

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1175066

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED
CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2023

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

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SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO**TRUSTEES AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS**

Registered charity name Sandwell Visually Impaired CIO

Charity number 1175066

Principal address SVI Office
West Bromwich Town Hall
Lodge Road
West Bromwich
B70 8DY

Trustees A D Averis
K Averis
P Bhachu
T Burling
R Flatley
R Gormley
T Gracesmith
G Orlebar
K Patel
H Rourke

Independent examiner J S Pye FCCA
23 Carline Crescent
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY3 7EU

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Reference and administrative details are shown in the schedule of members of the board and professional advisers on page 1 of the financial statements.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

(a) Governing document

The charity is controlled by its constitution dated 10 October 2017 and is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

(b) Organisational structure

The charity has a management committee of up to 15 members who meet regularly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity.

(c) Appointment of trustees

Under the requirements of the constitution trustees are elected to the management committee to serve for a period of up to three years after which trustees must be re-elected at the next annual general meeting.

(d) Risk management

The trustees have examined the major strategic, business and operational issues which the organisation faces. They confirm that systems are in place to enable regular reports to be produced so that necessary steps can be taken to reduce risks.

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT *(continued)*

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objects and principal activities of the charity are to relieve the needs of blind and visually impaired people living or working of the Borough of Sandwell in the West Midlands, their families and carers in particular, but not exclusively, by assistance in the provision of advice, education, information and support to enable increased independence and life opportunities.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

During this financial year our regular membership services continue. They have been developed and extended as people's confidence to get out and do things has grown. Our services are available to our membership of 349 members, carers and associates who have an interest in sight loss issues. However, it is not necessary for people to be members of SVI to receive a service. We have responded to 4,467 sight loss enquiries via telephone support, electronically and home visits.

Sandwell has approximately 1,117 people registered as sight impaired with the Local Authority. According to RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People) statistics, Sandwell would be expected to have an estimated 9,150 adult residents living with some level of sight loss. Given that RNIB's numbers are a rough approximation, we can only conclude that many people are not receiving a regular support service via statutory provision and likely no support at all other than from family networks. One of our goals is to reach as many of these people as possible.

SVI's work is based on true user participation and co-production. Our aim is to:

- reduce the isolation, disempowerment and loss of confidence experienced by many visually impaired people;
- provide a safe supporting approach to keeping active and healthier for longer;
- offer practical help to enable visually impaired people and their families to access support as and when they need it;
- encourage blind and visually impaired people to play an active role in the community;
- promote friendships and encourage peer support by organising trips, events and social activities;
- support families, friends and associates of people living with sight loss;
- work with service providers to inform and educate.

All our activities and campaigns are organised and led by visually impaired people with the assistance of our committed staff and volunteers.

We take a holistic approach looking at all elements of the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of the people who use our services. SVI seeks to help remove the fears associated with sight loss and encourage people to explore other ways of doing things which they may think are no longer possible.

We provide support in a range of areas, all of which are interlinked.

Supporting independence

A diagnosis of sight loss is life changing and can be extremely traumatic. Even those who have been visually impaired but whose sight is changing can become very anxious and fearful. With an estimated 45.2% of blind and visually impaired people experiencing depression, SVI has taken steps to try to remove some of the fears around sight loss and help people to explore a range of coping strategies.

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT *(continued)*

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Our daisy chain telephone befriending scheme offers a weekly welfare call to isolated and vulnerable people. We have a small one-to-one volunteer support service which we would like to develop to offer either regular home visits to vulnerable or isolated members or one-off visits to offer support when they need it. SVI services can be accessed virtually as well as face-to-face and our weekly coffee and conversation virtual sessions have remained very popular with those who still do not feel confident to get out and about. Our one-to-one and group volunteers have supported people to do the things that sighted people take for granted.

Social support

Meeting others and getting out and about is extremely important to people. Our 'Park Walks Programme' was our first step to restoring SVI group activities post pandemic. Since then we have re-established our social trips and activities with a skittles night, barbeque and karaoke nights, a number of Christmas social events and three accessible narrowboat trips.

Health and wellbeing

SVI has developed proactive partnerships with Sandwell Leisure Trust, the Portway Lifestyle Centre and Places for People, taking positive steps towards addressing barriers visually impaired people face in accessing fitness facilities. We recruit and train volunteer buddies to enable visually impaired people to take part in a range of activities on an equal basis. We hold weekly supported gym sessions, swimming, Aquafit and line dancing. We have a very popular weekly park walk programme. This year we introduced accessible cycling, something that most of our members did not think they would ever be able to participate in again. We ran a healthy eating and weight management programme, in partnership with Everyone Health, which included seated exercise sessions meeting the needs of our less mobile members.

Arts and culture projects

The arts have often been seen as something that blind and visually impaired people cannot take part in. SVI seek to break down these beliefs and encourage people with sight loss to enjoy arts and culture in a different way.

Working in partnership with Multistory and visually impaired photographer Karren Visser, we have been working on an exciting project that reflects the lived experiences, hopes and fears of blind and visually impaired people in Sandwell. The digital stories of some of our SVI members were launched this year. These were audio described by the members themselves. They highlight the skills demonstrated by visually impaired people during lockdown. The videos and photographs give a fascinating insight into their varied lives. Individual photography sessions and group workshops also took place as part of this project. Smaller arts and culture activities included a presentation of the Bearwood Tapestry and a guided audio described and touch tour of the industrial history of Smethwick.

Access to new technology

The ability to use new technology has become almost essential for everyday life. In this fast-moving area blind and visually impaired people are increasingly likely to be left behind. Many of our members are older people and most have lost their sight in later life. The skills base or even willingness/confidence to try out technology is often a barrier.

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT *(continued)*

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

As part of our support to members we hold virtual 'Appy Hour' peer support groups to help visually impaired people to access mobile phones, smart devices and tablets.

This year we have partnered with Sandwell Adult and Family Learning [SAFL] and Sandwell Library Service to deliver Azabat learn to touchtype courses and tablet and smart device training.

Information and communication

One of the largest barriers faced by people living with sight loss is accessing information. SVI works with statutory and community organisations to highlight the importance of accessible information in all formats. We circulate safeguarding alerts, police notices and neighbourhood information via email. We work in partnership with Sandwell Talking News to offer a postal and online weekly audio newspaper to blind and visually impaired people throughout Sandwell. Information about SVI's forthcoming activities and events is sent to members on audio CD when this is their preferred format. We maintain a website and Facebook page and group.

We restarted our tea and toast session, members' open meetings and held our first post-Covid annual forum. We invited guest speakers and representatives from local and national organisations to share information about their services. Our annual forum had over 100 people in attendance. Our monthly tea and toast sessions has around 30 people.

Fundraising and awareness events

We have not yet re-established our usual programme of fund raising and promotional events. We have put our membership fund raising on hold until such a time we feel it is appropriate to resume these activities.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves Policy

The Statement of Financial Activities shows a gross income of £79,944 and expenditure of £64,315. The reserves are primarily to cover the development and future running expenses of all aspects of the organisation.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

Our Trustees' overall aim is to establish SVI as a sustainable, user-led organisation with a reputation for delivering quality services. The majority of our Trustees are visually impaired themselves and are experts by experience. They are passionate about providing a service that fully meets the needs of their peers in Sandwell. We have two part-time staff seconded from the Council. We benefit from a central office location within the Borough at a peppercorn rent thanks to the Council's commitment to our service. This year we have also directly employed one member of part-time staff on a short-term, grant-funded programme, with another starting at the end of February 2023. Trustees and staff recognise the need for longer term funding to enable us to grow and develop. To this end, our plans for the next year include the following aims and objectives:

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT *(continued)*

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. Volunteering and befriending scheme. To continue and develop our befriending phone support to our lonelier, isolated and vulnerable members. We want to extend this provision to include more face-to-face befriending support.
2. Thanks to funding from the Esmée Fairbairn EPIC programme, we now have a Volunteers Coordinator in post. This will enable us to expand our volunteer base, providing opportunities for both VI and sighted volunteers. We will formalise our volunteer service, offer training and support and improve the service that we provide to our members.
3. With our adaptive technology and VI knowledge, we are in a position to offer unique volunteering opportunities for visually impaired people who might otherwise be excluded from the labour market. We further aim to offer work experience placements which will draw in further skills and raise awareness of blind and visually impaired people's ability to operate in the workplace.
4. Seek funding to offer specialist IT support and provision. This will empower visually impaired people and our staff to make better use of access technology. The digital consultant role will build on our relationship with local training providers to increase the skills' base of blind and visually impaired people and those seeking to train them.
5. Increase our one-to-one information and guidance support and trial further counselling and listening support programmes. We are seeking funding for a dedicated information and advocacy worker. An estimated 44% of blind and visually impaired people experience depression. In the past, the local Council had a designated sight loss counsellor, however this service was cut. A trial of our own counselling service showed that there was still a need for this provision. We are looking at ways that we can meet this need.
6. We want to further develop our social support programmes through the employment of an Activities Coordinator to take over running current activities and develop new ones. Organising events and trips out is time-consuming for our existing staff and precludes other developmental activities. We are exploring funding opportunities for this role.
7. More enablement support. Enablement and buddy support is fundamental to the work we do. No matter how confident and able a VI person is, there are times when sighted support is essential. The enabling/buddy model is very effective and empowering, making mainstream activities more appealing and accessible to people living with sight loss. We are seeking funding to maintain this aspect of our work and to develop our enablement service further.
8. Sight loss is life changing and the sense of bereavement is a natural process that needs help and support to overcome, our peer support model offers people a powerful example of what can be achieved following sight loss.

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT *(continued)*

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

J S Pye FCCA has been re-appointed as independent examiner for the ensuing year.

Principal address:

SVI Office
West Bromwich Town Hall
Lodge Road
West Bromwich
B70 8DY

Signed by order of the Trustees



A D Averis

16 October 2023

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023 which are set out on pages 9 to 15.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

The trustees 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 Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed 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 and I confirm that no material matter has come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of 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 confirm that there are no other matters to which your attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



J S Pye FCCA
Independent examiner

23 Carline Crescent
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY3 7EU

16 October 2023

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generating funds:					
Investment income	3	18	—	18	1
Incoming resources from charitable activities - grants receivable					
	4	1,399	75,407	76,806	53,534
Other incoming resources	5	1,314	1,806	3,120	1,485
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		2,731	77,213	79,944	55,020
Less: RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Charitable activities	6	3,271	(67,586)	(64,315)	(57,162)
Governance costs	7	—	—	—	—
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		3,271	(67,586)	(64,315)	(57,162)
NET INCOMING / (OUTGOING) RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR		6,002	9,627	15,629	(2,142)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		24,024	23,745	47,769	49,911
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		30,026	33,372	63,398	47,769

The notes on pages 11 to 15 form part of these financial statements. *

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

BALANCE SHEET

31 MARCH 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets		-	-
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>63,398</u>	<u>47,769</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		63,398	47,769
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>63,398</u>	<u>47,769</u>
NET ASSETS		<u><u>63,398</u></u>	<u><u>47,769</u></u>
FUNDS			
Restricted income funds	9	33,372	23,745
Unrestricted income funds	10	<u>30,026</u>	<u>24,024</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u><u>63,398</u></u>	<u><u>47,769</u></u>

These financial statements were approved by the members of the committee and authorised for issue on the 16 October 2023 and are signed on their behalf by:



A D Averis
Trustee

The notes on pages 11 to 15 form part of these financial statements.

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. STATUTORY INFORMATION

Sandwell Visually Impaired CIO is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England. The charity's registered number, principal address and nature of operations can be found in the Report of the Trustees.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102 (effective 1 January 2015), Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Cash flow statement

The trustees have taken advantage of the exemption in Financial Reporting Standard No 102 from including a cash flow statement in the financial statements.

Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise of unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Resources expended

Resources expended are recognised in the period in which they are incurred. Resources expended include attributable VAT which cannot be recovered.

Costs of generating funds comprise the costs associated with attracting voluntary income and the cost of trading for fundraising purposes.

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES *(continued)*

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include accountancy fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

All costs are allocated between the expenditure categories of the statement of financial activities on the basis designed to reflect the use of the resource. Costs relating to a particular activity are allocated directly, others are apportioned on an appropriate basis.

Fixed assets

The charity currently holds no fixed assets.

3. INVESTMENT INCOME

	Unrestricted funds	Total funds 2023	Total funds 2022
	£	£	£
Interest received	18	18	1

4. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - GRANTS RECEIVABLE

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2023	Total funds 2022
	£	£	£	£
Sandwell MBC staff funding	-	31,567	31,567	31,567
Sandwell MBC core funding	-	6,400	6,400	6,400
Other grants	-	37,041	37,041	15,567
Donations	1,399	399	1,798	988
	<u>1,399</u>	<u>75,407</u>	<u>76,806</u>	<u>54,522</u>

5. OTHER INCOMING RESOURCES

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2023	Total funds 2022
	£	£	£	£
Miscellaneous income	<u>1,314</u>	<u>1,806</u>	<u>3,120</u>	<u>497</u>

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

6. COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES BY FUND TYPE

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2023	Total funds 2022
	£	£	£	£
Travel expenses	319	672	991	632
Postage	-	-	-	=
Stationery	-	366	366	306
Transcription	90	275	365	165
Personal Assistance and Volunteers expenses	72	657	729	100
Printing	204	-	204	674
Insurance	-	566	566	411
Room Hire	30	280	310	-
Website	-	540	540	540
Equipment	1,460	4,510	5,970	1,038
Marketing	-	-	-	-
General expenses	209	640	849	267
Services	2,131	8,334	10,465	5,062
Rent	-	4,667	4,667	4,667
Staff costs	1,304	10,089	11,393	16,400
Seconded staff costs	-	26,900	26,900	26,900
Movement between funds	(9,090)	9,090	-	-
	<u>(3,271)</u>	<u>67,586</u>	<u>64,315</u>	<u>57,162</u>

7. GOVERNANCE COSTS

The charity has no governance costs as all trustees are volunteers and the financial statements are prepared by J S Pye FCCA pro bono.

8. STAFF COSTS AND EMOLUMENTS

Total staff costs were as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	11,393	16,400
Social security costs	-	-
Other pension costs	-	-
	<u>11,393</u>	<u>16,400</u>

Particulars of employees:

The average number of employees during the year, was as follows:

	2023	2022
	No.	No.
Administrative staff	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

No employee received remuneration of more than £60,000 during the year (2022 - Nil).

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

9. RESTRICTED INCOME FUNDS

	Balance at 1 Apr 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Movement between funds £	Balance at 31 Mar 2023 £
SMBC Grant – seconded staff	-	31,567	31,567	-	-
Transport fund	89	-	-	-	89
Active at 60	1,438	1,664	1,704	-	1,398
Core fund	7,073	6,450	3,671	-	9,852
Housing service group	92	-	-	-	92
Tipton tree of lights	1,130	741	772	-	1,099
Family support group	100	-	-	-	100
Young person's fund	400	-	-	-	400
Harry Payne Touchy Feely Arts project	333	-	3	-	330
SCVO Vision 2030	1,624	-	357	-1,237	30
Sandwell MBC Community Partnership Innovation	1,216	-	-	-	1,216
SCVO Vision 2030 Vaccine Support					
Community Grant	2,933	-	61	-	2,872
Active Black Country Tackling Inequalities Fund	7,317	350	4,163	-3,504	-
Esmee Fairbairn Volunteer Coordinator grant – SCVO	-	14,765	2,083		12,682
SCVO Positive Mental Health	-	250	210	-40	-
Awards for All – Enablement worker fund	-	9,828	9,291	-	537
Wates – Family enterprise socialise family support	-	5,000	-	-3,050	1,950
SMBC – CIL grant Information at your fingertips	-	1,598	1,839	241	-
SMBC – Healthy Lifestyle grant Shae up your summer	-	5,000	2,775	-1,500	725
	<u>23,745</u>	<u>77,213</u>	<u>58,496</u>	<u>-9,090</u>	<u>33,372</u>

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

10. UNRESTRICTED INCOME FUNDS

	Balance at 1 Apr 2022	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Movement between funds	Balance at 31 Mar 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
General funds	4,359	625	1,659	1,002	4,328
Annual Forum	1,554	281	1,423	-	412
Eye health Promotion	980	591	-	-	1,571
Visual Impairment					
Training	1,050	-	-		1,050
Community Involvement					
Fund	500	-	4	-	496
IT Tech	740	-	-	-241	499
Exit strategy	3,200	-	-	-	3,200
Health and Wellbeing					
projects	1,354	-	52	218	1,520
Funeral donations	1,873	-	-	-	1,872
CENTRO Transcription					
fund	875	-	-	-	875
Marketing	400	-	-	458	858
Salary contingency fund	3,101	-	1,304	7,652	9,449
Cassies three peak					
challenge	1,023	-	-	-	1,023
Men's group	414	-	-		414
Demonstration					
Equipment Fund	590	-	-	-	590
SocialEyes Fund	1,658	1,234	1,337	-	1,555
Virtual Raffle	75	-	25	-	50
Women's group	278	-	14		264
	<u>24,024</u>	<u>2,731</u>	<u>5,818</u>	<u>9,089</u>	<u>30,026</u>