

**JOSEPH COWEN LIFELONG  
LEARNING CENTRE CIO**

**REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**FOR THE PERIOD ENDED**

**31 August 2024**

REGISTERED NUMBER - 1174080



29 Howard Street  
North Shields  
Tyne and Wear  
NE30 1AR

Tel : 0191 259 2743 Fax : 0191 257 2249

E-mail : [info@essell.co.uk](mailto:info@essell.co.uk)

Ref: ACR/2668

**JOSEPH COWEN LIFELONG  
LEARNING CENTRE CIO**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 August 2024**

**CONTENTS**

Legal and Administrative Information	Page 1
Report of the Trustees	Pages 2 - 4
Report of the Independent Examiner	Page 5
Statement of Financial Activities	Page 6
Balance Sheet	Page 7
Notes to the Financial Statements	Pages 8 - 11

29 Howard Street  
North Shields NE30 1AR  
Tel: 0191 259 2743 : Fax 0191 257 2249  
E-mail: [info@essell.co.uk](mailto:info@essell.co.uk)  
Ref: ACR/2668

**Legal and Administrative Information for the Year Ended 31 August 2024**

**Constitution**

Joseph Cowen Lifelong Learning Centre CIO is a Body Corporate under Part 11 of the Charities Act 2011 and is governed by its Constitution. It is a Registered Charity no. 1174080

**Trustees**

The trustees serving during the year and since the year end were as follows :

Dr Dorothy Stainsby	
Dr Louise Jennet Freeman	
Mrs Joan Campion	
Dr Malcolm Robert Grady	
Prof Simon Pallett	
Mrs Rita Prabhu	
Mrs Anthea Lang	
Miss Lesley Pringle	
Prof Trevor Buck	
Ms Kate Bridger	(appointed 20 May 2024)
Mr Justin Pearce	(appointed 20 May 2024)

**Registered Office**

Essell Accountants Ltd, 29 Howard Street, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE30 1AR

**Independent Examiner**

Alex Robinson, Essell Accountants Limited, 29 Howard Street, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE30 1AR

## **Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2024**

The Trustees are pleased to present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 August 2024.

Legal and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the constitution and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

## **Objects of the Charity**

The objects of the CIO are to advance the education of adults in the north east of England (the area of benefit) by the provision of short courses, seminars, study groups, lectures and other such activities.

## **Structure, Governance & Management**

The Board of Trustees met nine times during the year.

## **Financial Review**

In 2023/24 the Trustees planned to make a deficit. During the Pandemic the Charity unexpectedly made surpluses because it was forced to reduce its programme and move online, so the plan was to return some of those surpluses to members by keeping subscriptions at pre-Pandemic levels despite the general rise in costs. In the event the Charity made a tiny surplus of £9 on unrestricted funds. This was largely because programme expenditure was a little lower than in 2022/23 and because there had been a small increase in the cost of subscriptions. We were also helped by being able to draw on the Midgley Fund grant to cover part of the cost of our programme.

The main challenge has been the decline in membership from about 200 pre Pandemic to 137-143 in 2023/24. Our costs remain much the same regardless of the number of members, so in the medium to long term we do need to increase membership. The Board is addressing how this might best be done, bearing in mind that most membership organisations have lost members in recent years.

The Trustees are always on the look-out for additional sources of funding, although the CIO is likely to remain dependent largely on members' subscriptions.

The CIO has continued to expend the restricted grant from the Midgley Fund on additional philosophy tuition and the funds are likely to be spent up in 2024/25.

## **Reserves Policy**

Unrestricted reserves includes a designated fund of £25,229 held for the purposes of organisational development. The money for this purpose was received from an unrestricted legacy, which the Trustees have designated for this purpose.

Otherwise it is the policy of the Trustees to hold unrestricted reserves equivalent to at least 6 months running costs in order to protect the Charity against unexpected losses in income or unforeseen rises in expenditure. The loss of members post Pandemic means that there is likely to be some further use of reserves in 2024/25, as the organisation works to rebuild membership numbers. The Trustees have made the decision to freeze membership prices for 2024/25 in order to remain attractive to members and to celebrate the organisation's tenth anniversary.

Nevertheless the Trustees remain confident that the CIO remains a going concern for the foreseeable future, given the substantial level of unrestricted reserves.

## **Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2024**

### **Achievements and Performance**

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the setting up of the organisation and a number of steps have been taken to celebrate this, from a tenth anniversary party to an extended taster week in September 2024 to a planned publication work on which is under way. It's quite remarkable that a membership organisation based on volunteer labour has been able to take over from a university-run centre for lifelong learning and make a go of it, without any statutory funding.

In 2023/24 we have retained a mix of face-to-face, on-line and mixed mode sessions. Mixed mode sessions present some challenges, but the Trustees have taken action to make this work as well as possible. Whilst some members would prefer everything to be face to face, others are only prepared to participate online. It also makes sense for evening sessions, when getting to and from sessions on public transport would be more challenging.

As with many other membership organisations, the CIO has experienced some loss of membership post Pandemic with 137-143 members in 2023/24 compared to about 200 before the Pandemic. The numbers are much the same as in 2022/23. We have continued to offer taster days to try and recruit new members with some success, but much more remains to be done to grow aggregate numbers.

We continue to operate successfully from Brunswick Methodist Church and enjoy excellent support from the staff there. The building offers an excellent City Centre location close to public transport links and a variety of catering outlets.

The Explore programme continues to be member-run, supported by a part-time Administrator. Our Administrator works largely from home, but has some drop-in space in Brunswick Methodist Church.

The CIO benefits greatly from the work of volunteers who carry out a wide range of tasks from devising the programme to supporting speakers with the technology and providing refreshments for taster sessions. The Trustees are very grateful for this support, without which the organisation could not function. The Trustees are also grateful for the support of the Friends of Explore, sometimes financial and in providing catering for celebrations and taster days.

The Trustees' Annual Report will be presented to the members at the AGM.

### **Public Benefit**

The Trustees confirm that they are aware of the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit and take account of it in running the CIO. There is substantial public benefit in the provision of a very wide curriculum choice, principally to an older audience, and in the way the CIO operates in partnership with other bodies. The CIO also offers some free events to the public, undertakes work in partnership with other organisations to make historical documents available to the public by transcribing them and publishing the results on-line. It also provides valuable opportunities for PhD students to present their work to a non-academic audience. Again we offered our annual Gordon Brown lecture and one additional lecture to all comers on Zoom and attracted a big audience, extending well beyond current membership.

The CIO offers two free taster sessions each year to allow interested individuals to sample sessions before they have to commit to becoming members.

### **Risk Statement**

The Board has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed and established systems for managing these. Thanks to the Pandemic the Trustees have been able to enhance the organisation's resilience by learning how to operate online and in mixed mode.

**Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2024**

**Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities**

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the surplus or deficit of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

**ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD :**

Trust     S D Pallett

Prof Simon Pallett

Date :     20.11.2024.

on,  
n

e.

3



**TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE JOSEPH COWEN LIFELONG LEARNING CENTRE**

I report on the accounts of the CIO for the year ended 31 August 2023 which are set out on pages 6 - 11.

**Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner**

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required this year (under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to :

- examine the accounts (under section 145 of the 2011 Act).
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Direction given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Independent Examiner's Report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the trustee's and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts. The report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention :

- (1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the 2011 Act and the Regulations have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Alex Robinson

Mr Alex Robinson FCCA  
Essell Accountants Limited  
29 Howard Street, North Shields, NE30 1AR  
Date : 24.11.2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u> £	<u>Restricted Funds</u> £	<u>Total 2024</u> £	<u>Total 2023</u>
<b><u>Income and Endowments</u></b>					
<b>Incoming Resources from Generated Funds:</b>					
Donations and Legacies					
Donations		2,326	0	2,326	1,964
Gift aid		326	0	326	342
Sundry sales		70	0	70	0
Grants		0	0	0	0
Income from Investments:					
Bank Interest		871	0	871	258
		<u>3,593</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3,593</u>	<u>2,564</u>
<b><u>Income from Charitable Activities</u></b>	2	<u>41,029</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>41,029</u>	<u>39,315</u>
<b><u>Total Income and Endowments</u></b>		<u>44,622</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>44,622</u>	<u>41,879</u>
<b><u>Expenditure on :</u></b>					
Expenditure on Raising Funds	3	494	0	494	387
Expenditure on Governance	4	1,027	0	1,027	976
Expenditure on Charitable Activities	5	<u>43,092</u>	<u>1,508</u>	<u>44,600</u>	<u>46,473</u>
<b><u>Total Expenditure:</u></b>		<u>44,613</u>	<u>1,508</u>	<u>46,121</u>	<u>47,836</u>
<b><u>Net Income / (Expenditure) resources before transfers</u></b>		9	(1,508)	(1,499)	(5,957)
<b><u>Transfers between funds</u></b>		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b><u>Net Movement in Funds</u></b>		9	(1,508)	(1,499)	(5,957)
<b><u>Balance as at 1st September 2023</u></b>		<u>79,440</u>	<u>2,964</u>	<u>82,404</u>	<u>88,361</u>
<b><u>Balance as at 31st August 2024</u></b>		<u>79,449</u>	<u>1,456</u>	<u>80,905</u>	<u>82,404</u>

The notes form part of the financial statements

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT  
31 August 2024**

	2024	2023
	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Tangible Assets (Note 7)	917	780
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors (note 8)	0	0
Cash at Bank and in Hand	<u>109,928</u>	<u>96,089</u>
	<u>109,928</u>	<u>96,089</u>
<b>CREDITORS : AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR (Note 9)</b>	<u>29,940</u>	<u>14,465</u>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	79,988	81,624
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u><u>80,905</u></u>	<u><u>82,404</u></u>
<b>CAPITAL AND RESERVES</b>		
Unrestricted Funds (Note 10)	79,449	79,440
Restricted Funds (Note 10)	1,456	2,964
	<u><u>80,905</u></u>	<u><u>82,404</u></u>

These financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 20/11/2024  
and were signed on its behalf by :

S D Pallett

Prof Simon Pallett

**Charity registered number : 1174080**

## 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

### Accounting Convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2015) and the Charities Act 2011. The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

### Incoming Resources

Incoming Resources represents grants, sales and other work done during the year. It is prepared on an accruals basis.

### Tangible Fixed Assets

Depreciation is provided at the following rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Computer	Straight line over five years
Fixtures and Fittings	Straight line over five years

Where assets are purchased with funds given for that specific purpose the Trustees may elect that the asset is written off in full in the year of acquisition in order to match expenditure with income.

### Fund Accounting

Funds held by the charity are either :

Unrestricted general funds - these are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds - these funds are grants or donations received that require the funds to be used in a specific way or for a specific purpose.

Designated funds - these are funds set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

2 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u> £	<u>Restricted Funds</u> £	<u>Total 2024</u> £	<u>Total 2023</u> £
Subscriptions	41,029	0	41,029	39,315
Income from events	0	0	0	0
	<u>41,029</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>41,029</u>	<u>39,315</u>

3 EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS

	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u> £	<u>Restricted Funds</u> £	<u>Total 2024</u> £	<u>Total 2023</u> £
Member development	494	0	494	387
	<u>494</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>494</u>	<u>387</u>

4 EXPENDITURE ON GOVERNANCE

	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u> £	<u>Restricted Funds</u> £	<u>Total 2024</u> £	<u>Total 2023</u> £
Payroll and independent examination	1,027	0	1,027	976
	<u>1,027</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,027</u>	<u>976</u>

5 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u> £	<u>Restricted Funds</u> £	<u>Total 2024</u> £	<u>Total 2023</u> £
Tutors	20,165	788	20,953	22,000
Room Hire	6,780	720	7,500	8,414
Telephones	0	0	0	105
General Insurances	823	0	823	758
Annual IT Support	583	0	583	718
Office Rent	832	0	832	1,212
Salary Costs	13,242	0	13,242	12,355
Stationery and Office Supplies	78	0	78	95
Bank charges	93	0	93	62
Sundry Expenses	155	0	155	504
Depreciation	341	0	341	250
	<u>43,092</u>	<u>1,508</u>	<u>44,600</u>	<u>46,473</u>

6 STAFF COSTS

	<u>Total 2024</u> £	<u>Total 2023</u> £
Wages and Salaries	12,482	11,658
Employer's NI	0	0
Pension Contributions	<u>760</u>	<u>697</u>

13,242

12,355

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

6 STAFF COSTS (continued)

2024 2023

The average weekly number of employees during the year was : 1 1

No employee received remuneration amounting to more than £60,000 in either year.

No Trustee was paid for their work as Trustees, but some Trustees were paid for tutoring. Trustees were paid £239 to reimburse them for expenditure incurred on the CIO's behalf (2023 £343).

7 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	IT Equipment £	Other Equipment £	Total £
<b>COST</b>			
As at 1 September 2023	1,250	126	1,376
Additions in the Year	478	0	478
Disposals in the Year	0	0	0
As at 31 August 2024	<u>1,728</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>1,854</u>
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>			
As at 1 September 2023	491	106	597
Disposals in the Year	0	0	0
Charge for the Year	320	20	340
As at 31 August 2024	<u>811</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>937</u>
<b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>			
As at 31 August 2024	<u>917</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>917</u>
As at 31 August 2023	<u>759</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>779</u>

8 DEBTORS

2024 2023

£ £

Prepayments	0	0
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

9 CREDITORS : AMOUNTS FALLING DUE  
WITHIN ONE YEAR

2024 2023

£ £

Deferred Income	28,471	13,210
Accruals	1,469	1,255
	<u>29,940</u>	<u>14,465</u>





NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

10 MOVEMENTS OF FUNDS

	Balance at 1 Sept 2023	Transfer Between Funds	Incoming Resources	Resources expended	Balance at 31 August 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>General Funds</b>					
Unrestricted Funds	53,811	0	44,622	44,213	54,220
Designated Funds	25,629	0	0	400	25,229
Total General Funds	79,440	0	44,622	44,613	79,449
<b>Restricted Funds</b>					
Restricted funds	2,964	0	0	1,508	1,456
Total Restricted Funds	2,964	0	0	1,508	1,456
<b>Total Funds</b>	82,404	0	44,622	46,121	80,905

The Designated Funds represent an unrestricted legacy which the Trustees have chosen to use for organisational development. It forms part of Unrestricted Funds.

The Restricted Funds represent a grant from from the Midgley Fund to fund additional tuition and activities in Philosophy.

