

**JOSEPH COWEN LIFELONG
LEARNING CENTRE CIO**

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED

31 August 2025

REGISTERED NUMBER - 1174080



29 Howard Street
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Tyne and Wear
NE30 1AR

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LEARNING CENTRE CIO**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 August 2025**

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Legal and Administrative Information for the Year Ended 31 August 2025

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	(resigned 4 October 2024)
Mr Justin Pearce	
Mrs Karen Gammack	(appointed 27 June 2025)

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 2025

The Trustees are pleased to present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 August 2025.

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 eight times during the year. In addition the Board held an away day to discuss future strategy.

Financial Review

In 2024/25 the Trustees planned to make a small deficit, but in reality a modest surplus has been made. This is because of strict control of expenditure, the maintenance of membership levels and a slightly lower level of expenditure on programming.

During the year the Trustees reviewed the CIO's reserves policy and determined that the minimum level of free reserves should be 6 months running costs, the designated Gordon Brown Fund and a small sum to cover winding up costs, if the organisation ever ceased to operate. This means that on current spending minimum reserves should be about £52,500 as compared to their actual level of £81,675. The Trustees have therefore reduced the subscription rate for 2025/26 from £285 to £250 in order gradually to run down the free reserves held over a number of years. It is therefore hoped that this new reduced subscription level can be maintained for at least two years and possibly longer.

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. It would of course help to have a few more members, although it looks as if the lower level of membership post Pandemic has become the new norm.

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 early 2025/26

The CIO received a £300 grant from Northumberland Archives to support a palaeography course run in conjunction with the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne. It also received a £500 donation from Jack Pennie to support activities in Season 4, held over the summer of 2025. This has enabled some trips and visits to be subsidised.

Reserves Policy

Unrestricted reserves includes a designated fund of £25,179 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. As noted above the Trustees have decided to run down reserves over a number of years, as the level of reserves was judged to be more than the organisation requires, by reducing the cost of an annual subscription.

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 2025

Achievements and Performance

Following on from our tenth anniversary a group of Trustees and Tutors has drafted an article about the first 10 of the Explore programme, the reasons for its success as well as analysis of the challenges faced. The research included a comprehensive survey of members' views which was communicated to members at the AGM in May 2025. It is intended to secure publication of the article in an appropriate journal or elsewhere.

The Trustees held an away day to plan for the future and a further one is being planned for autumn 2025. The Trustees have also reviewed and revised the Reserves Policy, developed a Data Protection Policy and are working on a review of existing policies, as well as providing new policies in key areas.

In 2024/25 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 139-145 members in 2024/25 compared to about 200 before the Pandemic. The numbers are much the same as in 2023/24. 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 Legacy Lecture to all comers on Zoom and attracted a big audience, extending well beyond current membership. This lecture is funded by the Gordon Brown legacy which is shown in designated funds.

The CIO offers free taster sessions each year to allow interested individuals to sample sessions before they have to commit to becoming members. In 2025/26 it will be offering bursaries for those on benefits who cannot afford the subscription.

Risk Statement

The Board has reviewed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and established systems for managing these. Thanks to our experience during the Pandemic the Trustees have been able to enhance the organisation's resilience by learning how to operate online and in mixed mode, and some of our provision continues to be offered in these modes.

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2025

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 :

Trustee *S.D. Pallett*

Prof Simon Pallett

Date : *7 November 2025*

TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE JOSEPH COWEN LIFELONG LEARNING CENTRE

I report on the accounts of the CIO for the year ended 31 August 2025 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.

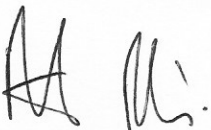
Independent Examiner's Report

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.



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

Date : 11/11/2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>Unrestricted</u> <u>Funds</u> £	<u>Restricted</u> <u>Funds</u> £	<u>Total</u> <u>2025</u> £	<u>Total</u> <u>2024</u>
<u>Income and Endowments</u>					
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds:					
Donations and Legacies					
Donations		1,918	500	2,418	2,326
Gift aid		254	0	254	326
Sundry sales		0	0	0	70
Grants		0	300	300	0
Income from Investments:					
Bank Interest		1,819	0	1,819	871
		<u>3,991</u>	<u>800</u>	<u>4,791</u>	<u>3,593</u>
<u>Income from Charitable Activities</u>	2	<u>41,584</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>41,584</u>	<u>41,029</u>
<u>Total Income and Endowments</u>		<u>45,575</u>	<u>800</u>	<u>46,375</u>	<u>44,622</u>
<u>Expenditure on :</u>					
Expenditure on Raising Funds	3	237	0	237	494
Expenditure on Governance	4	1,082	0	1,082	1,027
Expenditure on Charitable Activities	5	<u>42,030</u>	<u>1,501</u>	<u>43,531</u>	<u>44,600</u>
<u>Total Expenditure:</u>		<u>43,349</u>	<u>1,501</u>	<u>44,850</u>	<u>46,121</u>
<u>Net Income / (Expenditure) resources before transfers</u>		2,226	(701)	1,525	(1,499)
<u>Transfers between funds</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>Net Movement in Funds</u>		2,226	(701)	1,525	(1,499)
<u>Balance as at 1st September 2024</u>		<u>79,449</u>	<u>1,456</u>	<u>80,905</u>	<u>82,404</u>
<u>Balance as at 31st August 2025</u>		<u>81,675</u>	<u>755</u>	<u>82,430</u>	<u>80,905</u>

The notes form part of the financial statements

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT
31 August 2025**

	2025	2024
	£	£
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible Assets (Note 7)	597	917
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors (note 8)	499	0
Cash at Bank and in Hand	<u>104,010</u>	<u>109,928</u>
	<u>104,509</u>	<u>109,928</u>
CREDITORS : AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR (Note 9)	<u>22,676</u>	<u>29,940</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	81,833	79,988
NET ASSETS	<u><u>82,430</u></u>	<u><u>80,905</u></u>
CAPITAL AND RESERVES		
Unrestricted Funds (Note 10)	81,675	79,449
Restricted Funds (Note 10)	755	1,456
	<u><u>82,430</u></u>	<u><u>80,905</u></u>

These financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 7 November 2025
and were signed on their behalf by :

SD 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

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 2025

2 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u> £	<u>Restricted Funds</u> £	<u>Total 2025</u> £	<u>Total 2024</u> £
Subscriptions	41,584	0	41,584	41,029
Income from events	0	0	0	0
	<u>41,584</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>41,584</u>	<u>41,029</u>

3 EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS

	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u> £	<u>Restricted Funds</u> £	<u>Total 2025</u> £	<u>Total 2024</u> £
Member development	237	0	237	494
	<u>237</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>237</u>	<u>494</u>

4 EXPENDITURE ON GOVERNANCE

	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u> £	<u>Restricted Funds</u> £	<u>Total 2025</u> £	<u>Total 2024</u> £
Payroll and independent examination	1,082	0	1,082	1,027
	<u>1,082</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,082</u>	<u>1,027</u>

5 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u> £	<u>Restricted Funds</u> £	<u>Total 2025</u> £	<u>Total 2024</u> £
Tutors	18,428	945	19,373	20,953
Room Hire	7,232	435	7,667	7,500
Palaeography materials	0	100	100	0
Season 4 costs	0	21	21	0
General Insurances	838	0	838	823
Annual IT Support	534	0	534	583
Office Rent	312	0	312	832
Salary Costs	14,116	0	14,116	13,242
Stationery and Office Supplies	75	0	75	78
Bank charges	68	0	68	93
Sundry Expenses	107	0	107	155
Depreciation	320	0	320	341
	<u>42,030</u>	<u>1,501</u>	<u>43,531</u>	<u>44,600</u>

6 STAFF COSTS

	<u>Total 2025</u> £	<u>Total 2024</u> £
Wages and Salaries	13,316	12,482
Employer's NI	0	0
Pension Contributions	800	760
	<u>14,116</u>	<u>13,242</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

6 STAFF COSTS (continued)

	2025	2024
The average weekly number of employees during the year was :	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

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 £267 to reimburse them for expenditure incurred on the CIO's behalf (2024 £239).

7 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	IT Equipment £	Other Equipment £	Total £
COST			
As at 1 September 2024	1,728	126	1,854
Additions in the Year	0	0	0
Disposals in the Year	0	0	0
As at 31 August 2025	<u>1,728</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>1,854</u>
DEPRECIATION			
As at 1 September 2024	811	126	937
Disposals in the Year	0	0	0
Charge for the Year	320	0	320
As at 31 August 2025	<u>1,131</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>1,257</u>
NET BOOK VALUE			
As at 31 August 2025	<u>597</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>597</u>
As at 31 August 2024	<u>917</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>917</u>

8 DEBTORS

	2025 £	2024 £
Prepayments	499	0
	<u>499</u>	<u>0</u>

9 CREDITORS : AMOUNTS FALLING DUE
WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025 £	2024 £
Deferred Income	21,015	28,471
Accruals	1,661	1,469
	<u>22,676</u>	<u>29,940</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED

10 MOVEMENTS OF FUNDS

	Balance at 1 Sept 2024	Transfer Between Funds	Incoming Resources	Resources expended	Balance at 31 August 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
General Funds					
Unrestricted Funds	54,220	0	45,575	43,299	56,496
Designated Funds	25,229	0	0	50	25,179
Total General Funds	79,449	0	45,575	43,349	81,675
Restricted Funds					
Midgley Fund	1,456	0	0	1,245	211
Palaeography Fund	0	0	300	235	65
Season 4 Fund	0	0	500	21	479
Total Restricted Funds	1,456	0	800	1,501	755
Total Funds	80,905	0	46,375	44,850	82,430

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.
a grant from Northumberland Archives for a palaeography course and materials
a donation from Jack Pennie to support Season 4 activities