expended) where the benefit to the charity is reasonably quantifiable, measurable and material. The value placed on these resources is the estimated value to the charity of the service or facility received.

B:FRIEND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 2024

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

EXPENDITURE AND LIABILITIES

Liability recognition

Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.

Governance and support costs

Support costs have been allocated between governance costs and other support. Governance costs comprise all costs involving public accountability of the charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice.

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

ASSETS

Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity

These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year, and cost at least £250.

They are valued at cost

The depreciation rates and methods used are disclosed in the notes to the accounts.

3 ANALYSIS OF INCOMING RESOURCES

3.1

	This year £	Last year £
Donations and Gifts		
Grants	186,396	248,252
Donations	37,341	164,603
	<hr/> 223,737	<hr/> 412,855

B:FRIEND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 2024

4 ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES EXPENDED

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	This year £	Last year £
Raising funds				
Advertising	2,812	-	2,812	927
Total expenditure on raising funds	2,812	-	2,812	927
Charitable activities				
Other expenditure	4,431	310,485	314,916	251,926
Total expenditure on charitable activities	4,431	310,485	314,916	251,926
Total expenditure	7,243	310,485	317,728	252,853

5 PAID EMPLOYEES

5.1 Staff costs	This year £	Last year £
Salaries and wages	224,187	176,343
Social security costs	14,215	10,027
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)	4,780	3,718
Total staff costs	243,182	190,088

No employees received employee benefits for the reporting period of more than £60,000.

	This year £	Last year £
Total amount paid to key personnel	£46,828	£45,760

5.2 Average head count in the year	This year	Last year
Officers and administration	8	6
Support workers		
CEO	1	1
Management		
	9	7

B:FRIEND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 2024

6 DETAILS OF CERTAIN ITEMS OF EXPENDITURE

6.1 Trustee remuneration and expenses

No members of the management committee received any remuneration during the year.

£91.68 expenses were reimbursed to the management committee during the year.

6.2 Fees for examination of the accounts

This year	Last year
£	£

Independent examiner's fees for reporting on the accounts	2,085	1,985
	<u>2,085</u>	<u>1,985</u>

7 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS
Cost

Computer equipment	Total
-----------------------	-------

At the beginning of the year	18,264	17,119
Additions	760	1,146
Disposals	-	-
At end of year	<u>19,024</u>	<u>18,265</u>

Depreciation

Basis
Rate

Straight Line
3 years

At the beginning of the year	16,714	16,630
Depreciation	1,146	1,084
Disposals	-	-
At end of year	<u>17,860</u>	<u>16,714</u>

Net book value

At the beginning of the year	1,550	1,489
At end of year	1,164	1,551

B:FRIEND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 2024

8 DEBTORS AND PREPAYMENTS

Analysis of debtors	This year £	Last year £
Funding debtors	2,000	2,000
Prepayments and accrued income	2,290	1,925
Total	4,290	3,925

9 CREDITORS AND ACCRUALS

Analysis of creditors	This year £	Last year £
Trade Creditors	1,500	2,183
Accruals and deferred income	64,116	66,177
Taxation and social security	-	-
Total	65,616	68,360

B: FRIEND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 2023

10 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

10.1 Restricted funds held

Fund name	Purpose and restrictions
Voluntary Action Rotherham	to provide core service provision in Rotherham
Barnsley MBC	to provide core service provision in the Donina area
South Yorkshire Community Fund	to provide core service provision in the Moxborough area
South Yorkshire Community Fund	to provide core service provision in the Doncaster Central area
Coalfields Regeneration Trust - Barnsley South	to provide core service provision in Worsborough, Wombwell and Darfield
BOPPA	funding for physical activity sessions at the Donina social clubs
Derbyshire Voluntary Action	to provide core service provision in Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire and Bolsover
Big Lottery Reaching Communities	to provide core service provision in Doncaster
SYCF Green	funding for outings and other activities that connect older neighbours with nature
Sheffield City Council - Covid recovery fund	to provide core service provision in Sheffield
Doncaster MBC	to provide doncaster clubs a warm place in winter
SYCF: Community Resilience AS65035	sheffield befriending
SCC: East LAC	coronation celebration for sheffield social club
Ta'bol Trust	sheffield befriending
THLCF: Awards for All	social group sessions
LNRF	doncaster befriending
BHBC: Barnsley Better Bonds	funding for outings
Elise Pittington	rotherham befriending
McCarthy Stone: Spring Grants	core funding
Peoples Postcode Lottery	core funding
Rank Foundation	core funding

10.2 Restricted funds summary

	Balance b/f £	Incoming £	Outgoing £	Transfer to Unrestricted £	Balance c/f £
Doncaster MBC	2,500	850	3,350	-	-
Voluntary Action Rotherham	15,003	5,031	15,213	-	4,801
SYCF: Community Resilience AS65035	-	4,000	4,000	-	-
Barnsley MBC	71,880	40,085	93,307	-	18,657
Big Lottery Reaching Communities	74,826	45,000	101,076	-	18,750
SCC: East LAC	266	-	266	-	-
SYCF: Cost of Living Grant (Sheffield)	5,040	-	5,040	-	-
SYCF: Twon Bridge Wind Farm Community	2,557	-	924	-	1,634
Ta'bol Trust	1,727	2,503	4,227	-	-
THLCF: Awards for All	4,973	-	4,973	-	-
BHBC: Barnsley Better Bonds	334	-	334	-	-
Coalfields Regeneration Trust - Barnsley South	5,820	-	5,820	-	-
BOPPA	353	-	353	-	-
Derbyshire Voluntary Action - Feeling Connected	4,030	2,502	6,532	-	-
Sheffield City Council - Covid Recovery Fund	9,057	-	9,057	-	-
Elise Pittington	3,103	-	3,103	-	-
McCarthy Stone: Spring Grants	8,000	-	8,000	-	-
Peoples Postcode Lottery	25,000	-	25,000	-	-
HSBC	-	10,207	8,009	-	12,198
AIM Consortia	-	12,260	8,101	-	4,055
Liz & Tony Bremell	-	5,000	5,000	-	-
Sheffield Church Buxresses	-	600	600	-	-
St George Exile Trust	-	2,220	372	-	1,858
Sheffield University Incom scheme	-	1,000	1,000	-	-
Total	232,476	140,090	310,485	-	62,032

10.3 Analysis of net assets between funds

	General Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Tangible fixed assets	-	1,164	1,164
Current assets	248,220	128,403	372,702
Current liabilities	-	(83,616)	(83,616)
Net assets at 31 October 2024	248,220	62,030	308,250

B:FRIEND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 2024

11 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

No trustee or other person related to the charity had any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the charity during the period.