



TRUSTEE'S REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

21st October 2023 to 20th October 2024

Arkbound Foundation

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 20th October 2024

Charity number 1173072 (England and Wales)
SC049523 (Scotland)

Address and contact details

Arkbound Foundation
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Arkbound Foundation
Rogart Street Campus
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The trustees who served for the period of this report are as follows: -

Jim Dempsy, Chair
Waltraud Pospischil
Amanda Thomas
Lena Gray
Matthew Lepley
Claire Harris
Dr Rula Abdulrazak
Dr Renuka Thakore
Beth Cowen (Stepped down 30 January 2024)

Patrons

Anthony Hopkins CBE
Jane Hatton
Eoin McLennan-Murray
Lucy Watts MBE

Independent Examiner

Ahmed Khan CIMA
Capital Office
124 City Rd
London EC1V 2NX

Arkbound Foundation

Report of the trustees

For the year 21st October 2023 - 20th October 2024

Structure, Governance and Management

Type of governing document: Constitution

How the charity is constituted: CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) - only voting members are charity trustees

Trustee selection method: Appointed through open, full board meeting decisions

Objects and activities

The charitable objects of the CIO are: -

a. TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION for the public benefit by working with people across the UK of all age groups who are socially excluded on the grounds of disability, poverty, criminal background, ethnicity, or any other characteristic, and to relieve the needs of these groups to assist them to integrate more effectively into society, particularly by: -

- i. Empowering these groups through workshops and events to convey their personal stories in a way that can be understood and appreciated by the wider community.
- ii. Providing mentoring whereby individuals from these groups can fairly access the means to publish their work for the wider community to read and to develop their writing skills in a manner that improves their wellbeing.
- iii. Providing a means by which these groups can convey their stories through books and the media at large, thereby helping to tackle stigma, misunderstanding and discrimination.
- iv. Engaging these groups in discussions regarding climate change and the environment and promoting good environmental practice and awareness of related issues

b. FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION: For the public benefit to promote learning for people of all age-groups from disadvantaged backgrounds through the continued development of their individual capabilities, competencies, skills and understanding in subjects of educational value.

How the charity implemented the objectives and the main activities undertaken for the public benefit over the last year(s):

- The charity is grassroots founded, with lived experience core team members, as well as equality and diversity led. It works directly with people from a range of disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds, principally those who suffer social exclusion because of poverty, disability, ethnic and any other equality rights protected features, also those with refugee status, a conviction or criminal record, addictions, drug abuse, living in poverty, experiencing homelessness or being long-term unemployed.
- We are actively involved in disability activism, providing ongoing peer support, proactive engagement, writing for wellbeing guidance, and advice leading towards a publication. The majority of our trustees and staff identify as having a disability or other protected equality characteristics.
- In 2024 we have published eleven titles, with seven already in production/planning for 2025. Of the eleven titles, nine are single-author works and two are multi-author collections. Examples of the titles published during 2024 include:-

Arkbound Foundation

Report of the trustees

For the year 21st October 2023 - 20th October 2024

1. *Perestroika*, João Cerqueira

Perestroika is a gripping historical fiction novel set in the late Communist era. Beginning in 1978, it follows Slavian citizens like artist Ludwig Kirchner, enduring oppression under a brutal regime. By 1989, *Perestroika* ushers in revolutionary chaos, as former crime boss Ivan Fiorov's 'Freedom Party' mirrors the dictatorship it replaced. Themes of revenge, redemption, and catharsis intertwine with history, offering sharp parallels to modern crises like Putin's invasion of Ukraine and rising populism.

Author João Cerqueira, with a PhD in Art History, is published in eight countries and has won multiple awards, including the 2020 Indie Reader Awards. The book itself has already won several awards since its release: American Writing Award 2024, Independent Author Award 2024, Best Book Awards 2024, the Firebird Book Award winner 2024, and getting awarded as a 'citizen of merit' in Vienna.

2. *Govanhill Mythology*, Shane Johnstone

Govanhill Mythology is a poetry collection exploring the impact of change on Glasgow's Govanhill community. Once plagued by poverty and crime, Govanhill has transformed into a vibrant, diverse neighbourhood. Poet and linguist Shane Johnstone captures the struggles and resilience of its people, reflecting on their cultures, languages, and the seismic shifts that redefined their lives. His multilingual poetry, in Gaelic, Scots, and English, resonates deeply, evoking universal themes of alienation, loss, and adaptation.

Johnstone, a Glaswegian poet and translator, is widely published in Scotland. He also authored *The Gods of Frequency* (2020) and works in a Gaelic immersion nursery.

3. *Value Beyond Money*, Diana Finch

In 2009, the Bristol Pound was launched to transform the economic system. By 2015, it was among the world's leading local currencies, featured in major outlets like *Time Magazine* and Chinese state television. Despite its success, the currency ceased circulation in 2021, and the organization closed in 2023.

Drawing from her time as Managing Director, Diana Finch explores alternative economic models, questioning the nature of money and imagining systems that prioritize non-financial value. Her insights offer a transformative understanding of money and the economy, challenging readers to envision a post-market world that addresses environmental and social challenges.

4. *The Muffin Man*, André Rostant

Set in London's Soho, André Rostant's novella explores the lives of society's marginalized, from street beggars to a Big Issue vendor struggling with delusions, ultimately leading to his suicide. The story highlights enduring issues of poverty, exclusion, gender, sexuality, and mental health against a backdrop of rising fascism.

A transgressive work, it confronts cultural and religious hypocrisy, urging readers to rethink their perceptions of homelessness and poverty and to consider driving change.

Rostant, of Irish and West-Indian heritage, draws on his experiences as a Big Issue vendor. A published poet and musician, he performs regularly in London's vibrant calypso scene. The book featured in the 30th annual celebration of the International Network of Street Papers in Glasgow, who invited Arkbound Foundation to co-present their event.

Arkbound Foundation

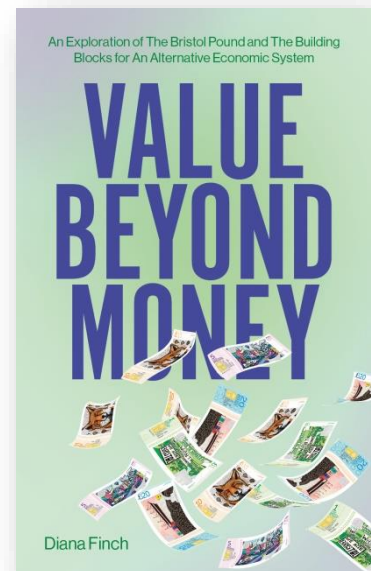
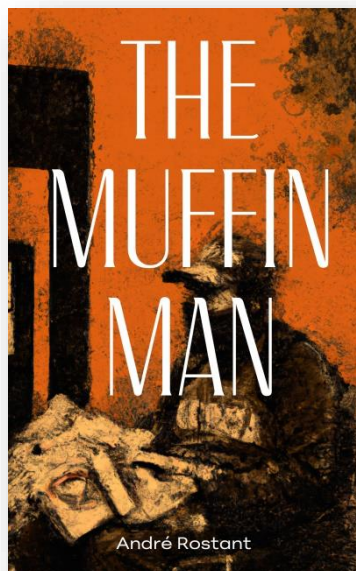
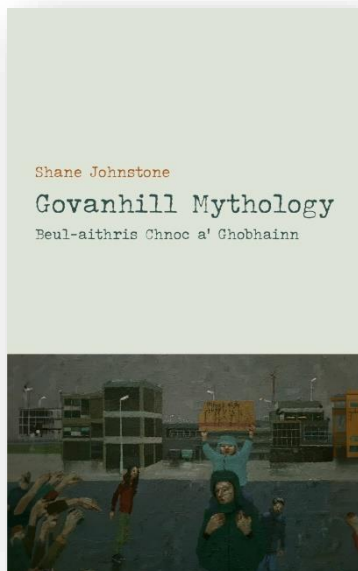
Report of the trustees

For the year 21st October 2023 - 20th October 2024

5. *Cameron's Choice*, Angela Bettoni

Twelve-year-old Cameron's life is in turmoil. His dad has left, his friendship with Daniel is strained, and his bond with his older brother Derek worsens. Desperate to impress Derek, Cameron tries to reinvent himself, making poor choices that alienate those who care about him. As he navigates identity and adolescence, Cameron must decide if he can rebuild his relationships and trust his new friends.

Written by Angela, a 22-year-old writer and performer with Down Syndrome, *Cameron's Choice* explores family, growth, and inclusion. Angela, a passionate advocate, has self-published four books and won awards for her groundbreaking work in creative arts and advocacy.



Our outreach to more audiences was spear-headed by a comprehensive social media strategy. By growing our social media volunteers from 6 to 37, it has led to a big increase in both followers and engagement:

- Our followers on Instagram have grown from 889 to 1581, Facebook has increased from 658 to 1.4K while X doubled to nearly 5k followers and LinkedIn steadily increased from 1.8k to 2.6 connections.
- We are now part of a growing community on Facebook and LinkedIn groups where daily engagement and uploading book reviews have resulted in a greater presence and understanding of the work Arkbound does.
- During the summer of 2024, adverts were placed specifically for the volunteer role of Book Reviewers. This saw a huge increase in the number of books being reviewed with volunteer numbers now standing at 69 and many volunteers committing to writing future reviews. These reviews are posted on many different sites as well as our own social media platforms, highlighting a wide range of our publications. Volunteers are then encouraged to pass the books on with a view to organically grow our audience.

Arkbound Foundation

Report of the trustees

For the year 21st October 2023 - 20th October 2024

Examples of the reviews are:

"All throughout the book, you are struck by the quiet, unexpected ways in which the worst effects of the pandemic have fallen on the shoulders of women and pregnant people. From being forced to go to ultrasounds alone to losing the support of local mum's groups, the little everyday agonies of raising a baby during this time come to light in a way I haven't really seen happen anywhere else." – Rainbow Punch

"Perspective shifts are a key reason I enjoy reading and this book allows the reader to see the homeless population in a different dynamic- some people may have their own version of how to 'do' life that is outside societal expectations, and many of us aren't brave enough to imagine that break away from the norm" – Beggar Bee Nameless

Writing Workshops

Alongside an ongoing programme of creative writing workshops, we also finished delivering a specific programme called 'Our Economy'. This was a workshop series that we ran in Glasgow during the summer of 2024. The focus of the 8 workshops was split between developing creating writing skills and discussing ideas about how the economy could work for everyone, with a different facilitator for each session. The workshops were free to attend and aimed at people who identify as coming from an under-represented, marginalised or disadvantaged background. We confirmed 10 participants from 19 applicants and we had 9 participants who attended at least 6 sessions. In the first 6 sessions, we had at least 8 out of 10 participants in attendance.



One of the outcomes of the project is a collection, *Our Economy*, that will be published in 2025 on the themes of the workshops. We invited participants and economics facilitators to contribute chapters or creative texts and received contributions from 6 of the participants. This will be the first time many of them have been published. The participants were encouraged to share their work with our creative writing facilitators for their feedback in advance of submitting, which they found helpful.

"It was good and nerve wracking submitting work to professionals however the feedback I got was very helpful and built up my confidence." – Participant

"I really enjoyed the creative writing specific workshops – particularly the exercises surrounding character and writing non-fiction." – Participant

Arkbound Foundation

Report of the trustees

For the year 21st October 2023 - 20th October 2024

"I have met some great authors who have given me great feedback and advice!" – Participant

"I really enjoyed connecting with other people and listening about their points of view even though we might disagree at some point. Also, the [facilitators] were experts that shared their experiences and knowledge, that was very enriched experience." – Participant

Writing Within Walls

Our Writing Within Walls prisoner writing mentorship programme was restarted on a voluntary basis in 2024 after a break. We've had 10 active partnerships this year, with people currently in prison and people with experience of incarceration being mentored by experienced writers. Alongside the actual sending of writing samples and giving feedback in response, mentors and mentees send letters that enable them to develop relationships, helping to address issues around isolation and poor mental health that are so rife in prisons. All correspondence is sent via Arkbound and mentees and mentors only share their first names, ensuring that safeguarding standards are maintained. The programme is now coordinated by a dedicated volunteer, who is gaining valuable administration and coordination experience, and we hope to continue to expand our pool of mentees and mentors in 2025. Koestler Arts has been signposting prisoners interested in writing and publishing to Arkbound Foundation, and we also receive enquiries from prison and probation officers.

"Thank you so much for your helpful and insightful responses to my ideas. It's reassuring to know that I'm making some kind of sense!" – mentee

Mentoring and events

We continued a programme of general mentoring, supporting 9 people on this across the year. Some mentees went on to develop their work with other publishers, whilst we were able to support 2 to achieve publication with us. In other cases, the mentorship allowed participants to gain better insights and understanding of the publishing process, as well as to develop their abilities and contacts within the industry. The aim of the programme, like WWW, is to empower people to have their voices heard through writing; to bolster confidence and self-esteem; to open up publishing opportunities after their writing is developed sufficiently; to improve wider community participation and cohesion as a result of the journey (events from publishing, material that is published, etc). An important part of the process is also to challenge discrimination, negative stereotyping, or general lack of understanding towards those who come from backgrounds where this is likely to occur.

With respect to events, we held:

- 12 book launch events, both online and offline, with a total attendance of 907 people.
- 4 industry specific publishing events, to help raise awareness of barriers that people from disadvantaged backgrounds face. These saw a total of 86 participants.
- 2 'open day' events, focused on supporting volunteers and attracting interest from volunteers. Both these events were attended by 16 people.

Arkbound Foundation

Report of the trustees

For the year 21st October 2023 - 20th October 2024

Governance

Over the last 12 months the charity's governance was stable, with meetings held of consistent attendance above quorum. Our general board meetings take place every month. Important decisions are made by majority vote and every trustee can bring up agenda points. All meetings are properly recorded through minutes which get taken during the meetings, then circulated to all trustees a few days later, once they are written out and confirmed to be accurate.

We also advanced through regular trustee training opportunities, and every board member is made aware of the resources and regulations which are available through the CCEW gov.uk pages, OSCR and Charity Excellence. Our policies get regularly updated and we have all essential ones in comprehensive forms, like safeguarding, EDI (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion), data protection, complaints, conflicts of interests, expenses, volunteering, together with internal contacts, designated persons, as well as outside contacts for emergencies.

There is an all-staff team meeting held bi-weekly, where each member can share details of their activities, together with weekly meetings for specific operational and project areas. Performance is regularly assessed by a general operations staff member, with monthly updates relayed to the board of trustees. Alongside this, the charity operates an informal steering group, comprised of (currently) four volunteers, two trustees, two staff members and a rotating number of beneficiaries. This group helps feed into the charity's work and direction.

Arkbound Foundation

Report of the trustees

For the year 21st October 2023 - 20th October 2024

Achievements and performance

Our Crowdbound initiative saw us successfully raise £18,554 from a total of 787 backers, in addition to £11,247 in linked donations. This enabled the full support of 7 campaigns.

Breakdown of campaigns

Product title	Items sold	Net sales	Orders
Ecological crisis, revolutionary change & collapse: diverse global perspectives	176	5155	176
The In-Between	54	3018	54
Where Do My Roots Go?	51	486	50
Back to the Fuchsia	49	1075	49
Govanhill Mythologies	38	2005	38
Talking to a Pie about Walking the Dog	22	3023	22
Value Beyond Money	397	3810	101
Totals	787	£18,554	£390

The Crowdbound website was also upgraded, allowing an enhanced user experience and the addition of new elements. Whilst the upgrade period of two months necessitated a pause in campaigns, the long-term difference is projected to see an increase in both the number of campaigns and returns next year.

Writers' Group & Literary Magazine

In collaboration with an Arkbound trustee, the Publishing Executive co-founded the Arkbound Writers' Group. This innovative group provides members with industry insights, one-on-one publishing guidance, Crowdbound campaign support, and guaranteed publication in the Arkbound Literary Magazine, which was also developed as part of this initiative.

Grant Writing Partnership

A partnership was established with 180 Degrees Consulting, the world's largest university-based consultancy for social impact organizations. This collaboration focuses on researching and securing grant funding for Arkbound's initiatives.

Arkbound's Latest Collection: Scottish Landscapes

Arkbound's latest multi-author collection will be published in autumn 2025. The collection will include 15+ poems and short prose pieces exploring the historical significance and cultural emphasis on Scotland's natural landscapes. The call for submissions requested pieces analysing and reflecting on:

1. Landscape memory: How the landscape holds collective memory, how historical events and environmental changes are etched into the landscape, and how these memories shape contemporary Scottish identity.
2. Intangible cultural heritage: Culture passed through generations, tied to the landscape—from oral storytelling, traditional music, and landscape-based skills (such as peat cutting)—and how these traditions are preserved, adapted, or lost.

Arkbound Foundation

Report of the trustees

For the year 21st October 2023 - 20th October 2024

3. Urban & rural landscapes: Tension between development and preservation, including how modern infrastructure can either threaten or integrate with the greater natural landscape. We were overwhelmed by the quality and diversity of submissions we received. Fundraising for the Scottish landscape collection will begin in early Spring 2025.

These initiatives have strengthened Arkbound's operations, expanded its community engagement, and advanced its mission to empower authors and foster meaningful connections.

As the UK's only literature organization part of the United Nations Environmental Programme, we continue to take our environmental and climate responsibilities very seriously. This is reflected through our ongoing support of works that cover environmental themes – climate change being the prominent subject – through titles including 'Ellie and Sapiens' and 'Value Beyond Money'.

Likewise, we honored our yearly commitment to be a carbon negative organization (one that absorbs or offsets more carbon than it produces) through a highly proactive supply chain policy and the supported planting of trees in the now 4-year-old 'Oakupy' project. Just like in 2021-3, we were able to replant 1000 oak saplings purchased from Maelor Forest Nurseries. With the help of volunteers working with Arkbound on this project, we were able to donate the saplings to a variety of organisations such as Pod Micro School, YACWAG (Yatton and Congresbury Wildlife Action Group) and Bristol Tree Forum who were able to distribute the donated trees through their annual tree giveaway project.

Our part as a member in networks such as Ecolise (pan-European) and Scotland Community Climate Actions Network (national action in Scotland) gives us many opportunities to stay abreast of what other organisations are doing, partake in all possible collaborative opportunities, and be at the forefront of real actions to tackle the climate emergency. The charity was one of the first, both in its sector and as a general NGO, to highlight the importance of climate change even before climate emergency declarations were made, with its efforts in this area acknowledged by awards going back to 2016. The inertia and insufficient effort made by many other organisations, even those in receipt of much higher levels of funding and with far greater capacity, continues to be a cause of mounting concern and one that the charity regularly draws attention to through social media, reports on our academic branch, and feedback provided to bodies such as the Environmental Funders Network and directly to funders themselves.

For the Social Enterprise UK 2023 awards we got nominated for "Best Social Enterprise Building Diversity, Inclusion, Equity & Justice", and we were also selected for a case study on 'Lived Experience Charities Undertaking Social Impact Work' by St Anne's College of Oxford University, which follows in the wake of us being featured in previous academic studies (as referenced on other annual reports). We got awarded as SE100 2024, listed in the top 100 UK social enterprises for the third year in a row. Other recognitions include becoming a global "People and Planet First" enterprise, the Charity Excellence quality mark, Disability Confident - and Living Wage employer accreditations.

Arkbound Foundation

Report of the trustees

For the year 21st October 2023 - 20th October 2024

Overcoming challenges and obstacles

As with previous years, the time spent applying for funding is never certain to result in any gain. With the advent of AI tools and larger organisations able to afford a paid grant writer, it is a challenging situation that requires ongoing adaptations to overcome. Nonetheless, grants received in this accounting period fell broadly in line with the last period. It is still the case that the charity receives no core funding to cover its overall staff costs, nor any rolling yearly funding to help with general areas. It appears to be far easier to gain project specific, restricted funding. It may be necessary in the future to utilise AI tools and expect staff managing projects to be responsible in acquiring the funds to keep their allotted projects going.

The wider societal background, of on-going lack of investment into key services, alienation and discrimination towards marginalised groups, deepening extremist narratives, alongside a climate and ecological emergency of growing severity, has presented a range of other problems. Long-term, the impacts from these areas may require a shift in focus, towards supporting communities at a more localised level, and being capable of gaining resilience to climate change. The charity's business plan, of acquiring property, has this in mind, and efforts to secure investment are hoped to bear fruition in 2025.

Arkbound Foundation

Report of the trustees

For the year 21st October 2023 - 20th October 2024

Financial review

The Arkbound Foundation aims to keep at least three months running costs in reserves, so as to cover emergency or unexpected costs. We have managed to continue doing that throughout this period.

During the last financial year, we were successfully able to repay a social investment loan from Social Investment Business early, which allowed us to bolster our operations and develop areas of income. The loan had an accompanying grant element of £20,000, which, in addition to other grants made, saw a total of £65,000 in this category (compared with £47,000 in the last accounting period).

Trading revenue continued to increase, principally around book sales, Crowdbound and publishing. Total trading revenue was £105,195. Alongside this, donations made up £41,003 with Gift Aid included, corporate sponsorship £5,999 and support in kind calculated at £4,275.

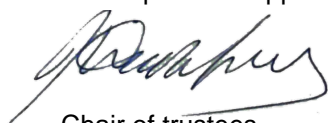
The main area of expenses has been staff expenditure (£83,016). By accounting year end we had a total of seven staff, the majority working part time. Various project running related costs, as detailed below at 13-14, made up the second largest area of expenditure.

Comparatively high financial resilience can be seen through the charity's multiple income streams, since the grant making landscape continues to be highly competitive (as noted herein). The long-term financial plan continues to be acquisition of a property, through which additional revenue streams can be made, as well as more far reaching social and environmental impact.

Independent examiner

Ahmed Khan was appointed as independent examiner for the charity in this period.

This report was approved by the trustees on 28th January 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Chair of trustees
Jim Dempsey

Independent examiner's report

To the trustees of the Arkbound Foundation

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Arkbound Foundation ('the charity') for the year ended 20th October 2024, which are set out on pages 13 to 17.

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 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

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.



Date: 22nd January 2025

Ahmed Khan CIMA
Capital Office
124 City Rd
London EC1V 2NX

Arkbound Foundation
Receipts and payment account (cont.)

For the year ended 20th October 2024

Arkbound Foundation

Receipts and payment account

For the year ended 20th October 2024

	12 months to 20/10/2024 Total £	Restated [Period in last accounts] Total £
Receipts		
Donations and corporate sponsorships	47,002	50,061
Grants (1)	65,000	42,000
Revenue from book sales and publishing	53,423	49,697
Support in kind	4,275	2,175
Other sales (including eBay)	10,090	11,757
Internship placement support	5,000	19,950
Crowdbound	31,682	28,600
Workshops	10,000	7,000
Loans	50,000	0
Receipts	276,473	211,240
Total	<u>276,473</u>	<u>211,240</u>
Payments		
Book publication costs (all elements)	32,986	30,399
Advertising and promotion	4,500	2,966
Writing and journalism workshops	11,273	4,236
Staff salaries	83,016	70,949
Training costs	550	1080
Volunteer and trustee expenses	4,056	2,009
Mentoring programme delivery costs	12,355	12,372
Rental and utilities	7,692	7,692
Insurance and legal costs	350	1,001
Admin (incl. Postage, stationery & franking)	4,098	3,014
Website costs	5,326	2,625
Equipment and materials	1,966	1,457
Environmental projects	2,000	2,062
Membership fees	325	325

Arkbound Foundation**Receipts and payment account (cont.)****For the year ended 20th October 2024**

Small grants and prizes (2)	500	6,000
Fundraising costs	3,000	5,188
Loan repayments	52,328	88,038
Total payments	226,321	241,413

Net receipts / (payments)		
Cash funds at 21st October 2023		68,145
Cash funds at 20th October 2024	118,297	

Arkbound Foundation

Balance sheet

As at 20th October 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Current assets		
Debtors: amounts falling due within 1 year (3)	12,723	17,839
Cash at hand and in bank	118,297	68,145
	<u>131,020</u>	<u>85,984</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year (4)	7,038	16,401
	<u></u>	<u></u>
Net current assets	<u>131,020</u>	<u>85,984</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	<u>123,982</u>	<u>69,583</u>
Total net assets	<u>123,982</u>	<u>69,583</u>
Charity funds		
Restricted funds (5)	76,273	26,975
Unrestricted funds (6)	47,709	42,608
Total funds	<u>123,982</u>	<u>69,583</u>

The notes on pages 15 to 17 form part of these financial statements.

Arkbound Foundation

Notes to the financial statements

As at 20th October 2024

(1)

Grants received

Name of source	Amount received (£)	Funding purpose
The National Lottery	20,000	Workshops and Publishing
Social Investment Business Grant	20,000	Development of income and workshops
Quartet Community Foundation	5000	Mentoring (restricted)
Foundation Scotland	10,000	Workshops and events (restricted)
Friends Provident	10,000	Our Economy (restricted)

(2)

Grants given

Recipient name	Amount given (£)	Funding purpose
Just Collapse	500	Towards operations as part of contribution to book

Arkbound Foundation

Notes to the financial statements (cont.)

As at 20th October 2024

(3)

Debtors

Due within 1 year	2024 (£)	2023 (£)
Trade debtors	6,590	13,279
Prepayments and accrued income	6,133	4,560
Grants	0	0
	<u>12,723</u>	<u>17,839</u>

(4)

Creditors

Due within 1 year	2024 (£)	2023 (£)
Book royalties	5,022	7,254
Trade creditors	2,016	9,147
Loan repayments	0	0
	<u>7,038</u>	<u>16,401</u>

(5)

Restricted funds

Current year (as at 20/10/24)

	Amount (£)
Writing Within Walls	3,073
Mentoring	9,011
Book publishing	16,854
Rental	3,414
Workshops	9,083
Staff	28,772
Placements	6,066
	<u>76,273</u>

Arkbound Foundation

Notes to the financial statements (cont.)

As at 20th October 2024

(6)

Unrestricted funds

Current year (as at 20/10/24)

Source	Amount (£)
Donations	18,498
Trading revenue	29,211
Total	<u>47,709</u>